Local Learning and Employment Networks

Engaging with Industry

September 2007
Foreword

This paper reports on a study of the engagement between the 31 Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN) and their local industries, the challenges involved and examples of successful approaches to collaboration.

This study emanated from the LLEN Chairs’ Forum in November 2006, where Chairs identified the task of engaging with industry as one of the more difficult aspects of their role, but noted that some LLENs had made sound progress in this area. The LLEN Chairs, together with Mr Peter Thomas, Chair of the Victorian Skills Commission, requested that this knowledge be captured and shared amongst the LLENs.

The LLEN Chairs’ expertise was gained through one to one interviews with the information organised around key issues and themes. This paper is provided as a record of the Chairs’ responses and a source of information and ideas for LLENs to consider when seeking to engage with industry to improve the education, training and employment opportunities for young people ‘on the ground’ in their local areas.

I would like to thank the LLEN Chairs who generously contributed their time, views and ideas during the course of the study. I now encourage LLENs to consider the views of the Chairs and use this rich source of information when planning initiatives to engage with industry.

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Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEns) play an important role in engaging industries and employers to improve the education, training and employment outcomes of young people, particularly those at risk of making poor transitions from compulsory schooling to the next stage of their lives and careers.

LLEns across Victoria include in their charters the creation and further development of sustainable relationships and brokering of initiatives between a range of local partners. They have found in practice that increasing the participation of key industry stakeholders, who are well placed to make a significant contribution, is one of their more challenging tasks.

Through interviews with LLEN Chairs, the paper reports on the key challenges for collaboration with industry, approaches LLEns have taken in addressing these challenges, and examples of success. It captures the Chairs' thoughts on broadening community and industry knowledge of LLEns, aligning LLEN and industry understandings and agendas, practical ways of approaching industry, and addressing local issues.

The case studies captured in the report provide examples of successful LLEN approaches to engaging with industry. They also provide a concrete basis for discussion and the sharing of good practice amongst the LLEns.

Into the future, LLEns should continue to build their capacity in making evidence-based contributions to policy solutions, expertise in collaborating with industry, and the capacity to enter mutually supportive partnerships and to learn from each other.
2. Introduction

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) were established by the Victorian Government in 2001, following recommendations from the *Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways*.

The core role of LLENs is the creation and development of sustainable partnerships and brokering of initiatives between local education providers, industry and community, to improve the education, training and employment outcomes of young people, particularly those most at risk.

There are 31 LLENs covering Victoria with a membership base of around 6,500 individuals and organisations, of which industry accounts for approximately 13 per cent. Around 50 per cent of LLEN Chairs (an honorary position) are drawn from the industry sector.

LLEN Chairs meet together regularly to advance the objectives of the LLEN initiative. In late 2006, supported by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the LLENs developed a Good Practice Framework which identifies five characteristics of good practice:

- successful stakeholder engagement
- collaborative partnerships
- sustainability
- changing culture and behaviour of stakeholders
- improved outcomes for young people.

This report builds on the Good Practice Framework, focusing on successful stakeholder engagement. The LLEN Chairs have recognised that maintaining and increasing the participation of key industry stakeholders is extremely important to the effectiveness of LLENs, but also as one of their more difficult tasks. They aim to ‘engage’ industry with the work of the LLEN, not necessarily by increasing the number of industry members (although this may occur), but in terms of industry and its needs directly contributing to the priorities and work of the LLEN. Strong involvement of industry is instrumental in:

- developing the linkage between education, training and employment outcomes;
- providing alternate pathways for young people, which can add substantial value to those offered by education and training providers and community agencies;
Local Learning and Employment Networks: Engaging with Industry

• ensuring input from an influential group of local stakeholders that are pivotal in the local economy; and
• addressing local skills shortages.

This paper reports on a study that sought to collect information, pool expertise and document good practice with respect to LLENs working effectively with industry, and to serve as a resource for the LLEN in their local settings.

LLEN Chairs contributed to the study, in most cases by participating in a telephone interview based on an emailed questionnaire. The study captured responses from 25 of the 31 LLENs.

The paper documents the key challenges identified by Chairs in their attempts to engage industry, approaches they have taken in addressing these challenges, some specific examples, and their suggestions for the future. This is particularly timely, given the strong labour market and the increasing needs of businesses and industries to find new employees and provide young people with work and training opportunities.

