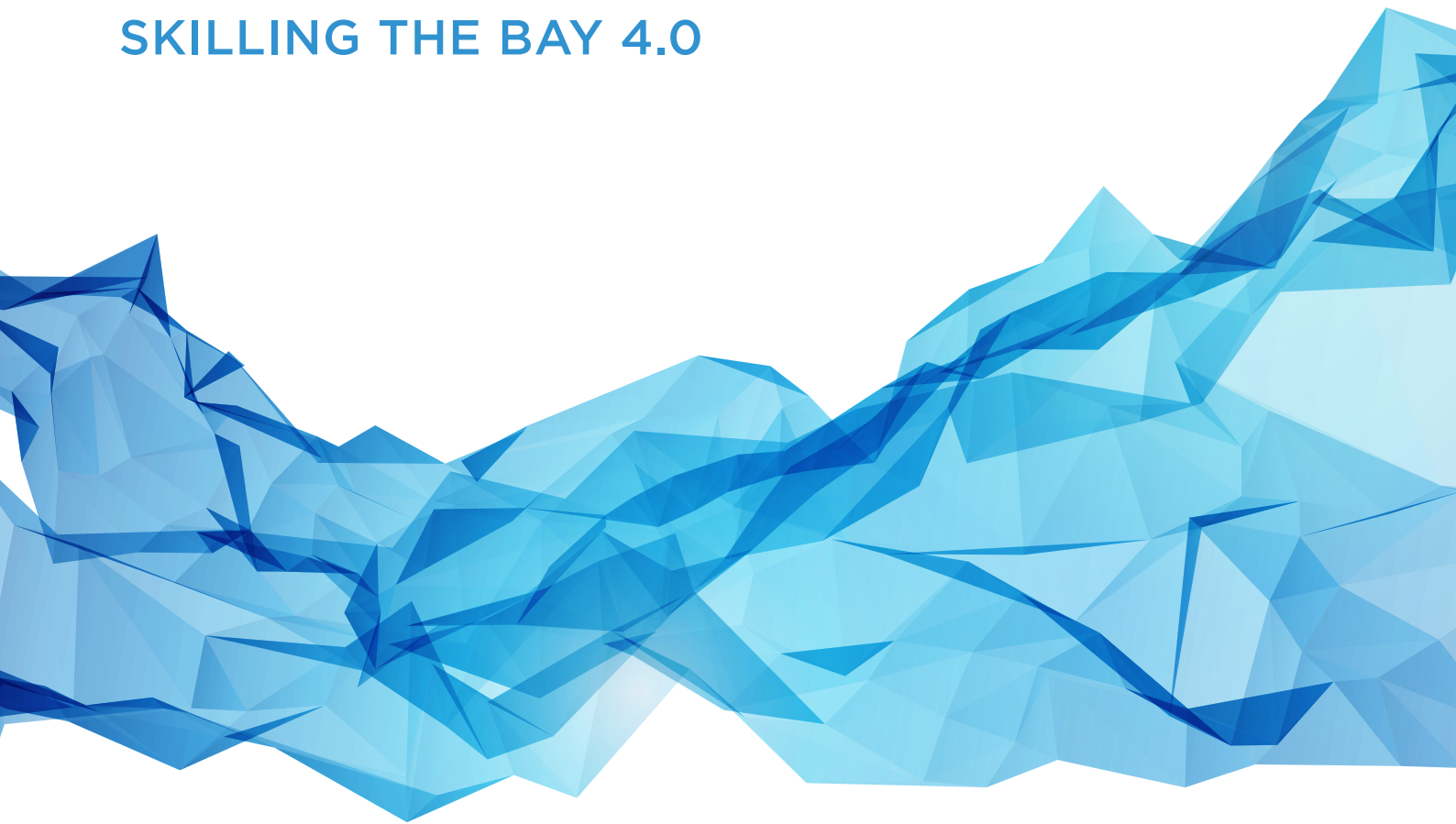


Skilling THE BAY

STRATEGIC PLAN
2021 – JUNE 2023
SKILLING THE BAY 4.0



*Delivering a place-based approach to promote and strengthen
career pathways for young people in the Barwon region.*



Skilling the Bay Strategic Plan 2021-June 2023
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INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan has been developed to articulate the goals and objectives of Skilling the Bay 4.0 (STB) and guide pathways initiatives and program delivery for 2021, 2022 and to June 2023, as part of the funding investment provided by the Department of Education and Training (DET, now known as the Department of Education (DE)).

