



INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY & JOBS



Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is committed to developing and incubating solutions that ensure an equitable transition to a more sustainable future.

Victorians produce 4 times the global average of greenhouse emissions.

1 in 3 young Australians are underemployed

Globally, Australia ranks 75 in women's economic participation.

The Australian economy has one of the highest standards of living in the world¹ and almost 30 years of uninterrupted growth². However, this relative success comes with increasingly alarming social and environmental costs. Economic development driven primarily by fossil fuels in advanced economies like Australia, has led to global climate change.

Australia is close to transgressing at least five of nine planetary boundaries³, is experiencing the collapse of 19 ecosystems⁴ and is going in the wrong direction on 23 of 52 Sustainable Development Goal indicators⁵. This is unsustainable and an urgent economic shift is needed to ensure a thriving future for people, place and planet.

The Foundation is working towards achieving the following outcomes:

- OUTCOME 1**
Relevant skills and capabilities, including social entrepreneurship, are increased.
- OUTCOME 2**
Quality jobs in clean, digital and caring industries are created for all job seekers.
- OUTCOME 3**
Enable our transition to an inclusive and sustainable economy that serves people and planet.

Does your organisation's work align with the outcomes of this Impact Area?

Learn about our grants at lmc.org.au/grants

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OUTCOME 1



Relevant skills and capabilities, including social entrepreneurship, are increased.

Skills mismatches and shortages are among the key obstacles to achieving an inclusive transition to a sustainable economy.

Australia is facing a critical shortage in skilled workers for both existing and emerging industries. The successful transition to a low carbon economy will only be possible through education and training systems that can provide the right skills for new entrants to the labour market and those workers re-skilling for new roles.

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is interested in the development of stronger links between skills and environmental policies, supporting education and training systems in tune with anticipated labour market shifts and building the skills needs for rapidly growing clean industries.

The Foundation's support is focused on:

- Projects and initiatives that prioritise 'next economy' skills and capabilities.
- Demonstration projects of wrap-around support that create clear pre-employment and training pathways and career exposure, particularly in clean industries.
- Community collaborations and industry partnerships for better transitions to work.
- Research to better understand the issues and inform policy advocacy that addresses the root causes and drivers and solutions to addressing the skills gap.

Challenge

Australia is facing a critical shortage in skilled workers for both existing and emerging industries. The National Skills Commission (NSC) has declared shortages in almost 20 per cent of 799 occupations, forecasting an additional 1.2 million workers will be needed to fill skill gaps across the economy by 2026.¹

The successful transition to a low carbon economy will only be possible by ensuring that workers are able to adapt and transfer from areas of decreasing employment to other industries and that human capital exists and is maximised to develop new industries.² Labour-intensive industries such as Health Care and Social Assistance are projected to make the largest contribution to employment growth up to 2025.¹ World Economic Forum research has identified the emergence of a technology driven 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' which is transforming the nature of work. Education systems have not yet been designed to foster the types of skills and capabilities needed to navigate the complex environments and multiple careers being catalysed by climate and technological change. According to the National Skills Commission, 53 per cent of new jobs created in the next five years will require skill level 1 – equivalent to a university degree education.¹

However, there are worrying signs that many Australians are not participating in post-school education, and employer investment in skills training has declined.³ There is a causal effect between where someone grows up and their career and potential income - place matters most in the teenage years⁴. Across Greater Melbourne there is a correlation between skill level and relative advantage; lower-skill workers live in more disadvantaged suburbs.⁵

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) system is a pathway of choice for many socio-economically disadvantaged learners. However, in Victoria, enrolments of apprentices and trainees have fallen by 23.6 per cent⁶ despite projections that demand for skilled workers will continue to exceed demand for workers with university degrees.⁷ The recent review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training system recommended clearer secondary school pathways and greater access for Australians experiencing disadvantage.⁸

