

Stronger Futures for All Young Victorians – Discussion paper on the youth transitions system

A response from

- **Central Ranges LLEN,**
- **Goulburn Murray LLEN,**
- **NE Tracks LLEN and**
- **North East LLEN.**

The four LLEN organisations from the Hume Region are providing this regional response to the discussion paper.

In so doing we are aware that there are a range of diverse communities across this region and thus, widely differentiated capacities of local communities to address the needs of young people in helping them to build

strong sustainable futures. This diversity needs to be recognised in the different regional and rural contexts, economies of scale for services and transport and the fact that parts of the region are within an hour's journey from Melbourne whilst other communities are over four and a half hours from Melbourne. This breadth subsequently creates issues around inequity as well as lack of access and opportunity for many of our young people.



The Hume Region extends over 40,000 square kilometres of provincial north east Victoria, encompassing many culturally rich and diverse communities.

The Region contains twelve local government areas. It is geographically diverse, including Victoria's alpine areas, the Victoria food and wine bowl, some relatively remote farming communities, the major regional centres of Wodonga, Wangaratta and Shepparton and new satellite communities to the near north east of Melbourne.

Challenges:

Rural issues

The Hume Region has been contending with a range of rural issues including drought, bushfire, industry realignments, sustainability of water, and use of recycled water issues. Parts of the region have been experiencing drought conditions for a number of years, other parts of the

region have experienced bushfire, or hail or frost, while the entire region, in common with other parts of Victoria, is dealing with climate change, land care, biodiversity and water management issues.

Many small communities are typified by an ageing workforce and changes in rural demographics, including declining populations exacerbated by youth migration to the larger centres, reducing local services, and loss of history. The continuing albeit incomplete roll out of broadband internet access offers promise of ICT solutions to many issues although limited access and capacity to use the technology presents numerous challenges.

Major Change Drivers

Despite the diversity of the area, it is possible to identify several major change drivers that affect industry, enterprise and the community in different ways throughout the area.

Drought/Climate change

There would be few people in Victoria who have not been affected in some way by the current drought situation. This situation is, however, the result of a much larger problem affecting nations, governments and communities around the world; climate change. Australia, like many other countries, is committed to making positive improvements to help combat climate change. Initiatives have been implemented at federal, state and local government levels, and deal directly with some of the worst affected areas around Australia – known as Exceptional Circumstances (EC) – as well as with urban areas where immediate affects are not as obvious but water conservation is now a key policy.

Ageing Workforce

In 2003, 3.2million people employed in the national labour force were aged between 45 and 64, a figure representing 32% of all employed people, up from 24% in 1983.

Currently, the Australian workforce increases by 170,000 per year. For the entire decade of the 2020s, growth is predicted as 125,000.

As a result, the labour force is set to experience severe upset due to increased shortages across all industries. Several major industries have been identified as being affected by an ageing workforce – Education, Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing, Health and community services, Electricity/gas/water supply, Transport and storage.

The full impact of the ageing workforce is yet to be felt in regional Victoria, however current figures suggest that the effects will become more acute in the next few years. In the Hume region alone, the pattern of people aged 70 and over is shown here.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------|--------------|
| 2001 | 25,000 |
| 2011 | 33,000 |
| 2031 | 71,000 |

Another key factor in relation to the ageing workforce is the generational differences existing in the current labour force. It is becoming increasingly clear that the emerging generation Z has needs and aspirations that are worlds apart from those of generations X and Y, and their work practices and motivation need to be considered by employers.

This is not to say that newer, younger employees are less motivated or valuable, but they are driven by different factors and need unique incentives to remain in a workplace and not seek employment elsewhere. As a way of addressing and overcoming the generational differences, businesses are seeing the value in mentoring programs. These programs can position older workers as mentors for younger employees, and allow the older generation the opportunity to pass on their valuable skills and knowledge.

Generational differences are also acute in many trade areas. Many of the older employees may have been born into the trade, and continue a family tradition. Younger workers, however, are often motivated by money and do not always feel the same sense of pride in learning and mastering new skills. Across the Goulburn Murray area, the average age of bricklayers is 50 years. This trend is evident in several trade areas, and it appears the future of manufacturing trades in regional shires will soon suffer from even more severe shortages as the older workers look to retirement or less physical work.

Skills Victoria has highlighted the age demographics of the Primary Industry, which employs a total of 2,157 people aged 65 and over. For all other industries, the figure in this age group is less than 550, with most under 100. Perhaps more alarming, nearly 5,500 people over the age of 55 are employed in Primary industry in the area, with less than 2,000 between the ages of 15 and 29. At present, positions made vacant in the next few years appear hard to fill, as younger people are not undertaking training in relevant areas. These figures suggest that the future of

Primary industry in the area could be under threat as young people are increasingly being employed in other industries – Retail and Business Services according to Skills Victoria. The Agri Industries will encounter severe problems in the coming decades when the physical nature of the work forces a large percentage of older workers into retirement or other employment.

Australian Industry faces many challenges and opportunities in the years ahead in responding to the rapidly changing dynamics of global competition. New pressures from emerging industrial giants, such as China, the rebalancing of our currency, the push towards global outsourcing, the introduction of the US Free Trade Agreement, and the erosion of Australia's traditional export markets mean that dynamic and world competitive industries need a highly skilled workplace to remain competitive. Australian industry as a whole will need to work smarter, become more innovative, and more knowledge intensive.

The Ai Group study *Industry in the Regions 2004* concluded that regional industry is increasingly looking to global markets to grow and prosper in the 21st century. Global engagement is seen as a means of overcoming the significant disadvantages of smaller local markets, providing wealth for regional economies and creating a foundation for sustainable jobs and growth. In order to compete successfully, regional businesses are making investments in key areas including research and development, workforce skills, new technologies and plant and machinery. While regional firms scored lower than metropolitan firms in relation to skills and productivity, they outperformed city-based firms in relation to investment in skills, workforce flexibility and employee participation. The study also showed that labour productivity was 6% lower in regional areas. This could be due to a wide array of factors including difficulties accessing factors of production such as skilled labour.

