

Local Government  
and Education

book

**It Takes a Village  
to Raise a Child**

resource

# Local Government and Education

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## It Takes a Village to Raise a Child

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for the Victorian Local Governance Association  
February 2003**

Layout by markmaking  
Published by Victorian Local Governance Association  
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MELBOURNE 3000  
Telephone: (03) 9654 0333

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VLGA Incorporation number: A0032212V  
ISBN 1 876683 90 2

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# Foreword

**T**HE VLGA is a passionate advocate for local governments and their capacity to strengthen and support sustainable communities.

Education is an emerging area of local government interest and action. Like local government, education is firmly grounded in people and communities. This Resource Book identifies the range of education and learning activities which local government already undertakes and documents new opportunities for building community and human and economic capital through education.

Education has important outcomes for individuals and communities. It provides us with the skills we need for employment and economic security. It brings people together in new communities of shared experience and shared values so breaking down prejudice, loneliness and isolation. It has positive effects on health. Education contributes to robust economies, engaged citizens and sustainable communities.

Results from the VLGA Education Project Survey show that local governments undertake a large and very diverse range of activities under the umbrella of education. Local governments work with young people and older people, with schools and employers, with community groups and individuals and provide support, premises, funding and advocacy to enhance their community's participation in education and learning. Officers from all parts of local government are likely to be involved in education, including those from youth services, elder support, economic development, community development, social planning and environmental and waste management.

In some councils and shires Councillors, Mayors and CEOs represent local government on Committees of Management of education and learning organisations. It is clear that education and learning are core business for many local governments. And so it is surprising that very few local governments have specific education policies to underpin this activity.

Local governments must develop education policies to provide a strategic foundation to guide their own activities and to inform their interactions with other levels of government. There are many partnership projects and funding available for local government to make use of. Without a strong policy framework, however, local government will not be able to assume its proper equal role in these partnerships.

In the course of preparing this report the VLGA was assisted by many local government Councillors and officers, and by many people in the education sector. Their enthusiasm and interest will result in the creation of the VLGA Education and Learning Network, which will provide leadership for policy development, advocacy and partnerships for the local government sector.

This project was undertaken with the assistance and support of the Department of Education and Training. We thank, in particular, staff of the Office of Portfolio Integration for their support and advice. Thank you also to the members of the VLGA Education Project Reference Group, chaired by Councillor Meredith Butler, who provided support and guidance for the project.

Councillor Julie Hansen,  
President, VLGA

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*'It takes a village to raise a child'*. AFRICAN AND PACIFIC PROVERB

**E** DUCATION was identified as an area of interest for local government at the annual VLGA Planning Day in 2002. The Local Government and Education Project was sponsored by the Office of Portfolio Integration, Department of Education and Training and supported by the Local Government Section of the Department of Victorian Communities in the Victorian government. This report is one outcome of that project, which also included a series of workshops and developing a network of local government Councillors and officers with an interest in education. The project aims and methodology are attached.

Local governments have deep knowledge of their communities, extensive networks and the political authority which enables them to be effective advocates. They are able to be more responsive, relevant and proactive on behalf of their communities than other levels of government. The Local Government Act 1989 provides that the role of local government includes to 'manage, improve and develop the resources of its district efficiently and effectively' The Act includes 'health, education, welfare and other community services' among the functions of local government and to 'co-ordinate with other public bodies to ensure that services and facilities are provided and resources are used effectively and efficiently' among its roles.

Given the centrality of education to the lives of children and families and its role in the employment and economic outcomes of citizens, it is interesting that most local governments have not taken an active policy role in education matters until recently.

The intended audience for this report is Councillors, local government officers and community members. It describes the types of interactions that occur between local government and the education sector, identifies examples of local government policy commitment to education and promotes successful examples of engagement with the education sector with the aim of enhancing local governments' capacity to engage with the education sector.

The following chapter of the report provides an overview of the forces that are shaping a new role for education. Changes in work and employment, in markets and organizations are described, as are recent Victorian government education reforms. Societal changes, including interest in community capacity building, the impact of an ageing population and changing perspectives on the role and importance of early childhood education are discussed.

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Chapters four, five, six and seven describe some current local government education activities in environment, business, older people and State and Federal Government initiatives. Throughout the report there are brief case studies of specific local government initiatives. Chapter eight concludes the report and contains recommendations to advance the relationship between local government and the education sector for local governments, the VLGA and the State Government.

There are four attachments. The first contains a list of some useful documents and web sites that were used as reference material in compiling this report. The second contains a glossary of terms used in the education sector. The first step to better relationships is learning how to communicate with each other, and the education sector is a complex maze for the uninitiated. The third attachment contains a table of the aggregated results of the VLGA Education Survey. The fourth attachment contains the aims, objectives and methodology of the project and a list of members of the VLGA Education Project Reference Group.

# Case Study

**T**HE Whittlesea Youth Commitment is a partnership between the Hume City Council and local agencies with an interest in the long term well being of young people in the community. The project aimed to develop a youth focused education and training system with integrated services to meet the needs of youth for employment and ongoing training in the Whittlesea region.

Eight schools participate in the project and they have worked collaboratively to

develop a Spirit of Cooperation Agreement. The Agreement includes a commitment to develop common exit strategies and policies and to support three 'transition brokers'. The transition brokers work on a one to one basis with young people who left school before completing Year 12, to ensure that they know of the available pathways to further education or employment before leaving school.

One of the results of the work of the brokers in raising the awareness of issues

facing early school leavers was that there were fewer young people seeking to make this decision in 2001 that there were in 1998-9.

The Council describes WYC as a 'process' that engages young people with the community.

Many of the initiatives established by the project will continue, supported by the Hume/Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN).

## Chapter 2

### A New Role for Education

**E**DUCATION and learning are increasingly recognised by governments as keys to the economic and social well being of citizens and communities.

Education can make a valuable contribution to resolving complex economic, social and environmental issues. The OECD has found that a well-educated and well-trained labour force is important for the social and economic well-being of countries, regions and individuals. It has found that education plays a key role in providing individuals with the knowledge, skills and competencies to participate effectively in society and the economy. Education contributes to an expansion of scientific and cultural knowledge and contributes to the development of new industries and new occupations. People with higher education outcomes are more likely to be employed. Importantly, the beneficial effects of education are felt at the community level as well as by individuals. The more highly educated a community is the greater are its economic and social outcomes.

The outcomes attributed to education are a natural fit with the goals of local government.

#### The Knowledge Economy

As economic activity becomes increasingly global, local governments and local communities are becoming increasingly significant. Economic activity occurs at the local and regional level and as a result the role of local communities in providing the conditions necessary for economic activity is heightened. This includes providing a skilled, competent workforce.

Globalisation is also in the spotlight for the speed at which the world moves today – skills,

particularly technological skills, become outdated quickly and have to be updated regularly. The mobility of capital and companies means that most people face periods of employment uncertainty and the best insurance against unemployment is relevant skills. This is the human capital theory of economic performance – economic performance is intimately linked to the level of skill and ability of the community. Whether globalisation is to blame, we can be sure that new forms of work and work organisation, known as called 'knowledge work', are emerging and that this is happening in a more and increasingly complex social, cultural and economic environment. Local government's role of economic development requires it to have an interest in education.

In many metropolitan, rural and regional areas the education sector is a major employer. In Australia, one worker out of every 34 teaches. And it's not just large cities well serviced by public, private and independent primary and secondary schools, TAFE colleges and universities that feel these effects. In some smaller towns the local school may be literally the biggest employer in town.

