



Passions & Pathways

Schools & Industry
Switching on Potential

Passions & Pathways is the only evidence-based, curriculum-aligned primary school careers learning program in Victoria, developing student self-knowledge, confidence, and aspiration for future pathways. Through diverse, hands-on experiences with local businesses, Passions & Pathways engages students in their final years of primary school in a journey of self-exploration.



GoldfieldsIlen
connecting young people
to positive futures

Welcome to Passions & Pathways!

Message from Dave Burton, Goldfields LLEN Executive Officer & Lena Mitchell, Passions & Pathways Program Manager

Starting career related learning early is important.

Research shows early intervention has a lasting impact on what children think they are capable of doing, how positive they are about their futures, and their capacity to network with others.¹ This helps them to connect what they are learning in school to real-world situations and see how education helps them succeed.¹³

In primary school, careers education is about helping children develop a healthy sense of self (*who am I?*), giving them a chance to explore exciting possibilities (*what does the world of work look like?*), and helping them understand who they could become (*what could I do?*), so they can reach their full potential.²

It is not about getting children to choose a specific job (many will end up in jobs that do not even exist yet!) or the practical aspects of work or job seeking.³

Passions & Pathways provides schools with training, curriculum, and support to run a 10-week subject in year 5/6, to give students exposure to the world of work through an exciting journey of in-class workshops, workplace visits, hands-on learning experience, and talks with people who work in industry. We celebrate the end of the program with a public exhibition in each region, to share what the students have learned with their families and community.

In 2022 as part of the program, we took 374 students from 8 primary schools across our region on our *Careers Roadshow*. Over 30 businesses opened their doors, giving students opportunities to take the driver's seat in heavy machinery, find germs with UV lights, feel clay and watch pots thrown, lay bricks, observe large-scale engineering robots, and much, much more.

Evaluation shows that *Passions & Pathways* increases young people's aspiration and understanding of the importance of school. It also makes them excited for their

¹ NSW Government (2014) *The Case for Career-Related Learning in Primary Schools*. Department of Education and Communities: Sydney.

² Kashefpakdel E, Rehill J & Hughes D (2018) [What works? Careers-related education in primary schools](#). The Careers and Enterprise Company.

³ NSW Government (2014) *The Case for Career-Related Learning in Primary Schools*. Department of Education and Communities: Sydney.

futures. A recent OECD review of the global literature has found that experiences that increase aspiration early are vital for young people's success in the labour market. ⁴

Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) is a not-for-profit organisation, directed by a Board of community leaders, that bring together partners and their resources to address the challenges that face young people to successfully transition from school to work in local economies.

Passions & Pathways has been proudly developed by community education experts in our region.

"The whole community benefits when young people are given opportunities to become engaged citizens who find a job/career they love."

- P&P Business Partner

The need for early careers learning

Ensuring every child reaches their potential

Research shows that to build successful careers, young people need a sense of who they are, and excitement about what they could become.⁵ Having aspiration impacts on the effort children put in in school, the subjects they choose, and ultimately the jobs they will end up doing.

Developing aspiration starts early, before a child goes to school. It develops by watching family members and their friends in their jobs, and hearing the attitudes they have about work. These early introductions to the idea of work begin to shape how broad the bandwidth is for a young person's aspirations.

"By certain ages children begin eliminating potential careers, jobs and interests based on who they perceive themselves to be. As a result, children may limit their educational and occupational choices".⁵

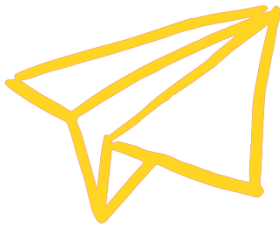
Low expectations can inadvertently be formed, and possibilities about what a child can do limited, if families and communities have:

⁴ Mann A, Denis V & Percy C (2020) *OECD Education Working Papers No. 241 Career ready? How schools can better prepare young people for working life in the era of COVID-19.*

⁵ Kashefpakdel E, Rehill J & Hughes D (2018) [What works? Careers-related education in primary schools.](#) The Careers and Enterprise Company.

- » little access to knowledge about changes happening in the economy and therefore the real opportunities that are available,
- » fewer employed people around households to model jobs
 - 26% of children and young people under 16 live in low-income welfare dependent families
 - Incomes under \$37,378 p.a. in receipt of the either solely or largely dependent on government for their income, 2017⁷ and/or
- » social norms and attitudes that perpetuate stereotypes, such as 'girls/boys can't do ...' or 'vocational pathways are not as good as university'.

