



Futureproofing farming

Employment pathways
into Agriculture

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands of Cardinia Shire, the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people.

We value and respect the deep and continued cultural connection and care for the land, waters and environment and recognise that Indigenous land management practices are sustainable and help build resilience to a changing climate.



Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	2	So, you're ready to apply for jobs?.....	17
Contents	3	Additional resources and support	18
Introduction.....	4	Acknowledgment and partner contributions	20
A snapshot of Cardinia Shire's agricultural workforce.....	5		
Pathways into farming and agricultural careers.....	6		
Are you thinking about a job in farming?	7		
Connect with farmers and the local food system	8		
What is it like to study and work in agriculture?	10		
Let's explore your education and training pathways into agriculture	12		
Finding a tertiary education provider	14		



Introduction

Cardinia Shire has a rich and diverse agricultural industry. Connecting young people with interesting and rewarding local jobs in the sector is one way to support a thriving local food system, now and for the future.

This toolkit is a comprehensive resource for young people, their families and school community, to learn about Cardinia's local agricultural sector and the opportunities for young people to learn, study or work locally.

A snapshot of Cardinia Shire's agricultural workforce

Local jobs in one of Victoria's major food bowls

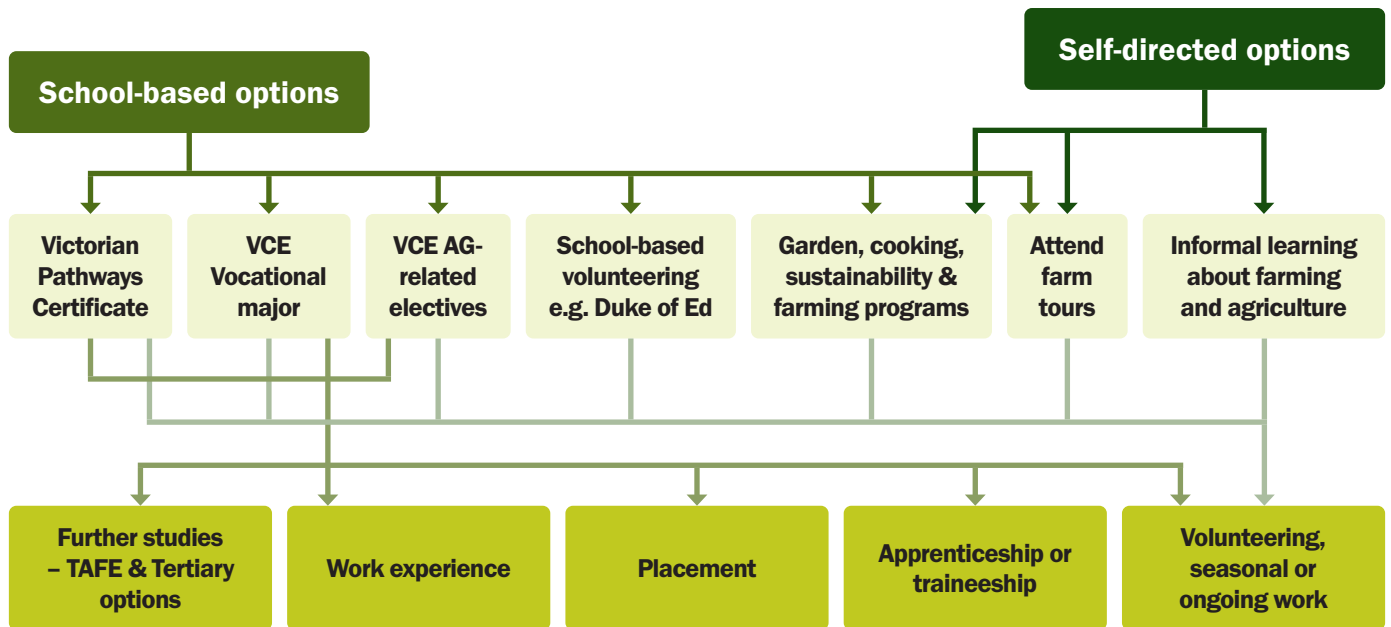


Note: These statistics are accurate as at January 2025. Source: [Economy.id.com.au/cardinia](https://economy.id.com.au/cardinia)

Pathways into farming and agricultural careers

So you're interested in learning about farming and agriculture, but wondering where to start? There are so many opportunities to learn and train in agriculture.

