

Stronger Futures for All Young Victorians

Swinburne's Response to the DIIRD Discussion Paper
on the Youth Transitions System

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June 2010



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Response to the DIIRD Discussion Paper on Youth Transitions

Introduction

The Victorian Government wants to ensure that all young people acquire the knowledge and skills to make a successful transition from compulsory schooling to independent adult working life. Its focus for the purposes of this paper is on young people between 15 and 24 years of age as it is this group who are likely to be transitioning from sector to sector. It is acknowledged that the knowledge and skills possessed by young people on entry to the workforce are critical to both theirs and the State's economic prosperity.

The Australian government and COAG has set national targets of:

- Lifting the Year 12 completion rates to 90%
- Halving the proportion of people aged 20 – 64 without a Certificate III or above
- Doubling the number of diploma and advanced diploma completions
- Lifting to 40% the proportion of people aged between 20 and 34 who hold a bachelor degree with 20% of these from low socio-economic status backgrounds.

Achieving these targets will require an improvement in the general level of educational achievement across the entire 15 – 24 year cohort with a focus on transitions between sectors with a particular emphasis on those transitioning from:

- Indigenous backgrounds
- Low socio-economic backgrounds
- Families under stress
- Low achievers
- Refugees and other newly arrived communities
- Neighbourhoods with pronounced poverty or remote locations.

The DIIRD paper articulates the strengths and challenges faced by our system and whilst it proposes a way forward it also seeks answers from stakeholders to a number of key questions.

This paper is Swinburne's response to each of the questions posed in the DIIRD paper and also outlines in the Appendix, several initiatives that Swinburne has already implemented to support the cohort described in this paper to transition to and from sectors and intra sectors. It also included draft proposals that would require government support to implement, each has the potential of making a significant impact on the success of Youth Transitions.

Swinburne would welcome the opportunity to discuss these opportunities further with the appropriate stakeholders.

1. Strengthening literacy and numeracy in the post-compulsory years

Key question:

How can we continue to improve the current youth transitions system?

Key points outlined in the paper are:

- Low achievement in literacy and numeracy (L&N) is associated with low levels of engagement with schooling and with the non-completion of initial qualifications
- Low levels of functional L&N can serve as a barrier to business growth

Great improvements in L&N are shown by sustained interventions in early years – this should be supported and sustained for those who need it as they progress through schooling.

- VCE, VCAL and entry level VET qualifications provide students with opportunity to acquire additional L&N skills however attainment of the qualification is not dependent on achievement of specific L&N standards
- There is a call for L&N standards to be introduced into Victorian senior secondary certificates – new national curriculum is being introduced from 2011 – this could inform the introduction of standards in Victoria.
- Introducing new L&N standards would need to be accompanied by support for teachers and trainers to strengthen the acquisition of these skills by young people
- Proposal that in Govt Secondary schools students who don't meet L&N benchmark by Year 9 will be provided with specific learning plan as part of MIPS to ensure that they reach benchmark.
- NQC recommend that L&N requirements be made more explicit in the development of lower level VET qualifications and as a core skill requirement for participation in qualifications from Cert 3 and above.
- Evidence exists that many ACE and VET providers have adopted the practice of enrolling students in programs to strengthen L&N skills where low prior achievement is diagnosed.

1.1 Swinburne's General Response

Swinburne broadly agrees with the above key items from the paper and acknowledge that in many of the discussions there does tend to be a focus on working with 'youth at risk' for whom significant resource intensive work needs to be undertaken, however, we feel that it is also important not to overlook the other youth who fall into this age bracket, many of whom find transitioning between sectors difficult even although they are not part of the 'at risk' profile.

The briefing sessions acknowledged that focussing on year 9 and above may seem to ignore the myriad of issues and contributing factors associated with poor L&N levels that occurs before age 15 and that these issues are being addressed via other means.

Swinburne concurs with the need to focus on issues prior to Year 9 that impact on L&N standards and agree that sustaining L&N support post year 9 is crucial to ongoing individual success. Sustained support for this cohort needs to be backed by specific accountability and

funding which acknowledges a 'life long' approach to gaining L&N skills. That is, because of some significant blockers to learning, some individuals don't gain L&N skills until at least their 30s which are strengthened during their life long learning journey, so a cut off point of 24 seems out of step with acknowledging life long learning journeys and varying stages of readiness to learn. It is important to note that we see it as essential that whatever the form that L&N support takes with this cohort, it is absolutely critical that it doesn't exacerbate existing feelings of exclusion.

We also believe that is important to distinguish between 'low L&N' and 'poor L&N'. Anecdotally, we hear that employers express dismay at poor L&N ability of students who exit into employment with a qualification (at times at a high level). Recent research has indicated that Australian workforce entrants seem to have lower problem solving abilities than comparable cohorts in other countries and Swinburne would suggest that improving problem solving ability as well as L&N ability should be a focus for improvement.

Swinburne is committed to supporting youth transitions and have set up a variety of award winning initiatives to support youth in their transition between School to TAFE, School to University, from TAFE to TAFE, TAFE to work, work to TAFE, TAFE to University, University to TAFE, University to Work, Community to TAFE, community to University – See Appendices.

Our experience has shown us that there are several critical elements of success and these are:

- A total philosophy of applied learning approaches, making learning real, with the student at the centre and having input into every step of the way of his or her learning which in many instances is project based.
- Complete acknowledgement of the non educational requirements of students of this age group to experience success and the resources allocated to support these non educational requirements
- An environment of 100% respect where everyone is treated as an adult which works all ways – students and teachers, students and students, students and organisation. We fully acknowledge that mistakes happen and that the world isn't a perfect place and that everyone deserves a second chance, and this philosophy and an environment of respect, this is supported by all.
- Selection of staff to work with the youth is also a critical element of success. We have found that the teachers who are most successful working with our youth cohort are those not just with the right qualifications, but with the right suitability and attitudes – ie suitability is more than just having the right qualifications.
- Supporting students to gain skill sets not just full qualifications, whilst encouraging and fostering a life-long learning approach enables students to move between and within sectors as appropriate
- Swinburne also advocates for the development of a core skills accreditation framework from School→TAFE→University that is linear from the equivalent of Cert I→masters that includes secondary school attainment, TAFE, employability skills and graduate learning attributes providing students with additional independently accredited qualifications for literacy and numeracy.

1.1.1 Responses to specific questions

■ *What form should the proposed literacy and numeracy standards take?*

Australia's School system is set up to promote students from Prep at age 5 to University at about age 18, with passages from level to level based on a pre determined set of standards that are steeped in L&N. We wish to acknowledge that standards relating to that pathway are an important, but by no means should they be the only types of standards, as the percentage of students who embark on such a lineal pathway from prep to Uni is diminishing – not just because it is not everyone's aspiration, but because we also need skills in areas that Universities as they are currently configured don't deliver on, for example higher level trades.

We believe that L&N standard setting should not just focus on academic standards, but also on L&N as they pertain to life skills – technical and practical L&N as well as academic and these should be referred to in an equal way, not as one being superior or more highly sought and rewarded than the other. That is, the form of the standards needs to be relevant and linked to pathways and goals.

Europe already has a framework for L&N attainment that can be mapped against Australian standards, creating a global value to L&N attainment.

We propose that the hierarchy of importance of L&N skills as they are currently measured needs to be challenged with the view of including more technical and practical L&N skills as well. To this end, we pose the question: Should there be different standards for different frameworks of Schooling and post School activities?