The purpose of the plan is to:

- Provide a clear vision for a place-based approach to strengthening pathways for young people in the Barwon region
- Outline a set of actions that will promote, strengthen and supplement pathways to sustainable and decent work
- Provide the background and rationale for investing in a coordinated place-based approach to linking students with vocational pathways opportunities in a changing regional economy
- Set out the objectives, performance measures, reporting framework and timeframes for delivery of the key strategies and actions to achieve the vision.

MANAGEMENT OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

The STB Project Management Office (PMO) is responsible for the implementation of this Strategic Plan. The PMO will provide regular updates on the progress of the Plan and program implementation to the STB Advisory Board, Executive Committee and DE in line with the reporting schedule and funding agreement milestones.



BACKGROUND

Skilling the Bay (STB) is a unique regional initiative established to address the economic and industry changes impacting the Geelong and Barwon regions. It is led by The Gordon Institute of TAFE (The Gordon) and delivered in partnership with Deakin University and the Victorian State Government.

STB leads a collaborative effort which brings together education providers, community organisations and industry to deliver targeted initiatives that enable the community to prepare for the new world of work.

STB was established in 2011 to raise educational attainment levels, increase workforce participation through training and re-skilling and grow existing and emerging industries. In response to the economic and industry changes occurring in the Geelong region, STB evolved in stages and has primarily focused on improving education and employment outcomes for people in the region through the delivery of a suite of education, employment and skills initiatives.

Since its inception, STB has realised several integrated projects to improve education, employment and skills outcomes, delivering tangible results for participants and stakeholders.

Funding for Stage 4.0 over 2021, 2022 and to June 2023 allows for STB to continue delivery of education and school-based programs that will help connect students to Geelong’s changing economic landscape, including industries of high demand.

STB is aligned to State Government objectives and the government has invested in this program as part of its commitment to quality education in Victoria, and the introduction of senior secondary school policy reforms as a result of the *‘Review into Vocational and Applied Learning Pathways in Senior Secondary Schooling’*, the Firth Review.¹

This strategic plan will outline the areas of focus for delivery in 2021, 2022 and to June 2023. Program delivery will target areas of weakness or opportunity in vocational and applied pathways as identified within the Firth Review. The Firth Review highlighted the need for improvements to vocational education and training in Victoria. It found more needed to be done to ensure young people had access to engaging training that delivered in-demand skills and lead to quality jobs. The Firth Review recommended strengthening the design and delivery of vocational and applied learning pathways to better facilitate and prepare students for successful post-school pathways, including further education or training and transitioning to the workforce. This will support a vocational and applied learning system that prepares all students to be lifelong learners and active citizens.

Under the new funding agreement, the STB pathways program suite was refocused on a small number of programs with expanded delivery to a greater number of schools to increase the scalability of the initiative and to identify models for expanding beyond the Barwon Area.

¹ Review into Vocational and Applied Learning Pathways in Senior Secondary Schooling, John Firth, State of Victoria (Department of Education and Training), 2020

THE GEELONG REGION CONTEXT

In 2020, STB released the *'Geelong Education and Workforce Profile'*, a report commissioned in late 2019 to tell the story of the Geelong region's response to significant economic and structural adjustment over the past 10 years, understand persistent education and employment challenges and look beyond the horizon to explore future challenges and opportunities.²

Many of the challenges identified in the report were amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, including high levels of youth unemployment, under-employment, difficulties in transitioning to sustainable and decent employment, exacerbating pockets of disadvantage and low levels of literacy (and digital literacy).

The report identified several persistent and predicted challenges facing the region, including:

- Potential disruption of up to 75,000 jobs by 2030 due to the changing nature of work through automation and digital disruption
- Place-based disadvantage with approximately 35,000 people in the G21 region living at or below the poverty line
- The significantly higher than average unemployment rates in Corio/Norlane (21.6%) and Whittington (18%)
- High youth unemployment ranging from 11.6% to 20%
- Struggles to lift literacy and numeracy levels based on NAPLAN results
- Need for greater inclusion and diversity in the workforce.²

Looking further into the future of work, Deakin University (in conjunction with Griffith University and Ford) released the *'100 Jobs of the Future Report'* which predicts that over the next decade, almost every job will be affected and the key drivers fueling this revolution are: automation, robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), climate change, globalisation and an ageing and increasing population.³

Along with trends away from routine jobs and an increasing volume of jobs requiring cognitive skill, the report outlines the skills that will be highly valued in the new workplace.