In parallel with these pressures are **a whole set of paradigm shifts which are impacting significantly on the structure and operation of industry including, new patterns of employment, new kinds of work and work organisation and new ideas concerning skills, knowledge and learning.**

Technology

This new landscape is a place where new information, knowledge and technology systems reign. We are in a post industrial era where industries and businesses either become obsolete, or morph into fierce competitors in a global marketplace operating with high levels of technology. Creative ideas, human services and technological innovations are the new buzz words. "The new

economy is knowledge and ideas based, where the key to job creation and higher standards of living are innovative ideas and technology embedded in services and manufactured products.” (Atkinson and Court 1998)

There has been “a general shift from a society of producers to a society of consumers” (Bauman, 1998b:31) and the shift also from manufacturing consumerism to technology and service consumerism.

IT knowledge and generic computer skills have permeated society and industry sectors to the extent that the need for IT skills has been the focus of training providers and employers for several years.

The needs identified in relation to technology refer to an emerging trend across all industries, where basic computer operation is not the only technological skill required. An increasing focus on world markets and globalisation has forced many employers to investigate more efficient modes of production and safer workplace practices.

Even in areas that have traditionally been more hands-on with tools and manual labour, there is an ever-increasing shift towards increased productivity and efficiency that results from the installation of new equipment and technology. Much of this equipment takes the place of manual labour, and can do the work of several people. It is no longer sufficient for plumbers to be good at unblocking pipes, but they need to be aware of and able to operate the latest technology used in their industry sector.

The problem of technology in regional Victoria relates to access, availability, cost and training.

Teenage labour market

- Between January 2009 and January 2010, the teenage full-time unemployment rate (12 month average) in the Goulburn-Ovens-Murray LFR increased by 9.9 percentage points, from 22.5 per cent to 32.5 per cent.
- The teenage full-time unemployment rate in the Goulburn-Ovens-Murray LFR (32.5 per cent in January 2010) stands above the average for both Victoria (30.1 per cent) and Australia (24.5 per cent).

Reliance on income support in North Eastern Victoria:

More than one in five persons (22 per cent) of the working age population (WAP) are in receipt of a Centrelink benefit in North Eastern Victoria. This is above the average for Victoria and Australia (17 per cent and 18 per cent respectively).

- A slightly higher proportion of the NE Victorian working age population (WAP) are in receipt of an unemployment benefit (Newstart Allowance (NSA) or Youth Allowance (other) (YLO)) when compared with Victoria and Australia (6 per cent of the NE Victorian WAP compared with 4 per cent of the Victorian WAP and 5 per cent of the Australian WAP).

Educational attainment

The level of educational attainment is strongly linked with labour market performance and the ability of a region (or its population) to respond flexibly to an economic shock. High levels of educational attainment, for instance, allows people to gain employment in higher skilled occupations, such as Professional, Manager and Technician and Trades Worker occupations, which tend to be more stable, more in demand and higher paid.

Accordingly, regions with relatively low levels of educational attainment tend, on average, to be less flexible in the face of economic slowdowns and face greater labour market difficulties. For example, upon retrenchment, those with lower educational attainment will find it significantly more difficult to find subsequent employment than their more highly skilled counterparts. As shown in the table below, every Local Government Area within the North Eastern Victoria Priority Employment Area has lower levels of educational attainment when compared with Australia and Victoria.

Educational attainment

| Region | Proportion of working age population (aged 15 to 64 years) | |
|--------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| | Finished Year 12 or equivalent | Attained Bachelor degree or higher |
| Gr Shepparton | 33% | 11% |
| Albury | 39% | 13% |
| Benalla | 34% | 11% |
| Campaspe | 29% | 9% |
| Corowa Shire | 28% | 8% |
| Indigo | 36% | 16% |
| Moira | 28% | 8% |
| Strathbogie | 32% | 10% |
| Wangaratta | 36% | 12% |
| Wodonga | 38% | 11% |
| NE Victoria | 34% | 11% |
| Victoria | 49% | 19% |
| Australia | 47% | 17% |

Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing

Greater Shepparton Educational attainment by country of birth

| | Proportion of working age population (aged 15 to 64 years) | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| | Finished Year 12 or equivalent | Attained Bachelor degree or higher |
| Born in an 'other than main speaking country' | 36% | 12% |
| Born in a 'main English speaking country' | 44% | 20% |
| Australian-Born | 34% | 11% |



Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing

This regional context provides the background to this paper but in responding we have attempted to outline the key issues across this region. Please note that the LLEN's have not attempted to answer all questions but those we see as having significant impact for the Hume Region and the young people who live within the region.

Regional Response to DEECD Transition Paper

Understanding of rural context, with economy of scale for services and transport.

It is the cost of travel in particular that is a major issue in regional areas, where training providers are not always flexible enough to acknowledge the needs of students and offer alternative delivery methods.

The availability of resources is also a big problem for rural students and training providers. In some areas, despite an overwhelming need for skills in a specific area, the small number of students may be overlooked when funding and resources are allocated. Consequently, their employment opportunities may be affected as their city counterparts may possess far greater expertise.

Expanded program offerings together with a broad VCE program require levels of resourcing which put schools under pressure to make choices about priorities. This is especially the case for smaller secondary schools.

Transport

Lack of transport limits young people's development of independence, access to social networks, employment and training options and services. Many young people of driving age cannot afford to own and run a vehicle, and have limited or no access to cars.

Availability of public transport:

- Some areas have no public transport
- Others have services that are infrequent
- Some run weekly only or at very infrequent intervals
- Some students have to catch up to three buses to school or TAFE
- Limited or no transport at night and weekends
- Availability often does not compliment employment or training requirements
- Limited or no availability to participate in sports, social, cultural or entertainment activities

Lack of access to tertiary education in rural areas:

Not enough young people aspiring to tertiary education or not being able to get there

Barriers include:

- cost of attending,
- cost of accommodation,
- the need to move out of home and away from family,
- living costs,
- barriers to accessing Independent Youth Allowance,
- cultural barriers.
- impact of the collapse of the labour market •

Challenges of an ageing population, decline in population size, a shifting industry base and the resultant obsolete skill base of older workers, require an increasing reliance on **all** of our young people. We need to ensure that they have the appropriate skills and orientation to contribute to the nation's economy, enabling Australia to be a competitive player in the global marketplace.