Check out the some of the local options available in Cardinia Shire.



More young people trained, experienced and working in...

<p>Farming e.g. agriculture, environment, conservation</p>	<p>Retail and hospitality e.g. markets, farm gates, Agri-tourism, cafes, farm supplies</p>	<p>Other growing options e.g. Horticulture in greenhouses, community gardens, vineyards</p>	<p>Other supporting industries e.g. AG-tech & IT, business management, accounting, marketing, agronomy, research, engineering and trades, animal care, teaching, local and state government</p>
---	---	--	--

Are you thinking about a job in farming?

Learn more about farming and the agricultural industry here!

Before enrolling in a course or applying for a job, you may want to learn more about farming and careers in agriculture. There are plenty of options for you to learn, connect and get involved in the local food and agricultural industry.

Bite-sized resources to listen, watch and read:



Meet farmers and young people working in Cardinia Shire through the **Futureproofing Farming** mini-documentary and video series



Learn more about some of Australia's largest agricultural industries on ABC's **Future Farmers** video series and discover how some of our food and drinks are produced



Listen to stories about local food and the people who grow it on the Mornington Peninsula, on the **'Behind the Farm Gate'** podcast



Watch **Virtual Reality** tours of Aussie Agrifarms



Watch the **"This is my job"** video series from Food & Fibre Gippsland



Connect with farmers and the local food system

- Do your family or friends work in farming? Go ahead and have a chat. Ask about how they got into the industry and the opportunities and the see for the future in farming.
- Find a local farm via the [Cardinia Farm and Food Directory](#), and consider a day out, to [‘Meet the Farmer’](#)
- Purchase food produce [directly from farms](#) and local markets such as:
 - [The Community Grocer](#), Pakenham, every Thursday 9am-1pm
 - Lakeside Market, Pakenham, third Sunday of the month, 10am – 2pm
 - Longwarry Fire Brigade Market, first Sunday of the month, 8am – 1pm
 - Upper Beaconsfield Village Market, annually in February
- Visit a local [community garden](#). Check out the Food From Home online directory which provides detailed information about how to find community gardens, what to expect, what’s on offer, and how to get involved.
- Attend careers exhibitions and events including:
 - [Cardinia Jobs and Skills Showcase](#)
 - [South East Careers & Try a Trade Expo](#)
 - [Pakenham Show](#), an agricultural and horticultural show held annually
 - [Farm World](#) held annually in Lardner
 - [Upcoming events at Federation University](#)
- Connect with people who work in the industry:
 - [Young Farmers Network](#) have podcasts and a Facebook group to connect with other young people interested or working in farming.
 - Local networks include [Cardinia Environmental Coalition](#) and [Victorian Farmers Federation – Cardinia branch](#)
 - Consider looking for a farming mentor through the [Cultivating Futures in Farming Mentor program](#)





If you're at school:

- Ask your careers counsellor and teachers about running farm tours and excursions:
 - [SELLEN](#) connects schools with local farmers currently offering farm tours
 - [Caldermeade Farm](#) offers school excursions
 - [Myuna Farm](#) run agricultural and sustainability education programs, available for years 7 – 12.
 - [CERES School of Nature and Climate](#) provides incursion and excursions, as well as curriculum linked lessons
 - [Farm My School Education Program](#) provide hands-on learning experiences to stimulate critical thinking about food growing, regenerative farming, sustainability, health and wellbeing
- Get involved in your school's gardening, cooking, farming or sustainability programs.
- Careers counsellors and teachers can hire [virtual reality headsets](#) from SELLEN, offering a fully immersive, interactive and multi-sensory experience of farming and other industries.

Teachers may also be interested in curriculum-aligned teaching materials available, including the Victorian Government's free [AgSTEM](#) education program, [Cool.org](#), [Meat and Livestock Australia](#), [Hort Innovation](#) and more.



What is it like to study and work in agriculture?

Agriculture, horticulture and agribusiness has a broad range of jobs. There are hands-on roles, as well as technical and research roles. If you're good at problem solving and enjoy working outdoors, this industry could be for you.

If you don't want to work on a farm or in a garden environment, there are other opportunities in the industry. There are jobs in wholesale and retail sales, transport and distribution, technology, finance or marketing. For example, you could work in retail, admin, engineering or technology for a business that makes or sells agricultural products.