The target of 40% of the population having a Bachelor degree may run the risk of diminishing the status of degrees and denies Australia's need for more hands on practical and problem solving skills, not just academic skills. In other words, one size does not fit all (one set of standards does not fit all circumstances) and neither it should.

Swinburne proposes a re-think of types of Bachelor degrees be considered to enable parity of esteem between an academic Bachelors degree and a technical or master class/artisan higher VET qualification.

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

The ability to teach L&N skills to adults is a specialist field and needs to be acknowledged as such – it is not a case of "I can read and write, therefore I can teach it." This sort of attitude denies a whole body of pedagogy and expertise that sits behind the support needed to support the acquisition of L&N skills and is not helpful in supporting life long learning options for those with low L&N. With the increased richness of data that is being accrued about student standards, perhaps

this may suggest a particular skill set needed by teachers to assist students in the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills in the post compulsory years.

There are pockets of teachers in post secondary institutions of with these specialist skills and qualifications, however with the pressure on VET teachers to have a duality of expertise – ie teaching expertise plus an industry specialisation, there is a diminishing bank of teachers with this expertise and diminishing guaranteed funding to support specific courses aimed at strengthening L&N. For the realisation of support for 15 – 24 year olds to increase their L&N skills there needs to be a corresponding set of funds put aside for the training and employment of teachers with this specialisation to guide their learning. Specialist L&N teachers are most effective if they can work alongside teachers with the industry expertise, but again the funding of this needs deep consideration.

For learners to acquire L&N skills, a whole other set of hierarchy of needs have to be met before they can begin to take responsibility for their own learning – issues such as isolation, loneliness, poverty, health issues etc, all need to be addressed before education is trusted or sought after. To this end, we feel it is critical to have many more support mechanisms in Schools and post school organisations and in the community to support the non academic issues associated with transition before the L&N aspects can be fully addressed. This would require increased funding and training of specific cohorts of staff within Schools, communities, TAFEs, Universities.

Creating an aspirational accreditation pathway for L&N skills in their own right would link school and post school attainment of L&N. Also curriculum pedagogy and 'scheme' links would add value where adult L&N involved teaching methodologies in school assisting adults in the home to mirror learning and raise aspirations and attainment and support learning.

2. Support for Making informed educational and training choices

Key Question:

How can we assist young people to make informed choices about their future education, training and employment options?

Key points in the paper are:

- Quality career development services are key elements of the support needed – they have the potential to raise student aspirations, heighten engagement and motivate them towards completing a qualification. On Track survey data cites better career advice as being critical to students deciding to stay in education.
- Post compulsory education choices require young people to have an understanding of their career and study alternatives, and their personal interests and aptitudes to be able to select pathways that are right for them.
- Victoria is moving towards a demand driven VET and H Ed sectors.

- Evidence suggests that the provision of supporting developmental skills so that young people can manage their careers into the future are better developed in Schools than they are in TAFE and ACE sectors. The quality of these services is uneven
- Research shows that approximately 20% of young people do not know what is required to meet their career aspirations and of those planning a technical or professional occupations, 56% plan to attend University and only 25% plan to commence a VET qualification
- A National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, a joint initiative of the Victorian and National governments is improving career development services through the provision of four new initiatives.
- There are arguments for the introduction of a career plan as part of the enrolment requirements for the VCE and VCAL

2.1 Swinburne's General Response

Swinburne agrees with the sentiments that it is important to raise the standards of career advisory services however caution that we should not only be applying adult thinking/brains to this aspect of career pathways and that wish to support the suggestion that skills and that career choices are developmental over several years and should not rely on last minute advice. That is, we need to beware that we are not applying mainstream thinking to non mainstream approaches. Additionally, we believe that it should be acknowledged that at 15 many or most young people in fact do not know which path they wish to travel and that this is OK and that young people should not be made feel inadequate for not knowing the directions in life that they wish to pursue.

It is noted that considerable research has been conducted into how and when young people make career choices however, we would be particularly interested to know whether there are any established links or research that indicates whether there are proven positive relationships between career advice and career planning.

The most important advice that Swinburne career counselling specialists would prefer to give the youngest in this target cohort is to pursue a well rounded education and to leave their options for their future open if they don't have a specific interest in mind.

Supporting this advice is feedback from our employers when asked what skills are most important for young people to have on entering employment, and the replies generally indicate a demand for a well rounded individual with well developed 'soft skills' rather than specific job related skills.

Swinburne believes that caution should be applied to the implementation of regionally based career counsellors to ensure that focus of advice is wider than just skills shortages in the area at the time. Parents also need the tools to make informed judgements as to career pathways and aspirations and transparent comparable data is necessary. We need to move from entry based quantum indicators of educational institutes like VTAC entry to more outcome related quality indicators providing information for more informed purchasing decisions.

2.1.1 Responses to specific questions

- ***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 the subsequent education, training, and employment settings

As mentioned above, our experience has been that many young people do not have a concept of where they are heading or wish to head, and that this concept does not fit well with our current mainstream educational approach, hence we believe that for this young cohort, that a well rounded generalist education would be of more benefit and would also meet the needs of employers in the long run. The bottom line for this thinking is that some young people take longer than others to reach the same destination.

A career plan for a young person will only engage them if it is meaningful, something that they want and can connect with, and is accessible. (For example, I have to pass year 10 to get into the pre-app in carpentry so I can get the apprenticeship that I want.) This means that it needs to be a visual pathway plan that is accessible on line enabling young people to own it and change it. Focussing on the end result and the alternative pathways not just the next step or one solution.

Swinburne's experience in conducting 'career taster' type courses to young people is that these have been very successful for those young people who have attended. There is one drawback to this success and that is that in many cases, students only get to experience these if their School based teacher identifies and nominates them as candidates and undertakes to organise this on behalf of the students. This indicates that teachers in Schools could probably benefit from some additional support to determine why they are nominating some students and not others. Also many careers teachers have no VET experience which limits scope of understanding. Anecdotal evidence suggests that sometimes organisations internal requirements around enrolment, timetabling etc can often be counter productive to what is trying to be achieved so advice would be to work towards making it easier for the temporary transition between sectors.

Swinburne's experience with Indigenous youth suggests that they actively seek out educational pathways that are specifically targeted towards Indigenous and that the Certificate 1 and 2 and 3 in Mumgu-dhal tyama-tiyt is a preferred option for this cohort rather than VCAL or VCE. 50% of enrolments in these courses are under 25 years of age and we believe that their next choices in education at a higher level are based on whether they feel comfortable or that the course is Indigenous specific rather than a deliberate choice based on what career aspirations they may have. In other words, for this particular cohort, the need to feel comfortable in the educational setting is greater than the need for the course to lead to a career outcome.

■ *What other actions should be taken to ensure that sound career development services are available to young Victorians?*

Career development services need to be simple, local and independent and integrated with mainstream programs, not 'bolted on'. That is, a single point of contact – with many doors into the same room where young people can connect with

any service, be it school, government, TAFE, University and each person gets the support that they need.

The UK national 'Connexions Direct' program provides an entitlement to all 13-19 year olds for independent advice and guidance for all students, not just at risk. This was a service outside the School system and directly increased participation and engagement. Many governments have created 'skills stores' in Australia for adults, and a specialised service for Year 9-12 would be highly regarded and effective.

It is more likely that sound career choices are made by young Victorians if there is an acknowledgement that traditional academic success is not the only indicator of a successful transition into the workforce. This set of attitudes has a strong societal backing and without re engineering society's attitudes, those who do not do well in traditional schooling will continue to be those whose aspirations to continue education and training will be diminished before they start. Valuing other employability skills in the selection processes is vital.