In 2022, we analysed the interests nominated on avatars 330 young people made of themselves in the Bendigo, Mt Alexander and Central Goldfields regions. We found:



"While young people at this age still have broad interests, they are already gendered, with boys more likely to be interested in technology and physical activity (despite as many girls saying they were good at technology), and girls more likely to be interested in caring and creative activities.

- P&P Evaluation 2022

The costs are significant

The costs of curtailed aspiration and disengagement from school are high.

For young people who leave school early:

- » In our region 17% of 15-19 year-olds are disengaged from learning and earning, with 7% fully disengaged (2016).⁸ That figure has increased over COVID-19.⁶ Australian research has shown that every year of school lost past Year 10 subtracts 10 per cent from their lifetime earnings.⁷
- » The deficit of education is difficult to overcome. An international review has shown that post school labour market interventions do not fully compensate for the transferable knowledge/skills acquired earlier in the education system.⁸

⁶ VicLLENs schools survey 2020 and 2021 unpublished data.

⁷ Leigh A & Ryan C (2008) Estimating returns to education using different natural experiment techniques. *Economics of Education Review*. 27: 149-1560. ANU: Canberra.

⁸ International Labour Office (2016) *Interventions to Improve Labour Market Outcomes of Youth: A Systematic Review*: ILO: Geneva.

- » Even when young people go on to higher education, many do so without certainty about the decision or pathway⁹, leading to costly dropouts. 23% of university, and 45% of non-university, higher education students do not complete their qualification (with 7% and 20% respectively dropping out after their first year).¹⁰

The costs to government are also substantial:

- » A NSW study has shown the cost to State and Federal government of servicing the 1,000 most vulnerable children and young people to the age of 40 (\$2.5M), mainly in welfare support and health care, is 15.9 times higher than that for the total under 25-year-old population (\$143k).¹¹
- » Any given yearly cohort of students leaving early contribute to a lifetime social loss of \$23.2 billion, mostly related to lower earnings, but also costs of crime and marginal tax burden. The lifetime economic cost to Australian governments or the taxpayer is \$12.6 billion.¹²



The Solution: Passions & Pathways

Passions and Pathways is a program (described in ‘*The program details*’ below) that supports primary school (year 5/6) teachers to run a 10-week subject of two-hour sessions with the support of a Goldfields LLEN Facilitators. It gives students in their last years of primary school exposure to the world of work through an exciting journey of in-class workshops, workplace visits, hands-on learning experiences, and talks with employers and Young Industry Ambassadors. Students also do an entrepreneurial

⁹ Norton A & Cherastidtham I (2019) *Risks and rewards: when is vocational education a good alternative to higher education?* Grattan Institute.

¹⁰ Australian Government. Completion rates of higher education students data. (2020).

¹¹ Taylor Fry (2018) *Forecasting Future Outcomes. Stronger Communities Investment Unit — 2018 Insights Report*. NSW Government: Sydney.

¹² Lamb S, Jackson J, Walstab A & Huo S (2105) *Educational opportunity in Australia 2015: Who succeeds and who misses out*. Mitchell Institute: Melbourne

project with a local business, and we finish the course with an expo/celebration to share what they have learned with their families and community.

Our objectives

Our objectives are:

- » To ensure all year 6 primary school students in our target schools are:
 - engaged, aspiring and excited about their futures
 - see the value of education and participation in enabling their achievement and success in school, life and work, because:
 - they better understand who they are and what interests them
 - have met employers and explored interesting work possibilities and environments
 - are not limiting the possibilities because of social norms and attitudes.
- » To build the capability of primary school teachers and school leadership in our target schools to deliver career related learning.
- » To create connections between schools and the wide range of employers, businesses and Young Industry Ambassadors in our region so schools can deliver engaging and authentic real word experiences for students.

Our principles

Careers learning needs to:

1. **Start early**
2. **Involve age-appropriate activities and play**
3. **Be open to all**
4. **Involve employers, employees and businesses so young people hear authentic information**
5. **Be embedded across curriculum to reinforces how learning across subjects relates to the real world.**¹³

¹³ Kashhefpakdel E, Rehill J & Hughes D (2018) [What works? Careers-related education in primary schools](#). The Careers and Enterprise Company.

Our Success

Passions and Pathways is a rewarding experience for the businesses that open up their workplaces, teachers who deliver the program, and the students that participate.