Many young people are being left behind, and this challenge will only intensify into the future.⁹ There is a growing body of international and national research that suggests young people are not adequately prepared for the rapidly changing nature of work. Capabilities such as collaboration, resilience and creativity, alongside communication and entrepreneurial skills, are increasingly being sought by employers. Analysis carried out by the Foundation for Young Australians found that since 2012 demand for digital skills has increased by more than 200 per cent, critical thinking by more than 150 per cent, creativity by more than 60 per cent and presentation skills by 25 per cent.¹⁰ Over the 20-year period to February 2020, before the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market, employment in STEM occupations grew by 85 per cent, or more than twice the rate of non-STEM occupations (which grew by 40.2 per cent).¹¹

Women's Economic Participation also needs to be addressed to respond to critical skill shortages. Since 2006, Australia has dropped from 13th to 70th in the World Economic Forum's gender equity scorecard on female economic participation. Additional women workers would not just be available to fill skill gaps in female dominated industries but could help address gaps across male dominated industries today and into the future.¹²

Australia has a rapidly ageing population, and many older workers and learners also face difficulties transitioning between industries. For older Australians, learning has the potential to extend working life, to assist in career transitions to more age-friendly job roles and to maintain health and wellbeing. However, opportunities for work-related learning and formal education reduce significantly beyond the age of 55, potentially leaving older workers vulnerable to early exit from the workforce. While there has been significant growth in internet use among senior Australians in recent years, there is still a very large group on the wrong side of the digital divide. Where older workers are offered training, it is likely to be skewed towards higher skilled workers.¹³

To access employment opportunities, the education and training system will need to provide the right skills for new entrants to the labour market and those workers re-skilling for new roles.¹⁴

Our Response

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is interested in the development of stronger links between skills and the jobs we need in the next economy (in the clean technology, waste recycling, regenerative agriculture, sustainable housing, caring, digital and other sectors). We support an education and training system in tune with anticipated labour market shifts and building the knowledge and capability to identify and anticipate 'next economy' skills needs.¹⁵

The Foundation wants to focus on fostering and supporting skills development initiatives at both the project and systems level the rapidly growing clean industries. Innovative, place-based collaborative approaches to nurturing appropriate community or industry wide initiatives would be of interest to the Foundation.

The Foundation's support is focused on:

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- Community collaborations and industry partnerships for better transitions to work.
- Partnerships between social enterprises that improve pathways across sectors.
- Research to better understand the issues and inform policy advocacy that addresses the root causes and drivers and solutions to addressing the skills gap.



OUTCOME 2



Quality jobs in clean, digital and caring industries are created for all job seekers.

Global and national trends are changing the nature of work and reducing economic inclusion and security for the most disadvantaged.

Cascading and interlinked factors are undermining the economic security and inclusion of individuals and communities. The world of work is intrinsically linked to the natural environment. Temperature rises and environmental degradation will increasingly put workers health, income, food and fuel security at risk and reduce productivity. These affects are particularly acute for the most vulnerable groups (young people and women) and workers who have the least economic capacity to respond.

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is particularly interested in catalysing the economic opportunities presented by emerging clean industries and economies, particularly through social enterprise, social procurement and other economically inclusive models and initiatives for groups experiencing the most disadvantage.

The Foundation's support is focused on:

- Quality job creation, including through Work Integrated Social Enterprises.
- Collaborations focused on systems change, innovation, entrepreneurship and emerging clean industries.
- Research to better understand the issues and inform policy and advocacy that address quality employment outcomes.

