



Bendigo Kangan Institute: Submission to *Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy*

Bendigo Kangan Institute (BKI) welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy.

We support the Draft Strategy's explicit recognition in Recommendation 4 of the critical role TAFE plays in skilling Victoria's communities for a stronger economy, focused on Melbourne's growth areas and regional centres.

By 2026, nine out of ten new jobs will require a post-school education and 81 of the top 100 largest growing occupations are attainable via a TAFE education¹. Our TAFE system is central to ensuring Victorians have access to high-quality education and training, equipping them with the skills needed for a rapidly changing workforce.

BKI is an integrated skills provider that brings together education, assessment and learning.

We are a Victorian Government TAFE and a member of the Victorian TAFE Network. BKI brings together Bendigo TAFE, Kangan Institute, VETASSESS and eWorks, to connect people and industries with the transformative power of education and careers. Through this, we transform lives, strengthen communities, empower workforces, and support industries to grow and thrive.

BKI:

- Operates nine (9) TAFE campuses, including three (3) Centres of Excellence, in automotive, health and community, and food and fibre
- Operates two Indigenous Education Centres in Broadmeadows and Bendigo
- Delivers training across Victoria through our workplace delivery model
- Is the largest provider of education to Victoria's corrections facilities
- Delivers innovative vocational education and VCE programs for senior secondary
- Assesses and recognises skills for migrants from around the world
- Delivers training internationally through partnerships with overseas training institutes

BKI supports Recommendation 4: Expand TAFE in Melbourne's growth areas and some large regional centres, to train students to fill skills gaps, especially in construction, energy and health

Australia is facing unprecedented workforce demand, leading to a once-in-a-generation transformation of the Vocational Education and Training sector. Expanding access to high-quality vocational education in growth areas is essential to meeting current and future workforce needs.

BKI strongly supports sustainable investment in TAFE infrastructure, focused on Victoria's fastest growing regions. BKI's campuses are situated areas of rapid or sustained population

¹ TAFE Value and Perception Challenge (research report), page 9

growth, including Melbourne’s Northern Growth Corridor, Bendigo and the Loddon Campaspe region, and a new campus in development at Melton in Melbourne’s Western Growth Corridor.

In recent years, BKI has increased our footprint in these areas and improved participation rates in education and training and in skills assessment and recognition.

BKI has delivered new capital works on time and on budget, including

- \$65m Bendigo City Campus redevelopment
- \$23m Bendigo City Health and Community Centre of Excellence
- \$60m Broadmeadows Health and Community Centre of Excellence
- \$4m Castlemaine Community Health and Learning Hub (embedded in industry)
- \$2m self-funded capital uplifts including health/nursing at Essendon
- \$1m self-funded veterinary nursing clinic at Broadmeadows

Bendigo

Bendigo TAFE is the “anchor” TAFE for Greater Bendigo and the Loddon Campaspe region and has served the regional community for over 150 years. Around 8,000 students’ study at our two Bendigo campuses, with smaller numbers in Castlemaine and Echuca. Bendigo TAFE is the major provider of apprenticeship training in the Loddon Campaspe, having graduated some 4,500 apprentices since 2019. Bendigo anticipates sustained population growth, requiring increased delivery in critical areas such as housing, health and community services.

Regional Victorian TAFEs suffer from underinvestment in trades training facilities. Our Charleston Road Campus in Bendigo East is running at full student capacity in ageing facilities. BKI is the lead partner for the Bendigo East Urban Renewal Precinct, which is funded to Master Plan Stage to activate 5 hectares of land in Bendigo East. Wider precinct developments extend to key worker housing and upgrades of existing sports and recreational facilities.

BKI estimates it will require \$60m to revitalise the Charleston Road campus to develop Bendigo as a leading multi-trade hub for the transition of training to meet the needs of the housing sector and clean economy.

BKI recommends:

- 1. Explicit nomination of the Charleston Road Campus redevelopment for a Clean Economy Centre of Excellence, including a multi-trade hub for construction and trades skill development.**

Broadmeadows

Broadmeadows and Melbourne’s Northern Growth Corridor is one of Victoria’s fastest growing regions, with the population expected to double by 2046, requiring significant uplift of investment in housing and social infrastructure and the training of more skilled workers in key growth sectors. Broadmeadows is one of Victoria’s youngest and most diverse communities – 51% are born overseas and the median age is 6 years below the Australian average. However, youth unemployment sits at 17%. By unlocking the latent talent in Broadmeadows and the Northern Growth Corridor, focused on young people and migrants of all ages, Victoria will benefit from a more secure skills pipeline and more prosperous communities.

BKI estimates \$300m is required to complete the transformation of the Broadmeadows Campus as the “anchor” education and training destination in Melbourne’s Northern Growth Corridor.

Stages 2 and 3 of the Strategic Asset Plan call for:

- A Foundations and Learning Centre,
- A new Indigenous Education Learning Centre,
- A Trades and Skills Centre of Excellence, open to industry and community, underpinning the region’s economic growth and social cohesion.

This redevelopment complements the \$65M Health and Community Centre of Excellence – already at capacity – and the new Hume Tech School. The Kangan Institute Masterplan also includes opportunities for land reuse for additional housing to support Victoria’s housing targets.

BKI is well placed to support the training needs of the Airport Rail Loop project, with our proximity to Melbourne Airport and key transport corridors. This location makes it easy for students and industry partners to access our training facilities. BKI also brings strong experience in delivering industry specific training, helping to develop the skilled workforce needed for large-scale projects like this.

