**Report to the ACFE Board on Learn Local organisations delivering training to young people**

**Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE)  
Youth Taskforce**

**May 2014**

**BACKGROUND**

In June 2013, the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board established the ACFE Youth Taskforce in response to *A Different Journey[[1]](#footnote-1),* whichreported on young people (aged 10-19 years) accessing education and training through Learn Local organisations in southern metropolitan Victoria. The ACFE Southern Metropolitan Regional Council contracted Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network (BGK LLEN) to lead the project and produce the report, which highlighted:

* that feedback gathered in Southern Metropolitan region suggests that figures for young people (aged 10-19 years) participating in education and training at Learn Local organisations may be significantly higher than reported;
* the complex funding structures that support young people accessing education and training through Learn Local organisations and challenges associated with planning programs in this context;
* the level of support required for these young people who often have complex needs and how well resourced Learn Local organisations are to meet this need, both in terms of funding and access to support or wrap-around services; and
* the need to recognise Learn Local as contributing to the education of vulnerable young people and the importance of establishing effective partnerships to support this work.

*A Different Journey* was the starting point for the ACFE Youth Taskforce and has been considered in depth and formed the foundation of further research (see Appendices), which informs this report about Learn Local organisations delivering training to young people. The report is intended as advice to the ACFE Board, the Department for Education and Early Childhood Development (the Department) and relevant Ministers and contains recommendations for each.

For a list of Taskforce members and acknowledgements, please see Appendix 1.

Following on from *A Different Journey*, BGK LLEN has also developed *The Next Journey[[2]](#footnote-2),* which reviews youth pathways and career development in alternative and flexible learning organisations within southern metropolitan Melbourne. This report recommended multiple opportunities that may enhance pathways and careers support for young people at a provider, sector and strategic level; these are explored later in this Report under *Engagement, Health and Wellbeing*. The ACFE Board may consider the recommendations from *The Next Journey* when identifying opportunities and strategies to support careers development and pathways within the Learn Local sector as part of implementing *Learn Local:* *Focusing on the Future*. The Taskforce commends this report and its recommendations to the Board.

**Policy context**

*Towards Victoria as a Learning Community*[[3]](#footnote-3) announced a renewed emphasis on building partnerships led by schools to support students, while ensuring that accountability for the educational outcomes of school-aged young people remains with schools. Increased school autonomy will provide greater flexibility to make locally informed decisions and greater tailoring of education and supports to meet the needs of their students and communities.

*Learn Local: Focusing on the Future*[[4]](#footnote-4)*:*

* recognises the Government’s commitment to improving school accountability for school-aged young people and the role of school-led partnerships in achieving this outcome;
* is inclusive of school-led partnerships with alternative education settings, provided they are designed to suit the learning needs of young people and offer additional flexibility to meet the needs of disengaged, vulnerable and at-risk young people; and
* highlights that where Learn Local organisations provide services direct to disengaged young people accountability is unclear.

*Learn Local: Focusing on the Future* committed the Government to supporting Learn Local organisations working with schools and other providers of alternative settings to ensure that young people receive an education that is tailored to their needs and circumstances in appropriate settings. The strategy highlights that arrangements between schools and Learn Local organisations should ensure that students have connecting pathways back to school, are taught to an appropriate curriculum and that the accountability for learning and development outcomes remains with the school.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Legislation and compulsory schooling age**

The Victorian *Education Training and Reform Act 2006[[6]](#footnote-6)* (the Act) requires children and young people to attend school from six up to 17 years of age. This includes a general exemption from attending school if the young person has completed Year 10 and is leaving school to participate in employment and/or education and training at another organisation, with their principal’s approval. Departmental policy guides school exit processes, including exemptions.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**School Funding and Reforms**

The Student Resource Package[[8]](#footnote-8) (SRP) is the funding model for Victorian Government schools and focuses on student outcomes and school improvement. This focus aligns resourcing to individual student learning needs, provides funding equity between like schools, provides flexibility to meet increasingly diverse student and community needs and encourages local solutions through innovation. This is done through a model that distinguishes:

* student-based funding: the major source of resources, driven by the levels of schooling of students and their family and community characteristics. The majority of funding within this area is allocated through per student rates and consists of allocations for core student learning and equity;
* school-based funding: for school infrastructure and programs specific to individual schools; and
* targeted initiatives**:** includes programs with specific targeting criteria and/or defined life spans.

The national school funding reform agreement has committed Victoria and the Commonwealth to $12.2 billion additional investment in schools over six years. This may present opportunities to better target funding to individual student needs, within the Victorian Government schools Student Resource Package (SRP) model. Improved school accountability, including the release of the School Compact, presents further opportunities to strengthen the school system and deliver improved student outcomes, particularly for disengaged or at risk young people.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Taskforce has developed this report to identify the most appropriate and achievable ways for the ACFE Board to support the Learn Local sector in providing and contributing to the delivery of quality services to young people. This includes the ACFE Board making recommendations to the Department and relevant Ministers.

The scope of the Taskforce’s report is limited to disengaged, school-aged young people training in the Learn Local sector. **For the purposes of this report *disengaged* was defined as school-aged young people who have stopped being actively and meaningfully engaged in schooling.** This report also recognises that the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006[[9]](#footnote-9)* defines *compulsory school age* as being “not less than six nor more than 17 years of age”.

Through their research, the Taskforce identified three key strategic areas or themes that were found to influence and impact the Learn Local sector in delivering training to young people. Summarised in the following table, these themes have informed the structure of this report and framed key issues identified and explored by the Taskforce, which are also outlined below.

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| **THEMES** | **KEY ISSUES** |
| **Leadership, Governance and Accountability** | Limited capacity within the sector and the system to identify fully the number of young people accessing training in the Learn Local sector, which limits their capacity to respond strategically to youth disengagement.  Research suggests that school engagement strategies are either not fully addressing the issue of youth disengagement or being fully implemented by relevant sectors.  Some Learn Local organisations may not have a clear understanding of the range of factors that should influence their decision to work with school-aged disengaged young people, including accountability. |
| **Partnerships and Collaboration** | Responses to youth disengagement can be fragmented, with disparate organisations struggling to deal with similar issues in isolation, which can be a barrier for Learn Local organisations that lack resources or partnerships to fully meet the needs of disengaged young people. |
| **Engagement, Health and Wellbeing** | Capacity to:   * provide tailored programs to meet the needs of young people; * resource and accommodate the complex needs of vulnerable young people; and * resource appropriate careers support and pathways planning for young people. |

**Recommendations**

The Youth Taskforce has developed a series of recommendations and strategies to enable the ACFE Board to respond to these issues and improve the Learn Local sector’s capacity to deliver training to school-aged young people. These recommendations are that:

1. **The ACFE Board provides advice to the Minister for Higher Education and Skills seeking that he liaises with his portfolio colleagues to:**
2. Consider adopting across the education system the following principles when developing policy for school-aged young people:

* schools are most appropriately authorised and resourced to deliver education and support services to school-aged young people in the majority of cases;
* partnerships, alliances and networks amongst education providers, the community sector, business and government can give greater focus to youth issues in non-school settings, strengthen service provision and facilitate local area responses to the education and training needs of disengaged young people; and
* education and training settings should be tailored to learner needs and circumstances in appropriate settings.