Hear from young people and farmers in Cardinia Shire who are looking into the future of farming and young people



Watch young people and farmers in Cardinia Shire talk about the opportunities to grow your career in farming

There are many benefits to working in agriculture:

- Create strong connections with the land and local employers.
- Increase your independence, enjoy working with your hands and the wellbeing benefits of caring for land and animals.
- Be part of the ever-evolving agricultural industry, with more farms using [regenerative farming](#) and [Ag-Technology](#), leading to more sustainable and efficient farming practices.
- There is demand for workers across all qualification-levels, from certificate level to post-graduate university. Over 90% of people who complete VET agriculture, at a certificate II, III, IV and diploma have been employed¹.
- With great diversity in [roles in the industry](#), there are always opportunities for growth and change in your career.
- Access jobs closer to home, with 10 jobs available for every 7.5 residents trained in agriculture within the Cardinia Shire region².

¹ An Essential Ingredient: The Food Supply Chain Workforce. 2025. Jobs and Skills Australia

² National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2024. Compiled and presented in economy.id



Meet a local

Red Gem Potatoes and Packers is a fourth-generation family farm established in Gembrook as a packing house. Lachlan, Sales and Production Assistant, said that “farmers are the most trusted professionals in Australia, [and that] in farming you will be well regarded and well supported”.

“Potatoes are one of the most sustainable and productive foods” and Lachlan is using his skills to help the business move towards zero net emissions and innovative technology such as x-rays to spot imperfections.

There is great [diversity in roles](#) within the agriculture industry, across a variety of settings. Primary agricultural roles include:

- [Farmer/farm manager](#)
- [Harvest operator or supervisor](#)
- [Farmhand / worker](#)
- [Agronomist](#)
- [Grower](#)
- [Irrigationist](#)

There are many other jobs that support farmers and on-farm workers. Some secondary agricultural roles include:

- Mechanic
- Engineer
- Information technology
- Marketing
- Accountant
- Manager and HR
- Vet and animal care
- Warehousing
- Purchasing agent
- Research
- Truck driver
- Pilot/crop sprayer
- Arborist
- Shearer
- Brewer
- Retail assistant

These roles work across a variety of settings and include:

- Farms
- Farming supply shops
- Laboratories
- Nurseries
- Garden settings, including market gardens, greenhouses, farm gates
- Wineries
- Retail or market storefront
- Forestry and nature reserves
- Landscaping companies
- Processing facilities
- Wholesale outlets
- Product packaging and distribution facilities
- Related business and government departments and offices
- Related technology and manufacturing companies

Let's explore your education and training pathways into agriculture

There are a variety of education and training pathways within the agricultural industry, each of which provide opportunities for continuous learning and development.

School-based learning and work experience options

Talk to your teacher, careers advisor or contact [SELLEN](#) about the options for work experience or student placement while you study.

They can help you decide your school and career pathways. School-based training and work pathways, where employers can host students include:

	Work experience	Structured workplace learning (SWL)	School based apprenticeships or traineeships (SBATs)
Overview	A short-term placement with employers to provide insights into industry and the workplace	Integrates on-the-job experience with secondary study as part of VCE, VCE Vocational Major or the Victorian Pathways Certificate Find the VETSS courses offered in your school here	Combines part-time employment, school and training. For students over 15 yrs and enrolled in years 10, 11 or 12.
Student age	Generally, year 10	15+ years	15+ years
Duration	Up to 14 days per year	1 day per week for 20 weeks or block placement available	7 hours per week for duration of course
Student payment by host	Minimum \$5 per day	Minimum \$5 per day	At least minimum wage in relevant award / agreement
Host payment	None	None	Hiring and wage incentives for eligible courses
Training program providers and key contact	School to Work delivered locally by SELLEN	School to Work delivered locally by SELLEN	School to Work delivered locally by SELLEN Head Start is an alt program available in Government Schools

Explore local work experience and placement opportunities via the [School to Work](#) portal.

Frequently asked questions



What activities could I do during work experience or placement?