Developing industry mentors

Youth Mentoring Assisted Pathways Program (YMAP) is a ten-week volunteer mentoring pathways program currently operating in seven schools across Melbourne’s western suburbs. Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley LLEN brokered the program with local schools at the beginning of 2001, with YMAP running each year since. The program has been developed as a retention strategy, not an exit one, as research evidence links the completion of Year 12 or equivalent with sustained employment and improved life outcomes.

The volunteer mentors, from a range of backgrounds, including university students, community individuals and employees assist young people at risk of early school leaving to identify their goals and explore how they could be achieved. Together, the partnership investigates all pathways available to the young person, including visiting training providers and industry of interest to the mentee. Young people are provided with skill development in areas that they identify as important to them. This will vary according to each individual but some of the more requested assistance required is understanding what employers want, knowing how to navigate provider websites, writing job applications and interview practice.
3. Challenges for LLENs

3.1 Building the profile of LLENs

The prospect for industry involvement is improved if industry has some knowledge or understanding of the LLEN and a favourable attitude towards its activities. LLENs that have a strong profile have a significant advantage. Often the LLEN’s activities as a broker require working ‘behind the scenes’ to initiate and form effective partnerships, and outcomes may sometimes be attributed to the partners rather than the LLEN.

In approaching industry, LLENs must effectively communicate:

- the role of LLENs
- differences from and relationships to other organisations working in the same field
- achievements of LLENs.

3.2 Relevance to industry

A second requirement for engagement is a match between industry and LLEN methods and objectives. To increase industry involvement, especially if reluctance has been shown, LLENs need to ensure that:

- industry understands their role
- their role is defined in a way that matches business imperatives
- potential to improve business outcomes is demonstrated, providing an incentive for industry involvement.

In their attempts to work with industry, LLENs need to ensure that they avoid an insular, inward looking approach and do not appear too ‘education focused’, to the exclusion of other groups and interests. LLENs wishing to engage businesses need to use the language of business. Business people, even those on the LLEN Committee of Management, may find it difficult to relate to issues presented using educational jargon, or to see how they could usefully contribute. Documents, papers and reports should be written for ‘non-educationalists’.

Before approaching a particular industry, the LLEN should try to develop an understanding of its needs, capabilities and circumstances, and how these match with the LLEN agenda.
3.3 Constraints on industry involvement

A number of factors deter industries from becoming involved, or cause them to withdraw their support for programs or initiatives. These factors may need to be addressed specifically in individual cases, and include:

- focus on day-to-day activities and shortage of time, particularly in the case of small enterprises
- previous negative experiences with at-risk youth (e.g. poor attendance, effort or interest)
- competing involvement on various community boards, programs and initiatives
- competing requests by a range of government organisations (both state and federal) that deal with industry, employment, training and education issues. These organisations include local councils, Area Consultative Committees, Job Network Providers, group training organisations, TAFE institutes, secondary colleges, Regional Industry Career Advisers and Local Community Partnerships.

3.4 Geographic issues

In addition to general constraints on industry availability, the different geographical situations of LLENs have an impact on their efforts to work with industry, and may require tailored approaches.

Metropolitan areas

Chairs in metropolitan LLENs reported they have the challenge of trying to relate to a large variety of industry sizes and types, coupled with significant geographical dispersion. Alternatively, they may operate predominantly in residential areas, which include only a narrowly focused business presence (e.g. from the service sector).

Large regional centres

In large regional centres, Chairs reported that they tend to operate within a relatively favourable environment of a reasonably diverse industry base, located within a compact area.

Rural areas/smaller regional centres

Close involvement with industry can be difficult for LLENs in rural areas and smaller regional centres. Businesses are mostly small (often sole operator) with limited scope to take on extra responsibilities, and may also be under financial stress (e.g. from drought or import competition). They can be widely dispersed over a large area that lacks major population centres and public transport. There may be only a few medium or large enterprises in the entire LLEN area that tend to be overcommitted and over-targeted.

Targeting specific industry sectors in an area

The Wetlands field day facilitated by the Glenelg Southern Grampians LLEN is part of a strategy to generate interest in career and education pathways in agriculture and conservation for young people, beginning with the Certificate II in Conservation & Land Management.