1. Continue to support the ACFE Board to provide input into the development of Government policy that impacts young people undertaking vocational training, including:

* changes to the Victorian Training Guarantee;
* school funding reforms that impact young people accessing training;
* amendments to Re-engagement Program policy;
* policy development for learners facing barriers to participation and attainment; and
* implementation of the Vulnerable Children’s strategy and the DEECD Health and Wellbeing strategy.

1. **The ACFE Board requests that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides the Board with annual reports about:**
2. VSN data on student movement and retention rates for young people enrolled in the Learn Local sector to inform Board policy and program advice;
3. strategies to strengthen implementation of Re-engagement Programs, including consideration of implementing strategies identified in this report relating to resourcing of supports to respond to queries about Re-engagement Programs, supporting schools to fulfil funding commitments to Re-engagement Programs and briefing schools and Department regional offices about the Learn Local sector to strengthen referral services and pathways; and
4. how effectively school-aged young people learning in Learn Local organisations through Re-engagement Program arrangements are accessing Student Support Services.
5. **The ACFE Board requests that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides advice for Learn Local organisations and schools about models for partnerships, alliances and networks that enable collaboration and sharing of resources that support young people, including:**

* re-engagement programs and facilitating the sharing of effective partnership models;
* student support services;
* curriculum and VCAL;
* professional development;
* access to facilities and infrastructure (e.g. sporting grounds and equipment);
* strategies for student (re)engagement; and
* funding opportunities to support partnerships (i.e. Capacity and Innovation Fund partnership stream).

1. **The ACFE Board develops policy and communicates advice for Learn Local organisations delivering training to school-aged young people, relating to:**

* the Board’s position, in line with the Act, that all school-aged young people should be enrolled in a school unless they have been granted and can provide evidence of an exemption, including clear process advice for responding to approaches by unenrolled, school-aged young people in discussion with the school and/or the Department;
* school-enrolled and compulsory school-aged young people being ineligible for pre-accredited delivery in recognition of school accountability for funding these learners and re-engagement programs in partnership with schools;
* highlighting the legal responsibilities and risks and discouraging Learn Local organisations from “carrying” or not enrolling students they deliver training to;
* advising about expectations and effective strategies to link young people to learning outcomes, pathways and resources, including through referrals and partnerships;
* clarifying duty of care for young people (under 18 years) in the training sector (legal advice required); and
* reinforcing the understanding that Learn Local organisations deal with young people with complex needs and the importance of a Learn Local’s capacity to manage these needs.

**LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

As discussed in *Towards* *Victoria as Learning Community (TVLC)*, accountability for student achievement, engagement and wellbeing rests first and foremost with schools. [[10]](#footnote-10) The Taskforce believes that this is underpinned by the principle that schools are most appropriately authorised and resourced to deliver education and support services to school-aged young people in the majority of cases. *TVLC* also recognises that collaborations and partnerships are essential for schools to build personal learning experiences for each student, especially in addressing the complex needs of students who are disadvantaged or vulnerable.[[11]](#footnote-11) Consistent with this, *Learn Local:* *Focusing on the Future* commits the government to supporting Learn Local organisations working with schools and other providers of alternative settings to ensure that young people receive an education that is tailored to their needs and circumstances in appropriate settings. Further, that arrangements between schools and Learn Local organisations ensure that students have connecting pathways back to school, are taught to an appropriate curriculum and that the accountability for learning and development outcomes remains with the school.[[12]](#footnote-12)

In this context, the Taskforce has identified three key issues and barriers that may impact the Learn Local sector’s capacity to meet these objectives, which relate to the themes of leadership, governance and accountability. These issues and barriers are discussed in more detail below and the Taskforce has identified strategies that may support the sector and improve the way in which it engages with young people.

1. **Limited capacity within the sector and the system** **to identify fully the number of young people accessing training in the Learn Local sector, which limits their capacity to respond strategically to youth disengagement.**

Data and anecdotal evidence suggests that there are significant numbers of students disengaging from school. For example the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Census identified approximately 11,000 Victorians aged 15-17 years as not attending any education and training, around half of which (5,500) were not in employment. This trend is consistent with Departmental data on early school leavers (Years 9, 10 and 11), noting that disengagement rates tend to be higher for Year 9 school leavers than those leaving at Years 10 and 11.

However, it is difficult to get a clear picture of how many young people are accessing education and training at Learn Local organisations, with *A Different Journey* indicating that there are more than are being reported. This issue is largely attributed to training delivery being funded by various sources, each with separate or no reporting requirements. While there is evidence to suggest that young people are accessing other services at Learn Local organisations, including alternatively funded training (e.g. re-engagement programs funded by schools and local government), this is beyond the scope of the report or the capacity of the Department to discover.

The Skills Victoria Training System (SVTS) used by the Department captures data on Victorian Government funded training delivery (i.e. Victorian Training Guarantee (VTG) funded accredited delivery or ACFE Board funded pre-accredited delivery) and some fee-for-service[[13]](#footnote-13). SVTS also captures, where reported, learner age and whether they are enrolled in school or not[[14]](#footnote-14). As school-enrolled students funded by the SRP are not reported in SVTS, these figures may not be representative of all school-enrolled students training in Learn Local organisations. However, SVTS has capacity to report the number of young people accessing Government funded training who are not enrolled in or disengaged from school. For the purposes of the ACFE Youth Taskforce’s research, the Department analysed 2013 SVTS data on young people aged 10-19 years undertaking Victorian Government funded training as reported by Learn Local organisations.[[15]](#footnote-15) The analysis found young people 10-19 years represented approximately 15 per cent (8,380 students) of total Learn Local reported accredited and pre-accredited delivery (5,560 students were 17-19 year olds). Seventy seven (77) per cent of young people were reported as not enrolled at school and most were in accredited programs at Year 12 or equivalent level (Certificate I and II). For further detail, please refer to Appendix 2. The Department may consider exploring further the number of young people of compulsory school-age (16 years and below) reported in training as not enrolled at school to determine whether this is comparable with the number of students granted exemptions from school; this may highlight any issues around school exit processes. **It is recommended, in line with the Act, that the ACFE Board develops clear process advice for Learn Local organisations to respond to approaches by school-aged young people who are not enrolled in school, including sighting exemptions and seeking advice from a school or the Department’s regional office.**

The Victorian Student Number (VSN) has been progressively implemented across all students in government and non-government schools, and students up to the age of 24 in vocational training. The VSN provides the capacity to gather accurate knowledge of student movement and retention rates and patterns of student premature departure. This may provide more accurate, longer term, and individualised destination data, allowing the education system to provide timely intervention and support to students. In the context of young people, the VSN provides a consistent reporting tool for tracking participation in education and training and monitoring disengagement and re-engagement by young people. **It is recommended that the ACFE Board be provided with VSN data about young people enrolled in the Learn Local sector to inform their policy and program advice.**

*A Different Journey* also reported that some Learn Local organisations are “carrying” young people that do not meet the VTG eligibility criteria, demonstrate poor attendance or have no provision for paying fees. These students are not centrally reported as they are not enrolled and do not receive Government subsidies. Despite recognising the importance of relationship and trust building with vulnerable young people and a Learn Local’s potential reluctance to turn people away, “carrying” students raises questions about the recognition that can be obtained for this training and how effective this approach is in supporting outcomes and pathways. **It is recommended that in any policy setting and/or advice to Learn Local organisations about working with young people that the ACFE Board discourages Learn Local organisations from “carrying” or not enrolling students they deliver training to.**

1. **Research suggests that school engagement strategies are either not fully addressing the issue of youth disengagement or being fully implemented by relevant sectors**

While it is difficult to get a clear picture of the number of young people accessing Learn Local organisations, available evidence suggests that there is a significant number of young people disengaging from school, some of whom present at Learn Local organisations. The Taskforce found that this was influenced by school (re)engagement strategies and how effectively these are being implemented by relevant sectors.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Potentially in similar recognition of this issue, the Department has released new Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance[[17]](#footnote-17) to better support principals to maintain safe and positive learning environments. The new Guidance includes information on strategies to promote and maintain engagement from a whole school level down to targeted supports for individual students. Every school will continue to be required to have a Student Engagement Policy that articulates the expectations and aspirations of the school community in relation to student engagement, including strategies to address bullying, school attendance and behaviour. Implementation of school engagement policy is outside the remit of the ACFE Board.