The employer who is supervising your placement will organise interesting, safe and hands-on activities. Depending on the season and the type of employer your placement is with, activities may include:

- Farm maintenance e.g. fencing, clearing and ground preparation, soil testing, irrigation
- Crop planting, growing, pruning, picking and harvesting
- Animal care e.g. feeding, watering, milking, birthing, tagging, shearing, herding and movement
- Crop processing and packaging
- Using AG-tech systems
- Use a variety of farming methods, including regenerative farming practices

Can I do my placement at any time of year? Is there anything to do in winter?

Many farms are seasonal, which means they have different types of work and higher amounts of work during specific seasons e.g. apple picking starts at the end of summer and asparagus harvests in Spring.

Here's an example of the various activities you could do in the different seasons:

Examples of seasonal farm tasks			
Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick & harvest produce • Feed hay to the animals • Fill water troughs • Maintain animal shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant seeds • Milk cows • Care for pet lambs • Maintain machinery after harvest season • Bail hay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fix fences • Crutch sheep • Plant trees • Extra feed for animals • Maintain animal shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick & harvest produce • Shear sheep • Water trees • Animal vaccinations • Lamb and calve birthing



Finding a tertiary education provider

There are many options for young people to enrol in courses related to the agricultural industry, outside of and beyond secondary school.

Local tertiary education providers:

Tertiary education provider	Location	Agribusiness-related courses available	Public transport options
Chisholm TAFE	Canbourne	Certificate III in Horticulture Certificate III in Landscape Construction	Train & connecting bus
TAFE Gippsland	Warragul	Certificate II, III, IV in Agriculture Certificate II, III in Animal Care	Train
Community College Gippsland	Pakenham	Certificate III in Horticulture	Train & bus

Current at January 2025

There are also study options for careers in industries that are critical to support the agricultural industry e.g. engineering, information technology, building and construction and more!

In fact, in 2021, 9% of local workers in agriculture had a tertiary qualification in engineering (primarily mechanical, electrical, manufacturing and automotive).

A further 8.3% has a degree in management and commerce (primarily business and accounting).³



Registered training organisations (RTO)

RTOs are training providers that offer nationally recognised Vocational Education and Training (VET) services as well as other short courses and learning opportunities. RTOs may provide training in a workplace or through simulation that replicates a workplace environment, resources and equipment.

Explore RTOs offering agricultural courses and other related courses, such as horticulture, animal care and laboratory skills [here](#)



Hear from local young people and farmers about their pathways to farming

When choosing the course and training provider that's right for you, consider:

- Locations of the tertiary education providers. There are many across Victoria and accessible via public transport.
- Your skill, interests and how you like to work. There are jobs available to work independently, or within a team, indoors or outdoors, locally or in jobs across Australia and the world. View the bullseye posters below to explore farming (and other) jobs according to your skills and interests:
 - [Do you enjoy or are you good at Environmental Science?](#)
 - [Do you enjoy or are you good at Metalwork and Engineering?](#)
 - [Do you enjoy or are you good at Rural Studies?](#)
 - [Do you enjoy or are you good at Geography?](#)

³ <https://economy.id.com.au/cardinia/workers-field-of-qualification?Indkey=23001>



Frequently asked questions

Further education can be expensive, are there options to make the course I'm looking at more affordable?

Many education providers offer support, making courses more affordable. Universities and TAFE providers are all different in scholarships, Government incentives and subsidies that they offer. It will take some research into each provider, but here are a few options to get you started:

- Currently, many TAFE qualifications and short courses have no tuition fee, as part of the [Victorian Government's Free TAFE program](#), including Certificate courses in Agriculture, Horticulture and Production Horticulture.
- [The TAFE and Training Line](#) is a Victorian Government service offering help and information about TAFE and training courses, qualifications and training providers, including subsidies.
- Go to your preferred university's website and search for terms like 'scholarships', 'grants', 'subsidies' or 'support to study'. For example, Federation University offers a variety of [scholarship options](#) that you might be eligible for.

So, you're ready to apply for jobs?

"When we're looking to hire someone, we're looking for someone who's motivated and willing to learn"

– Nick Russo,
Bellevue Orchard



If you are looking for a job, you can search and apply for jobs via:

- [Casey Cardinia Jobs](#) is a centralised hub for employment opportunities within the Casey Cardinia region. This one-stop-portal helps you find local jobs quickly and easily. This initiative is facilitated by the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council.
- [AgCAREERSTART](#) is a unique gap-year program providing young people with a paid job, training and development, not to mention the opportunity to build your networks within the agriculture industry.
- [Asuria](#) delivers the *Workforce Australia - Transition to Work* program, designed to help people who are not currently studying, aged 15-24 gain the skills, experience, and qualifications needed for a pathway into work or study.