The challenge is to encourage higher levels of qualification completion for more students overall and as soon as possible, in order to maintain their competitive advantages in the world markets.

Rural versus Metro

- Rural students are less likely to complete Year 12 than their city cousins and more likely to undertake vocational studies.
- Rural and regional students receive a lower ENTER score and are less likely to go to university than their metro counterparts. Currently 33% of rural students take up tertiary study compared to 55% of metro students.
- 36% of students at schools in Shepparton deferred university in 2009, primarily to qualify to for the youth allowance. Due to the nature of the employment market in regional Victoria, many young people will find it extremely difficult to qualify for youth allowance under the remaining workforce participation criteria.
- For **low-income earners**, the blockers to taking up university education and moving away from home are often complex and often associated with different family aspirations.
- Many of these young people flourish in a vocational learning environment because they see **purpose and meaning in the learning, which is more hands on.**
- With higher deferral rates, there will be many more students flooding the labour market targeting full time employment.
- Local employers say that the deferrers are competing for the jobs that would have gone to young people who had no intention of going to university anyway.
- These “other” rural young people are often left working below their potential, in part time, temporary, casual or seasonal employment.
- This only creates further unemployment and disadvantage in rural areas for the most disadvantaged groups.

Should LLENs be provided some flexibility to facilitate and broker service provision to young people 20 and over, in line with the flexibility in Youth Connections service provision?

Most LLENs could easily identify young people, aged 20 and over, that have both directly and indirectly benefited from the activities and involvement of the LLEN.

The extreme nature of barriers, as well as the number of barriers facing some of the 'at risk' young people with whom the LLENs deal, are not easily overcome. This being the case, they often need ongoing support to stay connected to education and training, as well as gaining and maintaining employment, well beyond the age of 19 in order to successfully transition into adulthood.

The current Enhanced LLEN contracts clearly reflect the current policy drive that recognises that earlier intervention is required for young people. To add to the identified young person cohort of 10-19 year olds for LLEN's, there is a real danger that LLENs will have to:

- become experts on the needs of a larger range of already very diverse young people
- deliver on outcomes that they are not funded for under their contracts
- again undertake significant governance changes, and
- also be expected to become everything to everyone in a climate when we are still coming to terms with the changes that have occurred in 2010.

With current resources already spread thinly across the state, to formally broaden the age range would simply create more of a strain and lack of capacity to carry out the core work of the LLENs. Even where additional resources were made available to assist in servicing another age range there are significant differences across the state that would make this difficult.

Indigenous support for VET Pathways

[Increase in taster, earlier interventions.....service delivery as per LCP's.]

The Shepparton Koorie community is the largest in Victoria outside of metropolitan Melbourne. Anecdotal information suggests a population almost 3 times the size indicated in the Census data.

The proportion of Koorie people in the Goulburn Valley who have post-school qualifications or participate in accredited training is lower than the state Koorie average. There is a challenge to ensure culturally appropriate content and teaching methods and to engage more fully with the community. Use of digital story telling has proved attractive in delivering programs across a number of sub groups within the Koorie community. A significant amount of Koorie provision is not through Koorie specific providers and is delivered through mainstream programs.

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

Aboriginal children (across the whole Hume Region) are:

- On track to meet reading standards in Year 3
- Behind standards for reading in Years 5, 7 and 9. This is the case for all children in Shepparton, but Aboriginal children are slightly further behind

In terms of education and training, Aboriginal people in general are:

- Increasingly obtaining bachelor or post graduate degrees. 36 had obtained one by 2006 compared to 3 in 2001
- Less likely to have completed Year 12
- Less likely to undertake work experience because they lack the business networks
- Less likely to undertake VETiS subjects

Key findings that emerged from the review underpinning the WANNIK STRATEGY

- There is insufficient focus on education outcomes for Koorie students and a failure to make the education system, at all levels, explicitly accountable for improvement in outcomes for Koorie students.
- Improving outcomes will require specific approaches that target the individual needs of Koorie students within the context of the Victorian Government's school education reform program.
- Low expectations of Koorie students negatively affect students' learning.
- Victoria is well behind other states in recognising the cultural identity of our Koorie population within a curriculum framework.
- Engagement between school staff, parents and community is poor and undervalued.
- The Koorie support workforce requires improved professional development and support, and the roles and responsibilities of these workers need to be realigned within a regional structure.
- Pre-school education is vital to address the gap between the 'school readiness' of Koorie and other students.
- Issues from outside of school significantly impact on education outcomes.

Cognitive and cultural demands made by schools act unequally on children and must be counterbalanced by appropriate measures of support:

- Good quality preschool provision

- Supervision of health and welfare in primary school
- Individual attention
- Differentiated teaching
- Curriculum responsive to context and capacity

A high concentration of social needs in regions and schools multiplies individual problems (e.g. through negative peer effects, parental apathy) – the **influence of SES lies in relationships and settings.**

Geographical patterns in under achievement reflect the influence of social area factors on child development and learning:

- Urban poverty and deprivation
- Low SES
- Health & well being

Students from low SES backgrounds encounter barriers that keep their performance well below that of socially more advantaged students, both boys and girls.

It is the schools' generality that is problematic, with the barriers embedded in the normal ways in which schools tend to work. *(Teese)*

Failure to manage diversity over the years of compulsory schooling means:

1. a continued problem of poor transition
2. continual narrowing of the social base of upper secondary education

This weakens the framework of opportunities for children from poorer and less educated families who may react by adopting a defensive peer culture that prides failure over success. *(Teese)*

What is needed:

- Targeted strategies and approaches to the education of vulnerable young people who are already disengaged and /or not attending education & training programs;
- The need for schools and community service organisations to form stronger partnerships to facilitate an inclusive support model for families taking into account the needs of vulnerable families.

The characteristics of families and neighbourhoods, and the way they interact with the school curriculum, classrooms, teachers, and teaching is the variable and can lead to achievement gap that widens over the stages of schooling.