The Department has also recognised that a small proportion of students may not respond to school-based engagement strategies and have developed guidance and policies for schools to develop re-engagement programs, which may involve partnerships with other education and training providers. Re-engagement Programs provide tailored education and support intended to re-engage the student, either to return to mainstream schooling or to continue within an alternative setting (e.g. TAFEs, RTOs and Learn Local organisations). Programs are funded through the SRP based on a minimum placement fee set by the Department and paid by the school, with higher rates negotiable between partners.

The Taskforce considers Re-engagement Programs the most appropriate model for Learn Local organisations to deliver training to school-aged young people. Consistent with *Learn Local: Focusing on the Future*, Re-engagement Programs ensure that students have connecting pathways back to school, are taught to an appropriate curriculum and ensure that accountability for learning and development outcomes remain with the school. This is achieved by collaboratively developed programs to meet locally identified need and contractual arrangements to ensure clarity around responsibilities, accountability and funding, with schools retaining duty of care for students.

Re-engagement Programs replaced ACE-school partnerships and memorandums of understanding from 2013, with advice provided to the Learn Local sector by the Department in 2012. However evidence suggesting that both sectors (school and Learn Local) may not have fully implemented the new arrangements.  *A Different Journey* reported challenges Learn Local organisations are facing in partnering with schools in delivering Re-engagement Programs, including:

* schools failing to fund program delivery – anecdotal reports suggest that this may relate school funding being linked to the annual school census which impacts when funding is committed. Learn Local organisations reported consequently funding delivery through the VTG or pre-accredited funding; and
* using non-binding memorandums of understanding – failing to use the contracts developed by the Department may impact accountability and grounds for conflict resolution (e.g. non-payment and recovery of funds).

**The Taskforce recommends further co-ordinated communication and support of Re-engagement Program policy and promotion of effective partnership models to strengthen implementation of Re-engagement Programs and in turn support the objective of *Learn Local: Focusing on the Future* highlighted above.** Strategies may include:

* the ACFE Board through the Department providing further advice to Learn Local organisations and schools about Re-engagement Programs and facilitating the sharing of effective partnership models;
* the Department resourcing a central contact or network of contacts to respond to queries about Re-Engagement programs for schools and training providers; and
* the Department investigating ways to support schools to fulfil their funding commitments to re-engagement programs (e.g. quarantine funding for re-engagement programs, earmarking funding for disengaged students).

There may also be an issue relating to young people being referred to Learn Local organisations by schools or Regional Offices without a clear understanding of the Learn Local sector or individual providers. Schools and Regional offices may benefit from a briefing about the Learn Local sector to ensure informed referral services and pathways for young people (especially when issuing exemptions).

In 2013, through the Department’s Re-engagement Pilot Initiative, $1 million was allocated to six new or existing re-engagement programs to improve capacity to deliver quality re-engagement programs that support disengaged or at-risk children and young people to achieve positive education and wellbeing outcomes. The programs were selected through a competitive EOI process and funding was provided for one year only, to supplement SRP funding which was the primary funding source for the pilots. It is also understood that the Department has commissioned an evaluation report for the pilots, which is being finalised. The findings have potential to inform improved implementation of re-engagement programs and public release of the evaluation is encouraged.

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| **Re-engagement Program: Wyndham Community and Education Centre**  In 2013, Wyndham Community and Education Centre (Wyndham CEC) started working with a network of schools to deliver a re-engagement program targeting local 15-17 year olds at risk of disengaging or disengaged from school. The network and program was established as part of the Re-Engage Wyndham Project, led by Manor Lakes P-12 College as part of a DEECD pilot Re-engagement Program.  Students remain enrolled in their home school but attend Wyndham CEC for 10 weeks (Term 3) to undertake a Certificate I in Vocational Preparation, intended to re-engage students in learning through experiencing achievement. Course delivery is matched to individual student learning styles through an Individual Learning Plan developed on commencement, which takes into account information gathered through the school referral process.  By remaining enrolled in a school, Wyndham CEC can access Student Resource Package funding for the program and students can continue to access school-based student support services as well as the Youth Worker at the Centre. Wyndham CEC has a contract in place with each of the schools involved, using the DEECD template to ensure clear accountability and funding arrangements prior to commencing a program. Regular communication with the schools regarding attendance and achievement was a key element of success and recognises that the school is ultimately accountable for these students.  In 2013, 18 students undertook the program and 15 transitioned back to school or into further education and training. Three students did not complete the course due to relocation. Due to the success of the pilot, this program will continue in 2014 over an 18 week timeframe (Terms 2 & 3). |

1. **Some Learn Local organisations may not have a clear understanding of the range of factors that should influence their decision to work with school-aged disengaged young people, including accountability.**

Some Learn Local organisations and their committees of management may not have a clear understanding of how to respond to disengaged school-aged young people and the range of factors that should influence their decision to enrol these students. For example, there are legal requirements regarding children and young people’s participation in school. In addition, Learn Local organisations should consider: is the learner of compulsory schooling-age or been granted an exemption from school? Can the learner be linked to a school, either for return to school or for a Re-engagement Program? Is the Learn Local appropriately resourced and capable of managing the various funding, resourcing and contractual arrangements necessary to deliver training to young people, including where irregular attendance makes funding unreliable? A lack of clarity can lead to Learn Local organisations delivering training without the support of schools or not appropriately targeted or resourced.

**This issue presents an opportunity for the ACFE Board to empower Learn Local organisations through policy settings and/or advice**, which could:

* clarify a Learn Local’s role and decision making process in working with children and young people, as well as the ACFE Board and the Department’s expectations about appropriately targeted and resourced programs;
* recognise the role of schools and their responsibility for the education and training of school-aged children and Departmental policy about Re-engagement Programs (including distinguishing between school enrolled and not school enrolled school-age young people - see Appendix 3 for a comparison of training delivery and funding models); and
* promote partnership models for Learn Local organisations with schools and other organisations to strengthen provision and establish referral pathways.

Working with disengaged young people also raises issues around duty of care and the potential legal implications regarding duty of care for training providers enrolling students under 18 years of age. **It is recommended that the issue of duty of care in training settings be explored further in a policy setting.**

Implications for pre-accredited purchasing should also be considered in policy development for young people. The 2014 Pre-Accredited Purchasing Package and Guide identifies disengaged youth as a learner group for particular focus in pre-accredited programs. However, the Board may wish to consider school-enrolled students and compulsory school-aged young people separately and align with recent DEECD policy changes that prevent school-enrolled students from accessing VTG subsidies (except for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships). This ensures that vocational training is linked to a student’s education program and is school approved and funded. **The Taskforce recommends that a similar policy be developed by the Board limiting access to pre-accredited delivery for school-enrolled and compulsory school-aged young people.** This policy would recognise school accountability for funding these learners, particularly as adult learners do not having an alternative funding source available outside of VTG and pre-accredited. Under this arrangement Learn Local organisations could continue to deliver training to these young people through Re-Engagement Programs in partnership with schools.

**PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION**

*Learn Local: Focusing on the Future* recognises the complexity and scope of training required to achieve good outcomes and where this is beyond the capacity of a single organisation, that it is unreasonable to expect Learn Local organisations to be ‘one-stop shops’ for all training needs. In responding to this issue, the strategy promotes greater support in forming partnerships, alliances and networks, and integrating more effectively with other training providers and community organisations. The benefits of these collaborative approaches may include more complete services, stronger pathways, increased program intake and improved provider sustainability. This may also support Learn Local organisations in managing the challenges of scale, developing stronger business models to support the quality of training and maintaining the core strengths of community provision: local presence, flexibility and accessibility. [[18]](#footnote-18)

Partnerships and collaboration were found to be key themes in strategies to support the Learn Local sector in responding to the needs of young people. For example, in delivering services to young people, providers interviewed in *A Different Journey* identified partnering with youth services, schools, state and local government, health services, employment services, Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) and community groups. In considering this issue, the Taskforce worked within the principle that partnerships, alliances and networks amongst schools, education and training providers, the community sector, business and government can give greater focus to youth issues in non-school settings, strengthen service provision and facilitate local area responses to the education and training needs of disengaged young people.

**A key issue identified by the Taskforce was that responses to youth disengagement can be fragmented, with disparate organisations struggling to deal with similar issues in isolation.** Due to the often complex needs of disengaged young people, no one service can fully respond to their needs so they are often supported by multiple organisations. These service and support organisations often have varying levels of interaction and connection, which can result in a lack of cohesion and isolation in responding to similar or interconnected issues. **This issue is a barrier for Learn Local organisations that may not have the capacity or resourcing to independently respond to the needs of disengaged young people and face challenges in establishing partnership to address this gap.** Depending on scale and staffing levels, managing multiple relationships may present a challenge for some Learn Local organisations.

**For these organisations, the Taskforce recommends promoting effective models of partnerships, alliances and networks, each depending on circumstances and the needs of young people in their community.** These may include:

* establishing an alliance or community of practice for Learn Local organisations working with local young people to facilitate knowledge sharing, improve program quality and delivery, pool resources and advocate the sector within their community or on particular issues;
* leading or joining partnerships with one or more schools to design and deliver re-engagement programs for young people that meet an identified local need. Where multiple partners are involved, a local network model with governance arrangements may facilitate better local solutions and streamline program administration;
* targeted partnerships to address a specific need, for example sharing resources and connections for: pathways planning and careers development including work placements; support services for leaners with complex needs;
* developing communities of practice around curriculum development and quality moderation that support appropriately targeted programs for young people; and
* partnering in training delivery with other local providers to combine programs and increase class sizes may address challenges associated with poor enrolment and attendance amongst vulnerable young people.

The Capacity and Innovation Fund (CAIF) presents an opportunity to support Learn Local organisations to establish joined up approaches that help to sustain ongoing Learn Local provision and increase opportunities for learners to access education and training pathways. An additional $1 million has been designated for projects that support the creation of partnerships, networks and co-location opportunities for Learn Local organisations. **There is an opportunity for providers to apply to the CAIF partnership stream seeking support for projects that support joined up responses to disengaged youth.** Submissions of this nature may be facilitated by Regional ACFE staff through the expression of interest process.

The *Youth Partnerships Initiative[[19]](#footnote-19)* demonstration projects trialled a number of approaches to partnerships across service sectors to improve engagement in education and training and to reduce the escalation of social, individual and behavioural problems for vulnerable young people. It is understood that an evaluation of the demonstration projects is currently being finalised and advice prepared for government. Learnings from the projects may present opportunities for the Learn Local sector in developing partnerships to support disengaged young people, particularly those that utilise the portability of SRP to fund flexible learning options and outreach teachers based in non-school settings. Public release of the evaluation is encouraged to enable exploration of these possibilities.

*Victoria’s Vulnerable Children: Our Shared Responsibility Strategy 2013-2022* is a whole-of-government strategy designed to drive broad, transformational change across government and the community to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families. The Strategy is exploring a local networks or area partnerships model that could facilitate local planning and decision making across state, local and commonwealth governments in partnership with local community. This work could also present opportunities for Learn Local organisations to connect with other providers of youth services in a more collaborative and network based approach. **The ACFE Board should seek opportunities to input into policy discussion about implementation of the strategy and highlight opportunities for Learn Local organisations.**

*A Different Journey* also highlighted that Learn Local organisations are feeling excluded by other education providers as their role in educating and training young people is not well understood or recognised; this tension may be impacting establishment and sustainability of partnerships. Seeking opportunities to showcase the innovative youth programs involving Learn Local organisations could raise their profile as effective partners. There is an opportunity for schools to learn from Learn Local organisations about effective strategies for engaging hard to reach and disengaged learners. **The ACFE Board may consider advocating this approach to the Department to identify opportunities for cross-sectoral knowledge sharing.**

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| **Flexible Engagement and Learning Network – Bayside, Glen Eira, Kingston and neighbouring regions**  The Flexible Engagement and Learning Network (FELN) is a partnership that has been developed as a Network of influence and capacity by the BGK LLEN. The FELN aims to foster strategic interest, drive opportunities and coordinate best options for flexible and alterative learning and engagement outside of schools in the Bayside, Glen Eira, Kingston and neighbouring regions. The FELN was formed in 2011 based on the outcomes of consultations held with alternative education providers, schools, community agencies and Department representatives.  The Network is made up of representatives from Learn Local organisations, TAFEs, schools with satellite CVCALs, RTOs, independent alternative learning centres and support agencies such as Youth Connections and Workplace Learning Coordinators. Representatives from South Eastern Victoria Region of the Department also attend meetings to provide updates on policy changes, areas of concern and opportunities to strengthen the work and connectivity with schools in the region.  The desired outcomes of the FELN are to:   * develop a broad and sustainable network that has the capacity to support providers; * develop strategic partnerships with community agencies and businesses in the region; * collaborate effectively to strengthen referrals, pathways and transition options for young people; and * enable opportunities to coordinate initiatives within the region and with schools.   By ensuring that a strong and coordinated flexible engagement and learning service system is in place, young people will be empowered to make positive learning, career and life choices through their engagement in ‘alternative and flexible learning setting’ provision. It is also identified by the group that it is important for parents and carers, community and schools to be confident that the engagement and learning provision is of a high quality and supports all young people appropriately. |

**ENGAGEMENT, HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

*Learn Local: Focusing on the Future* is inclusive of alternative educational settings outside schools, provided they are designed to suit the learning needs of young people with additional flexibility to meet the needs of disengaged, vulnerable and at-risk young people.[[20]](#footnote-20)On this basis, the Taskforce applied the principle that education and training settings should be tailored to learner needs and circumstances in appropriate settings.