Grouped as emerging themes, these include:

- Transdisciplinary skills - the need for a strong disciplinary base but combined with a breadth of knowledge of other areas, with technology skills, and with creativity
- Human skills - increasingly relevant in a world where machines do the routine work, and relevant also for cross-disciplinary teamwork
- Flexibility and adaptability - in the face of change, and the importance of the capacity to continue to learn, and be strategic about learning over a lifetime.²

The current education and skills profile coupled with rapid change to the economy and changing nature of work require new pathways to be forged into sustainable and decent work post-secondary education.



GOVERNANCE

Skilling the Bay is currently guided by an Advisory Board and Executive Committee Pathways Program, consisting of key stakeholders from Geelong’s industry, education and community sectors. The Gordon TAFE is the contractual partner for the delivery of the STB program and is responsible for operational management and financial accountability. The Gordon has also undertaken a significant leadership role in the delivery of the program, further demonstrating the distinct role TAFE plays in leading the skilling of industries and communities.

In 2020 the Advisory Board commenced a review to re-position itself for the future operations of STB. In 2022, the Governance structure and membership was refreshed to ensure appropriate representation on the Advisory Board and new Executive Committees for the next phase of delivery.

The Advisory Board will convene 2-3 times per year and provide strategic direction for the STB program and will include representation from key stakeholders at the senior strategic level.

A new Executive Committee Pathways Program has been established, replacing the Monitoring Sub-Committee. The Executive Committee will convene quarterly to oversee the delivery of the Pathways Programs (under the DE funding agreement) as outlined in the Delivery Schedule of this Plan. Appointees to both the Advisory Board and Executive Committee will be made in consultation with DE.

² https://www.thegordon.edu.au/sitedocs/skilling-the-bay/geelong-ed-and-wf-profile_2020.aspx,

³ 100 Jobs of the Future, Russell Tytler, Ruth Bridgstock, Peta White, Dineli Mather, Trevor McCandless, Michelle Grant-Iramu, Deakin University, Ford Motor Company of Australia LTD, 2019, ISBN: 978-0-646-99509-0

PARTNERSHIPS

STB operates in collaboration and partnership with key regional stakeholders to maximise participation and minimise duplication of education initiatives.

Education

- Barwon Regional Primary and Secondary Schools
- Deakin University
- Careers Teachers
- Head Start
- The Gordon
- The Geelong Tech School
- VCE Vocational Major Teachers.

Government

- City of Greater Geelong
- DE – Senior Secondary Pathways Reform Taskforce
- DE – Barwon
- Skills and Jobs Centre
- Jobs Victoria
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- Victorian Skills Authority.

Industry and Community

- Geelong Manufacturing Council (GMC)
- GMC Members
- Advanced Fibre Cluster
- Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network
- Northern Futures
- Committee for Geelong
- G21 Geelong Region Alliance – Cultural and Economic Development Pillar
- Health and Community Service providers
- Geelong Pre-Employment Network.

GEELONG REGION ECOSYSTEM

STB currently with a range of stakeholders in the implementation of programs and initiatives. It has a strong understanding of the strategic and operational nature of the local education and workforce transition effort.



OUR VALUES

Collaboration and inclusiveness are keys to:

- Avoid duplication of services and generate efficiencies
- Harness knowledge and skills to design effective intervention strategies
- Identify and agree on priorities to guide resource allocation
- Develop and design intervention strategies fit for purpose
- Create a culture that takes care of our own.

Education and training as the cornerstone of:

- Learning for jobs of the future
- Developing job readiness skills
- Re-skilling to respond to workforce changes.

Outcomes-focused:

- Performance measurement to test the effectiveness of interventions
- Rigorous evaluation framework to justify ongoing investment decisions.

Sustainability:

- Supporting strategies with a timeframe capable of generating long-term success
- Embedding STB in existing programs delivered by local entities.