In the program, participants receive intensive, pre-employment support to develop the right skills to get the job they want, connect with education or training, and connect with your local community with the support of an Asuria Youth Mentor.

Supporting you to apply for jobs

- Casey Cardinia Jobs portal job application [tips](#)
- Cardinia Business [Employment Resources](#) | [Cardinia Business](#) | [Creating Cardinia](#)
- [Myfuture](#) job seeker resources including resume templates
- SELLEN [resources](#) including interview skills, cover letter and resume writing and more
- [Workforce Australia](#) services and more information about pathways to employment.



Hear from young people and farmers in Cardinia about the opportunities for support

Additional resources and support

Cardinia Shire Youth Services have a range of [services, programs, events and activities](#) to support young people including the [My Place youth centre](#).

[YouthNav](#) is an interactive tool to explore the right job fit for you, and navigating how to get there! Designed by young people, for young people, the portal helps you understand, plan for and succeed in skills like getting a job, moving out of home, getting around, having a say and managing money.

[headspace](#) offer services to support young people with commencing and continuing work and study. They are available in-person, online and through their career mentor program. headspace Pakenham is located on the corner of Main St & McGregor Road, Pakenham.



Fair Work Australia (Australian Government) [YouTube video series](#), to help young workers get off to a good start in the workforce.

Support your wellbeing

Professional support can make a difference to your wellbeing or mental health

- [Headspace](#) supports young people with mental and physical health, alcohol and other drug services
- [Lifeline](#) is a free and confidential helpline to support you with mental and wellbeing
- [Beyond Blue](#) is a free mental health service to help you achieve your best possible mental health. There is a free phone helpline and online support

Financial support

- The [State Schools Relief](#) fund provides workwear and safety equipment for eligible students. Talk to your principal, vice principal or careers advisor about this fund.
- Financial support is also available for apprentices, [click here](#).

Support with finances

- [Money Smart](#) provides free advice on managing bills and debts
- [Centrelink – Services Australia](#) provides a free financial information service for everyone. You don't have to be claiming Centrelink benefits.

Transport

Young people can experience issues when travelling to work experience, student placement and employment. While this a complex and long-standing issue, the following links may be able to offer some support:

- [Getting around, Youth Nav](#) – explores a series of skills young people could use to help them navigate public transport and driving
- [Public Transport Victoria](#) – download the PTV app or use the website to identify public transport routes and plan your journey. This app gives live updates of disruptions to service and provides information about purchasing a myki travel card



Acknowledgment and partner contributions

Cardinia Shire offers a bountiful food and fibre industry. There are local jobs ready for range of skill sets and interest areas. Whether you're looking for a role that is hands-on and outdoors or opportunities to innovate in tech and trade. There is plenty of support ready to help you find the right role for you. Take the next step into agriculture today!

This resource was developed as part of the Futureproofing Farming project, funded through the VicHealth Local Government Partnership and led by Cardinia Shire Council. The project aims to connect local young people with local work experience and jobs in the agricultural industry through effective employment and education pathways, to support a resilient local food system.

This resource was developed in partnership with the following organisations:



Thank you to the following farms, nurseries and supporting industries for participating in the Futureproofing Farming project:

- Orchard End Farm
- United African Farm
- The Community Grocer
- Sherwood Park Orchard
- Bellevue Orchard
- Emily Hill Farm
- Victorian Livestock Exchange
- Future Seeds Nursery
- Thriving Foods Farm
- Galaxy Plant Nursery
- Cardinia Environment Coalition
- Pakenham Hydroponics
- Tarago Valley Organics
- Red Gem Potatoes
- National Food Institute
- Peppermint Ridge
- AgPath

Cardinia Shire Council

Customer Service Centre

20 Siding Avenue, Officer

Postal Address

PO Box 7 Pakenham 3810

Phone: 1300 787 624

Email: mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au

Web: www.cardinia.vic.gov.au

National Relay Service (NRS)

TTY: 133 677 (ask for 1300 787 624)

Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay):

1300 555 727 (ask for 1300 787 624)

Translator Interpretation Service

131 450 (ask for 1300 787 624)