Challenge

Economic stability through a secure income and/or quality work are vital for people's health and wellbeing ¹, but cascading and interlinked factors are undermining the health of individuals and communities. Globalisation, technology, and climate change bring both enormous challenges and opportunities to national economies, labour markets and communities.^{2,3}

The world of work for some sectors is intrinsically linked to the natural environment. Temperature rises due to climate change will increase the number of days that are too hot to work, putting workers' health at risk and reducing productivity.⁴ Temperature rises and environmental degradation will increasingly put workers health, income, food, and fuel security at risk and reduce productivity. These affects are particularly acute for the most vulnerable groups (Indigenous, refugees, older people, and women) and workers (seasonal pickers, labourers, etc) who have the least economic capacity to respond.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a stark impact on those in lower paid jobs, with the average wage of people in the most affected industries half that of people in least affected industries even before the pandemic. The majority of those affected by deep income losses are women and young people.⁵ The crisis deepened spatial disadvantage in Melbourne⁶ by affecting workers who cannot afford to stay home because they are sick and those workers who are in front line 'care and service' jobs. It also significantly increased labour market casualisation.⁷

Over the last three decades, the shape and structure of Australia's and Melbourne's economies have transitioned away from primary industries and mining toward knowledge and service economies, and from a labour-based to an asset-based economy causing significant disruption and increasing economic inequality.⁸

Australia's low headline unemployment rate masks the growing and persistent issues of underutilisation and casualisation. The rise of the on-demand workforce or 'gig economy' is leading to more precarious employment, sometimes low-quality employment conditions and some erosion of worker rights. More than half of new jobs in advanced economies since the 1990s have been temporary, part-time or self-employed.⁹ Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for total persons in the labour force in Greater Melbourne shows a 3 per cent

reduction in full-time employment and a 2.5 per cent rise in part-time employment.¹⁰

A 2015 Centre for Economic Development (CEDA) report concluded that technology has driven a large shift in the skill composition of the labour market towards high-skill jobs with an accompanying reduction in the share of middle-skill jobs. The low-skill job share decreased slightly.¹¹ This polarisation has contributed to an increase in earnings inequality since 1990.¹¹ Long run wage stagnation and escalating living costs are making life more economically insecure for many people in Australia.

Young People and Work

Young people are particularly affected by the rapidly changing nature of work. Youth unemployment is at or beyond crisis levels in some communities. Nearly one third of young people in Australia are underutilised. One in ten young people are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) and a further 20 per cent of young people are underemployed (but would like to work more hours).¹²

More than a quarter of a million young people aged 15 to 24 are currently unemployed across the country, accounting for more than a third (36 per cent) of unemployed people in Australia.¹³ In May 2020, 12 per cent or 391,000 young people aged 15–24 were not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).¹²

Young people are far more likely to experience unemployment in some regions than others. The Brotherhood of St Laurence has identified youth unemployment in each state or territory with Melbourne's west experiencing 15.5 per cent youth unemployment.¹⁴

Young people are likely to be disproportionately hurt by the process of job automation. Young people often get their first jobs in fields like retail, administration, and labouring. These fields are highly exposed to the impact of technology. Economists have forecast that jobs such as checkout operators, receptionists, personal assistants, and fast-food workers will either be lost or radically changed by technology. Between 2010 and 2015, nearly 60 per cent of young Australian students enrolled in fields of study that will be highly affected by automation¹⁵. Young people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, young people with a disability or those living in remote areas are particularly at risk of changes in the workforce.

Women and Work

Globally, Australia ranks number one in gender equality in education, but only number 75 in women's economic participation.¹⁶ This wide discrepancy suggests that women's successes in educational attainment have not translated into corresponding successes in the labour market and economically. The gender pay gap for all workers, including full time, part time, casual and other insecure employment positions, is 31 per cent.¹⁷ The difference is explained by the fact that women are much

more likely than men to be working part-time in Australia – almost half of all employed women work part-time (including part-time self-employed), compared to just 18.5 per cent of men.¹⁸

Women also work in underpaid feminised industries such as health care and education. As the Per Capita report Measure For Measure Gender Equality in Australia, details some Australian women also experience a 'motherhood penalty' whereby becoming a parent Motherhood doesn't only result in years of unpaid work, and reduced hours of paid employment for women; it is also the primary reason for a lack of career advancement among professional women.¹⁹ Compared to many other countries, Australian women do more unpaid domestic work and care, 311 minutes per day compared the OECD female average of 262.²⁰

During the Covid-19 pandemic, women were more likely to lose their jobs, more likely to do a lot more unpaid work, and less likely to get government support.²¹ We also see a lag in women returning to work post COVID-19 lockdowns in the west of Melbourne.