At some stage in our approach to ensuring sound career development services, we also need to be considering improving society support for students who do not manage the traditional school path as defined by the traditional thinking about what school success is. It seems ludicrous to continue to push the same things to the same students for whom traditional educational approaches have failed in the past.

Seeking sound career development services do not fit at the top of the hierarchy list for many of our young people. Using the Maslow's hierarchy of needs approach; we believe that it is unlikely that young people would be interested in planning their career if basic needs are not attended to. In other words, career planning would only be a priority after finances, housing, emotional, health and medical issues are sorted, so our belief is that one way of strengthening career development approaches for many, is to ensure that their basic needs are attended to first. To this end, we recommend that support services such as Centre Link, Youth Support Services, Disability Support Services, Counselling Services and other support services should be located in accessible areas for young people so that they can achieve a one stop shop for all their support services of which one could be careers advisory services (again, similar to Connexions in the UK). Currently for young people, trying to navigate through the maze and literally going from one place to another makes dealing with issues that need to be dealt with quite difficult and often means that young people just wont be supported to deal with what ever they need to.

Introducing a career plan as part of the enrolment into VCE or VCAL is supported however we caution that this plan should not be static and that it should be constantly revisited over a period of time and adapting it via a case management approach it should also be developed through an independent holistic guidance service, not the supplier/school or purchaser/TAFE/University.

■ ***How can business/industry be more involved in assisting students' career choices?***

The opportunities for young people to experience the world of work is important and often leads to part time employment. Businesses and industries are critical support factors to assist young people to 'try before they buy' however, finding work placements for young people is becoming increasingly difficult.

One suggestion is that a government incentives for businesses to take on work experience students would greatly support transitions between educational institutions at all levels and work.

Once young people have experienced the world of work, the job of a career counsellor /advisor needs to also embrace supporting students learning how to deal with the world of work – not just about getting a job. For example, getting to work on time – what is required? Having lunch at work if there are no shops – what has to happen? How to deal with a boss who listens to a radio station that you don't like? Again, accrediting employability skills developed during work experience would raise credibility.

3. Arrangements that support and encourage young people to complete year 12 or equivalent

Key Question:

How can Victoria reach its target of achieving more than 90% attainment of year 12 or equivalent by 2015?

Key points in the paper are:

- Young people are more likely to make a successful transition into the workforce if they have attained year 12 or equivalent. Victoria has adopted an ambitious target of achieving more than 90% attainment of Year 12 or equivalent by 2015
- Significant reforms have been introduced over the past decade to lift completion rates.
- Victoria's Youth Guarantee program has been expanded to provide a guaranteed place in a school, TAFE or ACE for all unqualified Victorians regardless of their age.
- The incidence of failure to attain Year 12 or equivalent at 19 is concentrated in low socio-economic locations. 50% of non-attainment is concentrated in 15 Victorian local government areas.
- In 2010, these areas are targeted under the National Partnership on Low SES Communities, with intensive strategies over 4 years to raise attainment in compulsory years of schooling and beyond.
- Many students leave school without completing Year 12 or equivalent due to not having access to subjects they are interested in. There are partnerships now in many locations to improve student options with LLENS playing effective brokerage roles in establishing these arrangements.
- There is scope to improve the qualification completion rates of young people in the VET sector.

- Some jurisdictions have established greater institutional specialisation in curriculum and qualifications.
- Many students leave school early due to difficulties coping with the study demands of VCE and would be encouraged to stay with additional support.
- High quality teaching and learning are acknowledged as being the most influential factors in student engagement and achievement.
- Adopting individualised learning approaches and more flexible approaches to delivery works.
- The Victorian Student Number introduced in Schools in 2009 will be implemented in the VET sector in 2010 which will provide the capability to track and analyse data about education in Victoria to inform refinement of approaches.
- TECs have been identified as best practice in supporting young people to attain initial qualifications in the VET and ACE sectors.

3.1 Swinburne's General Response

Swinburne fully concurs with the sentiments of the paper that high quality teaching and learning are the most influential factors in student engagement and achievement and to this end should receive considerable focus for improvement.

To encourage and support this target, Swinburne believe that there is a need to get more information into ALL government support agencies so that advice and support from one area does not contradict advice given in another area. This shared information needs to be accompanied with a fuller understanding by all stakeholders (including parents) of the variety of pathway options that are available to young people.

The combination of mis-communication between Schools, Parents, TAFEs, and H Eds is quite often the cause of young people choosing inappropriate pathways or leaving school when they shouldn't.

At Swinburne, we have observed that in some Schools there seems to be a social stigma attached to students who undertake VCAL and would suggest that there needs to be increased leadership at government level to ensure adequate marketing is done that turns this 'second rate' schooling philosophy around.

We also believe that additional consideration needs to be given to the specific needs of the CALD group of young people whose parents and support networks may also require specific types of support to encourage these youth to complete schooling.

Projects like our Smith Family initiative cannot be ignored, recognising that second generational aspiration is key to Year 12 attainment. Therefore learning plans that link adult/parent education and attainment to youth outcomes is key - cross sectoral partnerships with common purpose.

As put forward at the briefing, if the funding was attached to the individual young person, we believe that this would lead to greater equity of choice for all young people in Victoria and that young people's attainment cannot be separated from cultural, community, family aspiration and a whole education solution is required..

3.1.1 Responses to specific questions

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

As the paper outlines, we strongly support the need for a local system/process that makes transition between these institutions seamless and non complicated.

Our current experience in conducting taster courses and VET in School courses whereby students are released from their Schools for one day a week to attend TAFE is an excellent example of how different sectors can work cooperatively together.

We also recognise that there are a number of structural and sometimes financial barriers (eg VET fees on top of School fees) to be overcome in each sector that relate to aspects such as time tabling, course constructs, course fees, VCAA rules and other 'running the business' types of aspects that can impede partnerships between government and non-government schools and VET providers. The complexities of funding and rules relating to training packages and other curricula do not seem to always support delivery partnerships and there is a need for a review of funding arrangements and curriculum/training packing rules that would strengthen partnerships considerably. Creation of learning partnerships across sectors with joint strategic goals would assist greatly.

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

The introduction of a 'navigator' role into the VET sector would assist young people to complete initial qualifications. This would be a person who young people meet at the start of the qualification and who follows the young person all the way through. This role would be to identify and respond to early signs of disengagement and arrange a flexible response. We know that many non planned events happen in the lives of young people and the need to be able to navigate through and around these needs to be supported. (Again this was part of the Connexions service in the UK).

- ***What greater levels of institutional specialisation in curriculum and qualification delivery result in improved quality of provision and support increased student attainment of Year 12 or an equivalent vocational qualification?***

Greater levels of institutional specialisation in curriculum and qualification delivery would mean a more concentrated effort in particular industry sectors which in turn would mean greater economies of scale and therefore better equipment, more staff and so on. In principle this sounds like an excellent approach, however ACE and TAFE providers report that young people who leave traditional schooling early are not likely to travel very far from their neighbourhood to continue their studies. This

has as much to do with their age and maturity level as it does with their mobility and ability to fund their own travel.

To this end, we suggest that whilst in principle we support the notion of institutional specialisation in curriculum, there are other social factors that may come in to play that would inhibit young people moving out of their local environment to attend institutions that specialise in a particular curriculum and qualification area. This would indicate that generic lower level qualifications should be available at most ACE or TAFE providers and that specialisation would work better at higher level qualifications when young people are more mobile and able to shift.