#### Organisational Learning

The reforms experienced by local governments have resulted in many becoming as complex and as large as large private sector organisations. They have been and are continuing to experience organisational changes and are looking to the private sector for clues about how to become more effective, innovative, efficient and adaptable. This is driven by the communities they service and by their employees. To be an employer of choice Councils need to challenge and reward their employees with new opportunities and experience as well as wages. Communities are requiring that

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# Case study

**I**N 1982, the Cities of Collingwood, Richmond, Fitzroy, Northcote, Brunswick and Coburg were becoming increasingly concerned about the very high levels of youth unemployment in their cities. This concern was exacerbated by reluctance from local employers to enter into apprenticeship arrangements. Reasons for this varied from business uncertainty to prior bad experiences with incompatible apprentices. The Cities decided to form a not-for-profit group training company to assist the young people and the employers in the region.

Group Training Companies employ apprentices and trainees and then place

these people with suitable employers on a lease basis for all or part of the training period. Apprentices and trainees have the security of continuing employment throughout the training period and support from a coordinator. As at 30th September, 2001 Group Training Companies held 14% market share of employment of apprentices and trainees in Victoria making them the largest employer of apprentices and trainees in the state.

INGTL has changed its name to Apprenticeships Plus and provides a service in the North, North East and North West of the metropolitan area and surrounding regions. It currently employs

over 400 New Apprentices in industries from Automotive and Engineering trades to Horticulture at the Zoo. In its 17 years of operation, 96% of its graduating apprentices have gained full-time employment in their chosen field

Post amalgamation, the Cities of Darebin, Yarra and Moreland have continued their commitment to INGTL. There is no doubt that it has delivered some very good outcomes for local young people and employers. Its success speaks of the difference local government can make to economic and social outcomes of its citizens and communities. You can find out more at [www.ingt.com.au](http://www.ingt.com.au).

## EDUCATION AND LEARNING ARE...KEYS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELL BEING OF CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES.

their local governments become more responsive and creative. These demands are leading many organisations, including local government, to adopt the concepts of the learning organisation. The core principle of a learning organisation is problem identification and problem solving by every employee. Being a learning organisation fuels a general interest in learning.

### Victorian State Government Initiatives and Young People

Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society.

In Victoria, the State Government has commenced a program of decentralising and devolving decision making about education and training to local schools, school networks and partnerships with other types of education and training providers, local business, community organisations, local governments and unions. State Government is increasingly limiting its role to providing a common curriculum, policy, regulatory and legislative framework within which education providers operate. The rationale for this is a recognition that decisions should be made as close to the people they affect as possible. Effective delivery of education requires that schools and their communities have the capacity to make educational and resource decisions that are responsive to the needs of their students. An outcome of this devolution is community capacity building, as the skills and competencies needed to plan, develop and administer community organisations become more wide spread.

The key driver for many of these reforms is concerns about the number of young people 'falling through the cracks' of the existing systems. Until 2001 there had been no systematic follow up of young people who leave school before completing Year 12 and no one agency responsible for ensuring that they go on to further education, or training or employment, or know how to navigate these complex systems.

In the past 30 years full time employment opportunities have collapsed for young people. The situation is worse for young people in rural and regional Victoria, who often lack easy access to a Secondary School, TAFE or University and where unemployment rates are generally higher than in metropolitan areas. Employment status varies significantly by level of education. In May 1999 the national unemployment rate was 10.8% for those who had not completed High School, compared with 7.7% for those who had, 4.6% for TAFE graduates and 3.1% for bachelor degree graduates.

Links between schools and other agencies are vital. Local schools need the means to maximise those relationships that enhance curriculum and teaching for students and contribute to the well being of students generally, extend their opportunities for learning, and provide a crucial safety net. It is known that competition between schools causes disquiet in school communities. The local education networks and regional education partnerships that are being implemented involve all schools and post school education providers to ensure that collaboration, not competition, informs educational relationships.

# Case study

**T**HE City of Greater Geelong has commenced a community consultation process to develop its strategic direction and to ensure a sustainable future.

The strategic planning process uses nine 'pillars' or themes to provide a framework to assess the current situation, and to develop plans that define the future. The pillars have been used to focus debate, thought and energy within Council on the key issues for the region.

Now the pillars are being used to focus thinking and debate in the whole community.

'Education and Research' is one of the nine pillars. They are described as catalysts to achieving long term prosperity, successful industries and viable employment sectors. The goal of this pillar is 'to enhance the Geelong region's position and reputation as a leading centre for education, training and research.'

The importance of education to Geelong has also been identified in the 'Smart Geelong The Learning Town' program. This high profile initiative was declared by the City of Greater Geelong in December 2000 and aims to:

- Strengthen the skills and knowledge of the workforce.
- Build strong partnerships between industry and local educational providers.
- Extend affordable access to education.
- Develop information and communication technology skills across the community.

## AFFORDABLE, EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND LEARNING IS ITSELF AN INDICATOR OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL BEING.

### Community Capacity Building

The importance of education in building social capital can be simply observed at school fetes throughout Victoria. Whole communities, not just mums and dads, come together to celebrate their school and their community. They are occasions for making and renewing acquaintances, contributing to school coffers and simply having fun. But schools are only part of the education continuum.

Concepts such as life long learning and life wide learning have gained impetus as people struggle to manage the implications of trends towards knowledge-based work, accelerating demands for updated knowledge and skills, and less stable and predictable occupations. Education and learning are not just linked to economic activity and earning a living. They are recognised internationally as essential ingredients for community capacity building. At the individual and the community level, education and learning can help us to understand and influence the changes happening around us and so reduce the uncertainty and anxiety experienced by many in the face of large scale change. They can bring people together in new communities of shared experience and shared values, so breaking down prejudice, loneliness and isolation. They can work as opportunities for developing new networks of community activists and leaders. They can provide arenas for leisure activities. They have positive impacts on health. Learning can be seen to contribute to social well being and social capital. It helps us to feel that we belong and are valued by society.

Social capital affects the socio economic well being of society. Affordable, equitable access to health, employment and housing, quality of working life,

time and leisure, command over goods and services, physical environment, social environment and personal safety are all both indicators and outcomes of education and economic stability. Affordable, equitable access to education and learning is itself an indicator of social and economic well being.

That local governments view education as a component of social development is found by reference to it in policies and strategies concerned with community development, community health and community safety.

### An Ageing Population

Participation in education and learning offers older Victorians the potential for enhanced social, intellectual, mental and health outcomes.

The number of older people is increasing as a proportion of the total population because birth rates are falling, we are living longer and post-war baby boomers are entering the 'third age'. The baby boomers are the highest educated, wealthiest and healthiest of any previous older generation. It is difficult to imagine that they will not be interested in continuing their learning and education as they age. Evidence of their continued interest in learning is shown by the University of the Third Age (U3A), a cooperative learning movement with 60 branches in Victoria that offers over 120 different courses at any one time. Over 18,000 older Victorians are members of U3As, which vary in size of membership from about 20 to over 1000.

# Case study

ONE of the challenges for rural and regional communities is to attract and retain families. The Central Goldfields Shire Council has identified education and learning as key attractors and is working with State Government to create the Maryborough Community Education Precinct. What started as a proposal for a new Secondary College has developed into major new physical, social and economic infrastructure for the Shire. The Precinct

will bring together all government schools in Maryborough onto a single geographic site as a collection of sub-schools, small enough and sufficiently separate to preserve their neighbourhood feel and family character. Schools included in the precinct are two primary schools, the senior and junior campuses of the regional college, the specialist school and Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE (BRIT). It will include a long day care centre and U3A facilities. The precinct will be located in

town and accessible by pedestrians and drivers. It is intended that the precinct will be integrated into the town so that learners of all ages can build new networks and new community infrastructure.

The Central Goldfields Shire has identified the benefits to be gained as both tangible and intangible. The most significant benefit will be in improved student learning supported by more

## Chapter 3

### Local Government's Education Role

FEW local governments refer to 'education' in their Council Plans or Annual Reports. But it would be wrong to conclude from this that local governments do not have an interest in education. Education is not just what happens in the educational institutions in our communities. It can also be seen, disguised as outreach, marketing or community consultation, in many of the social, economic and environmental initiatives undertaken by local government. Local governments are also providers of services and infrastructure that are inherently educative: libraries, Maternal and Child Health Centres and Neighbourhood and Community Houses are examples.

Although local governments tend not to describe their own activities as 'education' they have five distinct educative roles:

1. As an **information provider**, to citizens and others of their policies, strategies, practices and laws;
2. As an **employer**, ensuring that staff are appropriately skilled. This responsibility is sometimes also recognised in the Council declaring itself a 'learning organisation';
3. As an **advocate and facilitator** of improved educational opportunities and partnerships for its community and citizens;
4. As a **provider** of, for example, pre school education and waste management education services, and
5. As a **community capacity builder**, through its consultation and participation activities.

The VLGA Local Government and Education Survey found that all local governments are engaged

in some form of education activity. Eighty four percent (84%) believe that local government should play a role in education. Comments in the survey indicated that local government does not perceive its role as an education provider (with the obvious exception of pre school for some local governments) but one which is strategic, working with local education providers to ensure that young people, the citizens of tomorrow, have the best possible start in life. Education and learning are seen as aspects of community safety policies, community health outcomes and community development programs. It was interesting also to note that many Local Governments are drawing connections between the level of educational attainment in their communities and the communities' economic development.

#### Early Childhood Education

In Victoria 96.4% of four year old children attend pre school. Local government has been involved in preschool education since the 1950s. Following the reforms of the late 1990s, in particular Compulsory Competitive Tendering, some local governments left the field. Others remained involved in preschool education, but to varying degrees and in varying roles. The VLGA Local Government and Education survey found that 71% of local governments lease premises to preschool providers, 40% employ preschool teachers, 72% liaise with preschool providers and 21% provide representatives for preschool management committees. One respondent reported that their local government had implemented a central enrolment scheme for preschools in its area. Another employed a preschool field officer and another funded improvements to preschool premises. The provision and maintenance of

efficient infrastructure and state of the art facilities. The learning experience is expected to spread out of the precinct and involve many parts of the community. The precinct will develop a range of facilities that will be shared and so benefit both the schools and the community. These may include sporting, arts, tutorial, computer and library facilities. A shared concert hall will be among the new facilities. There are

hopes that new networks will result in new opportunities for growth and economic development. And local businesses will benefit from a stronger base for training and a source of employees.

In the Central Goldfields Shire education is seen as the basis for community development and economic growth. The Shire could never afford the sorts of community facilities that will be made available through the development

of the Education Precinct. It also could not afford the prospect of the town declining and possibly dying. Education creates futures for people and communities.

## THE EDUCATION SECTOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHARE A HISTORY, SHARE COMMUNITIES AND HAVE SHARED CONCERNS ABOUT THE FUTURE.

preschool facilities is an enlarging area of funding responsibility for some local governments with young populations.

Local government is involved in maternal and child health, preschool education centres, centre-based child care, out-of school hours care and family day care. The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has found that local government expenditure on health, education and welfare in Victoria comprises fifty-two per cent of total national expenditure in these areas.

Early childhood education is generally reliant on local governments for some aspects of its governance, physical infrastructure and in some cases teachers. It is not integrated into the rest of the education system but into other family and children's services. It does not have a common core curriculum which allows for individual attention to a child's social, intellectual, physical and emotional development but can also result in uneven outcomes for them at the start of primary schooling. Firm educational foundations are laid in the early years of schooling and the current system does not provide a transparent and equitable educational commencement process.

### **Shared history, shared communities, shared resources**

The education sector and local government share a history, share communities and have shared concerns about the future. Many a Councillor has commenced their political life and gained community recognition from their work on a school committee.

State and Federal governments are responsible for the policy framework, funding and delivery of education at primary and secondary schools, universities and TAFE Colleges. Historically there have been few formal links to local government from this part of the education sector.

Local governments are rightly concerned about getting too involved in activities which are seen as the responsibility of another sphere of government for fear that it may lead to cost shifting to them. From a local government perspective, cost shifting can be broadly said to occur when the burden of the cost of provision of a service are transferred to local government from another sphere of government without a supporting revenue stream. In the case of education, there is no suggestion that service provision would be transferred to local government.

A successful education system satisfies criteria of excellence, equity, flexibility, diversity, effectiveness and efficiency. Local governments share these values as criteria for success in their own services.

Recently new opportunities for partnerships between local governments and local schools have emerged. They include a commitment to develop new school facilities as community resources in consultation with local governments. Public schools educate two thirds of Victoria's children. They can be a vital source of facilities, particularly in areas of high demand such as new growth suburbs and towns. There are opportunities for jointly funded or managed facilities such as community halls, sporting facilities, information technology facilities and libraries and for co-located activities such as child care, holiday programs and after school programs to make better use of school facilities throughout the year.

# Case study

**C**ERES (the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies) is a community environment project located beside the Merri Creek in Brunswick. CERES aims to foster awareness and action on environmental and social issues affecting urban areas. The site has displays and functional demonstrations on a range of environmental issues to show just what can be achieved at household, community and global levels.

CERES is an example of a community partnership between local government, the local community, other levels of government and business. It is situated on land owned by Moreland City Council, which also provides a maintenance grant; it is home to the Citipower renewable energy park; it receives grants from Parks Victoria and Yarra Water in recognition of the work it does to restore the Merri Creek environs; it is recognised by the Department of Education for its innovative education programs. CERES is also the key organisation in the 'sustainable schools' program.

About 60,000 students – from pre-schoolers to postgraduates – visit CERES each year. They participate in education programs in which they learn about:

- Global environment concerns (Greenhouse and Ozone effects, the Rio Summit)
- Energy conservation and renewable energy
- Waste minimisation and recycling
- Aquatic ecosystems and Drainwatch
- Melbourne's Aboriginal heritage
- Africa and Third World Development
- Indonesian and Melanesian culture
- Global futures

## Chapter 4

### Local Government and Environmental Education

**L**OCAL government has been at the forefront of environmental activities in Victoria. From waste management to waterway rehabilitation local government has worked with local communities to educate, activate and gain behavioural change. In most cases environmental education and activity is also linked to economic and social outcomes. Reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill protects the landscape and artesian water and saves Councils money. Reducing energy use reduces greenhouse gas emissions and saves money. Environmental rehabilitation projects often involve the community planting trees, collecting litter and monitoring the area's health through programs like Waterwatch. Environmental programs provide examples of successful partnerships between local government and others.

#### Waste Management

It is the area of waste management that best shows the impact that local government can have in changing community behaviour. This is an example of a very successful partnership between the local government sector and EcoRecycle. In a very short period of time we have moved from single large rubbish bins servicing all the waste disposal needs of households to multiple containers which enable waste sorting into

various types of recyclables. We are reducing waste to land fill and new industries based on the use of recycled materials have emerged. As well as behavioural change there has been significant attitudinal change. There is very strong and continuing support for kerbside recycling: 97% of Victorians believe that kerbside recycling is an essential service; 87% of urban households participate in kerbside recycling programs (including steel, glass, plastic, paper and cardboard); and 92% consider that it is important to cut down the amount of waste that goes to landfill. Ninety per cent (90%) of Victorians have access to kerbside recycling services, and a further 5% are covered by drop off facilities.

How did this happen? Most Local Governments work with EcoRecycle. In return for access to substantial government funding they agree to contribute staff time to waste education activities. In most cases this means a dedicated waste education officer. They work with schools, community groups, local business and Council staff to involve them in educational projects and activities. They have access to a Regional Waste Officer, employed by EcoRecycle, for advice and support. The approach taken by EcoRecycle is community development. It believes that local circumstance, priorities and needs vary enormously and that dedicated resources are required to address these different needs.

CERES also provides accredited adult training in horticulture, permaculture and environmental design.

And it is a partner in the Moreland City Council/Citipower Footprints Program. Footprints is an environmental curriculum, materials and program for primary and high schools. Environmental curriculum materials are prepared of relevance to the concerns of the local community, the requirements of the school curriculum and the age of the students. The program is supported by visits from Moreland City

Council staff, by regular newsletters and by a Footprints Conference held in the Town Hall in which the students get to showcase their projects, attend presentations and celebrate their successes. Themes covered by the materials include greenhouse and energy, stormwater and water conservation, flora and fauna, waste, recycling projects and transport. Subjects covered by the materials are science, maths, health, technology, biology, chemistry, geography, history and society and environment. Among the successes to emerge was the

Moonee Ponds Creek Environment Project, for which the Brunswick Secondary College won the Ford One Planet Award. Schools participating in the program can apply for Moreland City Council Environmental grants to assist them to implement environmentally wise programs.

## WASTE MANAGEMENT...SHOWS THE IMPACT THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAN HAVE IN CHANGING COMMUNITY BEHAVIOUR.

### Energy Management

Local governments are interested in greenhouse gas reduction in their own operations and those of their communities. The Cities for Climate Protection program has 39 Local Government members in Victoria. This represents 73.2% of the Victorian population. Councils in the program have committed to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions by between 10% and 40%. They have committed to work with their communities to reduce emissions by between 10% and 20%. This is a significant educational undertaking and an emerging partnership arrangement.

### Natural Heritage Trust

Some rural and regional local governments have worked with each other and community groups in their region to access funds from the Natural Heritage Trust. The Natural Heritage Trust was set up in 1997 to provide funding for environmental and natural resource management projects. There are four programs within the Heritage Trust – Landcare, Bushcare, Rivercare and Coastcare. These projects build community capacity and have deep educational outcomes both for citizens who are actively involved and those who hear or observe the projects in progress. The current relationship between local government and the Trust is problematic as it requires local government to access funds through community groups rather than in its own right.

### Grants

Environmental Grants are also a feature of many local government community grants programs. Such programs can be accessed by schools, which use the funds to develop projects suitable to the age of the children involved. Examples for younger children include funding to establish a butterfly attracting garden, and raising chooks for recycling lunch scraps and providing eggs. For older children revegetation and waterwatch programs provide the educational outcomes sought by school communities, and contribute to the understanding and development of social capital among young people.

The VLGA Best Practice in Local Government: Community Grants Program found that community grants programs are valuable tools for strengthening community.

# Case study

**T**HE Shire of Melton believes that education is so important to the future development and well being of its community that it established the Melton Education Board in 1998. Comprising Council representatives, education providers, industry representatives and community representatives the Board has developed the Shire of Melton Community Education Plan 2000-2002 and 2002-2004. The shire is 'committed to fostering

a community culture that encourages the continuity of learning at all age levels and providing world class learning opportunities for all residents of the Shire' Why does Melton believe that education is so important? In the Education Plan, the following issues are raised:

#### SOCIAL ISSUES

- The labour market has changed.
- High levels of youth unemployment.
- Changes in income support for families and young people.

- Curriculum will need to keep pace with the changing needs of society and industry.
- Family environments do not always support or encourage educational achievement.
- A multicultural environment requiring and encouraging cross cultural learning.

#### ECONOMIC ISSUES

- More employment opportunities are required within the municipality.
- Melton works with the State Government to attract businesses to the Shire.

## Chapter 5

### Local Government, Business and Education

**M**ANY of the educational and learning opportunities championed for communities by local governments involve economic development activities. Among these is support for the development of business incubators and the advocacy and leadership provided through initiatives like the Melton Education Board.

The impetus for business incubators comes from local governments or regional development organisations or community groups. Significant funding is available from the Federal government for establishing business incubators. Local governments which support or initiate business incubators also need to contribute significant funds, expertise, land or premises to make them happen. The key reason for local government's initial interest is usually concern about levels of unemployment. Small business is the largest employer in Australia.

Business incubators provide premises and support for new or evolving businesses. Assistance is given to grow a business and provide it with the skills and resources it requires to 'graduate' to its own premises. This assistance can include accessing venture capital and small business assistance programs, management training programs, information clearinghouses, community education regarding economic development, and linking regional higher education to the private sector.

Almost half (47%) of the respondents to the Education Survey indicated that their local government supported the business incubator concept. Of these, respondents from 17 local governments indicated that they provided staffing, premises or funding to a business incubator. There are 17 incubators in Victoria, in Mulgrave, Alphington, Fitzroy, Melbourne, Lilydale, Horsham, Wodonga, Warrnambool, Ballarat (two), Eaglehawk, Shepparton, Churchill, Newborough, Sale, Hastings and Brunswick.

According to the Australian and New Zealand Association of Business Incubators they have proven to be the most effective technique yet devised for creating employment, commercialising new technologies and developing local economies. It estimates that a typical business incubator accommodates between 40 and 50 new businesses. When fully operational an average of 25 businesses per year graduate. Over a ten-year period such an incubator would "hatch" over 180 new businesses, employing a total of 700-900 people and turning over around \$200m per year.

There are many kinds of business incubator which capitalise on the strengths or needs of the LGA or region in which they operate – some are general purpose, others concentrate on technology or specific industries such as arts and crafts, agriculture, software development and "green" technologies.

- The education system needs to link vocational study to industry requirements.
- There is a need to ensure the level of education provided at all schools within the municipality is balanced.

#### TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

- In addressing technology issues, Council should promote businesses, within the municipality.
- The Melton community must seek to build technology resources through cooperation rather than competition.

- Education and training providers must ensure that they are providing residents with leading edge technology, skills and experience.
- Teachers to acquire and harness the potential of future technology developments.
- Residents in Melton are encouraged into information technology learning.
- Co-operative opportunities will be encouraged that enable residents and the commercial sector to use existing IT facilities.

From these issues it is clear that the Shire of Melton has a highly sophisticated understanding of the role that education plays in ensuring good outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

# Chapter 6

## Local Government and Older Person's Education Activities

**C**URRENT trends in aged care stress positive ageing and active and fulfilling lives. Education and learning opportunities for older people keep them engaged in their communities, active and curious. This should result in better outcomes for them, their families and their communities.

By about 2020 a quarter of all Victorians will be over the age of 60 and with increased life expectancy many will be living well into their 80s and 90s. In rural and regional Victoria the ageing population is a particular issue – by 2021 it is expected that 38% of the rural and regional population will be aged 60 and over.

When local government develops policies and strategies regarding older people the focus is often on the needy – for example, the provision of Home and Community Care and concerns about the adequacy of Nursing Home bed provision. In fact, most older people are healthy and independent. Most live at home and only a minority are in nursing homes or hostels, or need public assistance for daily living. For those over 80 years of age, only one-third require help with self-care activities and this includes those living in residential care or at home. Workers 55 and over are the fastest growing sector of the labour market.

Almost one in five people aged 65 to 74 volunteer their services in the community. On average these volunteers give 105 hours per year, the highest of any age group. This is a large, largely untapped and growing resource base in our communities. One of the key areas in which older Victorians volunteer is the University of the Third Age (U3A). Members are teachers and learners and administrators, but all are volunteers who pay between \$20 and \$40 per year to

be members. U3As look to local government for support because of their significant contribution to community development. In a period of competition for scarce community resources, U3A sometimes struggles to obtain the support they need. In reality this is usually just accommodation, as all teaching materials are generated from membership fees or by tutors.

U3As are the main providers of adult community education for older learners. As providers of adult education activities, U3As come under the umbrella of ACFE. However this is an uneasy fit as U3A is generally not interested in credentials or certificates and ACFE and ACE guidelines are geared towards some kind of qualification.

U3A argue that they make a significant contribution to both community development and community capacity building. Community development happens when groups of local people take action to create new local services or to make existing services more accessible and relevant. Community capacity building improves the competence and problem solving skills of people who want to understand and manage their communities better, in a more sustainable manner. Half of the local governments which responded to the education survey indicated that they provided support to U3A. Of these half provided premises and half provided funding and one indicated that they provided staffing support. U3A was acknowledged as providing community development and bonding. It was seen as a strand of life long learning, itself acknowledged as a key element in the health and well being of a community for providing quality of life and improved well being.

# Case study

**F**ACED with a rapidly growing population of young people with low participation in secondary and tertiary education, the City of Casey initiated the Information, Communications, and Electronics (ICE) Program. The central aim of ICE is to encourage secondary students to take up careers or tertiary studies in information technology.

An example of a public, private partnership, ICE involves the City, three local secondary schools (public and private), local employer Motorola, the Department of Education and the NRC Racing Team. The City of Casey played a facilitation role in the

establishment of ICE: it networked with local employers, negotiated with the Dept of Education to recognise the program as a year 9/10 subject and encouraged local schools to participate.

Casey won the National Award for Innovation in Local Government (2001) for this program. It has resulted in high achievement from previously underperforming students, improved behaviour of some students, increased confidence and social involvement of girl students and encouraged at least three boys who had planned to drop out to continue their education. Over 250

students had participated in the program by the end of 2002.

The City acknowledges that the program required taking some risks to get established. But the outcomes have been impressive and not only for participating students. Casey has itself learned some valuable new skills in developing partnerships, taking responsibility locally for education and employment outcomes and learning new ways to develop socially and economically. It now speaks of a new three Rs for local government – 'roads, rates and rubbish' have become 'reading, writing and 'rithmetic'.

## Chapter 7

### Community Based State Government Education Initiatives

**T**HE Victorian State Government includes 'valuing and investing in lifelong education' as one of 11 strategic issues for informing government policy. Recently it has developed a new suite of education and training opportunities for young people and for whole communities. For young people these include Managed Individual Pathways Program, the new Certificate of Applied Learning and a student tracking system called On Track. However, it is Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) and Learning Towns that provide examples of local government's engagement with the education sector. The rationale for these initiatives is a commitment to community building through the development of strong partnerships with industry, education providers, local government and communities. Collaborative, locally and regionally based initiatives are thought to be more likely to develop responses that meet local needs and which allow for the diversity which exists between and within communities. LLENs acknowledge the interactions between communities, business and education and are welcome progression to developing a whole of government approach to education.

#### **Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs)**

The LLENs are 31 separate associations generally based on more than one local government areas. They are a grouping or network of organisations and individuals interested and involved in post compulsory education, training and employment. Young people leaving school before completing year 12 face long term disadvantages in unemployment and lower incomes so the emphasis on post compulsory schooling is

important. It is compulsory for young people in Victoria to attend school until they are 15 years old. For most this coincides with Year 10. Young people who leave school before this age are called early school leavers.

There are also significant social costs borne by communities with low levels of educational attainment. A Canadian study indicated that these costs included:

- increased administration costs of social welfare programs;
- increased demand on the health system;
- a less efficient operation of markets;
- higher costs of crime prevention and detection;
- decreased participation in the electoral and political process;
- decreased level of charitable giving and
- decreased social cohesion.

The benefits of encouraging young people to complete year 12 are evident, both for the young people and for the communities in which they live.

#### **The Kirby Report**

The main aim of LLENs is to improve education, training and employment outcomes for individual young people. A Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria (the 'Kirby Report') conducted in 2000 found that many people were dropping out of education and falling through the cracks due to a lack of systematic post school monitoring. It also found that the existing post compulsory education, employment and training system was rigid, fragmented, lacked transparency, was incapable of understanding and planning for the future and had

# Case study

**T**HE Wimmera and Southern Mallee Region in the far West of Victoria has a local economy largely dependent on agribusiness and tourism. There are major skilled labour shortages and good employment prospects in the region for young people but no post secondary school education opportunities. As a result many young people go to Melbourne or Ballarat for tertiary education. One consequence of this is that young people do not return to their home towns and communities. Another is that economic activity leaves

the region – mums and dads will postpone local purchases until they visit their children in the bigger towns and cities. While it is acknowledged that it is good for young people to travel and see the world, it is also important to keep them connected to their home networks with the hope that they will return to live and work there.

With all this in mind the LLEN has produced the 'Keeping Connected' package in partnership with Telstra, Australia Post, the regional newspapers, rural businesses and parents. The package

is delivered once a month to young people and contains phone cards, local newspapers (with employment guides), fuel vouchers (for local service stations), free passes to local events, local discounts and information about local support services for rural kids.

Although it is too early to tell if the package approach is successful, feedback from the young people involved is already positive.

limited accountability measures (which did not include obligations to young people or their communities). There was a lack of cooperation between the available programs and services and a lack of systematic response to the mediocre levels of participation and outcomes for young people. Among its conclusions was that there were opportunities to reform the system in conditions of economic buoyancy which would be difficult should there be an economic downturn. It observed that the whole community shared the challenges and responsibility of the situation and noted that many organisations, including business organisations had made offers of partnerships to work with young people, their schools and communities.

Following the Kirby Report the government developed a number of new programs to better record and track young people's education and employment outcomes. This included establishing LLENs throughout Victoria. LLEN bring together key local education, industry and community stakeholders to plan for the provision of education and training to respond to local needs. The main objectives of the LLENs are to:

- maximise education, training and employment opportunities, particularly for young people;
- maximise positive outcomes of people in post compulsory education, training and employment;
- establish a new relationship between education and training providers and government that involves less central intervention but greater accountability of providers to government, local industry and the local community; and
- provide local input and be informed by state wide policy and planning

## **Local Government and LLEN**

The LLENs provide a structure for local government to participate in and influence education and training provision and outcomes. In keeping with the objective of being local agencies, each LLEN has its own membership and management committee drawn from local employers, community agencies, schools, TAFEs, trade unions and local governments. They are intended to indicate a significant shift of emphasis away from centralised decision making by government through institutions to one of empowerment by communities through local decision through partnerships.

Most local governments view LLENs as positive community building entities. Local government has been deeply involved in establishing many LLENs, in some cases providing premises and other support in the start up stage. Local government's role of facilitating networks, understanding its community and developing innovative policy and strategy to deal with social issues make it a valuable partner. The LLEN role of creating positive outcomes for young people is a natural fit with the community development and social planning roles of local government. LLENs are also acknowledged by some local governments as contributing to local economic development. They understand that education and training are essential for a skilled workforce and that a skilled local workforce is essential to attract new industries and employers to a region.

The existing role and interest of local governments in regard to LLENs varies. All Victorian Local Governments except one are members of LLENs. Not all are members of the Committees of

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# Buloke Learning Towns Partnership

## Case study

**T**HE Buloke Learning Towns is part of the Learning Town initiative funded under the Victorian Government Learning Towns program. Buloke Shire Council has worked in partnership with Buloke Learning Towns since its inception. Initially, only the towns of Wycheproof, Donald and Birchip were proposed to be involved in the development of Buloke Learning Towns. The Shire, which covers 8,000 km<sup>2</sup>, believed that ten communities should be involved, and Buloke Learning

Towns was formed and received funding from the Adult, Community and Further Education Board of Victoria.

The partnership between the Learning Towns and the Council has continued to grow over the last two and half years of operation. Three Councillors are members of the Buloke Learning Towns Advisory Board, which also includes the Economic Development Officer and the CEO.

Each of the ten communities was surveyed at the start of the Buloke Learning Towns initiative and the results

indicated both that people wanted to learn and that they experienced significant barriers to learning. In particular, problems were found with affordable internet access, childcare, local learning opportunities, distance and time in most of the communities. Buloke Learning Towns and the Buloke Shire Council worked together to find solutions to some of these problems including finding additional funding. Successful applications have included:

### LLEN BRING TOGETHER KEY LOCAL EDUCATION, INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY STAKE-

Management of the LLEN to which they belong. In some regions this is because the Committee structure, determined by the members, only allows for one local government member. In others Local Government representatives have resigned from the Committee and have not been replaced. One respondent to the Education Survey cited LLENs as an example of voluntarism replacing State Government activity. Another felt that there had been insufficient consultation with Local Government prior to LLENs being established – an interviewee who thought that the regional LLEN boundaries determined by the State Government bore no relation to the natural regional activities of their local government reinforced this view. However, even in circumstances where Local Government is not represented on Management Committees there is a great deal of local government involvement in the LLEN. Individual officers and Councillors are often members and there is also formal representation on LLEN sub committees.

A useful indicator of the differing policy views of local governments towards LLENs is provided by the job roles of their LLENs' Management Committee representatives. All respondent Councils are members of LLEN and all but six are members of management committees of LLEN. The representation of Councils on LLENs is shared between Community Services roles (38%); Economic Development roles (25%); Mayors and Councillors (19%) and CEOs (8%). One respondent Council has a local teacher who represents the Council on the LLEN, another has its representation via Neighbourhood House

representatives and another shares the role between a youth services officer and an economic development officer, neatly describing the interconnections between the two.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATION ON LLEN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

	Metropolitan	Rural and regional	Total
Councillors/CEOs	4	10	27%
Community development	9	10	37.5%
Economic development	10	3	25.5%
Other/unknown	3	2	10%

#### What does Local Government bring to the LLENs?

Local Government is a valued LLEN partner. Executive Officers have observed that 'local government has a critical role as a key facilitator of local partnerships', 'local government provides legitimacy for LLEN – it is not local without local government', 'they are critical for information sharing, provide a power base for policy development and provide networks of relationships', 'local government is not so enmeshed in the territoriality, history and problems of schools – it is the honest broker' and 'local government is able to look at the broad issues'. One also observed that LLENs can be viewed as vehicles for implementing local government policy: 'LLEN does the things that Council supports but doesn't do'.

- **E-gaps funding from Multimedia Victoria.** The five smaller communities in the Shire now have local affordable public Internet access. Computers, based in shops or health clinics, are used to deliver basic computer training to the local communities.
- **Networking the Nation funding to supply the Council with laptop computers, which are used by the ACFE trainers to deliver training locally in each community.**

The Shire has also provided in kind support to many of the projects carried out by Buloke Learning Towns. These active learning projects are delivered at locations at the local level where the needs are identified and include various environmental projects. The Shire also provides venues for the Buloke Learning Festival events, particularly the Learning Towns dinner and awards night, and the presentation of the awards.

Buloke Learning Towns was also instrumental in the development of the north Central LLEN. The negotiations

involved working closely with three local Councils, and the Buloke Shire Council provided a great deal of support for this project.

The partnership until now has been very informal. However, the draft corporate plan for the next three years includes the development of the Buloke Learning Communities as being an integral part of the growth and development of the Buloke Shire. This move towards closer co-operation affirms the directions and benefits of an active community driven approach to learning partnerships.

## HOLDERS TO PLAN FOR... EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO RESPOND TO LOCAL NEEDS.

Council representatives on LLENs have described how useful they are for continued development of networks and partnerships, for implementing Council policy, and for advocacy to other levels of government: 'LLEN has demonstrated how the local business, education and government networks can effectively work together', 'Council now has the opportunity to contribute to educational planning and service provision through membership of the LLEN. This will enable the development of collaborative partnerships and holistic service provision for young people', and 'this has raised the profile of local government within the education sector and broader community' and 'local government should provide support to the current education providers which enhances the work currently undertaken'.

The LLEN movement is a valuable attempt by the State Government to engage whole communities in obtaining better outcomes for young people. Local government should be deeply involved as they are an increasingly important and effective vehicle for economic and community development.

### Learning Towns

Learning Towns have been created to address the learning needs of their localities through partnerships which promote learning opportunities, and use learning as a way of promoting social cohesion and economic development. In the words of one Learning Town Coordinator, 'building people to build the economy'. They are a key life long learning initiative.

The Learning Towns Network links ten non metropolitan cities, towns and shires in the pursuit of life long learning activities at a community level. Adult and Community Education (ACE) organisations are the sponsors and coordinators of learning towns. Nine Learning Towns were established in May 2000 in Kyabram, Horsham, Geelong, Leongatha, Wycheproof, Bendigo, Wangaratta/Benalla, Albury/Wodonga and Ballarat. Mt Evelyn is the tenth Learning Town.

An Evaluation of the Learning Towns Network found that they are 'a recognition on the part of Government that everybody deserves the right to learning. Furthermore when there is a need for people to continuously acquire new knowledge throughout their lives, then it is assumed that everyone is capable of lifelong learning and that everyone has the right to expect the society (town and community) to provide learning opportunities.'

Learning towns are an international response to the perceived need to develop local strategies to improve local outcomes in the face of globalisation. In Britain Learning Cities have demonstrated significant improvement in social and economic indicators such as rates of employment, school retention, participation in education, reduced vandalism and new industries.

A key feature of Learning Towns is the ability to deliver learning outcomes out side the walls of traditional learning environments where ever learning needs are identified. Its sphere of activity is flexible and unique and focussed on the needs of the

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# Case study

**T**HE Goldfields LLEN wanted to ensure that young people in Bendigo, Mt Alexander and Central Goldfields had all the information they needed about their education and employment options. Among the initiatives they have implemented is the Apprenticeship Stock

Exchange. Employers throughout the region are contacted and asked about potential apprenticeship and traineeship positions which will be available in the next twelve months. The information is collated with information about the type of job and the employer's vital statistics

(what it does, how many are employed and their jobs). It is then sent to schools for teachers, careers teachers and others to use when talking to students about their future. It's a simple idea, it's essential information for young people – but no one had done it before.

## “COUNCIL IS USING ENHANCED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AS A STRATEGY FOR...STRENGTHENING PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY WELL BEING”

community it serves. It brings a wide variety of individuals and community groups together in an uncompetitive and collaborative environment to work on projects that would not have been attempted by any one group alone. In this way the leveraging effect of a Learning Town is considerable and yields significant flow on effects which emphasise sustainable strategies and the improved capacity building of local communities.

Each of the Learning Towns is expected to develop according to local circumstances. They are expected to reflect the local education and training infrastructure, local economic and social development opportunities, and the collaboration between the key education, training, community, employment and local government stakeholders. The use of new technology to create innovative learning opportunities is a feature.

The Learning Towns initiative is based on a number of key principles. Among these are a focus on outcomes rather than structures; an emphasis on partnership and collaboration rather than creating additional groupings or bureaucracies and maintaining local flexibility to facilitate responsiveness to local community needs.

Local government involvement in learning towns is important for many reasons. They provide leadership and status, advocacy and endorsement, networks and are able to reach people. Their involvement also provides a level of accountability that is attractive to funding agencies.

Some respondents to the Education survey addressed the concepts of learning towns and communities. One said 'local government has the potential to contribute substantially in partnership with the education sector to deliver on community education outcomes which contribute to economic and social prosperity. Council is using enhanced learning opportunities as a key strategy for reducing disadvantage and strengthening personal and community well being'. Another that 'one of the roles of local government is to understand and respond to community needs. This requires local government to have an educative role reflecting community needs and not duplicating other tiers of government' and another that 'Council's extensive community consultation process to develop a community plan identified a strong vision for a living and learning community'.

There is a potential for conflict between LLENs and Learning Towns but they have developed a collaborative and supportive relationship and in a number of cases Learning Towns assumed a lead role in establishing LLENs.

These new State/Local partnerships offer significant benefits to communities. However, some smaller local governments have found that representation in all the new networks imposes heavy demands on their limited numbers of officers and councillors.

# Chapter 8

## What's Next for Local Government and Education?

### Conclusion

There are many factors which are indicating an enlarged role for local governments in their relationships with the education sector. Whether there are concerns about community capacity building, an ageing population or about education access and outcomes, or about changes in the skills required for employment or about enhancing the economic activity and outcomes of a city, shire or region, education and learning are on the agenda. Some local governments have acknowledged this and are developing policies, strategies and partnerships to take advantage of the life long learning revolution. For most, engagement with the education sector is simply an extension of existing networks and approaches. The State Government will continue to devolve educational network development to local communities. Local governments have an open invitation to be a part of those networks and the benefits to be gained are potentially immense.

Local governments must develop education policies to provide a strategic foundation to guide their own activities and to inform their interactions with other levels of government. There are many partnership projects and funding available for local government to make use of. Without a strong policy framework, however, local government will not be able to assume its proper equal role in these partnerships.

### Recommendations

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- 6.1 Local governments should develop education policies which acknowledge the role of education and learning:
  - as a community development and capacity building activity;
  - as a contributor to equitable life outcomes for citizens;
  - as an economic development activity;
  - as an integral element of individual and community health outcomes.
- 6.2 Local governments should continue to be involved in developing community education partnerships. Local government has advantages of understanding its community and networks that cannot be matched by any other group in the community.

#### VLGA

- 6.3 An education and learning network comprised of interested local government Councillors and officers and community members be established by the VLGA. The primary purpose of the Network would be to support the local government sector to articulate its role with regard to education and learning. Preliminary membership of the education network would be drawn from the Local Government and Education Project network.
- 6.4 VLGA to promote *It Takes a Village to Raise a Child* and its recommendations among members and throughout the local government sector.

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## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS MUST DEVELOP EDUCATION POLICIES TO...INFORM THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT.

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### VICTORIAN STATE GOVERNMENT

- 6.5 The State Government should continue to develop strategic partnerships between local government and State Government, education providers and users and employers. Local government must be involved at the policy development stage of any future proposals.
- 6.6 The State Government should develop more effective structures to link the various community development and learning/education programs promoted by the State Government to ensure that local government is able to resource its involvement. The current proliferation of programs stretches local government capacity for involvement, particularly in rural and regional Victoria. Linkages between these initiatives need to be developed to maximise the resources invested in them and to enable local government to continue to have a lead role in them.
- 6.7 The State Government should undertake a project to investigate and develop linking structures and processes which enable local government to more fully participate in the education and learning partnerships and networks available to them. The project should be undertaken in close consultation with the local government sector and particularly concentrate on appropriate structures for participation by smaller and rural and regional Councils.
- 6.8 The State Government should align networks of public schools to local government areas to optimise the benefits of devolving local activities to local communities.

### STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- 6.9 Investigate more shared facilities for schools and local government. There are great benefits to be gained from shared infrastructure development and management. Schools and communities can share performance and meeting spaces, sporting facilities and libraries, among others.
- 6.10 State and Local Governments should adopt a whole of government approach to education which recognises the interactions between pre-schools, schools, vocational education and training, higher education, business, transport, health, welfare and youth support.

# ATTACHMENT1

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- Australian National Training Authority:  
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- Adult Learners' Association:  
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- Local Learning and Education Networks:  
[www.llen.vic.gov.au/llen/](http://www.llen.vic.gov.au/llen/)
- Committee for Economic Development of Australia:  
[www.ceda.com.au/](http://www.ceda.com.au/)
- Life long learning:  
[www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/iln/index.htm](http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/iln/index.htm)
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[www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org)
- Citipower (Origin Energy):  
[www.citipower.com.au](http://www.citipower.com.au)

# ATTACHMENT 2

## Glossary of Education Terms

### **ACE Adult Community Education**

Adult community education delivers accessible, quality, and timely learning in autonomous community settings such as the CAE, Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres.

### **ACFE Adult Community and Further Education Board**

The Board's functions are to plan and promote adult learning, allocate resources, develop policies, and advise the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment on matters related to ACFE. Government funds allocated through the Board are used to provide courses and support general adult education programs, generally in ACE organisations.

### **ANTA Australian National Training Authority**

ANTA is a Commonwealth statutory authority established in 1994 to provide a national focus for vocational education and training (VET).

### **AQTF Australian Quality Training Framework**

A set of nationally agreed arrangements designed to ensure the quality of vocational education and training. The Framework includes standards for registered training organisations and standards for registering/accrediting bodies.

### **AMES Adult Multicultural Education Services**

Provides specialist, one-stop multicultural language, education and employment services based on individual client needs.

### **CAE Council for Adult Education**

Delivers life long learning and over the last fifty years it has pioneered many developments in adult education. Provides short course through to diploma level education for adult Victorians

### **DET Department of Education and Training**

DET's role includes oversight of all schools, post compulsory education and training provision in Victoria. It is involved in policy development, service provision and review.

### **ESL English as a Second Language**

Involves courses aimed at improving English language skills of students from other language backgrounds.

### **Flexible Learning**

Flexible learning is about using a range of learning strategies Like self-paced learning — in a variety of learning environments: video conferencing or a home computer in an online classroom. It particularly involves on line-learning.

### **Group Training**

Group Training Companies employ apprentices and trainees and then place these people with suitable employers for all or part of the training period. This provides the security of continuing employment throughout the training period and additional support as required.

### **Learning Towns**

A Victorian Government program which aims to develop collaborative learning partnerships by linking Adult Community Education, TAFE/educational institutions, industry, local government and community activity and integrate economic and social development. Nine *Learning Towns* were established in May 2000. They are Kyabram, Horsham, Geelong, Leongatha, Wycheproof, Wangaratta/Benalla, Albury/Wodonga, Ballarat; and Bendigo. A Learning Town has also been established at Mt. Evelyn.

### **Life Long Learning**

Learning as a life interest. Sometimes narrowly used as keeping work skills and competencies up to date.

### **Life Wide Learning**

Learning based on skills and interests, not necessarily work based.

**LLEN Local Learning and Employment Networks**

Empowerment by communities through local decision through partnerships. Membership of a Local Learning and Employment Network is drawn from any individual or organisation with an interest in post compulsory education, training and employment within the area covered by that LLEN. The LLENs are based largely on local government area boundaries.

**MCEETYA Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs**

An influential and active committee of Federal and State Ministers of Education.

**OTFE Office of Training and Further Education**

See OTTE

**OTTE Office of Training and Tertiary Education**

The Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) is responsible for the planning, regulation and delivery of a range of education and training programs and services in Victoria.

**Post Compulsory Education**

Generally used to refer to 15-24 year old young people and their education, employment and training options. It is compulsory for young people in Victoria to attend school from age 6 to 15.

**RTO Registered Training Organisation**

An organisation registered by a State or Territory recognition authority to deliver training and/or conduct assessments and issue nationally recognised qualifications in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework. Registered training organisations include TAFE colleges and institutes, adult and community education providers, private providers, community organisations, schools, higher education institutions, commercial and enterprise training providers, industry bodies and other organisations including local governments.

**TAFE Institutes Training and Further Education**

TAFE is the chief provider of post school VET, and an important ACE institution. A public education network of 12 stand alone Institutions and four University based institutions.

**VCAL Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning**

An alternative senior secondary and vocationally based qualification available throughout Victoria from 2003.

**VCE Victorian Certificate of Education**

Recognises academic achievement in the last two years of secondary school.

**VET Vocational Education and Training**

Traditionally post-secondary, non-university education and training for work, focusing on apprenticeships. Now offered in TAFE institutes, private training and assessment organisations, universities, schools and adult education providers.

**VAEAI Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.**

VAEAI is a state wide Koorie community organisation which aims to promote access and equity for Koories through the development of education programs that are culturally relevant, reinforcing Koorie identity and providing supportive learning environments. It also aims to provide to the wider community an awareness of Koorie cultures and educational aspirations.

**VLESC Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission**

The VLESC provides key policy advice to the Government on post compulsory education, training and employment.

**U3A The University of the Third Age**

An international program of independent learning cooperatives for retired people. Members are both educators and students. There are over 60 U3As in Victoria, involving around 25,000 people in about 125 different courses.

# ATTACHMENT 3

## Results from the VLGA Education Project Survey

1. Does Council have specific policies relating to education?	<b>YES</b>	
	<b>32</b>	<b>56%</b>
2. Please indicate whether your council provides staffing premises funding or other support for the following activities:	<b>YES</b>	
libraries	<b>60</b>	<b>105%</b>
internet access	<b>55</b>	<b>96%</b>
Environmental education (eg tree planting, waterwise, waste management)	<b>58</b>	<b>102%</b>
local history groups	<b>53</b>	<b>93%</b>
museums or art galleries	<b>44</b>	<b>77%</b>
mechanics institutes	<b>19</b>	<b>33%</b>
learning town/shire/city	<b>20</b>	<b>35%</b>
planning provision	<b>19</b>	<b>33%</b>
foundations and centres	<b>9</b>	<b>16%</b>
life long learning	<b>22</b>	<b>39%</b>
foundations and centres	<b>29</b>	<b>51%</b>
LLEN	<b>55</b>	<b>96%</b>
group training	<b>34</b>	<b>60%</b>
VET	<b>27</b>	<b>47%</b>
traineeship programs	<b>52</b>	<b>91%</b>
business incubator	<b>27</b>	<b>47%</b>
tertiary campus, TAFE	<b>24</b>	<b>42%</b>
child care	<b>53</b>	<b>93%</b>
pre school	<b>50</b>	<b>88%</b>
transport of school children	<b>11</b>	<b>19%</b>
full service schools	<b>5</b>	<b>9%</b>
employment and education forums	<b>44</b>	<b>77%</b>
scholarships	<b>30</b>	<b>53%</b>
curriculum development	<b>14</b>	<b>25%</b>
breakfast for school kids	<b>6</b>	<b>11%</b>
chaplaincy	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
work experience, student placement	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>
youth centres – tutor program	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
teacher	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
newsletter	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
school focussed youth svc	<b>2</b>	<b>4%</b>
after school program	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
holiday program	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
e-café	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
Student Accommodation (2 properties)	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
Young Achievers Award	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
'you can do it' program	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
leadership program	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>

3. Does local government have regular meetings with ed reps?	<b>YES</b>	
	<b>47</b>	<b>82%</b>
3a pre school	<b>36</b>	<b>63%</b>
public primary	<b>32</b>	<b>56%</b>
private primary	<b>21</b>	<b>37%</b>
public secondary	<b>36</b>	<b>63%</b>
private secondary	<b>24</b>	<b>42%</b>
TAFE	<b>33</b>	<b>58%</b>
University	<b>22</b>	<b>39%</b>
special school	<b>2</b>	<b>4%</b>
ACE	<b>2</b>	<b>4%</b>
School focussed network	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
other	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>
4. Is local government a member of LLEN?	<b>YES</b>	
	<b>58</b>	<b>102%</b>
4a Is local government a member of management committee of LLEN?	<b>YES</b>	
	<b>51</b>	<b>89%</b>
4b position of LLEN rep		
5. Does local government employ education officers?	<b>YES</b>	
	<b>19</b>	<b>33%</b>
5a. what areas?		
6. Is your Council involved in preschool?	<b>YES</b>	
lease premises	<b>57</b>	<b>100%</b>
employ teachers	<b>44</b>	<b>77%</b>
liaise with providers	<b>23</b>	<b>40%</b>
provide committee reps	<b>41</b>	<b>72%</b>
provide committee reps	<b>12</b>	<b>21%</b>
central enrolment scheme	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>
funds for public school mgt model	<b>8</b>	<b>14%</b>
7. Should local government be involved in education?	<b>YES</b>	
	<b>48</b>	<b>84.2%</b>

Note: Percentages were derived by dividing the number of responses by the number of respondent Councils. Therefore some percentages are greater than 100%. The highest possible number is 109%

# ATTACHMENT 4

## Project Background, Aims and Methodology

### Background

The Bracks Government 'Growing Victoria Together' initiatives place a strong emphasis on Education, life long learning and the creation of stronger links between schools, business and their communities. This, together with the report on Post Compulsory Schooling and Pathways and the report on Public Education the Next Generation, opens up questions regarding networks and the role to be played by local governments.

Local governments have not yet fully realised opportunities in the post amalgamation environment to more fully engage in issues around education, community building and life long learning. Local governments are beginning to focus more strongly on community building but are hesitant to engage in areas where they can see others taking responsibility.

### Aims

The aims of the project are to:

- Enhance the capacity of local governments to engage with the education sector
- Record existing examples of local government engagements with the education sector
- Identify examples of local governments' policy commitment to education
- Determine the nature of these commitments (to what extent do Councils feel a commitment to life long education?)
- Promote successful examples of engagement with the Education Sector
- Support the local government sector to articulate its role with regard to Education and life long learning.

### Methodology

This project was commissioned by the Department of Education. A project Officer was employed for six months. A Steering Committee comprising the Chief Executive of the VLGA and a Senior Project Officer in the Office of Portfolio Integration was formed. A Reference Group comprising Councillors, council staff and education specialists was established to provide guidance at key points of the project. Interviews were conducted with Education specialists and providers, LLEN Executive Officers, Local Government Chief Executive Officers, Mayors, Councillors, council staff and representatives of innovative education activities. A survey was issued. (see below). Three conferences were attended by the project officer. Five workshops will be held in February 2003, three in metropolitan and two in regional Victoria.

### Local Government and Education Project Survey

The Local Government and Education Survey was sent to all 78 Mayors and 78 Local Government Chief Executive Officers and made available on the VLGA website for six weeks. Responses were received from 62 respondents from 57 local governments. Responses were received from 79% of 48 rural councils and 65% of 31 metropolitan councils. This overall response rate of 73% is exceptional. In the letter accompanying the survey potential respondents were advised that their responses would be confidential, and that aggregation of the data collected would not allow identification of individual respondents. The Survey and aggregated responses are at Attachment 3.

Respondents represented most areas of local government and there were more respondents occupying Community Development roles than any other. Ten CEOs, five Mayors, one Councillor and seven Directors/General Managers were among the respondents.

#### RESPONDENTS TO THE VLGA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION SURVEY, 2002

Position	Number	Percentage (%)
Executive/political		
(CEO, Mayor, Councillor, EO)	18	29
Community development		
(inc social planning, leisure)	28	45
Economic development	4	11
Corporate Services		
(inc HR, Communication)	9	14
Teacher	1	0.3
Unknown	2	0.6
TOTAL	62	99.9*

\*Rounding numbers results in a total of less than 100%

### Members of the VLGA Education and Local Government Reference Group

Councillor Meredith Butler, (Chair),  
Boroondara City Council  
Councillor Alice Aird, Shire of Macedon Ranges  
Councillor Kevin Walsh, City of Greater Dandenong  
Councillor Angela Altair, City of Hobsons Bay  
Councillor Nick Eden, Bayside City Council  
Councillor Julie Eisenbise, Manningham City Council  
Councillor Geraldine Gonsalvez,  
City of Greater Dandenong  
Halvard Dalheim, City of Casey  
Rosalyn Black, Education Foundation  
Nic Abbey, Centre for Public Policy,  
Melbourne University  
Dr John Spierings, Dusseldorp Skills Forum  
Julie Hebert, ACFE Northern Metropolitan Region  
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ISBN 1 876683 90 2