BKI recommends:

- 2. Explicit nomination of the \$300m Broadmeadows Campus Redevelopment as a priority TAFE investment in Melbourne’s northern corridor.**
- 3. Explicit nomination of BKI as the local training provider for Melbourne Airport Rail.**

Maintenance

BKI has been entrusted with delivering new TAFE campuses in Broadmeadows, Castlemaine, Sunbury, and Melton. While capital investment is supplied by the government, BKI will incur significant operating and maintenance costs over the next five years without commensurate funding.

BKI’s newly completed Health and Community Centre of Excellence (Broadmeadows) will increase our physical footprint by 27% and is projected to drive a 17% growth in student numbers by 2030. Future funding rates have not accounted for the additional costs of maintaining these state-of-the-art facilities or supporting increased student enrolments.

BKI recommends:

- 4. Require government to explicitly fund a proportionate increase to the TAFE Services Fund to support new building operations.**

Innovative Delivery Models

BKI implements flexible, responsive education delivery models using its physical and digital infrastructure. Some useful models include:

- a) Universities Accord partnership

In our new Health and Community Centre of Excellence at Broadmeadows, BKI has a newly formed partnership with La Trobe University under the Universities Accord, supporting pathways between vocational and higher education. This collaboration enables students to transition from TAFE courses into university degrees, particularly in health, business, and emerging industries. By aligning skills training with university education, we enhance employment outcomes and workforce readiness in key sectors. Additional opportunities include reimagining the role of TAFE in partnering with universities for applied research, and taking a joined-up approach remote, rural and offshore delivery.

b) Industry-embedded delivery

Increasingly, BKI seeks to partner with industry to provide delivery within workplaces and we are currently Victoria's largest provider of workplace delivery, allowing students to gain skills while embedded in industry. An example is our \$4m TAFE co-located at Dhelkaya Health hospital in Castlemaine, which provides education within hospitals.

c) Study Hubs

Study Hubs will play an increasing role in supporting students, particularly in inner and outer regional areas. These hubs enable blended learning and provide access to TAFE courses in locations where traditional campus-based study may not be feasible.

BKI supports the activation of highly localised solutions for smaller regional communities to better access education and employment.

BKI recommends

- 5. Recognise the policy direction of the Universities Accord as a mechanism to harmonise tertiary education with the potential of reimagining colocation.**
- 6. Explicit recognition that some vocational education can be co-located and delivered in workplace settings (e.g. hospitals and industry) to delivery industry specific training and potentially reduce Victoria's infrastructure burden.**
- 7. Increased investment in regional and suburban Study Hubs to provide flexible, blended learning options for students who cannot attend campus.**
- 8. Explicit nomination of a Study Hub for the Cobblebank Metropolitan Activity Centre, collocated at BKIs new TAFE campus.**

BKI supports Recommendation 11: Extend Metropolitan trains and run more services in Melbourne's west

BKI supports Recommendation 12: Run more bus and coach services in regional Victoria

BKI strongly supports the extension and electrification of the train line to Melton, including Cobblebank – the home of our new TAFE campus. Additionally, better bus and coach services between regional centres, with stops at public TAFEs, will help expand opportunities for regional students.

BKI supports recommendation 19. Invest in digital healthcare

BKI invests in simulation and AI-enhanced learning. By investing in the latest learning and teaching practices and technologies, our students are better prepared for the jobs of the future.

BKI recommends:

- 9. That investments in digital healthcare include concomitant investment in the training infrastructure to build the pipeline of digitally capable healthcare workers, including targeted investments in TAFE.**

BKI Supports Recommendation 23. Fund better health and wellbeing infrastructure for Aboriginal Victorians

BKI operates on the ancestral lands of the Gunung-Willam-Balluk, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Djaara, Wollithiga, and Gunaikurnai peoples. Our Indigenous Engagement Centres (IEC) at Broadmeadows and Bendigo provide vital support to around 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, yet completion rates remain low at 35%.

The funding envelope for the new Cobblebank Campus does not include an Indigenous Engagement Centre. Establishing a centre in Cobblebank is essential to addressing the needs of the area's growing and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

BKI recommends:

- 10. Explicit nomination of a \$5m Indigenous Engagement Centre at the new Kangan Institute Cobblebank Campus.**

BKI remains committed to working with Infrastructure Victoria to ensure that Victoria's TAFE system continues to provide world-class skills, training, and pathways to employment for all Victorians.

Summary Recommendations

1. Explicit nomination of the Charleston Road Campus redevelopment for a Clean Economy Centre of Excellence, including a multi-trade hub for construction and trades skill development.
 2. Explicit nomination of the \$300m Broadmeadows Campus Redevelopment as a priority TAFE investment in Melbourne's northern corridor.
 3. Explicit nomination of BKI as the local training provider for Melbourne Airport Rail.
 4. Require government to explicitly fund a proportionate increase to the TAFE Services Fund to support new building operations.
 5. Recognise the policy direction of the Universities Accord as a mechanism to harmonise tertiary education with the potential of reimagining colocation.
 6. Explicit recognition that some vocational education can be co-located and delivered in workplace settings (e.g. hospitals and industry) to delivery industry specific training and potentially reduce Victoria's infrastructure burden.
 7. Increased investment in regional and suburban Study Hubs to provide flexible, blended learning options for students who cannot attend campus.
 8. Explicit nomination of a Study Hub for the Cobblebank Metropolitan Activity Centre, collocated at BKIs new TAFE campus.
 9. That investments in digital healthcare include concomitant investment in the training infrastructure to build the pipeline of digitally capable healthcare workers, including targeted investments in TAFE.
 10. Explicit nomination of a \$5m Indigenous Engagement Centre at the new Kangan Institute Cobblebank Campus.
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