The weaker are progressively excluded (often from poorer backgrounds) while the stronger ones are promoted (usually from more educated families).

Children from poorer homes more likely to:

- underachieve,
- disengage for school work
- leave school earlier
- study at lower academic levels
- record lower pass rates

Deprivation intensifies the effects of family socio economic status and the (predominantly) academic culture in schools through the concentration of multiple disadvantages in schools serving poor communities”.

(Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland, Reviews of National Policies for Education, 2007, OECD)

Participation in schools has been found to be important for helping people to build networks outside their family or close personal networks. These networks have significant benefits for individuals and communities. See the rationale as outlined in the report *Indicators of Community Strength: framework and evidence* on www.dpcd.vic.gov.au.

Parental participation in school activities in general (including homework) has also been shown to have a significant effect on school achievement (Department for Children, Schools & 26 Families, UK (2008) *The Impact of Parental Involvement on children's Education*. DCSF Publications. Available at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)

The priorities for Koorie training for 2010 in the Goulburn Valley region have been identified as:

- Nursing
- Aged care
- Construction
- Land management

There is some correlation between the courses being undertaken, skills shortages and community priorities in the fields of Building and Construction and Community Services and Health. In addition, there is substantial further activity in the Adult and Community Education area, assisting Koorie learners to return to study, build up core skills and assist in job-readiness.

Efforts should be continued in enrolling and retaining Koorie students in these fields within the training sector.

In addition, **over 87% of Koorie accredited course enrolments remain in Certificates 1, 2 and 3, so particular initiatives should be undertaken to articulate students through to Certificate 4 and Diploma levels.**

Links between training providers and employers should also be developed and strengthened to increase positive work outcomes for graduates from these courses.

A model that is working for Indigenous students:

ASHE (Academy of Sport Health Education, Melbourne University)

The ASHE uses participation in sport to undertake education within a trusted, culturally appropriate environment particularly for indigenous students.

Located in Shepparton the ASHE focuses on individuals and their personal needs by providing individualised education and career planning.

Major courses offered at the Academy include:

- Certificates 2 & 3 in Sport
- Certificate 4 in Community Recreation

These are conducted with the Goulburn Ovens TAFE, providing opportunities and incentives for individuals to build credits towards certification at higher levels with flexibility of entry and exit points. Community-based short courses in areas of community development and leadership are also provided at ASHE. All programs are developed on a needs-base rather than age-base.

ASHE development occurs at a critical time for community integration in the Goulburn Valley. It is believed that ASHE, as a means of expressing Indigenous leadership, has significant symbolic and practical influence in the region and the wider community.

ASHE is challenging assumptions and building new community attitudes. The academy makes a broad contribution to community needs by assisting the social, cultural, economic and infrastructure development of the City of Greater Shepparton and the region.

In what ways can the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills be strengthened in the post compulsory years?

We would like to preface this response with the statement that it may already be too late at the post compulsory stage to strengthen literacy and numeracy skills for many disengaged and disadvantaged young people.

That aside the focus of the LLEN's is to work with schools and training providers, community groups and organisations, business and industry, and parents and families in creating opportunities for young people. We note that there are a range of programs that are already being piloted to assist young people develop these skills.

Important considerations are:

- how we engage parents/guardians and families to build their children's literacy and numeracy capacities through taking a proactive and supportive approach to their learning
- community partnerships which already exist to work on building student capacity and how do we recognise and strengthen those partnerships to improve outcomes e.g.
 - In Wodonga the School Focussed Youth Services supports a homework program whilst a Literacy House has evolved over a number of years to provide specific

- support to young people with literacy issues. Unfortunately, the cost of the literacy services are often outside of the capacity of the families to pay.
 - High Water Theatre which works to re-engage very marginalised and “damaged” young people through the theatre and arts activities which has been established in Wodonga for more than five years
 - Local VCAL networks that include schools and RTO’s using regional approaches
- the impacts of mentoring programs that focus on re-engaging and/or strengthening educational outcomes and links to community, e.g
 - Community based mentoring programs being established in small rural communities across the region
 - Specific mentoring programs for students with disabilities

In facilitating pathway paths and programs for disconnected young people we have found in GMLLEN:

- A proportion of these young people are Juvenile Justice clients.
- Many of their younger siblings and relatives also attend and therefore the programs should be seen as a preventative strategy that effectively engages this cohort of young people and their families, and is supporting them in developing more positive pathways for the future.
- About 50% of these young people are indigenous and early school leavers.
- Another group are in out of home care.
- All the young people have anxiety disorders.
- Some are pre literate.
- They often have a history of family abuse, broken homes, malnourishment, little or no educational / psychological testing, and need social / emotional support as a priority.
- They are a high needs group, a group that often fits into the “too hard basket”.
- A key factor in ensuring the attendance of the young people is transportation to and from the program. A bus (provided by Brayton Youth and Family Services) driven by a staff member “picks up” and “drops off” the young people at their homes each day.
- Regular contact with families and/or agencies supporting the young people is an important component in achieving successful outcomes.
- Regular review of the Individual Learning Program with the young person and family and/or agency ensures regular feedback and positive reinforcement.

- While those families able to afford fees are expected to pay, the majority of families within the program are not able to contribute to the costs. In these cases no fees are charged and all stationary, consumables, sporting, recreational and camping activities are provided free of charge.
- Breakfast and lunch are provided each day free of charge.
- There have been remarkable achievements with the young people in the program. They want to attend, even on days off and holidays. They are usually all waiting for the bus to collect them.
- Young people that had difficulty interacting and communicating, are now on the way to being confident and happy young people, and are full of ideas on how to improve the program for themselves and others.

Will a career plan strengthen young people's engagement with education and their capacity to make informed study and career choices both during schooling and in subsequent education, training and employment settings?

It is acknowledged that good career planning can strengthen a young person's reason to engage with education. Providing informed advice around study and career choices may be more difficult without appropriately experienced and qualified people to provide that advice. The current practice of using teachers to support and work with young people to develop career plans (such as MIPs) may be fraught with problems if the only model the teachers know is one of school, university and then returning to school as a teacher. Lack of qualifications as a career advisor and limited experience of working across a range of industries limits significantly the quality of potentially well informed career planning.

