Australian Government’s SkillShare program established in Portland, commencing operations in June. Portland WorkSkills established to deliver the program. Auspicing bodies include City of Portland, Shire of Heywood and the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). Based in Shops 10 and 17, Pioneer Plaza.

Portland WorkSkills incorporated on 22 August. Cr Keith Wilson OAM chairperson, Bill Millard (Portland City Council) secretary and Dayle King program coordinator. Main purpose to provide structured skills training and open access support to unemployed jobseekers.

First Annual General Meeting held. Venue was Portland Municipal Offices with Bill Golding guest speaker.

Kath Healey becomes manager of Portland WorkSkills.

Bernard Wallace appointed manager of Portland WorkSkills.

WorkSkills commences a process of diversification aimed at moving organisation beyond relying upon a single program for its viability.

Australian Government Job Club tender won, starting an involvement in supplying structured job search training that continued until 2009. WorkSkills delivered this service in Portland, Hamilton and Warrnambool at various times.

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Growth sees organisation rent house at 1 Fredericks Court, now part of the Target car park.

First Tour Guide training course conducted.

Delivered our first Job Train programs for Australian Government, in hospitality and horticulture.

Win State Government grant to train tour guides and establish a tour guide business. Program launch at Portland Arts Centre by John McGrath MP, member for Warrnambool. A requirement was that tour guiding operation had to operate for at least one year. It is still successfully operating.

Purchase of Shop 15 Pioneer Plaza to provide additional space necessitated by organisational growth and reduce need to hire facilities around Portland.
Became a Registered Training Organisation with one qualification on our scope of registration. Today WorkSkills has some 30 qualifications on its scope.

WorkSkills and its tour guides play key role in MacKillop event and featured in several TV programs. The organisation was closely involved in the publication of ‘Walk in the footsteps of Mary MacKillop’, a substantial brochure highlighting the strong links between Mary MacKillop and Portland and including a self-guided tour of key sites.

Organisation secures the State Government’s Community Business Employment (CBE) program for Portland, Hamilton and their districts. The program was launched in Hamilton by Denis Napthine MP, Member for Portland. CBE's focus was on Mature and Youth jobseekers. A key part of the organisation’s diversification strategy and a core program for the next eight years.

Involvement in Hamilton commences by way of delivering the Australian Government’s SkillShare program in the Southern Grampians Shire. Based in shops 3 and 4 in Thomsons Plaza, in the Hamilton central business district.

Organisation conducts its first Work for the Dole project, placing 25 jobseekers with a range of community organisations in Portland and its district over six months. This commenced a productive involvement in Work for the Dole that grew substantially, involved two Shires and continued until end of 2009. Between 1998 and 2009, WorkSkills delivered some 80 Work for the Dole projects in its own right and facilitated community-based organisations deliver some 100 projects. These projects produced works of lasting community benefit. Over 1800 participants were placed in meaningful work employment experience and many used Work for the Dole as a springboard to ongoing employment.

SkillShare program ends. By this time WorkSkills is sufficiently diversified to continue operations as a provider of employment and training services. In nine years Portland’s SkillShare program assisted some 1840 unemployed jobseekers through structured training courses and over 3000 through open access services such as resume production. Over 1000 employment outcomes achieved.

WorkSkills and other SkillShare providers from Geelong to the South Australian border form Workpower, a not-for-profit company, in order to tender for major government employment services contracts. The venture was costly and unsuccessful and the company was dissolved at the end of 1998.

WorkSkills moves to Shop 14 from Shop 17.

WorkSkills moves from Shop 17 to Shop 14.

Commenced supplying tours to the privatised Port of Portland. Between 1995 and 1997 we ran 456 bus tours of the port carrying over 4,000 people including international travellers from almost every nation around the world.

Became member of nation-wide Employment Services provider JOB Futures, delivering a number of services for them as sub-contractor in subsequent years.
The new flight of stairs is an initiative of the Friends of the Great South West Walk, and the plans replace the existing flag and chain ladder permanently in place.

Work on the steps was carried out by volunteers, with the help of participants and people from the Office of Corrections. A grant of $5,000 was provided by the State Government through a Great Walk grant, and was used to complete the project.
The organisation becomes a New Apprenticeship Centre via the Australian Job Shop. In the next few years WorkSkills sets up hundreds of Apprenticeship and Traineeships across the region and as far afield as Geelong and Gippsland.

Portland WorkSkills becomes the Community Work Coordinator for the Western District Employment Services Area, managing all aspects of an enlarged Work for the Dole program in the Glenelg and Southern Grampians Shires. The program launched by the-then Minister, Tony Abbott, MP, at the Maritime Discovery Centre.

An establishment member of the Glenelg & Southern Grampians Local Learning and Employment Network, WorkSkills commences a decade-long involvement as either treasurer or secretary.

WorkSkills’ Work for the Dole project ‘History Alive’, focused on the Old Portland Cemetery, filmed for promotional purposes by the-then Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. Film later used as backdrop for 2002 Work for the Dole National Conference in Canberra.