In partnership with the Catchment Management Authority, Portland Aluminium, South West TAFE, Southern Grampians Shire Council, Southern Grampians Adult Education, Rural Industries Skills Training and the Department of Primary Industries, the LLEN facilitated the ‘Sample the Environment’ field day for nearly 100 interested students and their Careers and VET teachers at the recently developed Wetlands complex in Hamilton.
4. Strategies adopted by LLENs

4.1 LLEN promotion

Engaging industry with youth
The Highlands LLEN brokered a partnership between the City of Ballarat, The Courier Newspaper, Job Network Agencies and Group Training Companies to create a youth specific job page in the local newspaper on a weekly basis. Every Wednesday the Jobs For Youth page promotes and advertises youth specific job vacancies, useful job hints and highlights a good news story of a young person obtaining a full-time job. The industry/business receives good publicity and the testimonial encourages other businesses to look at employing young people.

By mid 2007, 25 testimonial/editorials showcasing successful employment outcomes for young people have been promoted. The positions filled have been largely traineeships or apprenticeships, which provide the necessary structured learning/training to ensure adequate acquisition of skills and knowledge. To date, 62 of 71 advertised positions have been successfully filled.

Engaging industry with youth
The HEAT (Hospitality Education and Training) program is a dynamic pre-employment training program that focuses on reengaging young people at risk of leaving school or for those seeking to reengage with education and training.

The Inner Eastern LLEN facilitated a partnership with St. Kilda Youth Services, local businesses and community organisations, the City of Port Phillip, William Angliss Institute of TAFE and Victoria Police.

With the support of ANZ Trustees, The William Buckland Foundation, Felton Bequest and restaurants including The Metropol and Amello, the program was announced as the Victorian State Winner in the Small Business Category for the 2007 Prime Minister’s Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships.

Chairs confirmed the need for a communications strategy to promote the LLEN initiative as a whole and the work of individual LLENs. A communications strategy currently under development by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will help to increase industry understanding and enhance the profile of the LLENs in most areas.

General LLEN promotional activities recommended were:

- seeking coverage via local community radio stations or newspapers (although some limitations were noted in rural areas lacking a central radio station or widely distributed local/regional newspaper)
- inclusion of items in relevant widely circulated newsletters (e.g. local council publications)
- preparation and circulation of LLEN newsletters
- upgrading LLEN websites to make them more interesting and useful to stakeholders, including industry.

Some LLENs have reported that presenting On-Track data results around the transitions of local young people from school to further education, training or employment, usually strikes a chord with their various stakeholders and assists in the process of crystallising support around their mission and function of improving outcomes for youth.

Suggestions for communication aimed specifically at industry include:

- making presentations to industry and trade associations, chambers of commerce, etc
- making presentations to local service organisations and the like, that attract a diverse range of community-minded participants including business people
- formal and informal networking of various kinds with industry representatives
- including relevant unions in the process when dealing on industry initiatives
- newsletters with content directed to industry – printed and/or electronic.
4.2 Strengthening business expertise and industry relevance

**LLEN business practices**

Governance, good organisation and committed key staff are important factors in engagement with industry, and critical to internal functioning of LLENs. Of particular importance are:

- appropriate organisational structure and strongly committed people, including the board members, the executive officer, support staff and volunteers
- board subcommittees that are organised to harness the energy, interests and expertise of members to achieve desired outcomes (e.g. development of partnerships with business)
- clear lines of authority, responsibility for delegation and communication between Chairs, board members and executive officers
- highly skilled executive officers who are not desk bound, and operate with flexibility to achieve agreed outcomes
- continuity of executive officers – important for nurturing relationships with employers and maintaining an effective network.

A strategic approach is important in all activities, including planning and targeting approaches to industry. This involves:

- ensuring that there is a clear and documented mission that employees and other stakeholders understand
- having a clear strategic plan and process in place, with regular reviews of activities and outcomes
- maintaining a watching brief on environmental changes, including awareness of any new programs or initiatives that may offer opportunities or lead to duplication of effort.

**Staff skills for interaction with industry**

Direct ongoing dialogue with local industries, for example through regular face-to-face contact and site visits to employers requires experienced personnel who can relate well to business owners, particularly those in small business. Skills and experience required to engage employers and industry are different from those required to interact with at-risk youth, schools and tertiary institutes. The best LLEN personnel have both skill sets, which is a difficult combination to find.