■ ***How should schools, VET providers and system authorities use the new transparency and accountability arrangements in Victorian schools and the Victorian Student Number to improve the completion rate to Year 12 or equivalent qualifications***

We are not sure that the transparency and accountability arrangements in themselves are the keys to improving the completion rate to Year 12 – ie one is not a cause of the other. Rather, these will be most useful as tracking measures to indicate the areas where support most needs to be in place. These accountability arrangements will help funding bodies to plan and track where best to allocate funds. This VSN needs to be continued through the lifelong learning pathway, including VET and HEEd.

■ ***What other strategies could be introduced to lift qualification completion rates for young people in the schools and the VET sectors?***

Knowing the system and what fits with what and what is needed to apply for each course/institution and how to do it seems daunting, so we would suggest a systematic method of briefing young people and their parents (some sort of core education about the system and how it fits together) before they make choices so that they have all options clearly set out.

High School curriculum and delivery mode doesn't seem to have changed in a long time and may be out of step with the needs of how some young people learn. For instance, rules relating to attendance times, class times and content seem at odds with a new and emerging reality of social networking and communication, and on-line learning, all of which may be suitable for some areas of the curriculum. A review of the 'rules' that are imposed on young people in the school system after say 15 years of age could be reconsidered based on new insights re why students disconnect from schooling. Or, conversely, the question could be raised: Why do high achievers have to stay at school?

Recently, Swinburne held an Expression of Interest evening at Lilydale to ascertain interest of young people who may be interested in undertaking VCAL at night – 30 applications were received on the night – this indicates that there is a need to rethink the 8.30am – 3.30pm School day for some cohorts.

Separate accreditation and recognition of employability skills would raise aspirations and value.

■ ***How can businesses and industry be involved in increasing completion rates – especially for apprenticeships?***

As mentioned in previous answers we believe that government incentives given to businesses and industries to take on more young people for work experience would serve to increase the options open to young people to get apprenticeships and other work experience.

Along with these incentives would come the need to educate the industries who are taking on these young people as to what is appropriate and what is not? There are currently many systems in place such as LLENS and ACs and so on that act as the go between for businesses and work, in a brokerage role. Adding student and business support roles to these functions could assist increase completion rates for Year 12 or equivalent in the schools and similarly in for VET and H Ed qualifications. Completion bonuses have a significant impact.

4. Systems that assist students move effectively between courses, institutions and sectors

Key Question:

How can we assist young people to transition seamlessly between sectors?

Key points in the paper are:

The process of articulation is a tool for building stronger career paths for young people and these paths should enable seamless progression through qualifications, being granted credit where eligible.

- For Australia to achieve significant increases in VET and H Ed enrolments and qualifications, articulation arrangements are essential
- COAG has set targets to halve the proportion of 16 – 64 year olds without Certificate III or above and to increase to 40% the proportion of people aged 25 – 34 holding a bachelor degree.
- Meeting these targets requires greater retention of enrolled students in all sectors
- The articulation challenge has implications for the design of new qualifications and the redesign of existing qualifications
- Victoria leads the way nationally in articulation arrangements and is in a position to influence national outcomes.
- The AQF Council are working on strengthening the AQF to encourage consistency in qualifications in and between sectors.
- The 2009 On Track data indicates that 46% of Year 12 completers entered university and 26% entered VET.
- The provision of 'reach forward' opportunities in Schools assists articulation and foster explicit partnerships between Schools, VET and University providers.

- Pilot programs of Industry Themed Programs (ITPs) in VCE and VCAL are being developed in Manufacturing, Building and Construction and Community Services and Health. These will be trialled at 3 sites using a consortia approach to delivery beginning 2011.
- Partnerships between Universities and Schools will be further encouraged particularly to promote H Ed for students from low socio-economic backgrounds.
- Further guidance and advice on appropriate assessment practices should be offered to RTOs delivering VET in Schools
- Structured workplace learning opportunities could support strong articulation and provide clear pathways to higher level VET qualifications.
- \$20M funding of a National Partnership initiative is provided for Workplace Learning Coordinators who will contribute to increasing alignment between VET provision in schools and local industry needs.
- The ENTER is the major mechanism for facilitating movement from School to Higher Education, however research indicates that selection based on the ENTER is a weaker indicator of student success in Higher Education courses for students with ENTERs below 80.
- Recent reforms to higher education will create a student demand driven sector comprising a larger and more diverse cohort of students.
- Articulation partnerships forged between schools and universities will provide opportunities and create pressures for student entry based on local rather than state-wide processes.

4.1 Swinburne's General Response

Swinburne agrees that articulation arrangements are important however also agree that the ENTER score is only most useful as an indicator for school league tables and University entrance. We believe that there are a greater range of opportunities for articulation via many other means and that these are extremely valuable approaches that need to be more fully marketed to young people and their significant supporters.

The paper is not clear about the future role of VTAC and it seems that the more local and direct offers are made to students rather than statewide selection processes, the less useful the VTAC selection processes seems to become.

For transition to work most effectively, we believe that young people need have a 'line of sight' that they can aim towards without the complexities of additional scores and/or tests to jump through as hurdles. Increased opportunities for workplace learning may assist focus and support this line of sight and subsequent pathways.

Swinburne's Guaranteed Entry Scheme (GES) and Pathways Transition project is a direct response to this issue.

4.1.1 Responses to specific questions

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

An obvious transition arrangement to assist students in transition is for Institutions to offer increased flexibility in the delivery and nature of VET and H Ed courses. This would enable young people to stay in employment whilst studying and indeed if

curriculum could be designed to include important learning from the workplace, this would also facilitate real world learning supported by critical reflection and analysis which would stand young people in excellent stead for their future life long learning journeys.

Because many 19 to 24 year olds need to support themselves financially, Swinburne suggests a review of the Youth Allowance rules which disadvantage some young people in the choices that they are able to make thus inhibiting smooth transitions across sectors.

For some young people, especially those from low socio economic backgrounds the HECS burden is seen as complex and can become a distraction to those seeking transition. A review of how the HECS and other fee help schemes work needs to occur to demystify them and to make them seemingly less onerous.

Students seem to be increasingly opting to take a 'gap' year between school and their next formal learning engagement and we believe that this is an aspect that requires further attention with respect to how effectively we can re-engage a young person after having had a year (or more) out of formal study. One option could be to consider how to capture and 'credit' some of the learning in that year towards a qualification, thus allowing this cohort to fast track. Making students aware of the RPL processes prior to them leaving school may give them an insight as to the sorts of evidence that they may collect along their working life journey that could be 'converted' towards a recognized qualification.

Transition skills accredited and embedded into existing delivery (see appendix) is crucial to preparing the student for success. It should not be seen as additional, but compulsory.

■ ***What other steps are required to assist schools; connection to the world of work?***

Government incentives to organisations who demonstrate in their budget that they support education for young people would be an excellent factor of support for both Higher Ed and VET course delivers and could herald a complete re think of curriculum and delivery methodology if known and supported internships were available, desirable and supported.

Some industries (eg Nursing) report that are funded for additional training for graduates once they enter the world of work to make sure that they are work ready. If this is an issue in other industries, then it would be helpful for industry if work ready skills were developed whilst students were undertaking a course, so the value of industry placements would be readily seen by industry as well as assisting students to transition to the world of work.

The suggestion to extend the traineeship process would be worthy of investigation to embrace a wider range of new start for young people. A traineeship program that

has a percentage of work and a percentage of formal study could be refined and applied to non traditional traineeship cohorts. Strategic partnerships relating to local areas of employment are crucial for developing relevance.