The LLENs would recommend that:

- All careers advisors in school are qualified careers advisors and have the opportunity to gain professional learning experiences in industry and business apart from university or further education institutions.
 - In the north east, families have travelled over 200 miles to Melbourne to seek qualified career planning support at a significant cost, because well informed planning advice is not available in their community or school.

- That there be cross curricular responsibility for the development of career planning in schools and that programs also be developed for the middle years of schooling that build informed workplace experiences for all young people.
- A range of virtual business activities are undertaken so that young people can explore a wider range of careers opportunities within their study programs.
- That business and industry assist in developing and implementing careers' curriculums. In some pre-schools the students are already experiencing workplace visits that engage them with hands on activities within those industries – e.g Beechworth Bakery.
- There needs to be an informed systemic curriculum approach that provides clear workplace and career transitioning throughout the school life of a young person.
- If we are talking about “**all young Victorians**” then it is imperative that young people no longer engaged in school can access free, competent careers planning support whilst out of school. There are pilot programs currently being run across the state but unless this is available state wide then government programs are creating further inequity and lack of opportunity for those young people unable to access the service they need.
- There is a need to build the capacity of parents and families to support their young people in making informed careers choices. Research demonstrates that young people seek advice from their families and model their own career pathways (or not) on family experience and input. It is important that parents are able to provide informed advice rather than misadvice. Further research and exploration of this is required as programs that build this capacity could be important in providing informed support to young people.

LLEN stakeholder comments on career advice in schools:

I think the best career advice for students is that which is outsourced and provided by qualified careers advisors (and definitely not provided by employment consultants based with JSA providers most of whom are not appropriately qualified to fulfil this role adequately).

Navigating the Youth Service System Research Coordinator, Mission Australia

Ideally the best career advice system would be a system that:

- Is easy for young people and their parents to access and navigate their way through, and offers practical advice and suggestions for future career pathways based on their children's strengths and abilities.
- It would be a system that is accessible in a number of ways - not just through school, and it's delivery would be the same to all young people in Victoria (regardless of whether they are engaged in school, attend government or private schools)
- Involves far more practical experience and opportunities than are currently available and is managed by uniformly trained career advisors/educator

Youth Development Officer, MOIRA SHIRE

1) ALL students receiving one to one or small group careers advice session at school (at year 10 or before leaving if earlier)

2) Start with students' interests and skills and look into careers / courses / job options that match.

3) Assist each student to plan a pathway into that career (subject choices/ work experience/ VCAL / VCE/ VET/ uni/ TAFE) based on the skills and abilities of the student.

Making the Links Mentoring Program Co-ordinator, Strathbogie Shire

- Engage the parent/care giver to get familiar with different career options and pathways so they are on board to support the young person. Some parents will not entertain the idea of certain careers (often through ignorance or misconceptions about a particular career). Careers counselling for all parties (i.e. student/parent).

Youth transitions support worker, Uniting Care Cutting Edge

- We get one chance at life, a career which you enjoy can help you reach your goals both financial and personal.
- From the day we are born we have a future, a career which you enjoy & which can contribute to your financial security ensures we are independent and fulfilled.
- Careers are able to change as move through our life journey a successful rewarding career contribute to our life and our journey.
- Every person has the right to respect and a future we need to respect our future enough to explore our career.

Councillor, Strathbogie Shire

- Age appropriate
- Taking account of ability and development
- Student focussed
- Accessible to all
- Builds on students experiences and strengths

Shepparton ACE

- A system based on increasing contact with employers/interviewers as regularly as possible, beginning with school visits, site visits, work experience, part-time employment, etc.
- Show a prospective employer *how you can run things*. I.e.: get lots of examples of how you used problem-solving, organising skills and common sense in real-world ways.
- Be able to speak sensibly about the career or job you want to get. Research it, do work experience or part-time work in that area. Get to know the buzz words for that job.

Nathalia SC

- A whole of school approach – everybody valuing career transitions
- Fully integrated in the curriculum – not stand alone – so students can make the ‘link’
- Involves parents, school, child and community partnerships

Careers Co-ordinator, Rushworth P-12

What would further strengthen the delivery partnerships between government and non-government schools and between schools and VET providers?

Mutually beneficial partnerships and arrangements

What additional actions should Government take to support young people to complete initial qualifications in the VET sector?

The enrolments in the VET in Schools program has grown across schools in the region but issues of access to programs of choice presents a challenge.

There is a issue of weak tertiary provision which contributes to the low levels of transition of Year 12 completers into tertiary education.

Issues identified:

- Parity of esteem.
- Equity and equality across all provision and courses.
- Providing transport funding to increase access and overcome rural and regional disadvantage. Ensuring that schools do not decide to run courses based on cost.
- More expensive vocational and hands on subjects (time and cost) are often not run in preference for small classes of 'esteemed' academic and less costly subjects.
- Capacity to provide breadth of subjects in small rural schools immediately disadvantaged rural students under current funding models.

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Government/non-government

- Mutually beneficial partnership b/w school sectors.
- Transport to access of VET courses
- Balance of VCE vs VET – e.g. 3 students studying Physics vs 20 studying a VET subject

How can student transition to the VET sector, higher education and full-time employment be improved?

Implement transition programs across these sectors.

Remove barriers by removing substantial cost.

Make the application and acceptance processes simpler.

What other steps are required to assist schools' connection to the world of work?

The pressure is on schools and education systems to adjust to a changing environment, and to look to future and emerging needs of their clients, their communities, their countries and the global market.

Critical factors will be: opportunity for extended learning opportunities; increased access to further education; and success in school by more students. How well nations implement systems and policies to address these three areas, will determine their competitiveness in the global arena.

A new paradigm

This is a new paradigm for many educationalists that are products themselves of the “academic tradition” and their own history.

Relegating vocational education

There is danger in relegating vocational education and training to a lesser platform in education provision, where the competencies and training in employability skills are viewed solely as preparation for the workforce to meet the needs of industry’s skill shortages, because the educational scope is too narrow. A broader perspective is to develop innovative and higher order thinking skills for becoming an enterprising person.