Innovation and entrepreneurship:

- Creativity and imagination as the basis for forging new frontiers of opportunity
- Developing and trying new ideas
- Successfully transferring ideas to commercial reality.

SKILLING THE BAY 4.0 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Over the past stages of delivery, the educational goal of STB is and will continue to be:

Increasing the number of individuals engaged in education and work opportunities beyond school.

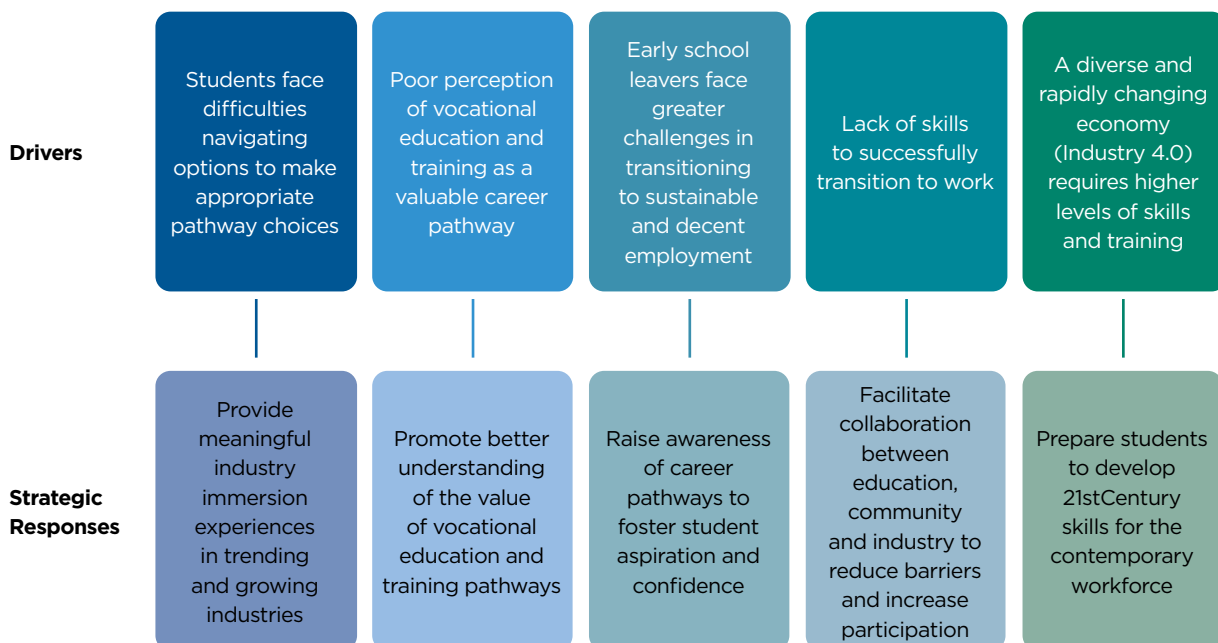
Funding for 2021, 2022 and to June 2023 will enable STB to focus on education and pathways programs to inspire and engage young people in learning and the world of work. It also provides an opportunity to align delivery with recommendations in the Firth Review to improve senior secondary pathways and post-school transitions to further study or work.

STB's purpose is to:

Deliver a place-based approach to promote, strengthen and supplement career pathways for young people into sustainable and decent work in the Barwon region.

Stemming from this purpose are the objectives that have been established to guide STB actions, delivery and the operational focus of the STB Program Management Office. These objectives were developed in response to key agreed drivers in the region; linking strategic objectives to desired short and long term outcomes.

Key Drivers and Strategic Responses



Given STB's evolution, we also recognise how important it is for people of all ages to see a pathway for themselves into new and emerging jobs and careers as the economy and nature of work change. While this is not the focus of this strategic plan, it underlies the overall vision for STB to support a regional workforce that is educated, skilled and equipped to navigate a changing economy.

OBJECTIVE ONE

Driver: Students face difficulties navigating options to make appropriate pathway choices.

Objective: Provide meaningful industry immersion experiences in trending and growing industries to students and teachers.