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

One of the inhibiting factors that is noticed from a dual sector organisation perspective is the seemingly conflicting targets that are set by government bodies. Organisations that cohabit successfully often do so at a greater deal of difficulty than seems necessary so that each sector can meet imposed targets. A review of targets so that one doesn't conflict with the other would free up organisations to focus on streamlining transitions for students rather than meeting seemingly conflicting targets.

As mentioned in a previous response, a movement or campaign to dispel the notion of elitism in Higher Education is necessary because this notion quite often steers potentially excellent candidates away from TAFE and hence takes pathway options are reduced for many young people.

Part time School and part time TAFE could be a viable approach that would improve articulation and support young people to take advantage of the expansion of these sectors – spending part time at TAFE would assist the young person to learn about the new system and approach to learning and would give them a sense of 'I'm half way through already, I may as well complete, because now I know the completion of one qualification will assist me pathway into another'.

There is a need to clarify/simplify all policy and funding around youth pathways / transition / engagement to make it more practical for all stakeholders. Current policy and funding space seems too busy and confusing for coal face workers, let alone young people and parents. Youth Commitment, Youth Connections, MIPS, School Engagement Guidelines, Wannik Strategy, COAG targets, Youth Compact, The Blueprint (DEECD), Future Directions, School Well Being Plans, Student Mapping Tool, are all excellent initiatives in themselves but we run the risk of them becoming a blur that is difficult to navigate and/or market to young people and others.

See Swinburne initiatives at appendix – GES/Transition skills/Smith Family project

5. Articulation within the VET sector and from VET to Higher Education

**Key Question:
How can we best support vertical articulation?**

Key points in the paper are:

The “Securing Jobs for your Future – Skills for Victoria’ policy statement strongly supports vertical articulation from lower level qualifications to higher level qualifications.

- Capacity enhancing aspects of articulation is the extent to which the various qualification levels have clear transition points for a higher level qualification to build onto a lower level qualification
- There may be scope to improve credit arrangements between TAFE and H Ed and also to develop consistency in credit arrangements offered to TAFE graduates.
- Reasons why low credit rates are given in H Ed are based on VET student’s lack of experience in essay writing, formal analysis, research and problem solving; however the availability of electives in higher level VET qualifications that develop these skills may help address such deficits.
- Credit arrangements operate more effectively in dual sector Universities.
- It is expected that partnerships between TAFEs and Universities will become more widespread.
- Comprehensive information for students will be difficult to access as more organisations form partnerships.
- Information on articulation and credit is spread over so many sites that VET students lack an easy means of testing how their qualifications could lead them into higher education.
- The amount of credit and the nature of articulation arrangements for the same VET qualifications are highly variable.
- The emergence of a Victorian articulation and credit transfer framework could encourage greater convergence of these arrangements.
- Supporting additional Victorians to participate in higher education requires a focus on areas where higher education participation is low.
- One possible response is to expand the provision of higher education courses in TAFE institutes.
- Goal of the Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program is that 20% of those enrolled in higher education will be from low socio-economic status backgrounds.
- To position Victoria to respond to this new policy environment created by the Bradley Review the Government is developing a Victorian Tertiary Education plan

5.1 Swinburne’s General Response

Part of the complexity around articulation and pathways is to do with the need for better core education to all stakeholders about the ‘system’ which would enhance structural understanding. Swinburne recommends core education workshops for all teachers, parents, careers staff, and young people themselves that informs how the system works – what VCE/VCAL/VET/H Ed is about and how they fit together, and where each pathway in and out of.

A recent initiative that Swinburne has implemented is the ‘Guaranteed Entry Scheme’ whereby students graduating with a TAFE Diploma are offered guaranteed entry into a degree in the same discipline if one exists, and are given several years to take up this offer, thus recognising how life long learning and connection to an organisation can benefit all parties. Dual sectors and geographic tertiary partnerships clearly raise aspiration and transfer.

5.1.1 Responses to specific questions

- ***Should efforts to improve VET to H Ed articulation and credit arrangements focus on particular occupational pathways and skill priority areas, for example engineering and nursing?***

The VET and H Ed sectors are currently quite compartmentalised each with their own learning and teaching models, however within Swinburne this compartmentalisation is radically breaking down with colleagues actively undertaking an analysis of each of the models and constructing matrices of overlays that will assist us to converge in many areas, opening the doors for some very real and exciting credit arrangements for students.

Initial analysis indicates that there are certain set of skills that students need to have that will ensure success be it at School, TAFE or Higher Education so given this finding, and the development of active interventions to support these core skills, it should not matter which occupational pathway articulation occurs within, so the only reason that efforts to improve articulation and credit arrangements in specific fields of study would be for strategic reasons to cater for skill shortage areas.

- ***How can governments ensure that reforms to the VET and H Ed sector address both skill needs and student demand for particular qualifications?***

Learning institutions need to have the resources to match their offers to students, so one way that governments can ensure reforms address the skill needs and demands is to reassess the rules around the resource allocation to each sector. Currently there is a significant mis- match in funding between Schools, VET and Higher Education but the bottom line is that there is significant under resourcing for each area which at the end of the day inhibits ability to meet demand.

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

Research indicates that there are pockets of excellence occurring in many areas across the state with innovative approaches being implemented in pockets. Swinburne's advice is for the Government to actively nurture these pockets with the desired outcome being continued success of those organisations and the young people who are benefiting from their services but will also serve to model best practice to other institutions who are still locked away 'sighing' about the changes

There are current leaders across the state who are still debating publicly whether or not their institutions will get on board with guaranteed entry and pathways and whether competencies cut it for higher ed, or whether students with bachelor degrees can be granted credit in a competency based environment and so on, and this seems very counter productive to the aims of this policy. It is a case of supporting good leadership in the participating organisations and funding excellent initiatives, rather than getting caught up in old rhetoric.

Distance and blended learning needs investment and a State led strategy for engagement and entitlements.

6. Opportunities for young people to re-engage with education and training

Key Question:

What systems do we need to put in place to minimise the number of young people who are not in education, training or employment?

Key points in the paper are:

OECD research indicates that effective youth transitions minimises the numbers of young people who are not in education, training or employment.

- We need efficient systems to quickly identify and re-engage those who drop out of education.
- A range of measures have been implemented to retain more young people and to reengage those who drop out. This avoids a pool of potential long term unemployed people.
- In 2010 the National Partnership entitles all 15 – 19 year olds to an education or training place and 20 – 24 year olds an education or training place that would result in a higher qualification.
- The school leaving age has been raised from 16 to 17 from 1 January 2010.
- Regional Youth Commitments initiative has been put in place to commit to keeping young people engaged in education until they complete Year 12 or equivalent.
- There is acknowledgement of those for whom mainstream schooling is not suitable by establishing a range of alternative settings across Victoria under the support of the LLEN.
- ACE sector makes important contribution to providing opportunities for young people to re engage
- New support arrangements are in place to re engage those who have disengaged. The new service “Youth Connections” is aligned with LLENs. Their service provides transition support to reconnect young people to work.
- A new service ‘Career onTrack’ combines career advice with case management to re-attach disengaging young people as soon as possible after disengagement, when intervention is most likely to be effective.
- Koorie Transition Coordinators are in place to support young Koorie people in education and work with a range of other services.

6.1 Swinburne’s General Response

Swinburne supports a centralised local system in current LLEN regions with shared local goals and process/systematic responses/tracking of disengaged young people through multiple systems (eg School, community, TAFE) This system would incorporate and reflect the Youth Commitment, Youth Connections, School Engagement guidelines and other relevant policy into a simple workable process. The core elements that we believe are important to the success of such a system are:

- Clear shared processes across all sectors and providers to enhance early identification of disengagement
- Clear shared responses to the various risk factors.