A growing group of older women are also facing financial insecurity and the risk of homelessness.²² This occurs because women usually hold lower levels of superannuation than men when they retire and sometimes have a history of lower paid, casual or part-time work, coupled with unpaid caring roles, leaving many older women less financially resilient²².

Our Response

The localised nature of complex economic challenges in Melbourne means that Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is taking a targeted and focused place-based approach to impact. The Foundation focuses on supporting the most vulnerable members of the community, who often face multiple barriers to economic security and inclusion. It is also important that we focus on the evidence-base for what works in employment and training pathways for groups experiencing disadvantage, particularly young people, and women. Ensuring jobs created constitute both quality and security is of important.

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is particularly interested in catalysing the economic opportunities presented by emerging clean industries and economies, particularly through social enterprise, social procurement and other economically inclusive models and initiatives (see Next Economy Jobs Challenge Guidelines for more information).²³

The Foundation's support is focused on:

- Quality job creation, including through Work Integrated Social Enterprises.
- Collaborations focused on systems change, innovation, entrepreneurship and emerging clean industries.
- Research to better understand the issues and inform policy and advocacy that address quality employment outcomes.



OUTCOME 3



Enable our transition to an inclusive and sustainable economy that serves people and planet.

Australia must urgently transition to a low carbon economy in an equitable and sustainable manner.

Economic development driven primarily by fossil fuels in advanced economies like Australia, has led to global climate change. Australia's carbon emissions per person and per dollar of national product are among the highest in the world. Rising temperatures are exacerbating pressures on every Australian ecosystem and natural hazards are becoming increasingly powerful and frequent. Social inequality is on the rise and people who are already experiencing economic or social disadvantage are most affected by climate change, either in community, at work or at home. We now need to develop a sustainable and inclusive economy, which provides opportunities for everyone.

In response, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is developing and incubating solutions at the project and systems level that will ensure an inclusive and equitable transition to a low-carbon economy.

The Foundation's support is focused on:

- Activities that effectively communicate the evidence that the shift to an inclusive and sustainable economy is both possible and desirable.
- Projects that support the implementation of innovative local transition solutions that benefit the community.
- Initiatives that identify and develop the necessary economic, social and environmental policy innovations to enable an inclusive and sustainable transition.

Challenge

The Climate Science

The case for human-induced climate change is accepted in the peer-reviewed science. Current atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂) are higher than at any time in the last two million years. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which provides the objective, global scientific consensus and reviews all available scientific data, has no doubt about this.¹ The additional greenhouse gas emissions we produce are trapping more heat and changing the climate, warming the atmosphere, ocean and land. Weather and climate extremes are increasing in every region across the globe, with much evidence of changes, including heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts, and tropical cyclones.¹

In Australia, every year since 2013 has been among the ten warmest on record. In 2019, records were again broken; the nation experienced its hottest January on record, which followed its hottest December, in 2018. Rising sea-levels, floods, drought, fire, extreme heat and damaging weather events are just some of the many impacts that will continue to increase in the years to come.²

Unless emissions are substantially limited, the severe impacts we are experiencing across the globe will worsen. The time we have left to avoid a climate catastrophe is rapidly diminishing. We must immediately reduce emissions, as every fraction of a degree of avoided warming will lessen the impacts.¹ Across the globe, most countries have ratified the United Nations' Paris Agreement and are now attempting to keep global temperature rise this century below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels or at least below 2°C.³ Achieving these targets will require net zero CO₂ emissions globally by 2050 with deep cuts by 2030.⁴ If we want to achieve the 1.5°C target, then steep emissions reductions by 2030 are particularly important.⁴ If we want to achieve the 1.5°C target, then net global emissions must decline by about 45 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030. To reach the 2°C target, global emissions must decline by about 25 per cent by 2030.⁴