Strategy: STB will raise awareness of careers in industries of regional significance for teachers and students through the delivery of high quality programs, including:

- Delivery of programs that provide real, hands on exposure to vocational careers
- Developing new industry immersion and pathway programs aligned to the local labour market and the changing regional economy
- Maintaining strong connections with industry and regional bodies
- Working closely with students and teachers to maximise the experiences
- Continuously improving programs based on student and teacher feedback.

Actions:

- Deliver the GMC STEM Manufacturing Futures Program
- Plan and pilot two 'World of Work' industry immersion and experience programs in new and trending industries.

Outcomes:

- Students have aspirations for further study and/or their working future
- Students have the confidence to pursue vocational and/or career pathways.

Long term:

- Students make a successful transition from education and training to work.



OBJECTIVE TWO

Driver: Poor public perception of vocational education and training as a valuable career pathway.

Objective: Promote better understanding of the value of vocational education and training pathways.

Strategy: To assist in raising the profile of vocational education and training, STB will:

- Deliver high quality programs that raise awareness of vocational and applied learning pathways
- Engage with Barwon region community and industry leaders to build confidence in the quality and value of vocational education and training
- Work within The Gordon TAFE to raise the profile of VET pathways to sustainable work and careers
- Collaborate with industry and community to understand challenges and inform place-based program and broader system design.

Actions:

- Deliver the Geelong Tertiary Futures Program as a flagship program for regional secondary schools
- Develop and implement a stakeholder communication and engagement plan to promote the value of VET and VET pathways
- Co-design and contribute to the School-Industry Roundtables (SIRT) in Barwon region
- Promote other regional programs which contribute to increasing the profile of VET pathways opportunities.

Outcomes:

- Students have the confidence to pursue vocational and/or career pathways
- Students continue to engage in school and complete a secondary certificate
- Students have improved knowledge of a range of vocational pathways.

Long term:

- There are increased levels of participation in vocational education and training within the region
- Students experience continuity (connected pathways) in vocational and training pathways
- Strong public confidence that vocational education will lead to sustainable and decent employment.

OBJECTIVE THREE

Driver: Early school leavers face greater challenges in transitioning to sustainable and decent work.

Objective: Raise awareness of career pathways to foster student aspiration and confidence.

Strategy: STB will work to raise awareness of vocational and career pathways to allow students to make informed choices about their current and future study by:

- Illuminating pathways into new and emerging careers and industries for students and teachers
- Increasing exposure opportunities for students and teachers to experience a variety of industries to foster student aspiration
- Assist teachers and students to understand the changing economic profile and skills required for future work.

Actions:

- Collaborate with regional stakeholders to hold a regional Apprenticeship and Traineeship forum
- Work with The Gordon to provide improved VET Pathways resources and information for use by schools, teachers and individuals
- Provide personal development for teachers and funding for casual relief teachers to allow teachers to accompany students to WoW and STEM Manufacturing Futures Programs.

Outcomes:

- Students have the confidence to pursue vocational and/or career pathways
- Students have aspirations for further study and/or their working future
- Students engage in school and complete a secondary certificate
- Students experience continuity (connected pathways) in vocational and training pathways.

Long term:

- Students make a successful transition from education and training to work
- There are increased levels of participation in vocational education and training within the region.



OBJECTIVE FOUR

Driver: Inequities exist (particularly in under-resourced cohorts) in accessing exposure to the world of work.

Objective: Facilitate regional collaboration between school, community and industry to reduce barriers to participation.

Strategy: STB will work closely with schools, community groups and other supports to understand the barriers that students face in accessing exposure to the world of work by:

- Building strong partnerships with students and schools
- Delivering programs that provide equal access to exposure to the world of work, understanding that some students face barriers to accessing work experience
- Reducing barriers such as transport, communication and information.

Actions:

- Develop and deliver the World of Work (WoW Program) in targeted industries and provide access to the program across the region
- Provide assistance to schools, students and teachers to overcome barriers to accessing programs, including: travel, CRT and blended learning options
- Explore further opportunities to increase access and participation in consultation with stakeholders.

Outcomes:

- Students have aspirations for further study and/or their working future
- Students engage in school and complete a secondary certificate.

Long term:

- Reduce entrenched intergenerational disadvantage.

OBJECTIVE FIVE

Driver: Industry reports that students lack the skills required to successfully transition to work.

Objective: Utilise an evidence base and share findings from community consultation to inform program design and advocacy.