- Case managed support for seamless transition of most 'at risk' young people between education providers and youth services
- Local partnerships involving all key stakeholders connect to disengagement from education.
- Local tracking of 'most at risk' at entry and exit into programs so that support is triggered early.

However these need to be more strategic and common purpose and need investigation and evaluation.

An other general comment to this part of the paper is our query re the wisdom of raising the school leaving age to 17 when in some instances this could exacerbate the disconnect between the individual and learning pathways. Most schools simply don't have the resources to adequately support disaffected youth in the way that other sectors may be able to, but the embargo on leaving school based on age could be counter supportive of a wide range of youth. In many ways the stepping stone type pathway is delayed by keeping a range of students in school till 17 – more effective pathway choices are available and should be publicised and supported more by government.

6.1.1 Responses to specific questions

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

This can best be implemented by setting up a long term model/approach that builds capacity with the whole system to support all Youth, including young people at risk and implementing direct case management approach to manage disengaged Youth, eg Connexions UK model.

We believe that implementing Youth Connections would be most effective if it is part of building a long term (10 year plus) shared local vision and process to support engagement – not just a service response.

Working in partnership with existing agencies that provide case management/outreach support seems to be the most logical approach to reengage young people with education and training. In doing so, this would mean that we need to recognise the limitations of Youth Connections as stand alone services, but rather it would work best if integrated into existing local responses adding value, rather than replacing.

■ ***What services should Youth Connection service providers use to establish effective referral and working arrangements?***

There are many existing Youth Services and networks so establishing a broad network that includes all local services and stakeholders working with young people disengaging from education in a one stop shop scenario may assist to lessen the maze for young people to work through.

■ ***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?***

Swinburne strongly supports the need for LLENS to also facilitate brokerage services for young people over 20 because young people up to 25 or older can still experience similar issues of disengagement and the LLENS need to be able to answer local needs and not be bound by the current strict 19 year old upper limit.

■ ***Is the range of qualifications on offer to re-engage young people adequate?***

The qualifications listed are adequate for most young people; however Swinburne suggests that we also need to add the Certificate 1 in Vocational Education/Work Preparation and the Pre Apprenticeship courses and Indigenous specific courses to the list that is suggested, ie VCE, VCAL, CGEA and Diploma Further Education. Parity also needs to be increased between VCE/VCAL/VET/HED to support choice and diversity of offer.

APPENDIX

YOUTH TRANSITIONS INITIATIVES @ SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY

Guaranteed Entry Scheme

Swinburne University of Technology believes that the guaranteed entry scheme currently being implemented is unique in Australia. The Scheme guarantees all students a pathway from Certificate level programs through to postgraduate study. Students will be given a pipeline offer that guarantees them a place in two levels of study. A Diploma student will, for example, receive a guaranteed place in both the Diploma and a Swinburne Degree, a consistent amount of credit agreed upfront. Students are required to complete the first qualification prior to entry in the next level but no other prerequisites are required.

The guaranteed entry scheme will be an “opt out” scheme which we believe will see a much higher participation rate than one where students have to apply for the next step on the pathway. The scheme will also help the aspirations of students and encourage them to continue their participation in formal education for much longer.

Research has shown that students are over 30% more likely to progress if they have been given an offer early in their lifelong learning journey, thereby raising expectations, aspirations, engagement and attainment.

The scheme is not time dependent which means that if for example a student completes their TAFE qualification and decides to enter the workforce for a period of time they will know that the next step on their educational journey is already confirmed without the need to go through any additional application and acceptance processes. This is a significant benefit for students who are lacking in confidence and need encouragement to proceed to the next educational level.

The Guaranteed Entry Scheme will apply to all students who are enrolled at Swinburne. The following examples show how it will apply to different client groups.

1. Secondary school students:

- **VET in Schools** – these students have already commenced their VET studies and will be given a guaranteed place in a series of TAFE programs with progression through to a Degree. For example a student may complete a VETiS program in Children’s Services from this start they will receive an offer into the Diploma of Children’s Services and the Bachelor of Social Sciences (Early Years Education) or complete a Certificate III in Hospitality and receive an offer through our approach to guaranteed entry to an Advanced Diploma in Hospitality, Tourism or Events to an Bachelor of Business (Hospitality, Tourism or Events Management). This type of offer could lead to double degrees or a range of combined qualifications in hospitality, events and tourism.

- **VCAL students** – these students may be disengaged young people studying at Swinburne or those still in their School in both cases they are fully engaged in their VET studies and will have similar types of guaranteed entry as above. For example, they may complete a Certificate III in Printing Graphic Arts and will then receive an offer to a Diploma of Graphic Arts and a Bachelor of Communication (Design). In Swinburne's Young Mums program the young women (approximately 16 years of age who are either pregnant or have a young child) are enrolled in a VCAL program and a Certificate III in Children's Services. The guaranteed entry scheme provides them with a clear and guaranteed pathway all the way to a degree.
- **VCE students** – These students can complete full Certificate III level programs as an integral part of their VCE studies and in 2011 this will be done through the Knox Innovation, Opportunity and Sustainability Centre - KIOSC Trade Training Centre which is a consortium of 7 Schools in the Knox cluster and Swinburne. KIOSC will be built at Swinburne's Wantirna campus. In 2011 Swinburne will provide, for example, the Certificate III Laboratory Operations as an integral part of the Schools' VCE program. Completion of the Certificate will guarantee students entry into the Diploma of Laboratory Technology and the Bachelor of Science. This process will take no longer to complete than the normal pathway into a degree but it will break the process down into smaller steps with a series of qualification outcomes along the way. It will reduce the level of competition for students and make the TAFE pathway clearer for parents and careers advisors. For students with low academic aspirations it will provide encouragement with each step seen to be achievable.

2. **Mature Learners:**

The guaranteed entry scheme will also apply and give students certainty about their pathway. Often mature learners returning to study lack self confidence and have relatively low aspirations. TAFE is often seen as a good starting point. The guaranteed entry scheme provides them with a staged approach to a degree that is clear from the beginning. For example students who start with a Certificate III in Financial Services will have a guaranteed place all the way through to a Bachelor of Business (Accounting) or a Certificate III in Allied Health Aged Care to a Bachelor of Social Science (Nursing) or a Certificate IV in Community Development through to a Bachelor of Social Science (Social Housing) and in this case all the way to a Master of Social Science (Housing Management and Policy).

3. **Partner organisations:**

Swinburne is working with regional TAFE Institutes to make this opportunity available to their students. Currently we are working with Wodonga and Goulburn Ovens Institutes of TAFE to map their programs to degrees and we will work through any curriculum design issues with them over the coming months.

Swinburne's guaranteed entry scheme has the potential to significantly increase the number of students completing an under graduate degree and Swinburne will extend this type of offer to higher degrees too.

The gradual staging of the courses will mean students will proceed when they are ready, either academically or because they wish to go into the workforce for a period of time, the certainty of the pathway is very appealing to students. Swinburne University of Technology is able to implement this opportunity for students because it is a dual sector university and is therefore able to manage the projected student load.

The benefit of guaranteeing entry should not be underestimated. It enables students to make clear educational decisions about their future and the manageable steps are very appealing to students. Our current students are very excited about this opportunity and we are confident it will have a long term impact on youth participation.

