



## Stronger Futures for Young Victorians Central Grampians LLEN Response

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In addition to staff attending the Ballarat regional forum, CGLLEN held a workshop in Stawell on 2 June 2010 to gather feedback from its member organisations. We are pleased to provide the following response to the Stronger futures for all young Victorians discussion paper:

### 1. LITERACY AND NUMERACY

- National benchmarks can play a role in lifting literacy and numeracy attainment.
- Early intervention is crucial and should be funded from Grade 1 and followed through. Reading Recovery is an important program in this area and similar approaches are required for 'at risk' students who have not benefited from this program.
- The paper does not refer to special setting schools (which do not participate in the NAPLAN Assessment).

### 2. SUPPORT FOR INFORMED CHOICES

- An up-to-date career plan can strengthen education and training engagement and MIPS is an important initiative in this area. However, implementation varies across the state and further work to benchmark against good practice would be helpful.
- There should be an assigned adult/teacher who follows through each students from Year 7 to 12 (does this start at Primary level?).
- LLEN/DEECD facilitated Youth Commitments have an important role to play and the role of Student Transition Teams and Community Reference Teams (attached) are important.
- Parent involvement is not mentioned in the paper, yet research indicates parents are the most important influence on careers choices. CGLLEN has facilitated the delivery of the Parents as Career Transition Supports (PACTS) by its member schools with positive results. ***We recommend that DEECD consider how the PACTS program (Attachment 1) could become accessible to all Victorian secondary schools.***

### 3. ARRANGEMENTS TO ASSIST COMPLETIONS

- The Youth Options Guarantee has provided a successful framework for collaboration to ensure shared responsibility for young people so they don't fall through the cracks.
- Marian College has adapted the Teacher Advisor program (Attachment 2) operating in Canada. The program is based on a commitment by the school that every student has a significant adult within the school environment who is monitoring them and making certain that they are on track. ***We recommend that DEECD investigate this model further.***
- A wide variety of schooling choices, within and beyond school hours, is the key to better retention.
- Broad VETiS provision is crucial, but in rural areas offerings are continually threatened by: the cost of delivery, lack of diversity in providers, a perceived lack of quality in delivery, small student numbers, shortages of trained staff, lack of transport, timetable complications and a lingering academic bias in some schools.
- Student centred learning is essential and learning plans must be tailored to the needs of the individual – sometimes a good outcome is that the student simply 'turns up', and they may only do so one day a week, but that's often the foundation for a better outcome down the track.
- Since 2005 CGLLEN has facilitated a partnership to deliver Central Connect (a community VCAL based re-engagement program). The program has grown from 13 students in 2005 to more than 70 in 2010. The key to the success of the program has been the sharing of responsibility for program planning and delivery, and in many cases, the joint enrolment of students in both school and TAFE programs. The current requirement that Satellite VCAL or VCE students are enrolled entirely at the school has impaired the partnerships which underpin the program and made many TAFE programs unattainable due to cost. Students must now make a choice between TAFE and school, which splits the cohort and reduces the viability of both options.  
  
DEECD's biggest challenge in supporting reengagement programs is to provide flexibility for schools. Unfortunately current constraints for eligibility reduce the potential for resourcing re-engagement. With case-by-case consideration, re-engagement programs are developed for a much wider range of young people than the enrolment requirements permit. ***We recommend that DEECD consider this issue, as outlined in a recent Policy Issues Paper presented by CGLLEN to the LLEN Chairs Forum (Attachment 3).***
- Funding for virtual schools needs to be adequate for country students to access and promotion is required to ensure teachers and students consider this a quality learning option.
- *The importance of mentoring is well recognised but not systematically supported or funded. This is a definite gap and we recommend that DEECD consider how all schools can be supported to access and/or deliver quality mentoring programs.*
- Practical, hands-on work is often the key to re-engaging boys.

#### 4. RE-ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

- In the CGLLEN Region, co-location of Central Connect (Community VCAL) with Youth Connections has been a significant factor in the success of both programs.
- The Youth Connections tender required respondents to identify linkages to a range of programs including Community VCAL, LLENs and Youth Commitments. It is important that contract management of the program ensures that providers are meeting these requirements.
- CGLLEN could easily identify young people, aged 20 and over, that could benefit from the activities and involvement of the LLEN. We believe the concept of an expanded LLEN role to encompass young people aged 20 and over has considerable merit, especially in rural areas where partnerships are already starting to coalesce around expanding the range of supports and options available.

We also recognise, that in the context of recent expansion of the LLEN role and implementation of the National Partnership, that this may not be a view common to all LLENs at the current time. ***We recommend that DEECD explore the potential for an expanded role with interested LLENs. Additional funding would be required to service another age range and with the right support, CGLLEN would be happy to participate in a pilot project to model a LLEN based approach to the needs of young people aged over 20.***

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11 June 2010