Strategy: STB will work in partnership with schools to understand and provide students with the skills required to successfully transition to work by:

- Delivering the Geelong Tertiary Futures Program which includes a WorkSkills component, providing students with accredited studies in employability skills (specifically Communication and Occupational Health and Safety)
- Working with key regional stakeholders including the Geelong Region Local Learning Network and the Skills and Jobs Centre to align programs with school and industry needs.

Actions:

- Conduct further resource development to enhance the WorkSkills units of the Geelong Tertiary Futures Program including exploring the use of digital badges and contextualised industry information
- Participate in and contribute to regional networks, forums and events to inform the community regarding changes in the education ecosystem and share learnings from program delivery.

Outcomes:

- Students demonstrate capacity to apply knowledge and skills in work situations.

Long term:

- Students make a successful transition from education and training to work
- Students have the skills they need to move successfully into further training or work
- Vocational education meets regional needs and priorities.



OBJECTIVE SIX

Driver: A diverse and rapidly changing economy, coupled with Industry 4.0 requires higher levels of skills and training.

Objective: Prepare students to develop 21st century skills for the contemporary workforce.

Strategy: STB will work to raise teacher capability in developing 21st century skills by:

- Fostering strong regional representation and attendance at the STEMEd Conference
- Working with Deakin University to encourage greater participation in STEM in both primary and secondary schools
- Collaborating with the Geelong Tech School to promote and increase engagement with professional development opportunities for teachers.

Actions:

- Deliver programs that develop 21st Century skills for students and teachers such as the D-Tech Skills Builder, STEM and Entrepreneurship programs and developing new pathways into new and emerging industries
- Support teacher engagement with professional development through the provision of scholarships to attend the STEMEd Conference and CRT for targeted professional development.

Outcomes:

- Teachers have improved capacity in teaching in growth areas including 21st Century Skills
- Students have the capacity and skills for work situations.

Long term:

- All Victorians develop knowledge, skills and attributes needed now and for jobs of the future
- The Barwon region has a thriving regional economy.

OBJECTIVE SEVEN

Objective: STB operations are sustainable and well governed.

Strategy: STB will work to achieve operational sustainability and good governance through:

- An effective Advisory Board and Executive Committee with consistent and quality reporting
- A well maintained risk and issues register (Attachment 5)
- Comply with The Gordon TAFE policies and procedures regarding HR and OHS
- Contracts and MoUs will be in place with partners and stakeholders.

Actions:

- Manage the budget and forecast expenditure within the funding allocation
- Manage contractual and partnership arrangements through contracts and MoUs as appropriate
- Manage the STB program in line with The Gordon's operational policies and procedures.

Outcomes:

- STB operates effectively, safely and within budget
- Staff are appropriately trained and skilled
- Project partners deliver effectively.



PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

Since inception, the STB program has been overseen by strong governance and a robust performance measurement framework that was refreshed for this current stage of delivery.

The current Performance Measurement Framework has been developed in consultation with DE to measure and track the performance of STB activities and initiatives. The framework includes key performance indicators, objectives, targets and evidence to allow DE, the Executive Committee and the Advisory Board to monitor progress on an ongoing basis and make informed decisions.