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**A formalised industry engagement process**

Gippsland East LLLEN, in partnership with an international company operating in the region, has developed a checklist and flow chart detailing a process to establish successful community-based partnerships with industry. The process offers specific, step by step, advice on:

- pre-planning (self evaluation, evaluation of business and industry sectors, and evaluation of potential partnership models);
- approaching the business (informal and formal approaches, skills of the presenter and aspects of the presentation); and
- entering the partnership (formal or informal agreement, meetings and frequent monitoring, key success factors).

The process has been successfully applied by the LLLEN in establishing relationships with several local partners.

**Brokering solutions for industry skill needs**

The Baw Baw Latrobe LLLEN through its local research identified the emerging skill shortage, and the need for increased training, in the energy industries in Victoria, particularly in the Latrobe Valley. The LLLEN has facilitated and brokered a collaborative partnership between energy industry companies across Victoria, schools and TAFE providers (as well as private RTOs), with the aim of addressing the current and future training requirements of this industry.

The outcome of this partnership is the development of the Victorian Energy Education and Training Project. The purpose of the project is to substantially strengthen the links and engagement between the power generation and distribution industry and education and training providers; provide new education and training opportunities for young people; and address identified skill shortages in the power generation and distribution industry.

The Victorian Energy Education Project provides supported pathways into the industry using the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and VET in Schools, supported by industry speakers and work placements.
Some LLENs have employed and trained young graduates to approach industry. This approach was proven to be not ideal because of the time required to develop relationships and the short-term availability of graduates who tended to move on to permanent employment. However, where a LLEN has been able to maintain a project officer in a geographical sub-area, with a specific brief of ‘industry engagement’, results have been impressive over time, with industry in the area covered by the project officer more strongly involved than in other parts of the LLEN’s territory.

Experience as a business owner or employer, and strong empathy towards the challenging environment in which businesses are operating are important factors in interaction with industry. Clearly, presentation of the relevance and benefits of LLENs to industry is also important.

In boosting LLEN expertise and ability to link with industry, Chairs noted the importance of:

• being receptive to new ideas and methods
• learning from what other organisations are doing
• networking by executive officers with others in similar geographical areas or with similar industrial structure, not just in adjacent areas
• study tours, exchanges, conferences and seminars to facilitate exchange of information.

**Educating industry about different perspectives**

Benefits for working together can be gained by attempting to give business leaders a better understanding of some aspects of the LLEN operating framework, including:

• government processes with which LLENs interact (and which may introduce constraints, e.g. on timing)

• the value and practice of collaborative concepts such as ‘competitive neutrality’, a lack of which can undermine LLEN attempts to work on projects involving a range of businesses.
4.3 Approaches to working with industry

Observations about ‘what works’ with industry include central themes of:

- minimising disruption to business
- demonstrating benefits to employers (short-term, long term, practical or good corporate citizenship)
- ensuring publicity following achievements to maximise benefits in terms of promotion for the businesses involved
- allowing time for a solid relationship to develop and ensure a productive association between the LLEN and a business.

Within this framework, the following mechanisms are suggested.

Activating personal networks

Chairs are directly involved in industry locally, through businesses, employer associations, TAFE institutes and secondary colleges. They use personal local networks effectively in promoting LLENs to other members of the business community.

This capacity can be enhanced by drawing on networks of other LLEN members or staff with business connections, for example board members and executive officers.

Being proactive

Relationships with industry are best nurtured by taking a proactive approach to establish direct and recurring interactions with employers. Effective approaches include:

- setting up ‘round table’ working groups, including key employers and employment and training organisations, to examine how they can work together to obtain better community outcomes
- hosting employer seminars and/or social networking activities (e.g. symposiums, golf days)
- visiting employers at their work sites (being careful to choose convenient times and limit frequency)
- organising regular programs of industry inspections
- staging careers expos, in particular those focussing on areas of local skills shortage.

Seeking partnerships to magnify impact

A key initiative for many LLENs is to pursue links with a committed employer, usually large, that is willing to take a leadership and mentoring role with students and/or with other businesses.

Their contribution can take a number of forms including:

- assisting with production of printed material for distribution to schools
- sponsoring communications activities e.g. development/production of promotional materials including DVDs or CD-ROMs
- assisting with provision of workplace tours

Targeting specific industry sectors in an area

In 2006 the South East Local LLEN brokered a partnership between the Local Government Business Networking Unit, the Area Consultative Committee, a local manufacturing business association and the LLEN. This informal alliance coordinates, prioritises and plans partnership based school-industry activities to promote realistic perceptions of pathways and careers for young people in the manufacturing industry.

Place-based Industry Round Tables

The Gippsland East LLEN is located in a largely rural area, with significant distances to travel between a few large towns. However, it has had success in engaging industry locally through facilitating a number of location-specific round tables, comprising identifiable employers that would most likely employ young adults around a specific town.
• sponsoring local business forums and career expos
• encouraging other smaller businesses with whom they link to come on board.

Advantage may also be obtained through LLENs co-locating with complementary organisations such as local councils or Local Community Partnerships, to share resources and contacts and to coordinate activities. Co-location can also make the LLEN more accessible or likely to attract some stakeholders, through concentrating a number of linked organisations in one place. Organisations appropriate for co-location include:

- employer and industry associations
- other government-funded organisations with similar objectives
- training and educational institutions (e.g. TAFEs)
- local councils
- youth and community services organisations.

Targeting specific industry sectors in an area

South West LLEN’s Automotive Reference Group runs forums for the automotive industry that focuses on attracting and retaining ‘Generation Y’ staff. Evaluations of the forums have shown greater interest in and uptake of automotive careers by young people.

Building on school programs with strong industry relevance

Many LLENs indicated strong industry involvement with VET in Schools (VETiS) and VCAL programs, and in areas where Technical Education Centres and Australian Technical Colleges are established. The School Based Apprenticeship Scheme (ASbAs) presents a good example of how employers are able to be readily engaged; given it is a specific and relevant initiative, with tangible and recognisable outcomes for industry. LLEN partnerships with local trade and labour councils have been particularly beneficial in supporting apprenticeships and traineeships.

LLENs have also been able to harness support from industry partners in providing information to encourage young people who may be prospective future employees. LLENs frequently work with businesses to improve knowledge of industry opportunities by careers teachers, students and their parents. A particular focus is ‘selling’ to youth the changing nature of work and overcoming poor perceptions associated with some industries (e.g. emphasising opportunities associated with technology, the requirement for highly skilled workers, rising salaries and associated benefits).

Brokering solutions for industry skill needs

Banyule Nillumbik LLEN has facilitated the Community Regional Industry Skills Program (CRISP) Project. This industry specific project, funded by the Department for Planning and Community Development, aims to assist in addressing skill shortages by promoting the community services and health sector industry to young people in the Nillumbik Shire and adjoining local government areas. Twenty-nine employment outcomes have been achieved in 2007, including school based new apprenticeships. Further, the project has achieved 32 training outcomes.

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4.4 Responding to geographic differences

A different mix of tactics for working with industry may be required, depending on local circumstances.

**Metropolitan areas**

In situations of geographical and industry diversity, manageable approaches to working with industry include:

- selecting and targeting a group of medium-to-large employers concentrating initially in a local area and interacting with them as a group
- placing emphasis on establishing a working relationship with a particular industry sector assessed as offering good opportunities for collaboration
- developing specific initiatives or project ideas and seeking an appropriate industry partner for each
- linking with well established organisations (e.g. TAFE institutes) to broker a range of support to improve employability prospects for disadvantaged young people.

In adopting these approaches, challenges remain of ensuring reasonable physical coverage and gaining broad recognition of the LLEN by industry.

**Larger regional centres**

Larger regional areas often include a reasonable diversity of local industry combined with a strong sense of community among people, who mostly live and work in the same general area. LLEN Chairs are usually well known and well connected locally, and there is a relative ease of networking with industry, industry associations, and community organisations, TAFE institutes and secondary colleges, largely through established networks.

Successful approaches have been to locate and associate directly with local business associations, peak industry associations, and local chambers of industry and commerce. Partnerships with these bodies provide advantages in linking with already established business and industry networks and committees, providing extra resources to implement projects.

Challenges associated with at-risk youth require a holistic approach, and LLENS in regional centres have established close working relationships with local community and welfare organisations to identify young people at risk and provide support, with the aim of developing work readiness.

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**Brokering solutions for industry skill needs**

In partnership with Western LCP the Brimbank Melton LLEN is engaging several new industry partners. City West Water and Smorgons Steel now support vocational pathways for young people. An example of this work is the ‘Careers in Manufacturing’ program (sponsored by the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development), which is delivered in seven schools in the Melton and Brimbank municipalities.