Based on the latest science, and considering Australia's national circumstances, Australia should reduce its emissions by 75 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2035.⁵

Most Australians now accept climate change is happening, are concerned about it, and are open to taking meaningful action.⁶ With regard to emissions reductions, 73 per cent now support a net zero by 2050 target and 61 per cent support at least halving emissions by 2030.⁷ However, people still respond to different messages and messengers, so appropriate communication strategies need to be utilised to effectively engage the majority.⁸

The community needs to understand climate change and the opportunities involved with the transition to net zero emissions, so that appropriate action can be taken at the individual level through to the policy level.

Social Inequality and climate change

The 2016 Paris Agreement refers to a just transition, highlighting the imperative to ensure that the transition to a post-carbon and environmentally sustainable future does not come at the cost of economic opportunity for the most disadvantaged.⁹

Excessive inequality in any society is harmful. A system that leaves people behind is bad for the economy as well as people. Inequality in Australia is increasing and will likely be exacerbated by current crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Climate challenge. In Australia, someone in the highest 20 per cent of the income scale lives in a household with almost six times as much income as someone in the lowest 20 per cent of the income scale.¹⁰

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.¹¹ The first of these goals is "No poverty". However, Australia has the 16th highest poverty rate out of the 34 wealthiest countries in the OECD. One in four children experience poverty during childhood, living in homes where incomes are less than half the Australian median.¹²

Social security payments represent 54 per cent of income for those in the lowest 20 per cent income group. People receiving JobSeeker Payment (formerly Newstart Allowance) and Parenting Payment are more likely to be in the lowest 10 per cent income group, while those reliant on Age and Disability Pensions are more likely to be in the second lowest 10 per cent income group.¹³

Climate change will affect every Australian and many of its impacts are likely to hit low-income households hardest. With these levels of entrenched disadvantage, it is essential that the transition to a low carbon economy does not further entrench existing inequalities or generating new conditions of harm and inequality as a consequence of introducing low-carbon energy systems.¹⁴

Our Response

Since early 2016, Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation has supported an increased understanding of the climate science and solutions by providing accessible, evidence-based information to the public, which will assist all levels of government and the community to respond to the challenge effectively.

We now need to understand how we will transition to an inclusive and sustainable economy that serves people and planet so that we reduce emissions and address the climate challenge.

The technological and economic case for a cost-effective transition has also been made across many economic sectors¹⁵ and the costs of low-emission alternatives continue to fall dramatically.¹⁶

There is a significant opportunity to further develop the wellbeing, circular, social and regenerative economic approaches to reduce material extraction, diversify and localise economies, improve the way we live in cities, and create jobs.

There is also opportunity to inform this transition through independent policy and research and to investigate how the for-purpose sector can prepare for, and drive, the transition. The Foundation looks for social innovations that create more inclusive social and economic policies and advance economic equality for the most disadvantaged.

The Foundation's support is focused on:

- Activities that effectively communicate the evidence that the shift to an inclusive and sustainable economy is both possible and desirable.
- Projects that support the implementation of innovative local transition solutions that benefit the community.
- Initiatives that identify and develop the necessary economic, social and environmental policy innovations to enable an inclusive and sustainable transition.

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- 2 <https://www.oecd.org/australia/australia-post-pandemic-reforms-should-strive-for-a-return-to-strong-well-distributed-growth.htm>
- 3 https://www.climateworkscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/LUF_PB-summary-report_FINAL.pdf
- 4 <https://soe.environment.gov.au/>
- 5 MSDI. TRANSFORMING AUSTRALIA SDG PROGRESS REPORT 2020 Update. www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com (2020).

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Learn more about the issues affecting our community

Our [Greater Melbourne Vital Signs Report](#) provides a snapshot of the health, wellbeing and vitality of Greater Melbourne. The report identifies positive aspects of our community, as well as the issues we face, and informs the Foundation's strategy.