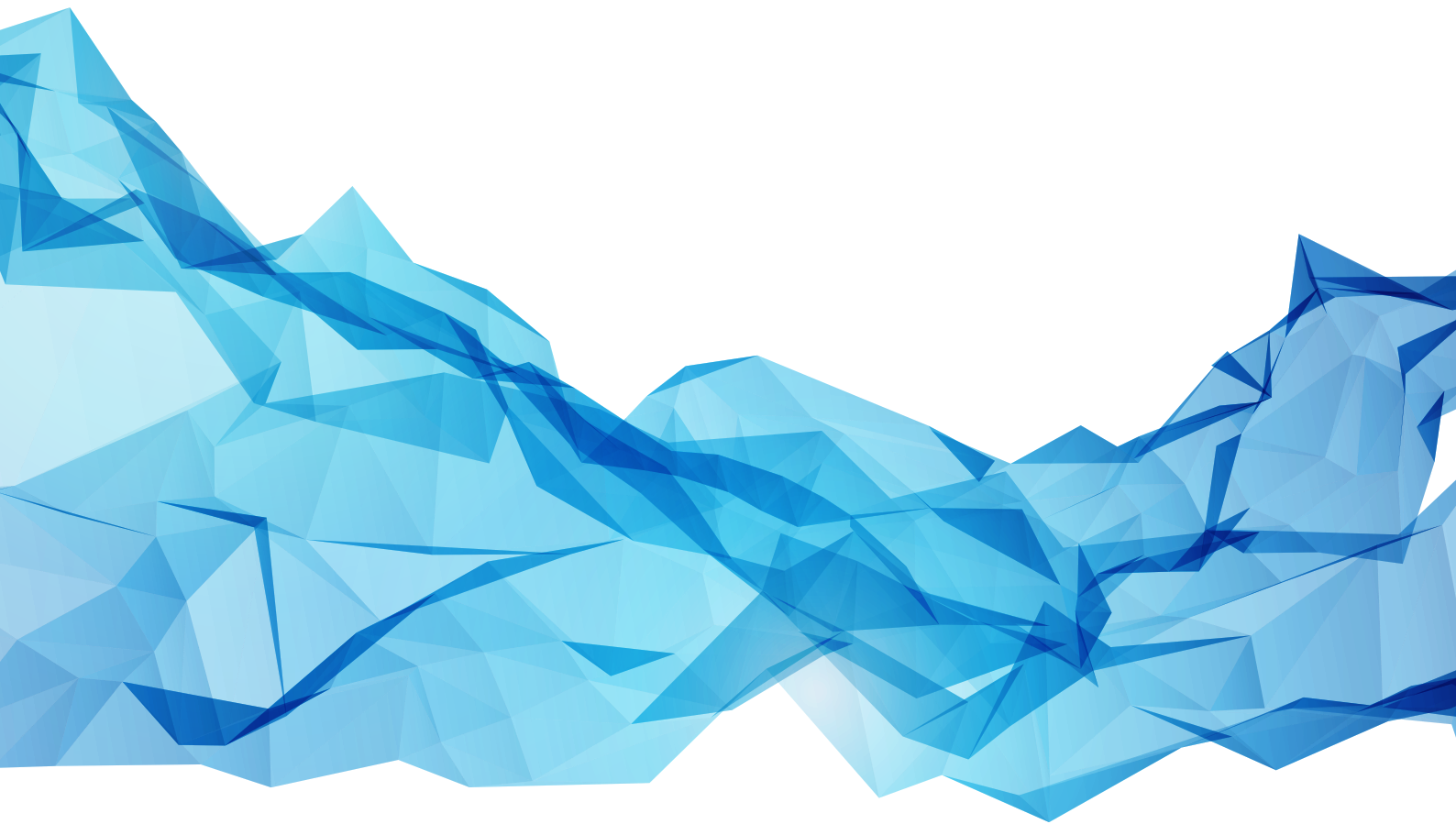
STB will report on each performance measure quarterly (or annually as noted) for each initiative, assessing them against targets and budgetary goals. For all initiatives, quarterly progress reports are produced including an assessment of risks potentially impacting initiative outcomes supported by mitigation intervention strategies as required.

STB initiatives and programs are also supported by their own steering committees, comprised of industry and/or program stakeholders to advise on program delivery. Delivery partners for individual project initiatives are monitored by STB in accordance with contractual obligations established within specific funding agreements aligned with the Performance Measurement Framework.

EVALUATION

In 2022, STB engaged Management Governance Australia (MGA) to conduct an interim evaluation of the Education and Pathways Initiative. The interim evaluation assessed the current performance of STB towards its overall purpose and objectives. MGA undertook a literature review, data analysis and consulted with key stakeholders to evaluate the program implementation in 2022. It mapped the inputs, outputs and outcomes to the Program Logic and Evaluation Framework.

The report confirmed that the Education and Pathways Initiative is delivering on STB's Strategic Purpose. It spoke of how STB purposefully aligns with the Firth Review, the new VCE and the Regional Skills Plan, ensuring that there is a focus on providing meaningful immersion experiences in industries of regional significance including new and emerging industries. STB has adopted an intersecting role connecting schools, higher education, industry and external providers and influences system level change. The evaluation highlighted STB's ability to provide a consistent, adaptable and flexible approach to working with schools and its response to the pathway needs of highly vulnerable young people.



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