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| **Case studies:**  **A school-based approach to student support: Individualised Support Programs[[21]](#footnote-21)**  Owing to the high proportion of migrant and refugee students in the school population, Debney Park Secondary College created a wrap around approach to student support. Teachers worked in teams to share the management of the entire cohort of students at each year level. Teachers in each team were in constant contact with their students and became very familiar with their students’ backgrounds, present circumstances and performance and were able to provide a supportive network for them all. Owing to the small size of the school, some teachers were part of more than one team, resulting in a high degree of continuity of support as the students progressed up through the year levels.  Teachers were provided with additional training in intercultural communication and dealing with the needs of young people who had experienced traumatic events. In addition teaching staff were supported by a team of specialist professional staff including a full-time welfare co-ordinator, part-time psychologist, disability worker and community nurse.  **A Learn Local organisation’s partnership approach to student support: Youth Education for Life and Learning Access (YELLA) Program,** **Prahran Community Learning Centre**  Prahran Community Learning Centre (PCLC) has been running re-engagement and education programs for young people who have not been attending school for six months or more. The YELLA Program was specifically developed as a re-engagement program that is flexible and provides tailored, individual learning. Its focus is on intensive literacy and numeracy classes along with a vast range of educational and recreational activities that incorporate life and learning skills into the curriculum. It is funded through the Student Resource Package via a contract process with mainstream schools.  The aim of the YELLA program is to employ a broad range of methodologies to allow a more seamless and successful transition into education and regular attendance at school. Partnerships have played a significant role in the success of the YELLA Program. Many local service providers have made a significant impact to the students’ education and overall wellbeing such as Caulfield Park Community School, IE LLEN, Family/Education workers from Catholic Care, Department of Human Services, Child Protection Workers, Family Services Workers, Southern VACCA, Stonnington Youth & Adventure Playground Services (SYAPS) and Youth Connections. Often the services involved with individual students have regular care-team meetings for the purpose of case planning to ensure the needs of the individual family members are being met and to share relevant information.  The YELLA Program re-engages young people over a two year period and embraces pedagogies that encourage, support and nurture learners. The success of the Program has been in the linkages with schools and the pathways and support systems developed for the young people. Recent outcomes include young people demonstrating increased self-esteem and a general sense of belonging to a community. This has enabled students to successfully pathway into areas such as reintegration into mainstream school and/or further training which includes apprenticeships and traineeships. All students enrolled in 2013 successfully transitioned into some form of education or training in 2014. |

Learn Local organisations may face challenges related to engagement, health and wellbeing. Three key challenges are discussed in more details below and strategies identified by the Taskforce to the support the Learn Local sector.

1. **Capacity to provide tailored programs to meet the needs of young people**

Providers should recognise that it may not be appropriate for young people, particularly of compulsory school-age, to undertake training in an adult learning setting. When developing programs and individual learning plans for young people, Learn Local organisations should be mindful of the learner’s age and prior level of achievement, work collaboratively with schools when developing programs for school-aged young people and be sure to work within existing curriculum frameworks, including:

* the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority’s curriculum frameworks for school education;
* Training Packages or other accredited courses, regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority or Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority standards;
* the ACFE Board’s Pre-accredited Quality Framework for pre-accredited delivery; and
* the Department’s guidance and quality framework for Re-engagement Programs.

**Where providers are not able to provide suitably tailored programs, the Taskforce recommends that consideration be given to referring young people to more appropriate settings or establishing partnerships to strengthen delivery.**

1. **Capacity to resource and accommodate the complex needs of vulnerable young people**

As discussed in Partnerships and Collaboration, disengaged young people often have complex needs that no one organisations can manage in isolation. A key challenge identified by *A Different Journey* was managing the complex needs of young people training in the Learn Local sector relating to education and personal circumstances, including:

* levels of literacy and numeracy;
* attitudes of disengagement and lack of connection;
* mental health and peer relationships, including bullying and sexuality;
* disabilities and learning differences;
* alcohol, drug and substance abuse; and
* family background.

Like other education and training providers, Learn Local organisations are responsible for the learning outcomes of their students but complex needs can impact a learner’s ability to participate in training and achieve learning outcomes. **It should be noted that some young people who are experiencing significant challenges may not be ready for participation in education and training and may require referral to other support services before seeking to engage in learning.**

Learn Local organisations may need to consider whether they are appropriately resourced to respond to learners with complex needs. Funding for wrap-around services and infrastructure may already be a major issue for many Learn Local organisations, not necessarily limited to young people, and the current expectation is that organisations fund these as part of their operating expenses. **The Taskforce recommends that the ACFE Board provide advice to Learn Local organisations to consider the following approaches to respond to learners with complex needs**:

* **A referral-based approach – this recognises that the key function of Learn Local organisations is education and that other services are resourced to provide specialist support, including schools-based support services and community services funded through the Department of Human Services; and**
* **Partnerships and networks – present an opportunity for Learn Local organisations to connect with appropriately resourced services and establish referral pathways or to pool resources to respond to an identified local need.**

A challenge in linking eligible learners to school-based support services is recognised and there is an opportunity for the Department to support schools and Learn Local organisations in making this connection. **It is recommended that the Department provides annual reports to the Board about how effectively school-aged young people learning in Learn Local organisations through Re-engagement Program arrangements are accessing Student Support Services.**

The Department is also currently investigating models to better target support to learners facing barriers to participation and attainment in vocational training. This will include consideration of wrap around support services based on the assessed need of each individual. This work will inform any future approach applied in the Learn Local sector. The Department has also developed Health and Wellbeing Principles to guide expectations about delivering on the commitment to wellbeing. This is largely focused on early childhood and schools, but may involve opportunities to support vulnerable young people in the training sector. **The ACFE Board should seek opportunities to input into these policy discussions and highlight opportunities for Learn Local organisations.**

1. **Capacity to resource appropriate careers support and pathways planning for young people**

*Learn Local: Focusing on the Future* recognised that Learn Local organisations require further support to enable the sector to provide learners with the advice and information they require to secure a better future. This is particularly relevant for disengaged young people who may require significant assistance in establishing pathways into education, training and employment.

The Government has committed to facilitating increased access to career services by Learn Local organisations to help meet these needs, including:

* in response to a recent evaluation, meeting with Learn Local organisations to commence discussions on expansion of the Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework (VCCF) to more specifically meet the requirements of the Learn Local sector; and
* developing more comprehensive advice for arranging work placements for students enrolled in post-secondary VET courses, building on existing online guidance available for non-school providers of VCE and VCAL for arranging and supporting work placements.

Following on from *A Different Journey*, *The Next Journey[[22]](#footnote-22)* reviews youth pathways and career development in alternative and flexible learning organisations within southern metropolitan Melbourne. This report recommended multiple opportunities that may enhance pathways and careers support for young people at a provider, sector and strategic level, including:

* Partnerships and networks: joining the Careers Education Associations of Victoria; establishing a Career Guidance and Information Service for all training provider within a region resourced by volunteer and/or funding support from the provider network (opportunity for CAIF partnership bid); establishing a centralised Pathways and Careers Development Service staffed by experts and available to learners outside of mainstream providers; establishing a sector-specific Careers and Pathways Network (region or LLEN) led by a LLEN, peak body or a lead provider; establishing links with tertiary providers to look at opportunities for student volunteers.
* Resources and student supports: establishing an online ‘resource database’ led by a provider or external source and funded through a small membership contribution; preparing case studies for parents and learners about the value of work experience; presentations and volunteer mentoring by older or past students to promote work experience; providing resource kits to employers to support awareness of complex issues amongst young people.
* Professional development: offering a mix of provider and expert led training with opportunities for sharing tools in and resources relating to pathways planning, work placements and pre-enrolment, progress and destination tracking.
* Policy and strategy: increasing support amongst Job Services Australia, Disability Employment Services and Workplace Learning Coordinators for students in alternative settings; reinstating MIPS in alternative settings; expanding the L2P program for marginalised young people particularly for mentoring; promoting inclusion of alternative settings in destination research.