Academy of Performing and Visual Arts

In response to enquiries from parents of disengaged secondary school students and social workers working with troubled youth, the notion of a secondary school devoted to specialised areas in the performing and visual arts offers benefits for both government and the wider community. School leavers at age fifteen are often disillusioned with the traditional secondary education. Further, they often lack self-esteem, underachieve, and their social disengagement frequently leads to long term unemployment and dependence on social support.

Youth disengagement correlates with low socio-economic status, so an enhancement to traditional education is required for low socio-economic cohorts, in particular. In addition, there are many students who are gifted musicians, dancers, actors, artists or designers, or have a direct interest in the production and design aspects of performance (lighting, sound, sets, costume, make-up, stage management or direction) who may not succeed within the constraints of a traditional VCE program. This is because most schools lack the resources needed to offer them a comprehensive range of VET units embedded within coherent VCE program so that they can develop their creative knowledge and skills and knowledge in a meaningful way.

There is, therefore, a need for a specialist school to cater for those whose interests lie outside the normal range of unit offerings at VCE level. It is Swinburne's intention to establish such a school, which will offer specialist training within various fields of the entertainment sector within a continuous program of academic achievement. Programs would be structured in such a way as to allow students to achieve a VCE and an ENTER score, but these programs would look very different in a performing and creative arts setting. For example, a program could consist of:

- traditional studies across the curriculum to meet VCE requirements (include units in English and Mathematics)
- specialist/artistic educational program streams including in Music (solo and group performance), Dance, Drama, Visual Arts and Design
- extra-curricula activities that incorporate work-integrated learning, including performances and exhibitions at state, national and international events

There are numerous skills with vocational outcomes that would be included in a range of VCE customised programs, including the Cert III in Theatre & Events (VET units and separate qualification). The Academy would provide programs ranging from Certificate III through to Advanced Diploma as well as mainstream VCE studies.

Connecting this specialist school to a dual sector university such as Swinburne would provide:

- state-of-the-art facilities and resources
- industry expertise and connections
- experienced practitioners with reputation and excellence in chosen fields
- support and mentoring from VET and Higher Education students undertaking higher level study
- a community away from a traditional "going to school" environment, to both educate and nurture talent and produce happy and inspired students who will go on to achieve their best
- guaranteed entry into further qualifications in either VET or Higher Education
- opportunities to gain a VCE across a range of areas not able to be offered by most schools
- holistic assessments across units that culminate in full scale productions
- audition/job readiness experience, through work-integrated learning

- re-engagement of youth not interested in staying at school
- new opportunities for students from low SES backgrounds
- tangible opportunities for students to successfully complete their VCE but also aspire to attaining higher level qualifications
- enhanced education and training for talented students to support excellence in the entertainment sector

Swinburne University has been working with local secondary schools, such as Swinburne Secondary College, in the development of this concept of the Academy of Performing and Visual Arts which is proposed to be built at Swinburne's Prahran Campus. The Prahran campus is already a hub for design, arts and creative studies. Swinburne's Faculty of Design, the National Centre for Circus Arts and the David Williamson Theatre are all core parts of the campus and colour the range of existing programs delivered on the campus.

Swinburne is proposing a \$50M redevelopment of the campus to be completed by 2015 and within that development two floors of the building would be dedicated to the Academy. Swinburne would appreciate support from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or Department of Innovation, Industry, and Regional Development (DIIRD) to support the project with professional advice, promotion and support and eventually with capital funding.

Smith Family – Learning for Life Families

The Smith Family is recognised nationally for its innovative programs which provide educational opportunities across the life span for disadvantaged children and their families. Swinburne's project with the Smith Family will complement their existing "Learning for Life families" strategy by directly supporting the Female Guardian / Parent of the supported learner, assisting with breaking the cycle of second and third generational low educational attainment.

Research has provided extensive evidence of the correlation between learner achievement, generational and environmental aspiration and educational engagement. It is of no surprise therefore that one of the key indicators currently being considered by DEEWR in relation to the classification of Low Social Economic Status is second generational qualifications.

Raising aspirations and qualifications of the surrounding support system, especially the women, will have many positive effects including:

- Creation of a "family" culture that values learning and attainment
- Positive influence on the Family's capacity to increase economic prosperity
- Positive reinforcement of the value of education through attainment of first qualification whole qualifications – each woman will achieve either a Certificate III or IV in Business
- Increase in recognition and currency of employability skills including problem solving , numeracy, literacy etc
- Development of a support network of women participants with extensive external support
- Skills Development in the areas of Financial Awareness and Budgeting, Communications, ICT, Pro-active Health strategies, Parenting and Career Development.

Swinburne's Asia-Pacific Centre for Social Investment and Philanthropy (APCSIP) and 'TAFE School for Sustainable Futures have successfully developed models of delivery and targeted support for under-represented groups in Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education. These range from Swinburne's award winning "Young Mums" program to the National Indigenous Governance program. APCSIP is committed to promoting and advancing social investment amongst all sectors in Australia and throughout the Asia Pacific Region and incorporates research dedicated to promoting capability in harnessing the dynamics of social investment to positively impact upon regional well-being.

This project represents a partnership between The Smith Family, Emberin and Swinburne University through bespoke development of the "My Mentor" program.

Swinburne University has a supportive partnership with Emberin and partially funded the development of the 'My Mentor' program that has been mapped to a Diploma of Management. My Mentor is designed to promote female participation and increase qualification levels through innovative learning solutions. This project will continue this strategy and complete the mapping of the Emberin materials to Certificate III and IV level.

The Smith Family program use specially designed learning resources that combine different modules of learning with every day practical examples of competence and map the attainment of these modules against a Certificate III qualification.

The activities and delivery methods have been tailored as "fit for purpose" for the Victorian pilot group of female guardians or parents in the "Learning for Life families". The learners will be paired with a mentor/

assessor who will provide support and help to tailor the program to meet the individual's learning style, pace and personal circumstances. These mentors will be Swinburne staff who are experienced in working with a diverse cohort. They will provide telephone and other support on a weekly basis and regional "Help" face to face sessions will be offered. These support sessions will provide an opportunity for the participants to come together either virtually or physically once a week.

The learning materials will be provided in a variety of formats including visual material via a workbook and DVD and audio via an MP3 player pre-loaded with the modules. These will support self-paced and independent learning together with maximum support.

The Smith Family' and the 'Learning for Life' families have been involved in the development of the program and evaluation strategy for the Victoria pilot of the program.

Swinburne will use student contact hours from its Performance and Funding Agreement with the Victorian Government, administered through Skills Victoria, to fund the pilot program with approximately 400 women across Victoria.

Swinburne has waived the usual student enrolment fees and material costs and the costs for development of the customised learning resources. The project will also support the marketing and administration carried out by The Smith Family and covers all of the women's costs.

It is proposed not only to evaluate the program's outcomes in relation to the women participating, but to also compare outcomes for this cohort to another group who do not participate in the program. This will allow research to analyse the additional effects of the program on the wider family.

Swinburne University's involvement in this project is as a 'not for profit' activity. We intend to recycle any funding profit into a national roll out of the program and to support the funding of any family member to progress into a higher level qualification with the additional benefit of a scholarship take-up that is valid for five years.

Swinburne University is very positive and excited about the possibility of partnering with Emberin and The Smith Family in the creation of a new learning resource and support model targeting females that are already interconnected through their family and the 'Learning for Life' program. The project has been developed to raise aspirations of these families through educational attainment and opportunity.

Swinburne would appreciate some financial support to extend the Victorian pilot program nationally. To do this we will need government funding for the program hours and approximately \$150,000 for continued development of the product and learning materials.