Too often, this area is undervalued, because it is seen as a pathway for lower achieving students who do not fit into the traditional model of education delivery, and delivery arrangements are often external to the school.

The academic and vocational divide is not bridged, the wheel of theoretical subject knowledge grinds relentlessly against the hands on competency based one, both supporting the nations’ visions and needs, but operating in an oppositional environment and where the broad based comprehensive secondary system and the traditional Higher Certificate has the dominant value.

Easing the Cognitive Shift

“Vocational learning is not seen as teaching and learning and motivational tool to ease the cognitive shift by allowing an emphasis on applied learning, problem-solving and sharing of tasks.....howevervocational education is the single most important avenue for creating learning incentives and for raising achievement”(OECD 2007).

Because underachievement and low or no qualifications sentences a person to a lifetime of poorer outcomes and welfare dependency, addressing this issue is a priority for schools and systems across nations, because educational engagement and achievement is the means of breaking this pattern.

Secondary schools need to consider the benefits of assimilating vocational learning constructs into their comprehensive models, because the applied and collaborative problem solving

approach has the potential to address the risk of underachievement by making the learning more relevant to the learner and therefore providing incentives to learn.

This is particularly important for learners whose aspirations differ from the traditional academic pathway.

Traditional academic models in secondary schools can marginalize lower performers even further, because “just at the time when these economic connections must be made, the curriculum becomes:

- More specialized
- Conceptually demanding
- Appears to be inward looking and detached from reality

With no incentives, interest weakens and boredom sets in”.

(Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland, Reviews of National Policies for Education, 2007, OECD)

A culture change in teaching methodology

Implementing a teaching and learning style based on an applied and collaborative problem solving approach requires a culture change in teaching methodology where the teacher becomes a facilitator and consultant to students.

It requires teachers (and students) to take risks. It represents a power shift in the classroom. It focuses the spotlight on the processes that engage students in experiential learning, not on the content as the means and end in itself.

Working independently and cooperatively, the student engages in a process of learning by doing, and this includes permission to make mistakes, and celebration of successes.

The classroom becomes a rich environment focused on learning in relevant and interesting ways, linked to student interests and aspirations and therefore meaningful. This is a long way from the historic academic curriculum delivered in a “chalk and talk” style, which in turn is “light years away” from the demands of a global world.

“The global corporate curriculum is about sensation: it is textually rich, entertaining and engaging and has become the yardstick against which they judge and find wanting formal school curricula (Kenway et al 2003)

Implications for teachers

Schools potentially undertake a range of vocational education and training components in the curriculum such as education and industry links programs, enterprise education and project work, work experience placements, careers expos and conferences and industry tours. These programs and activities do not necessarily challenge the historical orientation and perceptions of teachers, and can be delivered as another bundle of content, rather than real learning.

As Fagan points out: teachers would gain from a theoretical understanding of the areas of enterprise, entrepreneurship and economic literacy.

Schools need to clearly understand the tensions, dynamics and implication of the new landscape and the potential role of schools and particularly vocational education in its broadest sense. They need to be challenged to move beyond the narrow view of delivering competencies for work readiness, or delivering a unit of study in the curriculum, as components of a traditional suite of offerings, without shifting their academic orientation.

Fagan’s paper, “Enterprising Education in Scotland: is Education for Work enough?” poses the following questions:

- Do teachers understand of the meaning of work in our society and in the future?
- Are they aware of shifting patterns of work and labour markets?
- Do they know how to help young people become more adaptable?

She argues that teachers and policy makers should examine the theoretical contexts of the changing nature of work in post-industrial societies in order to make informed choices about the contribution of schools education to our future society.

Her discussion points to the need to explore the changing patterns of work through empirical analysis of emerging conditions:

- How is expanding technology affecting our traditional occupations and encouraging new ones?

- What is the extent of the shift from industrial worker to knowledge worker?
- Look at the effects of globalization on the development of a knowledge economy.
- How does a nation develop local economies in relation to international factors?
- Look at work in relation to cultural issues and self definition. How do we deal with new classifications of work and activity?
- How do shifting patterns of age and gender of employees affect the working population?
- Consider questions of responsibility in relation to “civil society” and consider the role of education.

(Enterprising education in Scotland: is education for work enough?, Catherine Fagan, University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK, Journal of Educational Inquiry, Vol 7, No 1, 2007)

Basic Employability Skills that employers want:

Employers in North Eastern Victoria were asked when recruiting, whether they placed more importance on the applicant’s personal traits and qualities or on their technical skills and experience.

The highest proportion of employers surveyed in North Eastern Victoria (40%) thought that personal traits and qualities were the most important. A further 37% of employers considered that personal traits and qualities and technical skills were of equal importance, whilst 24% rated technical skill and experience as more important.

The sorts of personality traits or qualities sought after by employers included positive attitude, communication skills, teamwork skills, and reliability. These survey results indicate that in today’s labour market, jobs seekers need to have both technical or job-specific skills and basic employability skills. (DEEWR)

What other initiatives would improve school to tertiary education articulation and support young people to take advantage of the expansion of these sectors?