The ACFE Board may consider the recommendations from *The Next Journey* when identifying opportunities and strategies to support careers development and pathways within the Learn Local sector as part of implementing *Learn Local:* *Focusing on the Future*. The Taskforce commends this report and its recommendations to the Board.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Youth Taskforce’s report identifies a number of opportunities and strategies to enable the ACFE Board to respond to and influence the issues facing Learn Local organisations and the education sector more broadly in delivering training to young people.

The Taskforce has developed the following recommendations to support the Board in implementing its response:

1. **The ACFE Board provides advice to the Minister for Higher Education and Skills seeking that he liaises with his portfolio colleagues to:**
2. Consider adopting across the education system the following principles when developing policy for school-aged young people:

* schools are most appropriately authorised and resourced to deliver education and support services to school-aged young people in the majority of cases;
* partnerships, alliances and networks amongst education providers, the community sector, business and government can give greater focus to youth issues in non-school settings, strengthen service provision and facilitate local area responses to the education and training needs of disengaged young people; and
* education and training settings should be tailored to learner needs and circumstances in appropriate settings.

1. Continue to support the ACFE Board to provide input into the development of Government policy that impacts young people undertaking vocational training, including:

* changes to the Victorian Training Guarantee;
* school funding reforms that impact young people accessing training;
* amendments to Re-engagement Program policy;
* policy development for learners facing barriers to participation and attainment; and
* implementation of the Vulnerable Children’s strategy and the DEECD Health and Wellbeing strategy.

1. **The ACFE Board requests that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides the Board with annual reports about:**
2. VSN data on student movement and retention rates for young people enrolled in the Learn Local sector to inform Board policy and program advice;
3. strategies to strengthen implementation of Re-engagement Programs, including consideration of implementing strategies identified in this report relating to resourcing of supports to respond to queries about Re-engagement Programs, supporting schools to fulfil funding commitments to Re-engagement Programs and briefing schools and Department regional offices about the Learn Local sector to strengthen referral services and pathways; and
4. how effectively school-aged young people learning in Learn Local organisations through Re-engagement Program arrangements are accessing Student Support Services.
5. **The ACFE Board requests that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides advice for Learn Local organisations and schools about models for partnerships, alliances and networks that enable collaboration and sharing of resources that support young people, including:**

* re-engagement programs and facilitating the sharing of effective partnership models;
* student support services;
* curriculum and VCAL;
* professional development;
* access to facilities and infrastructure (e.g. sporting grounds and equipment);
* strategies for student (re)engagement; and
* funding opportunities to support partnerships (i.e. Capacity and Innovation Fund partnership stream).

1. **The ACFE Board develops policy and communicates advice for Learn Local organisations delivering training to school-aged young people, relating to:**

* the Board’s position, in line with the Act, that all school-aged young people should be enrolled in a school unless they have been granted and can provide evidence of an exemption, including clear process advice for responding to approaches by unenrolled, school-aged young people in discussion with the school and/or the Department;
* school-enrolled and compulsory school-aged young people being ineligible for pre-accredited delivery in recognition of school accountability for funding these learners and re-engagement programs in partnership with schools;
* highlighting the legal responsibilities and risks and discouraging Learn Local organisations from “carrying” or not enrolling students they deliver training to;
* advising about expectations and effective strategies to link young people to learning outcomes, pathways and resources, including through referrals and partnerships;
* clarifying duty of care for young people (under 18 years) in the training sector (legal advice required); and
* reinforcing the understanding that Learn Local organisations deal with young people with complex needs and the importance of a Learn Local’s capacity to manage these needs.

**Appendix 1: Taskforce Membership, Support and Acknowledgements**

**ACFE Youth Taskforce membership**

* Ms Andrea McCall, Chair ACFE Youth Taskforce, ACFE Board
* Mr Ron Wilson, ACFE Board
* Dr Madeleine Mattarozzi Laming, ACFE Board
* Mr Linc Yow Yeh, ACFE Board
* Ms Louisa Ellum, Chief Executive Officer, Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network
* Ms Georgie Ferrari, Chief Executive Officer, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
* Ms Bronwen Heathfield, Director, Participation Branch, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)

**Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Support**

* Ms Verna Kearney, Manager, Participation, Practice and Development, DEECD
* Ms Jayne Furlong, Senior Project Officer, Participation, Practice and Development, DEECD
* Ms Aimee Nelkner, Project Support Officer, ACFE Board Secretariat, DEECD

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* Ms Carol Kelly, Executive Director, Student Inclusion and Engagement Division, DEECD
* Mr David Murray, Director, Youth Partnerships, DEECD
* Mr Nick Chiam, Acting Executive Director, Tertiary Education Policy and Strategic Projects, DEECD
* Ms Kris Arcaro, Director, Engagement, Health and Wellbeing, DEECD
* Ms Nicole Lynch, Manager, School Funding Reform, DEECD
* Ms Angela Savage, Chief Executive Officer, Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres
* Ms Sophie Corbett, Co-ordinator Youth Services, Upper Yarra Community House
* Ms Angela Stathopolous, Member, Southern ACFE Regional Council
* Ms Robyn Downie, Manager, Network and Regional Support, DEECD

**Appendix 2: 2013 Data on young people training in Learn Locals**

For the purposes of the ACFE Youth Taskforce’s research, the Department analysed 2013 SVTS data on young people aged 10-19 years undertaking Victorian Government funded training as reported by Learn Local training organisations. The annual data is currently being reviewed by HESG, and is considered preliminary at the time of writing. Consequently, all values reported below must be considered provisional numbers, and all are rounded to the nearest 10.

The analysis found that most young people training in a Learn Local, and who were no longer at school, were enrolled in accredited programs designed to provide them a Year 12-equivalent level of academic achievement. In further detail:

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| ***Compulsory school-aged:*** | * Learners up to 14 years of age (less than 300 students) were fewer than 1 per cent of all reported Learn Local students in 2013.  As this is such a small cohort, it is difficult to draw any patterns or inferences. * Learners aged 15-16 years were 5 per cent of all reported Learn Local students in 2013 (2,550 students). Approximately one quarter (820 students) of this cohort were in pre-accredited training in 2013 while the majority (1,590 students) were training in accredited courses at Year 12 or equivalent level (i.e. AQF Certificates I and II), having achieved Year 9 or equivalent. Over 60 per cent of these learners aged 15-16 years were reported as “Not at School” in 2013. |
| ***Post compulsory school-age:*** | * Learners aged 17-19 years were 10 per cent of all reported Learn Local students in 2013. Of this cohort, 84 per cent (4670 students) were reported as "Not at School" when studying with Learn Local providers in 2013 and - within that category - the majority had achieved Year 10 or higher and were in accredited training at Year 12 or equivalent (Certificate I and II) level (2420 students) or at Certificate III level or higher (1480 students). |

**Appendix 3: Comparison of training delivery and funding models for school-aged young people**

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|  | School enrolled | Not school-enrolled\* |
| **Training delivery model** | Re-engagement Programs under contract with an enrolling school | Pre-accredited and accredited training |
| **Funding model** | Student Resource Package (SRP)\*\* | VTG, ACFE Board, fee-for-service |

\*Compulsory school-aged students (6 up to 17 years) require an exemption to not be enrolled at school. \*\*SRP relates to Government school students only.