In 2022, *Passions a Pathways* impacted:

374 Students



9 Schools



17 Teachers



52 Businesses



Surveyed P&P businesses:

100% would recommend it to other businesses/industries

94% reported it was beneficial to their organisation

94% reported it created enthusiasm amongst staff

"Sharing our work was extremely rewarding for staff. Students brought energy and enthusiasm to our workplace. We were reminded of what we love about our industry."

Teachers who delivered the curriculum:

100% reported they enjoyed teaching it

100% reported it increased student's knowledge of work possibilities

91% reported it helped students define their skills and interests

82% reported it increased student's aspiration

73% it challenged gendered views of job possibilities.

"For a lot of our students, transitions into high school can be difficult, but this has given them motivation to stay in school. Already they are like... "I want to go to TAFE, I want to go to Uni, so I need to stay in school". They haven't had that mindset before."

What makes us unique

Our program is unique because it:

- » Is the only evidence based, best practice, curriculum aligned, careers learning program for primary school in Victoria
- » Is a substantial program (not a single workshop) and works with schools year-on-year
- » Utilises the extensive network of the LLEN to provide a rich menu of work contacts, experiences, practices and resources, for schools to draw on
- » Has been built by the community, from an identified community need, and a collective commitment to address intergenerational disadvantage in our region
- » Is flexible and can adapt and respond to changes in our local economy (both long term restructuring and short-term shocks like COVID-19) to provide young people with the best information about opportunities for their future
- » Has a track record and is sustainable and scalable to other areas.



The program details

Professional Development

Principals and teachers who will be directly delivering *Passions & Pathways* to Year 5/6 students undertake a full day Professional Development workshop where they meet the Facilitator, the businesses involved in the entrepreneurial project and learn how to teach the course (the curriculum, the timeline, and activities, and what outcomes we expect).

We also run a shorter interactive induction session with all teachers to let them know about the careers learning that will be happening in the school and talk about incorporating real life learning across all subjects.

Online resources and support

Passions & Pathways teachers are supported by online resources including:

- » A library of workplace videos and classroom activities
- » Links for other professional development and careers advisor courses
- » Cross curriculum ideas and resources.

We have also established a Facebook page for teachers to exchange info and support.

Curriculum

The curriculum components include:

- » **Personal Avatar:** students explore themselves and create a picture of themselves (avatar), surrounded by colours and words that represent their skills and interests.
- » **Weekly in-class curriculum-linked lessons:** classroom teachers guide students through their learning journey (weekly two-hour lessons) linked to the Victorian Curriculum and the Australian Blueprint for Careers Development.
- » **Working with trained Young Industry Ambassadors** on communication, goals, and aspirations.

- » **A Roadshow** of businesses that open their doors to showcase possibilities, including taster workshops at TAFE/University to understand what higher education might be like.
- » **An entrepreneurial** inquiry-based learning project involving a real business and community solving a community challenge. Students will get project roles that match their Avatars (for example, creating a community corner library service).
- » **An expo** to showcase learnings to families, their host businesses and the community.





Our partners 2022

2022 Schools

City of Greater Bendigo

Eaglehawk Primary School
Heathcote Primary School
Lightning Reef Primary School
Specimen Hill Primary School
St Peter's Primary School (CEO)
California Gully Primary School

Mt Alexander Shire

Campbells Creek Primary School
Newstead Primary School

Central Goldfields Shire

Maryborough Education Centre

2022 Local businesses

Bendigo Region

Australian Turntables
Bendigo Art Gallery
Bendigo Botanic Gardens
Bendigo Livestock
Exchange
Bendigo Pottery
Bendigo TAFE
Bendigo Tech School
Bunnings Epsom
Bunnings Kangaroo Flat
Delecca's
Discovery Science &
Technology Centre
Elders
Flora Hill Quality Meats
Hebron Films
Hofmann Engineering
Jenny's Early Learning
Centre
Jools for Jim
Lansell Homes
La Trobe Art Institute

La Trobe Rural School of
Health
Loddon Plains Landcare
Network
Monash Rural Health School
Motherson Elastomers
Munari Wines
Strategem
Victoria Police

Central Goldfields Region

Central Goldfields Art Gallery
Central Goldfields Shire
Council
Go Goldfields
Maryborough District Health
Service
The Nest
True Foods
Victoria Police

Mt Alexander Region

Fire Bean Coffee
Goldfields Library
Corporation
HALT
Lot 19
Main FM
Mount Alexander Shire
Council
Mount Alexander Timber
and Hardware
Museum Makers
Newstead Kinder
Pud for all Seasons
Punctum Productions
Yarrabee & Castlemaine
Stone
Youth Take Over



Contact us!



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