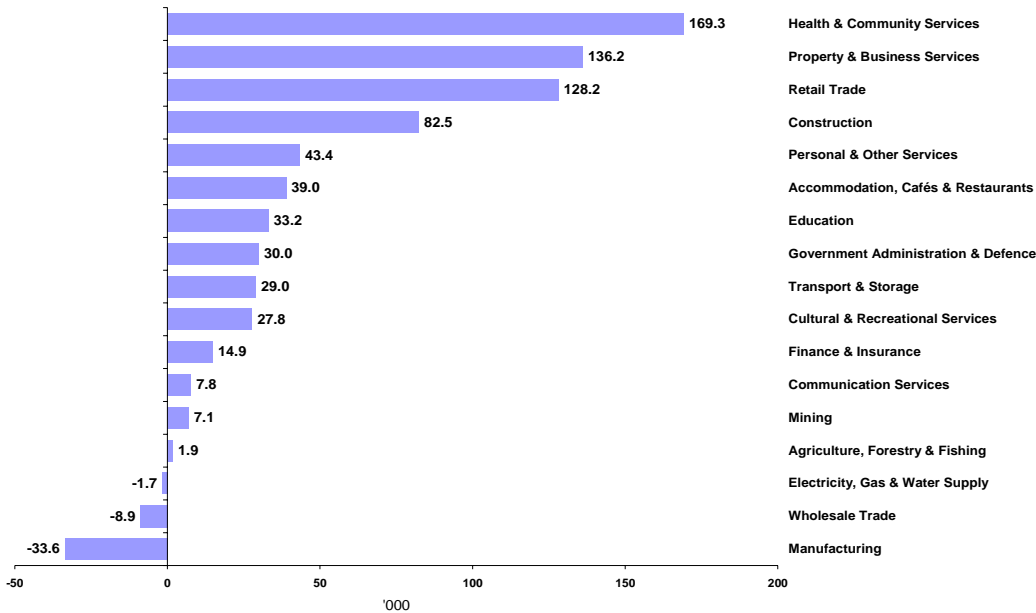
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- Increase affordable accommodation for young people to access Higher Education
- Articulation from TAFE to Uni
- Partnerships between Schools and Uni
- Localised delivery through learning hubs using technology, manned by mentors

Should efforts to improve VET to higher education articulation and credit arrangements focus on particular occupational pathways and skill priority areas, for example in engineering and nursing?

Attention should be paid to both current and future projected skill shortages.

Figure 3: Future Jobs Growth by Industry – Australia, 5 years to 2011-12.



Source: DEEWR, Australian Jobs, 2007.

Skills Victoria data

According to the 2006 Census, the four major planning industries in the Goulburn Ovens area, with their respective employment figures, are:

| | |
|--|--------|
| Business Services | 19,699 |
| Primary | 14,868 |
| Wholesale Retail and Personal Services | 12,553 |
| Community Services and Health | 11,689 |

Skills Victoria includes figures illustrating historical growth rates for each planning industry, and estimated growth rates between 2006 and 2011. The majority of planning industries are expected to experience a degree of growth, with the five largest estimated growth rates shown below;

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Water | 2.7% |
| Transport and Storage | 2.6% |
| Community Services and Health | 2.2% |
| Business Services | 2.0% |

Due to the lack of evidence provided to support these growth claims, it is unclear how these figures have been reached, especially for industries that have historically experienced decline.

Water Industry

It is also unclear what exactly is included within each industry title. 'Water', for example, is a rather ambiguous title that does not give a clear indication of the individual sectors that it comprises. What is clear, however, is that the water industry is predicted to become a high priority for the Goulburn Ovens area as the focus shifts slightly away from the effects of drought and starts to focus more heavily on climate change and ongoing water use and practices.

The water industry, including its components of agriculture, conservation and land management, civil engineering, is predicted to become a high priority for the Goulburn Ovens area, despite the effects of drought and climate change.

Health Services

The Health industry will experience growth across all regional areas, although meeting the demand will be an ongoing problem for many shires. At present there are a large number of overseas-trained employees working in the area, and it is expected that this trend will continue. All aspects of health care will require additional resources and concerted focus in the next few years, especially as the population continues to age and place increased pressure on health services.

There is a gradual shift within the sport and recreation sector towards health management and promotion - often focused on the older generations. Growth in that industry is not occurring in the traditional sporting areas, like personal training, but is moving towards support and ancillary services for the aged population. SV suggests that the Health industry will experience some growth,

Transport and Storage

There is a need to emphasise the role of logistics in this industry. The Goulburn Ovens Area is soon to become home to the Goulburn Valley Freight Logistics Centre, as well as a major part of the proposed Inland Rail Project to link Melbourne and Darwin. It is not only products that will be moving around and through the area, but people as well. Rising fuel prices will affect regional

populations more than city people, as public transport is not nearly as readily available or efficient. As a result, more efficient ways of moving people around the regional area will become a high priority in order to address the rising costs of living and financial burdens experienced by those living in rural areas.

The entire Transport industry will experience a huge amount of growth, and a large proportion of this growth will be directly related to logistics.

Retail

Retail is leveraged a great deal by fast food chains. There are great numbers of traineeships in fast food throughout the area, however the completion rates are very poor. This trend is not expected to change in the near future, and it is expected that supply of employees will continue to meet demand.

Despite the size of the Retail industry, especially in relation to younger workers, the current training practices are sufficient to maintain the status quo and even allow for slight growth in the industry.

Primary

Historical rainfall figures suggest that the Primary industry will face increasing difficulties and will struggle to grow. The implementation of better farming practices, however, will help to ease the pressures felt at present by farmers and business operators, and will eventually encourage growth across the entire industry.

In order for this to occur, specialist areas within the industry need to be identified and approached separately by training providers in order to result in experienced, advanced employees who will acknowledge and overcome future obstacles.

'Primary' refers to agriculture, horticulture and viticulture, but will also increasingly encompass other areas like conservation and land management, logistics, marketing, and people management.

Tourism and Hospitality

It is the consensus of the Goulburn Ovens Reference Group that 'Tourism' needs to be separated from 'Hospitality' to ensure training resources are properly distributed and directed.

Historically, the entire industry has been capped by Skills Victoria.

When combined, the industry as a whole appears to have a great deal of churn, when in reality Tourism is much more stable. The churn factor evident within Hospitality negatively impacts

upon Tourism, and the two industries need careful separation. One such explanation for this trend is the feeling that hospitality provides a job, while tourism is a career. When the two industries are approached in this way, it is clear that their needs are unique and very different from each other.

Though it does experience a great deal of churn, the Hospitality training and employment opportunities provide young people and employees with fundamental employability skills that will help in any career path they choose. Thus, there are elements of hospitality-related skills that will remain crucial for many industries that provide future career opportunities for those presently working part-time in hospitality, and it is these elements of the training in particular that need to continue.

Tourism is closely linked to geographical areas, and as such the industry is not the same across all shires. For some shires within the area, the existence of hospitality is very closely linked to tourism, and one will not survive without the other.

How can governments ensure that reforms to the VET and higher education sector address both skill needs and student demand for particular qualifications?

- Investigate more efficient and effective provision of VETiS and VCAL programs, and work with all relevant providers across the networks to plan provision for these programs.
- Investigate school options and initiatives to enhance the range, quality and efficiency of provision.
- Strengthen dialogue on the risks of early school leaving.
- Improve the range, efficiency and quality of provision.
- Consider:
 - Restructuring;
 - Specialisation or partial specialisation between providers;
 - The development of hubs which support networks and provide or facilitate some program delivery;
 - The establishment of virtual colleges made up of collectives of providers;
 - Direct partnerships between providers, including providers across the different sectors;
 - The use of purchasing as a mechanism to exploit these options. (KEATING)

INCREASED PARTNERSHIP MODELS

- Partnerships with parents & communities:
- Community Hubs
- Partnerships with business
- Place-based approaches
- Meeting diverse needs

How can governments improve provision and articulation arrangements to better support young people, especially in rural and regional areas, to access tertiary qualifications without need to relocate?

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- Increase articulation between TAFE/VET and Uni, not just in skill shortage areas. E.g. VU & RMIT already doing this. + Wodonga TAFE & CSU
- Technological options e.g. Video link – need to look at action research on best ways to teach in the medium; assist with access + “Learning Hubs” with assistance of mentors.

Many innovations and equipment are not available in the local area, despite a clear need for increased expertise and improvements. In order to meet the needs of local industry, and help them to perform on a global scale, regional students need access to these new technologies, wherever they may be.

At present, a large number of students seek further education in urban centres where resources and expertise are more readily available, while adequate technology and equipment remains under-utilised in regional areas due to a lack of demand and a lack of operational ability. In order to address this trend, regional training providers need to provide students with access to expert knowledge to ensure improvements in agriculture and horticulture industries, for example, will assist local businesses to increase productivity and minimise the effects of climate change.

Deferral

Technological progress is common to all nations, and there will be fewer jobs available overall with the successful applicants having the higher qualifications.

And yet recent studies on rural students have revealed:

- A trend of increasing regional disadvantage

- A pattern of rising rates of deferral (at least 2 and a half times greater than in the city)
- Approximately three in 10 (30.1%) do not take up a place at university after one year
- Deferrers from regional areas less likely to take up a university place than others
- Financial barriers remained prominent among the reasons given by young people for having not taken up a place in education or training
- Students working long hours while at university were more likely to have dropped out of their course.

What other actions should be contemplated by institutions and government?

Changes have been made in education policy but **issues of inequality, associated with socio-economic status, poverty and deprivation remain largely unaddressed.**

Schools face the challenge of addressing diversity and poor transitions, especially for the most disadvantaged groups. As Teese points out, “how will schools manage diversity if they export the challenges?”

They run the risk of entrenching academic culture and will continually reproduce the gap in achievement”. (OECD 2007)

It is important that nations monitor and review their systems in order to improve the quality of their systems, and for public accountability purposes. International studies and comparisons look for relationships between the variables with the aim of defining effective policies and systems.

The OECD (2006) has outlined some policy mechanisms that are characteristic of effective national systems:

- •Flexible & responsive systems
- •Motivated young people wanting to learn
- •Education and work linked
- •Open access to qualifications
- •Diverse assessments
- •Progressive qualifications

- •Transparent qualification system
- •Efficient funding systems
- •Better managed qualification system

and also characteristics of effective transition systems in education:

- A healthy economy
- Well organised pathways to work or further study
- Opportunities to combine workplace experience with education
- Tight safety nets for those at risk
- Good information and guidance
- Effective institutions and processes

(OECD 2000, p16)

By addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged groups, we will gain higher levels of qualification completion for more students overall, and this will be the critical leverage that maintains competitive advantage in the world markets.

This means addressing the poverty and poorer completion rates of the most disadvantaged groups in communities. This is where the difference will be made

KEY CHALLENGES

- Build stronger partnerships with industry and business
- Implement the Regional Youth Commitment across sectors, supporting all young people into education , training and employment
- Identify Champions
- Increase tertiary pathway options locally
- Improve transition from primary to secondary schools
- Work with families of aboriginal, ethnic and low SES backgrounds

How can Youth Connections be implemented in Victoria to most effectively re-engage young people with education and training?

What services should Youth Connections service providers use to establish effective referral and working arrangements?

Should LLENs be provided some flexibility to facilitate and broker service provision to people 20 and over, in line with the flexibility in Youth Connection service provision?

LLEN's already cover a cohort of 10 – 19. Youth Connections do not. To compare the work of the two is difficult as they are different in both their role and the outcomes they are expected to achieve. There is much to be considered before it would be appropriate for the LLENs to step into this brokerage of partnerships to support the people 20 and over and this was clearly the case with the change in age and stakeholder cohorts for the new Enhanced LLEN obligations for 2010 - 2013. These were:

- Increased funding that really did not align with the increased expectations to facilitate partnerships for 10 – 19 year olds whilst also increasing the cohorts of stakeholders. This change has clearly stretched the limited capacity of most LLENs.
- Organisational restructuring around our incorporation as not-for-profit organisations and requirements to amend our Rules of Association and, in some cases, other governance requirements to accommodate a change in age cohorts.
- Confusion about the role of the LLENs. We have just gone through a transitioning and consultation process with members and stakeholders to inform them of the changes for 2010 – 2013.
- The need for additional funding to support such a proposal. Currently the LLEN's do not have the financial capacity to provide further partnership brokerage provision.

Overall, providing flexibility will not provide the capacity to engage in facilitation and brokerage for people over 20.

Is the range of qualifications on offer to re-engage young people adequate? (Existing qualifications include VCAL, adult VCE, the General Certificate of Adult Education and the Diploma of Further Education.)

Is this an offensive question? Where is VCE and VET? Why is there an assumption that young people who need to be reengaged are not particularly intelligent. There are many examples of young people who have not re-engaged with education and training because they did not fit the system, not because they were incapable of learning. Boredom is also a reason intelligent young people disengage from school.