**Appendix 4:** **ACFE Youth Taskforce Research Matrix**

| **Proposed Headings for Report** | **Policy/Funding Environment** | **Research / Evaluation / Reports** | **Programs** | **Gaps/Issues** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Leadership and Innovation** | **National Partnership for Youth Attainment and Transitions** (expires 2013) – Purpose is to achieve national Year 12 or equivalent rate of 90 per cent by 2015 (equivalent is qualification at AQF Certificate II or above or other higher education pre-entry course); provide an education or training entitlement to young people aged 15-24; better engage young people in education and training; assist young people aged 15-24 to make successful transitions from schooling to further education, training or employment; and better align Commonwealth, State and Territory programs and services related to youth, careers and transitions.  **National Requirement for Youth Participation** to make participation in education, training or employment compulsory for all young people until they reach age 17.  **Learn Local: Focusing on the Future** - Improving alternative settings for school-age young people by:   * improving accountability and outcomes for school-aged young people, with renewed emphasis on school accountability and school-led partnerships (TVLC) * being inclusive of alternative educational settings outside schools, provided they are designed to suit the learning needs of young people with additional flexibility to meet the needs of disengaged, vulnerable and at-risk young people. * supporting Learn Local organisations working with schools and other providers of alternative settings to ensure that young people receive an education that is tailored to their needs and circumstances in appropriate settings. * through arrangements between schools and Learn Local organisations, ensuring that students have connecting pathways back to school, are taught to an appropriate curriculum and accountability for learning and development outcomes remains with the school. | (M) WynBay LLEN: Currently undertaking **research into viability of alternative education provision within that growth corridor** (due end of 2013).  (R) GE LLEN: Currently undertaking a viability study (ACFE funded) with a consortium regarding **setting up a new Learn Local, identifying gaps and barriers for youth within the LL space**, post closure of the Community College in 2012.  (M) Inner City Regional Youth Affair Network (ICRYAN) Conference Report: **‘The Middle Years – Unchartered Territory?’ (Sept 2013)** –highlighted issues about service provision and barriers that limit organisations’ ability to provide programs and services to the middle 8-14 years, including funding, emphasis on the early years or youth and equity/access. VCOSS and YACVic highlighted that there is the greatest gap is middle years service provision.  (R) **Geelong Region LLEN: ‘Next Step’ Transition Protocol Trial Evaluation (June 2013).** Framework as developed and trialled for a structured system to support young people, schools, training providers and support services to follow a simple, planned protocol that complements other student planning processes and decreases the risk of young people making ineffective transitions to complete Year 12 or equivalent. | **National Partnership for Youth Attainment and Transitions** expired in 2013, but two programs were extended:   * Youth Connections * Partnership Brokers | **Governance** – Some LLs and their committees of management may not have a clear understanding of the organisations roles and responsibilities in relation to young people accessing their services.  There may be issues regarding the appropriateness of the adult learning environment and course choices for young people. |
| **Partnership and Collaboration** | **Victoria’s Vulnerable Children’s Strategy** – spans across 2013-2022, sets out whole of Government approach to preventing abuse and neglect at an earlier stage. May have implications for the LLO sector.  **Area Based Governance –** The Vulnerable Children’s Strategy is currently developing an Area Based Governance model which aims to facilitate local planning and decision making across state, local and commonwealth governments in partnership with local community.  **Youth Partnerships initiatives (David Murray, DEECD presented to Taskforce)** –Aims to improve engagement in education and training and to reduce the escalation of problems for individual young people. Twenty-five different projects have been developed and delivered through seven discrete sites across Victoria, with collaboration between DEECD, DHS, DOH, DOJ, Victoria police, local government and in some cases the community sector, such as LLENs. **“The Youth Partnerships Effect: Now and into the Future” Youth Partnerships Conference, October 2013 (reports from Ron Wilson and Louisa Ellum) -** Focus was reporting on the showcase projects originated under Youth Partnerships initiatives. Included panel discussions, keynotes and workshops on: *Social Network Analysis* of Youth Partnerships by I& J Management, including characteristics of effective partnerships; and *Gauging the Value of a Flexible Learning Option for the Young Person and the Australian Community* by James Cook University. (slides available). | (M) **BGK LLEN & Educational Transformations: ‘A Different Journey – Youth in Learn Locals’** (Feb 2013). Three considerations put forward:   1. Consideration needs to be given to resourcing these young learners equitably (in the same way as their mainstream school counterparts). 2. Consideration needs to be given to developing mutually respectful partnerships to create workable MOUs, data collection, funding models, outcome and pathways tracking, effective referrals and transition support and professional development opportunities and recognition of staff. 3. Consideration needs to be made to an equitable model of funding for Learn Locals that are engaging and working with our most at risk and complex young people.   (M/R) **BGK LLEN: BrainFood Conference survey** (2013) about youth provision. Youth issues identified as being presented at LLs – students not feeling safe at school/poor experiences at school (include bullying); lack of vocational opportunities; needing something to do; significant family support issues; barriers to learning – low literacy and numeracy/learning disabilities; substance abuse; no employment options in town; boredom; significant mental health issues. LLs not working with young people – main reasons were lack of interest from secondary school to partner and support; lack of resources and know-how in working with youth (including appropriate staff).  **(M/R) Dusseldorp Skills Forum:** Dusseldorp Skills Forum has commissioned a Briefing Paper to inform the National Alliance for Inclusive Learning’s advocacy agenda for both the Federal and State Governments. This will outline the key elements of a National Framework for Inclusive Learning – a new framework for education systems, which includes flexible and inclusive learning models, both for those in school settings and those disengaged from school. | **Community Action Networks:**   * + (R) Warracknabeal Community Action Network: Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House delivers the SVCAL program on behalf of Warracknabeal SC for disengaged young people (WSM LLEN).   + (R) Nhill Community Action Network: Nhill College and Nhill Neighbourhood House created a learning space for high risk students in Years 7 & 8 (WSM LLEN).   (M) **City LLEN:** Working with CAE and Victoria Police on the New Pathways program for early school leavers/ juvenile justice clients (since 2007).  (R) **GM LLEN:** Work with range of organisations and providers to develop re-engagement programs for most vulnerable youth cohorts: CYCLE program in Cobram (since 2008) for young people 14-25; Big Picture UnReal! Program in Shepparton; BEST CENTRE Berry Street School (Shepparton Campus) from 2012; McAuley Champagnat Programme; Shepparton ACE College; Academy of Sport Health and Education. (Some case studies available.) | **Juvenile Justice** – clarity of accountability and coordination around education and training for young people in juvenile justice system, including those transitioning from custody and community supervision.  **Challenges partnering with schools** – portability of the SRP; effective MOUs, appropriate levels of funding. |
| **Engagement and Participation** | **Victorian Training Guarantee** – provides subsidised training for eligible learners, including young people. There are potential implications for LLs in relation to the recent policy changes, with school students to access SRP rather than VTG to fund training.  **Student Resource Package (SRP)** – Victorian Government schools are funded through the SRP, which involves: student-based funding (majority of resources) driven by the levels of schooling of students/families and community characteristics, with allocations for core student learning and equity; school-based funding for infrastructure and programs specific to individual schools; and targeted initiatives for programs with specific targeting criteria and/or defined life spans.  **Portability of SRP** –A separate project is being managed in SRG to look at use of SRP funding in alternative settings. Implications for Learn Locals that are finding it difficult to get SRP funding from schools and instead relying on the VTG.  **National Plan for School Improvement** - delivered through “Better School Plan”, includes new school funding to help ensure every school student receives funds for support. Relevant to LLOs if students receive extra (needs-based) funding for disadvantage. (Funding to 2014)  **Evaluation of Re-engagement Program** (Carol Kelly, DEECD presented to taskforce) – KPMG evaluation to increase understanding of successful program models given to pilot and assess re-engagement programs. Preliminary findings indicate that solutions lie at the local level, that supporting disengaged students is more costly than other students and intensive support is required to enable them stay locally attached. Prevention and making school seem exciting whilst meeting the needs of diverse students is key. | (R) **GE LLEN: ‘Impact Survey Findings for Learn Local Delivery in Bairnsdale & district’** (July 2013) looking at the closure of Community College East Gippsland (Oct 2012). 100 students were displaced as they delivered 50% of the region’s pre-accredited hours and over 50% of VET delivery was youth accessing the College for VETIS and career programs. A viability study for a new LL is currently underway.  (R) **Geelong Region LLEN: ‘Next Step’ Transition Protocol Trial evaluation** (June 2013). GR LLEN developed and trialled the framework for a structured system to support young people, school, training providers and support services to follow a simple, planned protocol that complements other student planning processes and decreases the risk of young people making ineffective transitions to complete Year 12 or equivalent.  **Good Shepherd, Jesuit Social Services and MacKillop Family Services: ‘I Just Want to Go to School – Voices of young people experiencing educational disadvantage’** (2012). Engaged young people in creating digital recordings of their stories and their experiences in education. Provides insight into alternative settings.  (M) **Southern metro LLENs/ RCDO: Pathways and Career Development in Alternation Education** (due for release end of Oct 2013). This research looks at youth pathways and transitions in alternative education settings (LL, RTOS and TAFEs) and seeks to identify effective strategies to support young people through improved pathways planning, resource access and ongoing up skilling of staff within this sector. Current findings include: nearly 80% of providers surveyed have none or only 1 qualified staff member working in career development; over 65% of providers undertake a form of individualised pathways program planning/ MIP-style planning; partnerships identified as the key to pathways support and destination success, however many providers found that ‘services’ by providers were often expensive and/or not relevant to the cohorts at alternative education providers; students lacking readiness or requiring high level support was a major barrier to work placements/experience.  (M) **IN LLEN: Darebin Under 16 Project – Improving Education Engagement** (2012). Collaborative research project between the Youth Connections provider (NMIT) and IN LLEN undertaken to gain an understanding of the extent of disengagement in Darebin and the develop informed responses to the issue. Of particular concern were the limited options available to young people under 16 if they became disengaged from school. Data found that 113 young people (2011) under 12-15 were enrolled in alternative settings.  (M) **OE LLEN: Currently undertaking research on programs for under 15s in Learn Locals in the outer eastern/ ranges region of Melbourne** (due end of 2013).  (M) **IN LLEN: ‘Moreland Under 16 Demonstration Project – Interim Report’** (Dec 2012). Demonstration project was a response to research undertaken in 2011 regarding school disengagement. Report highlighted that many young people under 16 attended school on an irregular basis (three times the Victorian State average for each student).  (R) **CR LLEN: ‘Evaluation of Kyneton Community Learning Centre Flexible Learning Options Program (Cert I Vocational Preparation)’** (Feb 2013). Program was developed in response to growing numbers of young students disengaging from school – namely 14-15 year olds. Evaluation report investigated the ability of the program to increase the re-engagement into educational/career pathways for disengaged young people. Theses that emerged from the evaluation included – flexibility; the environment; one on one learning; incentives; partnerships; and role of coordinator and trainer. | **Youth Foyer initiative** - international approach which provides accommodation for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The youth involved need to be engaged in education, work or training for a period of two years. Victoria has three youth foyers at Holmesglen TAFE, Kangan TAFE and GO TAFE. | **Definition of disengaged** - A clearer definition of “disengaged” is needed.  **Quality** - The quality of education provided to children with complex needs to be the same as that offered to other children.  **Careers support -** Few providers have qualified career development staff. Funding to support this role is an issue.  **Equity and access** - clarifying funding stream from schools to Learn Locals – multiple funding sources.  **Reporting** – inconsistency between DEECD and LL figures about young people in LLs.  **VTG -** policy setting as a barrier/enabler for young people  **Reengagement and relationship to schools** |
| **Health and Wellbeing** | **DEECD Health and Wellbeing Principles –** under development to guide expectations about delivering on commitment to wellbeing. Will cover early years, schools and adult learners. | **‘Two Way Street’ YACVic (2012) -** research to better understand the effect of barriers to positive health and wellbeing on educational engagement by young people. Based on the experiences of these young people, the report identifies approaches that can be taken in school and youth service settings to prevent disengagement and enable better involvement of all young people in learning and other pathways.  **Connecting the Dots: Threat Assessment, Depression and the Troubled Student Harwood (2011**) - understanding depression and violence to “connect the dots” to detect the troubled student, thereby preventing campus violence in higher education institutions. |  | **Wrap around services** – access to wrap around services for students in other settings.  **Some students are more comfortable in alternative settings** – discussion of how this could/should be supported and funded. |