Portland WorkSkills becomes accredited to deliver Adult Community Education on behalf of the State Government’s Adult, Community and Further Education Board. The organisation continues to deliver this major program.

WorkSkills selected to deliver the State Government’s Apprenticeship and Traineeship Training Program.
Community Business Employment program brought to an end by Victorian Government. Nearly 4000 participants assisted in Portland and Hamilton and some 1375 employment outcomes achieved.

Our first Green Corps project commences 'Fitzroy River Revegetation Project Heywood'. WorkSkills delivers six major environmental projects in the Glenelg and Southern Grampians Shires over the next three years.

Purchase of Hurd Street property for use as base for Green Corps projects and outdoor Work for the Dole projects.

Finalist in Prime Minister’s Work for the Dole Awards for ‘The Stables Project’ conducted in partnership with the Arts Company.

Winner of Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority Environment Achievement Award for contributions to the regional environment by way of major Green Corps and Work for the Dole projects.

Purchase of Shop 14 Pioneer Plaza, our ‘head office’ thus ensuring that the focal point of our management and administration is secured.

Hamilton office relocated from Thomsons Plaza to Hamilton Institute of Rural Learning, a site ideal for our Green Corps and Work for the Dole service delivery and operations.
Chairperson Keith Wilson OAM retires from the WorkSkills Board of Management after eighteen years involvement in the organisation. He is presented with a fine office chair and replaced as chairperson by former treasurer, Michael Hunter.

WorkSkills publishes ‘In the footsteps of Mary MacKillop’, a revised and updated self guided walk tour of historic Portland and its Mary MacKillop sites. Publication subsequently nominated for a Victorian Community History Award

WorkSkills a major supporter of ‘Admella 150’, the commemoration of the wreck of the steamer Admella in 1859 and Portland’s role in the rescue of survivors. WorkSkills organises a number of key events, including tours of Portland sites linked to the rescue.

End of our major involvement in Work for the Dole and our direct involvement with Hamilton and the Southern Grampians Shire. WorkSkills gift substantial array of outdoor equipment to Hamilton Institute of Rural Learning. An involvement in Hamilton is maintained by way of providing onsite training to trainees.

Publication of ‘The Historic Narrawong Cemetery’ interpretive brochure, an outcome of the ‘Far South West Eco-Heritage’ Work for the Dole project

Purchase of Shop 9 Pioneer Plaza with a view to future development. Leased, then brought into commission as a large and versatile training space in 2010

Disposal of Hurd Street property as a consequence of ending involvement in outdoor projects and focusing on building up the organisation’s training operations

Major refurbishment of our Pioneer Plaza properties by way of an Australian Government ICET grant combined with WorkSkills contributions. WorkSkills currently occupies Shops 7, 9, 14 and 15. Over time, it has also occupied Shops 6, 10, 11 and 17, as well as several other properties in Portland and Hamilton.

Publication subsequently nominated for a Victorian Community History Award

21st anniversary of establishment and incorporation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Purchased the former Birralee Kindergarten and South Portland Community Health centre off the Glenelg Shire. As the Waratah Centre, it will play a key part in our community development initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Assumed responsibility for the Neighbourhood House Program in Portland in response to requests from Department of Human Services and Glenelg Shire Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Successfully delivered Department of Human Services’ Employment Support initiative in Portland, achieving pleasing employment outcomes for participants.</td>
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- **Finalist in Victorian Aboriginal Education Association’s Wurreker Awards**
- **Our tour guiding interpretive brochure, In the Footsteps of Mary MacKillop nominated for the Victoria Community History Awards.**
- **Successfully delivered Glenelg Shire Council’s Improving Liveability for Older Persons information technology project in Portland and Heywood.**
- **Assumed responsibility for the Neighbourhood House Program in Portland in response to requests from Department of Human Services and Glenelg Shire Council.**
- **Comprehensively re-worked organisational Strategic Plan and Business Plan to manage accelerated change and to be best position the organisation for the future. The rolling plan extends over three years and is strongly supported by comprehensive cash flow projections.**

- **Successfully registered as a Registered Training Organisation for a period of five years, comprehensively meeting the requirements of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority and the standards of the Australian Quality Training Framework.**
- **Obtained grant from AMES for major research into training needs of Portland’s culturally and linguistically diverse communities, leading to improved access to training and to the establishment of our English as a second language support program.**
- **Finalised the development and implementation of an effective and readily updatable eLearning strategy for accredited and general training.**
- **Our vital Victorian Training Guarantee Contract with the Higher Education and Skills Group of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) renewed for the maximum period of three years.**
- **25th anniversary of establishment and incorporation and 5,000th learner entered on our data base.**
- **Successfully accredited as a provider of government-subsidised literacy-numeracy courses Foundation Skills training under the Victorian Training Guarantee.**
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- **Winner of the ‘Inclusive Customer Service’ Award and co-winner of ‘Business of the Year Award ‘of the Glenelg Shire Council’s Inclusive Business Awards.**
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