**Targeting specific industry sectors in an area**

Project 729 in Manufacturing, facilitated by the Smart Geelong Region LLEN, will raise the awareness of young people, their parents and teachers about pathways into careers in the broad manufacturing industries sector. The project will enable participating schools to build capability for careers education (and in particular to focus on career opportunities available in local manufacturing companies). It will also support young people entering school to work pathways (including Structured Workplace Learning, VCAL, VETiS and ASbAs) in the senior years.

This project was designed by the LLEN’s Geelong Region Employers Reference Group in tandem with the Region’s Post Compulsory Network and the G21 Skills Task Force. The project has been funded by the Victorian Skills Commission (formerly VLESC) Manufacturing Skills and Training Task Force for the period July 2007 to Dec 2008.
Rural areas and smaller regional centres

**Developing industry mentors**
The Baw Baw Latrobe LLEN brokered a collaborative partnership with Equipsuper late in 2006 which involves an initiative that links young people from schools and community education programs with experienced people within the community. With the financial support of Equipsuper and participation by its staff as mentors, the Inspiring Young People program has targeted young people who may not be sure about their career choices or pathways and highlights the opportunities that are available in Gippsland. Other stakeholders are local schools and community education providers, The Smith Family and GippsTAFE.

**Developing industry mentors**
The continued loss of young people from the Goulburn Valley region was raised as an issue with the Goulburn Murray LLEN by local industry. The loss was having a significant impact on SPC Ardmona, one of the largest employers in the Goulburn Valley. SPC Ardmona has three manufacturing sites in the local area (Shepparton, Mooroopna and Kyabram), and employs approximately 600 permanent professional, semi-professional and unskilled workers along with a further 5,000 employees during the fruit processing season.

The Goulburn Murray LLEN with SPC Ardmona, Careers Connection (Local Community Partnership) and the local community have partnered to promote and implement initiatives for young people, which aim to increase their skills and employment potential. In the last two years SPC Ardmona has placed over 30 students in various fields. Currently they have 16 apprentices with 80% having completed a work placement through the VET in Schools program.

Despite some difficulties in terms of availability, viability and accessibility of industries, rural areas tend to have a strongly developed sense of community and an openness to personal approaches by LLNs. Approaches are more effective when the LLEN is widely known and well regarded in the community and when the direct relevance of proposed activities and mutual benefits are promoted to employers (often small businesses).

Service clubs, such as Lions and Rotary, with a range of participants and a community focus, are potential partners. Local industry groups may be less available than in other areas, and travel distance and associated time and cost are significant disadvantages for industry members (especially in farming) taking an active part in local associations. Transport issues also limit the potential for young people to interact directly with industry, for example through work experience and access to apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities.

As in other areas, it may be possible for LLNs to collaborate with other organisations, for example co-locating with council services, and encouraging larger local employers to help involve and mentor smaller businesses. Where the LLEN area includes a number of geographically distinct, smaller regional centres, formation of localised ‘round table’ working groups of employers and education and training providers centred on the specific needs and opportunities within each particular township, has been an effective approach.
5. Further development

5.1 Building powerful community organisations

LLENs can develop into powerful local community organisations with many community-minded and enthusiastic people involved at a local level. With strong cross-sectoral membership and industry participation, LLENs can provide good examples of ‘thinking local’ to contribute to policy development.

A future challenge for LLENs is to continue to build on this capacity, and to develop its use it to greatest effect, including links to government policy makers.

5.2 Increasing skills

Skills required to effectively relate to industry are different to those employed in interacting with the education sector, including schools and TAFE. A key ongoing success factor in engaging industry is to have people on the LLEN team who have a close empathy with business, particularly its challenges and day-to-day pressures. There is a need for this requirement to be addressed in selection and training of personnel.

5.3 Partnerships and resources

With limited means, LLENs have leveraged other resources, through co-location or partnerships with relevant organisations, to achieve good outcomes. However, the LLEN core role and identity need to be maintained. A strategic approach is necessary for identifying partners and building partnerships that closely align with LLEN goals and can achieve demonstrable outcomes in key areas of concern.

5.4 Learning from each other

Central to ongoing development is a continued commitment amongst LLENs to sharing their growing expertise in interacting with and influencing development of their local environments. In some circumstances, there could be further benefits in working together actively to implement initiatives on a joint basis.