1. *A Different Journey*, Louisa Ellum, BGK LLEN and Fiona Longmuir, Educational Transformations (2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *The Next Journey,* Fiona Waugh, BGK LLEN (2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Towards Victoria as Learning Community*, DEECD (2012) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Learn Local: Focusing on the Future*, ACFE Board and DEECD (2013) p16 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Learn Local: Focusing on the Future*, ACFE Board and DEECD (2013) p16. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. As per the Education and Training Reform Amendment (School Age) Act 2009 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/attendance.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/finance/Pages/srp.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. As per the *Education and Training Reform Amendment (School Age) Act 2009* [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Towards Victoria as Learning Community*, DEECD (2012) pg. 19 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Towards Victoria as Learning Community*, DEECD (2012) pg. 25 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Learn Local: Focusing on the Future*, ACFE Board and DEECD (2013) p16 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. From 2014, Registered Training Organisations will be required to report on all fee-for-service delivery. This is not required for non-RTOs so will not impact all Learn Locals. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. VTG policy changes in 2014 make school-enrolled students ineligible for VTG funded training (except for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships), so the majority of future reporting in SVTS will be students no longer engaged in school. Pre-accredit funding does not currently have a similar policy, so data about school-enrolled students undertaking pre-accredit courses would continue to be captured unless there was a similar policy change by the ACFE Board. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The annual data is currently being reviewed by HESG, and is considered preliminary at the time of writing. Consequently, all values reported below must be considered provisional numbers, and all are rounded to the nearest 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The Taskforce also recognises that disengaged young people often have complex needs that challenge their participation in a mainstream schooling; this is discussed later in *Engagement, Health and Wellbeing*. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Learn Local: Focusing on the Future,* ACFE Board and DEECD (2013) p16 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. <http://www.youthpartnerships.vic.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *Learn Local: Focusing on the Future*, ACFE Board and DEECD (2013) p16 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Laming, M. M. (2011). Debney Park: A study of exemplary practices in one ethnic and racially diverse Australian school. In E.L. Brown, E. V. Dvoretskaya & P. Gibbons (Eds.), Ethnicity and race: Creating educational opportunities around the globe. Charlotte, N. C.: Information Age Publishing. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *The Next Journey*, Fiona Waugh, BGK LLEN (2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)