Student transition and Study Skills

Swinburne University of Technology is expanding its suite of entry pathways to offer some innovative solutions for all students while targeting low socio economic status students including rural and remote. Our intention is to ensure that all students exit with a qualification and to maximise the number of qualifications acquired on the learning journey.

These new and innovative teaching and learning models allow us to maximise our dual sector advantage, to increase our higher education program offerings in Melbourne's outer east and broaden the courses offered to School, VET and Workforce Development students. Our provision will be extended at our current "VET only campuses" and in local government areas where the take-up of higher education is traditionally low.

The suite of entry pathways includes:

- **The guaranteed entry scheme** - ensures that all pathways have staged entry and exit points (Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Degree). This approach is explained in full in Strategy 1 including the participation of regional partners.
- **Parallel courses** - where appropriate tailored VET qualifications will be offered as a value-add in parallel with Higher Education, for example a Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) with a Certificate IV Mental Health or a Bachelor of Engineering Degree with Certificate IV in Engineering – linking the practical skills with the theoretical or Bachelor of Business with a Diploma of Sustainability or Diploma of Carbon Management. This enhances students' employability and retention. In many cases allowing the student to work in their intended industry field while continuing to study for their Degree. It also gives the student more experience and information regarding their future career choices and facilitates an earlier decision point regarding the suitability of their career choice.
- **Reverse articulation** - Swinburne also has initiated the first reverse articulation offer to students who have not completed their undergraduate qualification, for example students who do not complete year 1 or 2 of a degree will be offered the opportunity to have their credit or learning mapped back to a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma (which ever is the most appropriate) this ensures that their learning has an accredited outcome even if it is not the original qualification they intended to complete.
- **Diplomas Embedded into Degrees** – The number and type of undergraduate degrees offered by Swinburne will be considerably extended by embedding diploma study into the design of some new degrees. These degrees will be used to broaden the study score required for participation in higher education. This will be done in a way which does not compromise the students' chance of success in their undergraduate study.

To move through our various entry pathways students are required to complete the first qualification prior to entry in the next level but no other prerequisites are required. One of the key requirements to make these strategies work is supporting student transition through tailored study support initiatives. The key target areas are transition from School VCE and VCAL programs to TAFE and Higher Education and from TAFE to Higher Education.

Swinburne developed a concurrent study program which is used to support study skills and student transition. This curriculum has been purchased and used by many Institutions in Australia. We are now working on content for an accredited, self paced, flexible delivery package that allows students to

complete their transition study units in their own time. This will assist student transitions and to successful in completing their educational pathways.

The new version of our Study Skills and Transition program will include subjects such as essay skills, research skills, time management, individualised learning, industry based learning, credit where credits due. The program will be developed at a number of different levels targeted to the transition the learner is preparing for. The vision is to have the "Everything you ever needed to know to achieve TAFE / University success" completed by all year 12 student and all transitioning learners. This publication needs to be main stream and marketed through traditional distribution channels and Web media.

Swinburne University and Pearsons Australia will collaborate on this project, each bringing their strengths to the collaboration and we are working on a dual branding for this product. Swinburne will develop the content while Pearsons will bring their considerable strengths in publishing, marketing and sales to develop the best market ready product possible. This innovative collaboration will quickly raise market awareness of the product and increasing the speed to market would maximise the credibility of the product.

Swinburne is concerned the content being developed for the Study Skills and Transition program may be a little dry. Making this potentially dry content more innovative and engaging would be a key outcome for this project. This can be achieved through design and styling but will be significantly enhanced by the collaboration with Pearsons and utilising their strong understanding of the vocational market and educational publishing.

The content would have a similar look and feel to Swinburne's "My mentor". The format could be described loosely as a "course in a box" as it will include everything the student needs within a physical box to complete the program. The program would contain online components. One initial thought is to house all of the generic content "in the box" and put online the content specific to the transition pathway i.e. Year 12 to Higher Education, Year 12 to TAFE, TAFE to Higher Education.

The intention is to create a Study Skills and Transition "course in a box" that would be available through training providers but also through retail outlets. This product would significantly enhance the government's strategy for the achievement of a tertiary sector - raising student attainment, progression and ultimately maximising Australia's knowledge economy.

Swinburne is offering the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or Department of Innovation, Industry, and Regional Development (DIIRD) the opportunity to partner with us in this project. The level of participation could range from endorsement and promotion of the product to partial funding and ownership of the product. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these options further.

Knox Innovation, Opportunity and Sustainability Centre (KIOSC) Trade Training Centre

This exciting Trade Training Centre project is currently in the design phase with the building expected to start construction in 3-6 months with programs commencing in the Centre at the start of 2012.

The Knox, Innovation & Sustainability Centre (KIOSC) Trade Training Centre is a collaboration between seven Secondary Schools in the Knox region and Swinburne University.

The Knox Consortium of Schools are:

- Bayswater Secondary College
- Boronia Heights College
- Fairhills High School
- Rowville Secondary College
- Scoresby Secondary College
- Wantirna College
- Waverley Christian College

The concept for the “KIOSC” is to establish “a centre of excellence training hub for the delivery of green education and training focusing on environmental sustainability and responsible management with a focus on technology and innovation”

The Knox Innovation, Opportunity & Sustainability Centre (KIOSC) would promote career pathways in traditional and emerging industry trades as they relate to the application of manufacturing, engineering, electrotechnology and renewable energy solutions.

The KIOSC Objectives are:

- To expose students, teachers and parents to the diversity of “green” industry careers and higher education pathways available, including those that they might not have previously considered
- To provide a shared learning centre characterised by discovery and inquiry based learning, innovative curriculum and teaching practices, leading edge technology and equipment for both academic and applied learning
- To create an environment that enables industry to actively participate in the skills development of students and teachers and to contribute to the overall design of industry relevant and appropriate course programs which integrates theoretical and applied learning and incorporates opportunities for students to participate in structured work place learning
- To enable increased student engagement and well being, improved learning outcomes and broadened pathways and transitions to higher education or employment

KIOSC has two integrated parts. One, a discovery centre with a customised range of programs for Year 7-9 students and secondly, a series of VET programs for Year 9-12. It will start to engage students from Year 7 in discovery programs which move into a range of VET programs by Year 9.

The curriculum delivered in the discovery centre will be integrated with the school program of each of the Schools. This is an amazing level of co-operation between the Schools as they start to develop common areas of study as an integral part of the curriculum. They have also developed common timetables and the significance of this activity should not be underestimated. It will give students more flexibility to engage in a broad range of VET programs including Certificate III level programs integrated within VCE studies, VET in Schools, an increased range of VCAL programs, accelerated VCE studies with Higher Education.

The philosophy behind KIOSC is to build opportunity and pathways for all students while giving them access to innovative and exciting programs which will build demand for careers in skill shortage areas.

The students will all be able to access Swinburne's guaranteed entry scheme (strategy 1) and the KIOSC programs will integrate the transition and study skills (strategy 4).

KIOSC will also work closely with industry and has already successfully started cadetship programs for two students. KIOSC will play a significant role in structured workplace learning and in assisting students to become more job ready. The KIOSC programs will be underpinned by an employability skills framework and by using Swinburne's employability skills Passport.

KIOSC is bringing together the thinking and opportunities that can be created by a positive and co-ordinated relationship between Secondary Schools and a dual sector University.

KIOSC is built on a long term relationship built on trust between the consortium members. It is a highly localised solution and is only working because it has been developed for our local context.

Some ideas about how it might look: