THE CASE FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS

BUILDING MORE INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS IN AUSTRALIA
ANI WIERENGA AND JO TAYLOR

Engaging more young people in learning and designing systems that work for them.

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Building more Inclusive Learning Systems in Australia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is about engaging more young people in learning through systems designed to work for them.

In recent decades, educators in Australian schools and not-for-profit organisations have shown great creativity in keeping young people connected to learning. Staff in schools and NGOs are often the carriers of the learning – and the memory – about how to do this well, through strong relationships, effective pedagogy and tailored local strategies. What is new is that particularly over the past two decades, governments at state and federal level have increasingly had a strategic focus on what works at a systemic level for keeping young people connected to learning. It is now possible to recognise that a growing number of states have been able to create alternative models of supporting practice on the ground, tailored to their own constituency and conditions. In a fast-moving field of activity, this report provides a current, national and systemic overview of just some of these developments in Australian education. In arguing 'The Case for Inclusive Learning', it draws on and is co-developed from the work of a growing national movement of practitioners, researchers and policy-makers.

It is important for education systems to address the barriers that exist for particular young people, but in the twenty-first century it will be even more important to re-frame the way Australian education is understood. In line with international counterparts, it will be important for Australia to recognise flexible and inclusive learning – within organisations and schools – as an integral part of education provision and a central pillar of education policy.

The most recent statistics on 'apparent retention', measuring retention from Years 7–12, hint at a slight improvement in retention figures that looked immovable.[4] Additionally, a growing number of individual sites across the different states, show improved evaluation outcomes for young people. The unresolved challenge for the learning sector is that these outcomes are often reported as isolated good news stories and may be dismissed as such. The critical mass of evidence from across the country now needs to be drawn together, which is the object of this report. By bringing the stories together, the report creates a basis for consolidating what we know; multiple examples together show developments in different learning systems and create a foundation for an evidence base.

By highlighting key examples from across the country, the report offers both a conceptual framework and some diagnostic tools. These can then be used for understanding and explaining other examples, as there is far more happening in policy and practice than can be covered in one report.

70,000+
STUDENTS EDUCATED WITH FLEXIBLE LEARNING PROGRAMS EACH YEAR

In Australia in 2014 there were 2,083,119 young people in primary school and 1,506,867 in secondary school.[1] It is estimated that approximately one in five young people of high school age is out of school, although accurate data is difficult to obtain.[2] Meanwhile, nationally, there are over 900 flexible learning programs, educating over 70,000 students each year.[3]

Based on the secondary school population rate identified above, if one in five young people is out of school, then rather than serving just 70,000 students, over 600,000 Australian high school students alone could potentially benefit from more flexible and inclusive models of learning. This can happen within and through, rather than separate from, schooling.

The Case for Inclusive Learning Systems report is prepared by Dusseldorp Forum as a contribution to a fast-growing national conversation about education in Australia. 'The Case' is based on a series of national consultations, a review of research evidence and a review of current policy and practice. Dusseldorp Forum defines flexible and inclusive learning to include programs and initiatives that seek to increase engagement in learning, that take a whole-of-person approach to learning and focus on creating socially inclusive educational pathways for all young people. This sphere of interest intersects with activity that is widely referred to, in the learning sector and in education policy, as 'alternative education'. As others have argued, it is time to stop labelling what works as the alternative.[5]

This report argues the case for flexible and inclusive learning systems, accessible to all young Australians.

It begins by confronting the picture created by the current statistics, exploring why change is important. Examining where sound educational practices are already being employed –practices that demonstrably prevent disengagement and improve young people's outcomes – the report reveals promising areas in policy and practice and the attributes of inclusive learning systems. These attributes have been re-framed as a series of design principles, forming a guide to the acknowledged progress across the country, as well as a framework to guide future action.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Australian education policies are based on a shared federal and state government commitment to education for all young Australians.

The aspiration in the preamble to the 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians is that all individuals are equipped 'with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to take advantage of opportunity and to face the challenges of this era with confidence'.[6]

Education policy recognises schools as playing a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation's ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion.[7] Also recognised at this aspirational level is the vital role of other organisations, families and communities, and the significance of high-functioning partnerships between these. Despite this recognition, it is often only schools that are visible when young people's education is discussed. There is, therefore, a case for inclusive learning systems to be framed within these policy aspirations with a view to recognising whole-of-person and whole-of-community engagement.

School retention among Australian young people has increased over the past three decades but a growing body of research evidence reveals that Australia's school-based education systems alone are not meeting the needs of significant numbers of young people.

20%

AUSTRALIAN HIGH-SCHOOL AGED INDIVIDUALS ARE NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL

For example, Australian research shows that 20% of Australian high-school-aged individuals are not attending school, and the international PISA research has revealed that a further 20% of Australian young people say they feel they do not belong in their school.[8]

This means they are not receiving the support necessary to engage and learn effectively, or to achieve the outcomes they need.[9] Furthermore, research patterns have shown that those who miss out in education are more likely to be from low SES backgrounds, Aboriginal or rural.[10] Although the numbers have changed, these patterns have not changed for decades.

In order to ensure that education is available for all young Australians, change is needed. Across Australia innovative educators and practitioners have developed effective models to engage the students who would otherwise have dropped out of education, offering vital pathways for them to remain engaged in learning and to transition to further learning and/or employment.[11] The significant challenge is to distill what can be learned from these organisations and the policies that support them, and to create more inclusive ways of designing education systems that will deliver quality learning outcomes for all young Australians.

Internationally, research findings reveal that the best way for a nation to improve its overall education outcomes is to increase the systemic supports for those 'at the bottom' – those who are missing out; the same research also highlights that, with clever design, stronger outcomes can be achieved at no cost to high achievers.[12] As this report reveals, Australian examples reinforce these messages.

Australia is a federation of states, each with its own education system. Early evaluations indicate that where state policy and systems are mobilised to support the learning organisations and programs that work directly with young people, flexible education systems can achieve powerful outcomes.[13] They can lead to better outcomes for young people, their communities, for the organisations that support their learning and for the associated government catchments. One of the most significant findings from the available examples concerns the redistribution of resources to maximise opportunities and shows that strengthened outcomes can be achieved using the resources currently available.[14]

RECOGNISING AND SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING APPROACHES

The point here is not so much about creating a greater proliferation of programs, but about recognising and supporting flexible and inclusive learning approaches as significant and legitimate parts of Australian education systems.

As the material in this report demonstrates, the leading edge of innovation, historically, has been driven through practice, instigated by not-for-profit organisations in direct response to specific local communities and their needs, with the attendant policies, systems and research looking to find ways to better support these initiatives.

WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEM?

The concept of an inclusive learning system differs from the concept of inclusive schools. In the inclusive school debates, which began more than a decade ago, importantly inclusion was theorised as a democratic commitment through which all children, no matter what their special needs might be, would be able to participate in the mainstream school experience: 'Inclusion is an aspiration for a democratic education and, as such, the project of inclusion addresses the experiences of all students at school.' [15]

While that concept is stated to be for 'all students', it fails to reconcile that not every child can be accommodated at all times in all schools. A wide variety of factors influence whether or not a young person remains in school, the level of achievement they attain and their preparedness for post-school life.
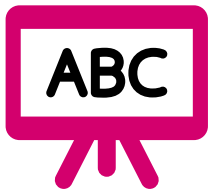
A flexible system that allows and encourages access to learning spaces both inside and outside of schools may well suit the needs and capabilities of a significant number of students and increase the likelihood of those young people remaining connected to education and engaged in learning.

The concept of inclusive learning systems – systems that function cooperatively between schools or with other learning programs and that are facilitated and supported by the state – is already being successfully demonstrated in a number of state or regionally based programs. The flow-on benefits, both social and economic, to the individual students and the community are significant, and the innovative educators in these 'alternative' programs have much to offer the wider education community. Rather than simply a proliferation of programs, arguably what is needed is for such powerful insights about supporting student engagement to inform the structure of all Australian schooling. The program models they have developed, cited as examples in this report, can and should be built upon to further expand inclusive delivery of opportunities for learning and education for all, and so realise the goals of equity and excellence in schooling as set in 2008 in *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*.[16]

THE CASE

This report, 'The Case', articulates a series of principles for inclusive learning systems. These probably will sound familiar: they are grounded in Australia's existing policies for education; each has been tested in policy and practice, and, over the past three years, each has been strongly affirmed during the Dusseldorp Forum's dialogues across the Australian learning sector. However, it is the first time this material has been gathered in one place. The three-fold case for inclusive learning systems made here maintains the following:

Engaging more young people in learning is a priority, as is designing learning systems that work for them. Particularly among the 20% of Australian young people for whom traditional models of schooling are failing, a rapidly growing body of evidence shows that flexible learning options can and do work well.[17]

We know what works, and people are doing it all over the country. As demonstrated in this report, there is a great body of practice knowledge, good evidence of successful programs and strong learning cultures, and, increasingly, states (governments) are adding systemic supports. Where governments provide systemic supports for good programs, these become even more effective. Where these supports are long-term, there is real impact.

It is now time to build more inclusive learning systems, to pull all this evidence together, to use what we know, to work collectively to make change and to create systems that work.

A FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS

A framework for an inclusive learning system has a number of attributes, each of which translates as a design principle. An inclusive learning system:

1. addresses local needs to reach all *young Australians*

2. provides a range of *learning choices, which are contexts or settings* in which learning can take place

3. will tailor the *models of practice* to match the learner needs and goals as these change over time

4. allows learners to take a range of different *learning pathways* that match their aspirations, and living contexts

5. provides learners with *supports to navigate* their education system

6. *enables* these practices at *state level* (with underlying culture, resources, processes and systems)

7. is backed by federal commitment (e.g. integration, value-adding) to *ensure learning systems are accessible to all* young Australians.

The practitioners and managers who work directly with young people are all too aware of the complexity of immediate needs and the gaps in service delivery. These principles are a distillation of discussions about existing challenges and strengths, and rather than being prescriptive about a particular model of service delivery, they are oriented towards conceptual analysis of the factors that will lead to better practice.

When framed this way, the roles of multiple actors can be acknowledged:

Principle 1 recognises the learners themselves – the active engagement of all young Australians – and notes the importance of their contribution to these conversations.

Principles 2 and 3 recognise the work of organisations or providers, offering learning choices using different models of practice to meet the needs of diverse populations.

Principles 4 and 5 recognise the role of regional bodies, focusing on pathways and navigation supports. The people in these organisations and networks are Australia's experts in student engagement.

Principle 6 recognises the role of regional and state peak bodies and associations, of strategists in professional development, information sharing and coordination. Principle 6 also recognises the closely related roles of the state and policy infrastructure, coordinated policy, targeted funding, standards and safeguards, training and development, data collection and management and accountability with state funds.

Principle 7 recognises the role for federal government in commitments that add value across state systems, in both mandating and funding activity to create access to learning opportunities for all young Australians.

The completely different geographical, economic and social contexts in Australia provide opportunities for learning across diverse models of practice and policy. Within this landscape, and alongside young people, both education and government sectors can also be recognised as learners.
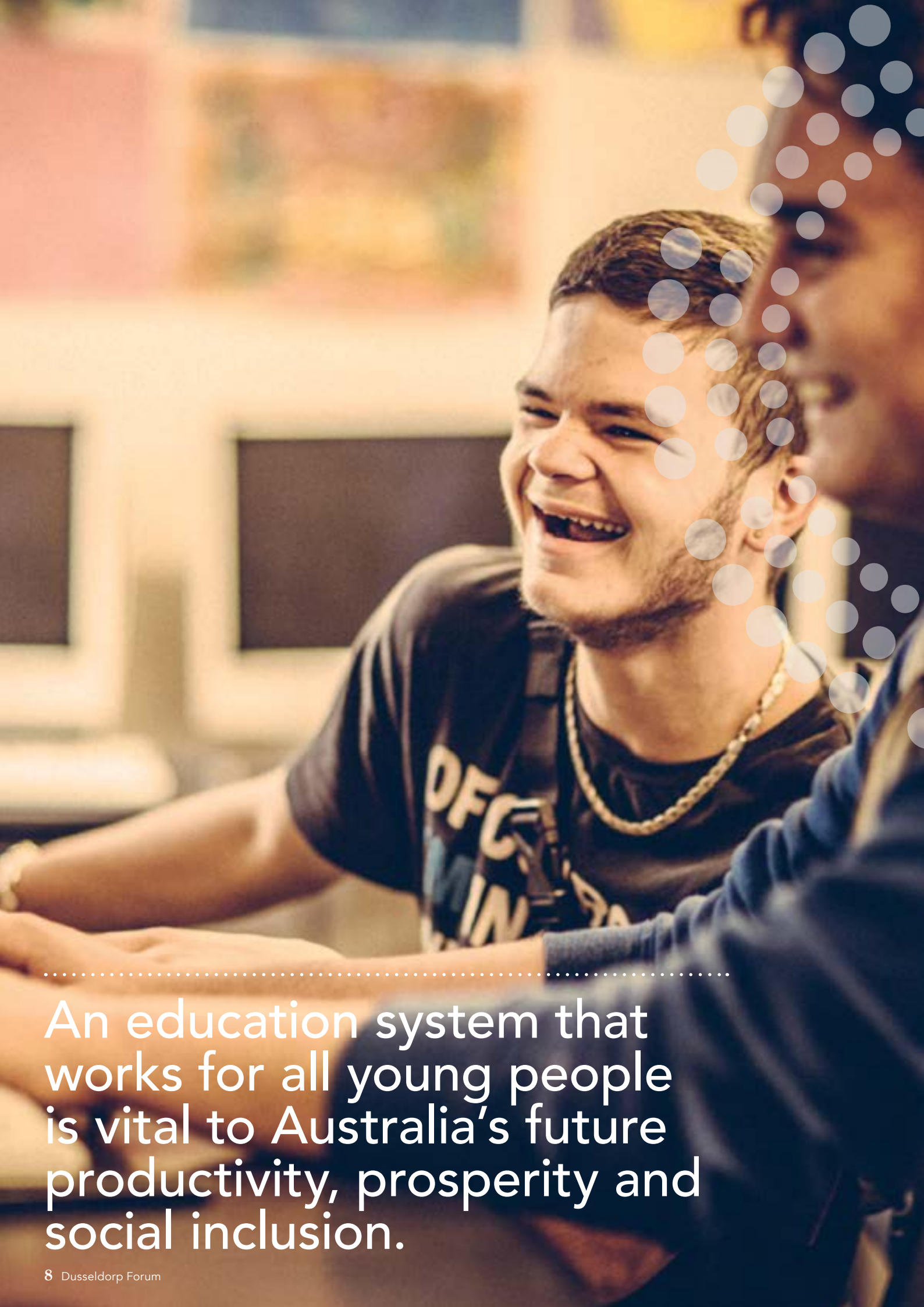
An education system that works for all young people is vital to Australia's future productivity, prosperity and social inclusion.

1

BACKGROUND AND METHOD TO THIS REPORT

This report follows a three-year dialogue centred on the groundswell of activity towards inclusive learning systems in Australia.

Organisations across Australia's learning sector, many identified in the Acknowledgments, contributed to the sequence of inputs that directly inform this report and provide evidence of this activity. In 2011, following Dusseldorp Forum's National Scan of Learning Organisations,[18] initially 400, and later over 900, flexible and inclusive learning organisations signed up to become part of the Learning Choices Database.[19] This work revealed a sector deeply engaged in addressing local young people's education needs, starting from the ground up, but not often equipped with the resources to share insights, to know what others are doing or to have a collective impact on broader patterns of policy and practice.

A series of workshops followed with a coalition of nationally focused organisations with expertise and experience in engaging young people in education and learning. This group formed as the National Alliance for Inclusive Learning in 2011. The Alliance met regularly between 2011 and 2013 with the aim of promoting high quality, socially inclusive learning opportunities and improved learning outcomes for young people throughout Australia.

On the basis of these conversations, Dusseldorp Forum commissioned Regina Hill from Effective Philanthropy to create the original schematic framework for 'The Case', which has since been adapted to provide the conceptual framework of this report.

In 2014, Dusseldorp commissioned Ann Deslandes to further investigate the evidence on both the emerging systemic approaches in Australia and the effectiveness of these approaches. This 'scan' revealed rapidly evolving policy landscapes, showing that, in some states, trials of more systemic approaches to inclusive learning are underway, but that this is an emergent area of policy practice work in most states.[20]

Documentation of the practice and outcomes of flexible learning organisations is also a growth area, with a body of well-grounded, program evaluation-based research now providing evidence about program effectiveness. As a culmination of the 'Putting the Jigsaw Together' project,[21] a series of detailed case studies have become a primary source of information documenting the examples in this report.

The series, by Kitty te Riele and a team from The Victoria Institute for Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning at Victoria University, documents the process and the outcomes of programs and reveals that flexible and inclusive learning programs can work and work well, particularly for young people with whom conventional schooling options fail.[22] At a conservative estimate, these flexible learning organisations are now working with 70,000 students per year.[23]

Alternative Education Alliances are vibrant and active bodies across this country. Many alternative learning organisations are part of engaged communities of practice, committed to corporately strengthening their work and the evidence base that supports their practice. A series of meetings and workshops in four Australian states in 2014 provided new evidence about promising state-based responses to creating inclusive learning systems. These workshops with practitioners provided further clarification toward the key findings and recommendations in this report.

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The strong message that has emerged from all of these inputs has now become *The Case for Inclusive Learning Systems*. We know what works, and it is time to pull this together, to articulate what has been learned, to outline what it takes and to identify the ways ahead.

Young people have the right to an education that effectively prepares them for the present and the future.

2 THE CHALLENGE

Australians embrace and value education and believe that it should be available to all young people. Successive Australian Governments have supported this commitment.

Australia's national and state and territory governments have affirmed through the 2008 *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (called the *Melbourne Declaration*) that all young people have the right to an education that effectively prepares them for the present and the future so that they can thrive both in and beyond school and be successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.[24]

To realise those aims it is important to ensure that every young person has appropriate learning opportunities and support to develop both as an individual, building their personal skills and wellbeing, and developing their academic and vocational skills.[25] This means young people have access to learning opportunities that work for them and that provide them with practical pathways into further education, training, civic and social participation and employment.

Australia's current school-based education system, however, is not meeting the needs of a significant number of young Australians. Each year thousands of young people leave school early.

THE SCALE OF THE ISSUE

Although retention rates to Year 12 have improved over the past two decades,[26] over a fifth (21%) of students leave school without a Year 12 qualification.[27]

One in four (25%) of all young Australians are currently disengaged from both fulltime education and employment.[28,29] This high rate of disengagement has not shifted much over decades despite long periods of economic growth.[30]

1 in 4

YOUNG AUSTRALIANS ARE CURRENTLY DISENGAGED FROM BOTH FULLTIME EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

In a context where the national policy focus has been on (successfully) increasing retention, of particular interest here is those who are now staying in school but not achieving. International research shows that one in five Australian students, or another 20% of young people who are actually in school, are disengaging, saying they feel they do not belong there.[31] In Australia, during the decade between 2003 and 2012, the share of students who reported that they feel like they belong at school shrank by around ten percentage points. By way of contrast, the same measures in Switzerland revealed a more than 10% increase.[32]

Data on youth participation rates in education clearly demonstrate that our current school-based education system is not working for significant numbers of young people. Each year thousands of young people leave school without completing Year 12; a significant proportion of those never complete 12 years of schooling or equivalent vocational training.[33] A further group of students stay at school but are not constructively engaged in learning. Of the current total Australian student population, it is estimated that some 500,000 students are likely to leave school without the skills and knowledge needed to participate effectively in a globalised society.[34]

Equity is a significant issue here.[35] In Australia, socio-economic background has a greater impact on young people's educational outcomes than in other high performing OECD countries, such as Finland and Canada, with a 20 percentage-point gap between the highest and lowest SES quartiles in attainment of Year 12.[36] Internationally, Australia is recording above-average reading performance, but above average impact of socio-economic background on outcomes.[37]

74%
STUDENTS FROM LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS COMPLETE YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT

Only 74% of 20–24-year-olds from low socio-economic backgrounds complete Year 12 or equivalent, compared with 94% of 20–24-year-olds from high socio-economic backgrounds.[38]

In 2009, over half a million (561,000) young people (13% of 15–19-year-olds and 25% of 20–24-year-olds) were not fully engaged in formal education, training or employment. The proportion of young people in this 'at risk' category was higher in more disadvantaged areas than others, with 20% of 15–19-year-olds and 41% of 20–24-year-olds not fully engaged in those areas.[39] Young people living in the most disadvantaged areas were more likely to report barriers to learning associated with schooling or further education than were those in less disadvantaged areas (21% of 15–24-year-olds compared with 15%).[40]

In 2011 those figures had not significantly changed, with 14% of young people aged 15–19 years and 22% of those aged 20–24 years not fully engaged in education, training or work. While some young people were participating in education or work at a part-time level, 8% of all 15–19-year-olds and 12% of 20–24-year-olds were not engaged at all in education, training or work.[41]

In the same year, 25% of young people aged 15–24 years (759,000) were participating in non-formal learning activities largely outside of the school-based education system. This number provides a useful ongoing estimate. The group comprised 14% in work-related training and 11% in other learning activities.[42] It is important, though, to distinguish that non-formal learning is structured learning that does not lead to a formal qualification. While some argue that it

is the qualification that makes all the difference in young people's lives, rendering other types of learning impotent, what is most significant here is these young people are connected to learning and to meaningful outcomes.[43] In an effectively functioning inclusive learning system, articulation becomes easier. This means young people would be supported to go further, as appropriate, because they would then have greater access to further learning choices.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Having an education system that works for all young people is critical to young people and vital to Australians' future productivity, prosperity and social inclusion.

FOR INDIVIDUALS: It is well accepted at both policy and practice levels that participation in education has significant economic, social and civic benefits for individuals, families and communities.[44] Education plays a critical role in providing young people with the personal, life and vocational skills they need to participate in the workforce. The most recent PISA research indicates that 'highly skilled adults are twice as likely to be employed and almost three times more likely to earn an above-median salary than poorly skilled adults. In other words, poor skills severely limit people's access to better-paying and more rewarding jobs'.[45] Other research shows that people with qualifications at Certificate III level or above are more likely to be employed, earn more and be less susceptible to changes caused by economic downturn and industry restructuring than people with lower levels of educational attainment.[46] Education is a foundation capability that improves a person's employment prospects and earning capacity. Evidence also points to a relationship between education and better health and raised civic and social engagement.[47]

Beyond the economics, this is also about quality of life. In education policy in Australia and internationally, education is being recognised as not simply a pathway to employment, but also a pathway to active forms of citizenship and a key site for nurturing individuals' capacities to actively engage and contribute to society.[48] PISA research highlights that 'Highly skilled people are also more likely to volunteer, see themselves as actors rather than as objects of political processes, and are more likely to trust others'.[49]

FOR COMMUNITIES: Education has positive health and wellbeing outcomes that impact at individual, family and community levels.[50] Building a more inclusive education system that works for all young people allows them to take up constructive roles in society. This is recognised as the most significant mechanism for supporting potential and also for breaking cycles of disadvantage. While Australia has deep and persistent patterns of disadvantage, a 2013 Productivity Commission report has identified education and employment as the principal way to shift these patterns.[51]

Similarly, international PISA research findings state that: 'Disadvantaged students *can and often do defy* the odds against them when given the opportunity to do so.

This includes offering these students equal opportunities to learn, and fostering their self-confidence and motivation so that they can exploit their potential'.[52]

The same PISA findings challenge some of the stereotypes surrounding disadvantaged students. For example, across OECD countries, 31% of students from disadvantaged backgrounds are 'resilient', meaning they perform strongly in the face of adversity. The challenge to stereotypes is that these are among the best performers of all students of similar background internationally.[53] A key difference between disadvantaged students who are resilient and those who are not is that resilient students attend more regular lessons at school. PISA results show that the more self-confident and the more motivated students are, the greater their odds of being resilient.[54] Besides motivation and self-confidence one of the key ingredients of resilience is time in class.[55] Having classes that are accessible to students from disadvantaged backgrounds is key to strengthening these outcomes.

FOR AUSTRALIA: Find out what works and do more of it. Building a more inclusive education system works for young people as it allows more of them to take up constructive roles in learning and, more broadly, in Australian society. Again, quoting directly from the PISA research, 'fairness, integrity and inclusiveness in public policy … all hinge on the skills of citizens'.[56]

This does, indeed, relate to skills as they form the basis for improved performance and potential for productivity. One research report from PISA explains that among the 13 countries that showed improvements in average reading performance since 2000, most can attribute those gains to large improvements among their lowest performing students.[57] The bottom line is that improved reading performance among low achievers is not only possible in every country, it is essential for reducing inequalities in learning outcomes and improving a country's overall performance.

The same international research highlights the value of focusing on equity, a point we return to later in the report:

> PISA results suggest that the countries that improved the most, or that are among the top performers, are those that establish clear, ambitious policy goals, monitor student performance, grant greater autonomy to individual schools, offer the same curriculum to all 15-year-olds, invest in teacher preparation and development, and support low-performing schools and students.[58]

The research shows that no country or economy has reached the goal of creating a completely equitable education system, but some are much closer than others.[59] Some countries and economies such as Germany and Switzerland have shown that improvements in equity can be achieved at the same time as improvements in overall performance, and in a relatively short time.[60] The results also highlight that many countries and economies have made notable progress in narrowing the performance gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students while simultaneously improving overall performance. This shows that, while promoting learning for *all* students, education systems can reduce the extent to which differences in socio-economic background relate to student performance.[61]

Significantly, school systems vary in the degree to which they allow socio-economic differences to become differences in performance. This indicates that any obstacles posed by disadvantaged social background can be overcome. The PISA research affirms that while some of those differences may be attributable to culture, the fact that the relationship has changed significantly in some countries suggests that policy and practice can make a difference.[62]

Importantly, this research reveals that Australia is among the higher-performing half of OECD countries, but among the less equitable. There is higher than average difference in performance between advantaged and disadvantaged students, and thus greater potential for improvement. Correspondingly, and following the logic above, Australia has a lot to gain by addressing questions of equity in young people's access to education.

In terms of the economic return on greater participation, in 2005 Applied Economics undertook a cost-benefit analysis which showed that reducing the number of early school leavers and increasing equivalent retention rates from 80% to 90% would boost annual GDP by 1.1% or $10 billion by 2040, with a consequent benefit to government revenue equating to just over a 23% share of that increase.[63]

A more recent example of one program's economic return is from Hands On Learning Australia. The Deloitte Access Economics Evaluation of this flexible learning program reveals $12 return for every $1 of investment.[64]

INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS IN AUSTRALIA

The concept of an inclusive system reflects the commitment that all young people be connected to learning. The focus on system reflects that all young people have a place.

The concept is different from the inclusive school identified in the 'inclusive schools' debate,[65] because our focus on a learning system recognises that not every child can be accommodated at all times in all schools. Depending on learner needs and capabilities, having access to other learning spaces is important.

The focus on inclusive *learning systems* recognises two other important points:

- The Australian examples of success with young people at risk of disengaging show state and/or regionally based coordination between schools and other learning programs. Flow is possible, change is possible, credentials are possible, reconnection and growth happens.

- Student engagement is a challenge for Australian educators. So-called 'alternative learning' practitioners are some of our most experienced educators, especially in student engagement. It is time for the learning from within 'alternative' programs to inform all Australian schooling.

BUILDING MORE INCLUSIVE
LEARNING SYSTEMS

Building more inclusive learning systems will help realise the goals of promoting excellence and equity in schooling as set out by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs in *The Melbourne Declaration*.[66]

If Australia is to realise its commitment to all young Australians, it will be important to acknowledge the scale of the problem that exists and the social and financial benefits that come with addressing it.[67] Building on the work that is already done will aid in developing a more inclusive way of delivering education and learning.

Across Australia innovative educators and practitioners have developed effective models to engage students who would otherwise have dropped out of education, models offering vital pathways for students to remain engaged in learning and to transition to further learning and/or employment.[68]

While the importance of having an equitable, inclusive learning system is well accepted and is reflected in key policy statements and frameworks at national, state and territory levels, systems naturally face challenges in translating those principles into practice in effective, systematic ways.

Substantial variation remains in the manner and degree to which inclusive learning principles are applied on a day-to-day basis when designing policy, allocating funding and developing and delivering different learning activities. There can also be a tendency among many policy-makers, practitioners and community members to distinguish between 'mainstream' and 'non-mainstream' parts of the education system and see them as separate service systems, rather than parts of a single system. Taking this 'split system' view has contributed to the development of siloed policies and practices that often make it difficult to coordinate activity across the systems and help students to move between different parts of a system.

The result is that learners often fall into the cracks between systems and end up dropping out of education altogether.[69]

A NEED FOR SYSTEM-LEVEL ACTION

While many educators understand and use inclusive learning practices, there is uneven recognition of this work at a systems level.

A RANGE OF SYSTEMS TO WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY TOGETHER

It is time to think about the system in a different way, to refigure the role of policies and funding practices and to structure and manage the different elements as integrated, inclusive education systems. Significant improvement in student outcomes also requires a range of systems to work more effectively together, including education, health and community services.

A synthesis of the current thinking provides an important background for any systemic change. A more systematic approach promises to deliver tangible social and financial benefits at an individual, community and national level through attention to:

Access and equity
Improving access and increasing equity will assist in ensuring that all young people have access to education and learning opportunities irrespective of where they live, what socio-economic or cultural background they come from or whether they have a health or learning limitation or impairment.

Engagement
Increasing learner engagement encourages educators to provide learners with a range of options that can better meet their needs, allowing learners to take more control of their education and engage more fully in learning.

Wellbeing
Improving wellbeing includes enhancement of individual, family and community wellbeing through improved civic, social and economic participation.

Economic participation
Increasing participation in education and learning raises the prospects of school completion and achievement of higher qualifications and employment.

Productivity
Improved productivity flows through the improvement of national skill levels.

Educators need to be able to link students into learning options both inside and outside the school gate.

3 THE ATTRIBUTES OF AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEM

This section provides a conceptual framework reflecting some of the work already happening in the learning sector.

It highlights the attributes of an inclusive learning system – the elements identified by practitioners as essential to their work.

Excellent examples of flexible and inclusive learning approaches appear across Australia, but, critically, not all young people can access these. Access is often about what is in the way, obstacles involving social context, practical resources, family circumstance and personal wellbeing.

To realise the aims of Australian Education Policy – specifically the Melbourne Declaration – and benefits described earlier, it will be important to ensure that:

1. every young person has access to opportunities and support to develop as an individual, building their **personal skills and wellbeing**, and their capacities for social participation; and

2. every young person has access to **learning opportunities** that provide them with practical pathways into further education, training, employment and other contributions to society.

FIGURE 1 – DUAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT APPROACH*

Develop as an
Individual
(Personal development & wellbeing)

Develop as a
Learner
(Academic & vocational development)

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT
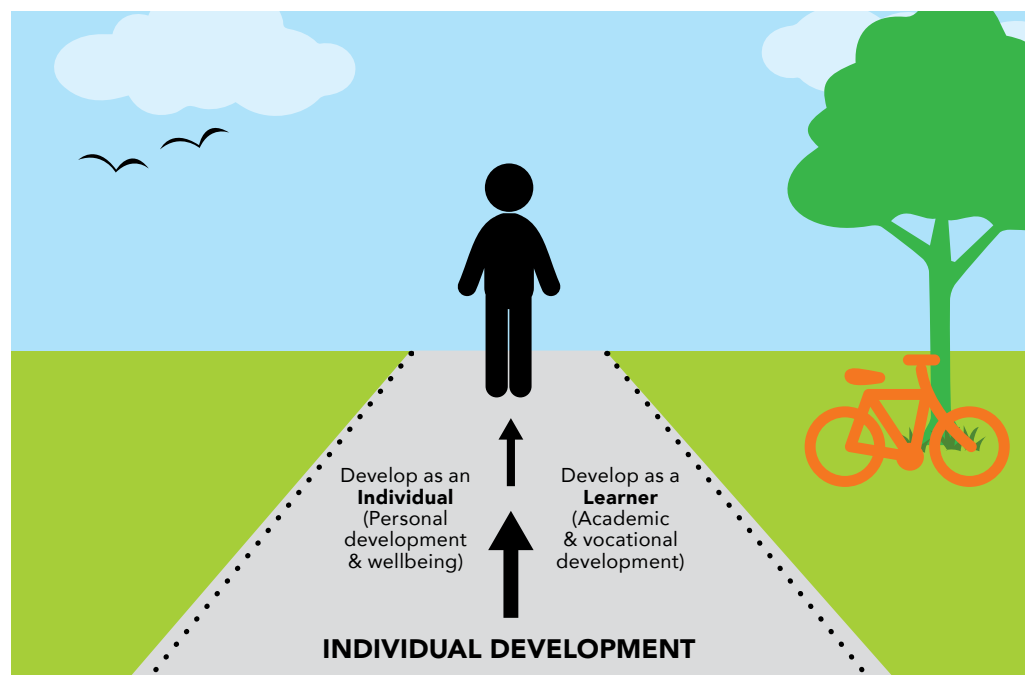
* Figure 1 based on an original schematic diagram published in Nechvoglod et al., *Hard to reach learners*, 32; and Hill, "Successful Schooling", 27–29.

FIGURE 2 – ATTRIBUTES OF AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEM*

1
All young Australians

Provided with

2
Varied Learning Contexts

3
Tailored Ways of Working

4
Flexible Learning Pathways

5
Navigation Supports

Supported by

6
An Enabling State
(Culture, resources, standards and regulation)

7
National commitment to education for all young Australians
(Coordinated policy, targeted funding)

INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEM

● Philosophy   ● Operational componants   ● System supports

Educators need to be able to provide and/or link students into learning options both inside and outside the school gate that meet both wellbeing and learning needs – unless the former are being addressed, the latter will not happen.

Supporting young people to learn and develop two broad sets of capabilities (personal and life skills, as well as academic and vocational skills) requires a responsive and inclusive learning system that meets their diverse strengths, interests, objectives, learning styles and needs. An important element of this work is that young people's voices are listened to, ensuring they are actively involved in developing learning options that work for them.

To work in this way, educators understand they need to be very creative, that education systems are playing catch-up and system responses are uneven. Structured around a twentieth-century frame of reference, the least helpful expressions in policy and curriculum reviews cast students as a homogeneous group without agency or voice and focus on the delivery of education and learning within a standardised schooling model.[70] At the other end of the spectrum, systems that are learning are ready to articulate the challenges and nuances of providing support for this dual-focused approach on the ground.

An inclusive learning system needs to provide **all** learners with access to learning options appropriate to them. This section sets out the key attributes of an inclusive learning system and discusses each one in turn.

The pyramid above describes and conceptualises the multiple levels of activity represented in an inclusive system. The description begins at the top with an organisational focus on the young person, their potential and their needs, and works downward to foundations at systemic levels.

* Figure 2 adapted following an original schematic diagram developed by Regina Hill, Effective Philanthropy, 2012.

FROM 'ATTRIBUTES' TO 'DESIGN PRINCIPLES' FOR AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEM

As illustrated in Figure 2, an inclusive learning system:

1. is for *all young Australians*

2. provides a range of *learning* choices – contexts or *settings* – in which learning can take place

3. tailors the *model of practice* to match learner needs, interests, learning styles and objectives as they change over time

4. allows learners to choose from a range of different learning pathways that match their needs, aspirations and living contexts

5. provides learners with *supports to navigate* their education system

6. includes support from an enabling state (systemic supports: culture, resources, standards, processes and systems)

7. is backed by national commitment to education for all young Australians (coordinated policy and targeted funding).

Together these attributes form a clear set of design principles against which the inclusiveness of Australian education systems can be understood, assessed and actively pursued.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 1 LEARNING FOR ALL YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 1 acknowledges the value of recognising local needs and opportunities and building on these to create engagement in learning. Young people come to learning differently equipped to make sense of it. They draw on different characteristics, values, skills and experiences and very different resource bases. These differences are formed and informed by family, community,[71] the social and cultural contexts in which they live,[72] and by all their life experiences and prior learning experiences.[73]

Those factors together influence the orientation that young people have towards learning and towards the personal and instructional supports they may need in order to learn.[74]

To be effective, an education system needs to work not just with individual learners in isolation but also in the context of the families, communities and the circumstances in which they live.[75] This means that effective education might be about working with young people and social context, working to create change not just with and for young people but with and for their communities. At the very least, it means recognising the different baselines from which young people come and which shape the types of foci that will work and outcomes that are possible.

FIGURE 3 – LEARNING CONTEXT: ACTORS INFLUENCING HOW INDIVIDUALS LIVE AND LEARN*
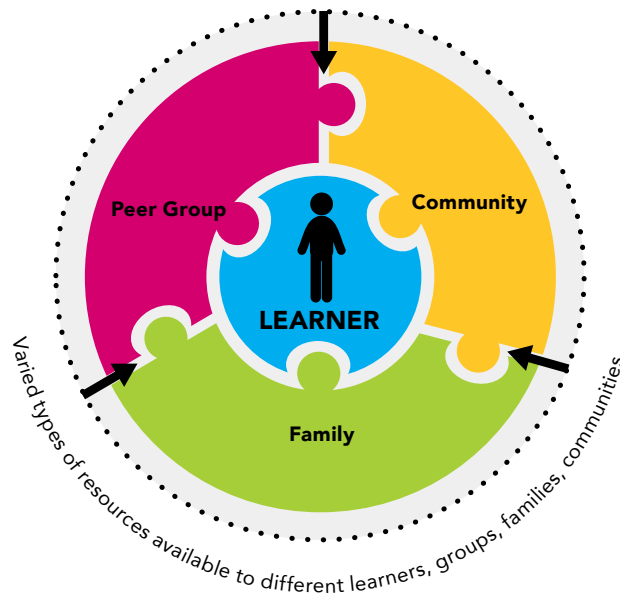
*   Figure 3 based on an original schematic diagram developed by Regina Hill, Effective Philanthropy, 2012.

Creating local opportunities for engagement in learning

Research shows a clear link between the understandings young people have about education, their sense of identity and purpose, their hopes and aspirations,[76][77] the way they engage in learning, and the outcomes they take away from the experience.[78][79] The outcomes, in turn, are based on the past learning experiences, whether or not they have learned that they can be effective, useful and competent – whether they can succeed.[80]

Outcomes are also based on the whole ecology of relationships that surround them,[81] the local cultures, what these cultures value, how learning is understood, how it informs their thinking and supports their growth.[82]

Young people experience different barriers to engagement, a point covered more extensively under Principle 3. Depending on life experience and local culture, young people's interest is engaged by a variety of things; they come to learning with different intelligences, passions and learning styles, and so may learn best in different ways. Particular topics, activities and teaching approaches will hook into the interests and learning styles of some young people and work well with them but not with others.[83]

Young people also participate in learning for different reasons, some of which are overtly related to vocational learning and others not. For example, they may want to: participate in a group or activity that makes them feel like they belong; find their own voice and develop a personal skill; develop language or foundation skills; build their knowledge; pursue a particular goal; get a qualification and a job or become a volunteer.

Together, these different factors influence what types of settings and learning activities will engage particular young people. They also influence the young person's motivation or propensity to stick with a given learning activity, particularly when the going gets tough.[84] To be effective, an education system needs to allow for diversity and difference. And while solutions will vary across different settings, research does show that, generally, a young person is more likely to engage in learning if they:

- feel welcome, cared for and safe
- are interested in the learning activity
- see it as being relevant and useful to them, and
- feel competent – they can do it.[85]

Addressing learning and support needs

In order make education accessible to all young people, education systems are well positioned to provide young people with personal and instructional support. The type and level of support young people may need in order to take advantage of learning opportunities is influenced by both their personal needs – their individual characteristics and resources – and their prior learning experiences, formal and informal.

Each young person brings with them different knowledge, culture, values, understanding and skills.

Some young people will arrive with positive past experiences of learning and having done well; others will not and may have weaker language, literacy and numeracy skills. Some will be confident and not find it difficult to access and engage in different learning options; others might be less confident and/or find it more difficult to do that.

For example, they may:

- be unfamiliar with the education and learning system and find it difficult to identify what learning options are available to them

- find it hard to access what is available because they are not confident to do so or because they struggle to access things like transport or childcare or find it difficult to manage family, community and/or work responsibilities, or

- find it difficult to engage in learning because of poor housing or health, support or learning limitations or impairments.

. . . .

The prior learning and skills that young people bring to learning and the learning preferences, interests and styles they have influence both the teaching approaches that will work best for them and the type and level of support they will need in order to learn.

. . . .

The personal characteristics, values, resources and skills that individuals bring to learning also influence the type and level of support that they need to be able to engage successfully in learning activities.

To be effective, education systems need to recognise and respond to those instructional and personal support needs, and, most importantly, they need to recognise learner diversity and provide learning opportunities that fit the learners, rather than require learners to fit the system.

Education systems rise and fall based on how they treat their most vulnerable participants. As highlighted earlier, the international PISA outcome reports explain that boosting the performance of low achievers in literacy is the most effective way to boost the effectiveness of a whole education system, and, importantly, that it is possible for education systems to do this without diminishing the opportunities for high achievers.[86] In this context, core competencies in key educational areas, such as working with Indigenous children, with communities approaching learning in a second language, or with children with disabilities can be understood as an integral part of a system, ensuring both effectiveness and efficiency of the whole system.

FIGURE 4 – FACTORS INFLUENCING HOW LEARNING OPTIONS NEED TO BE DESIGNED TO FIT LEARNER INTERESTS, OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS*
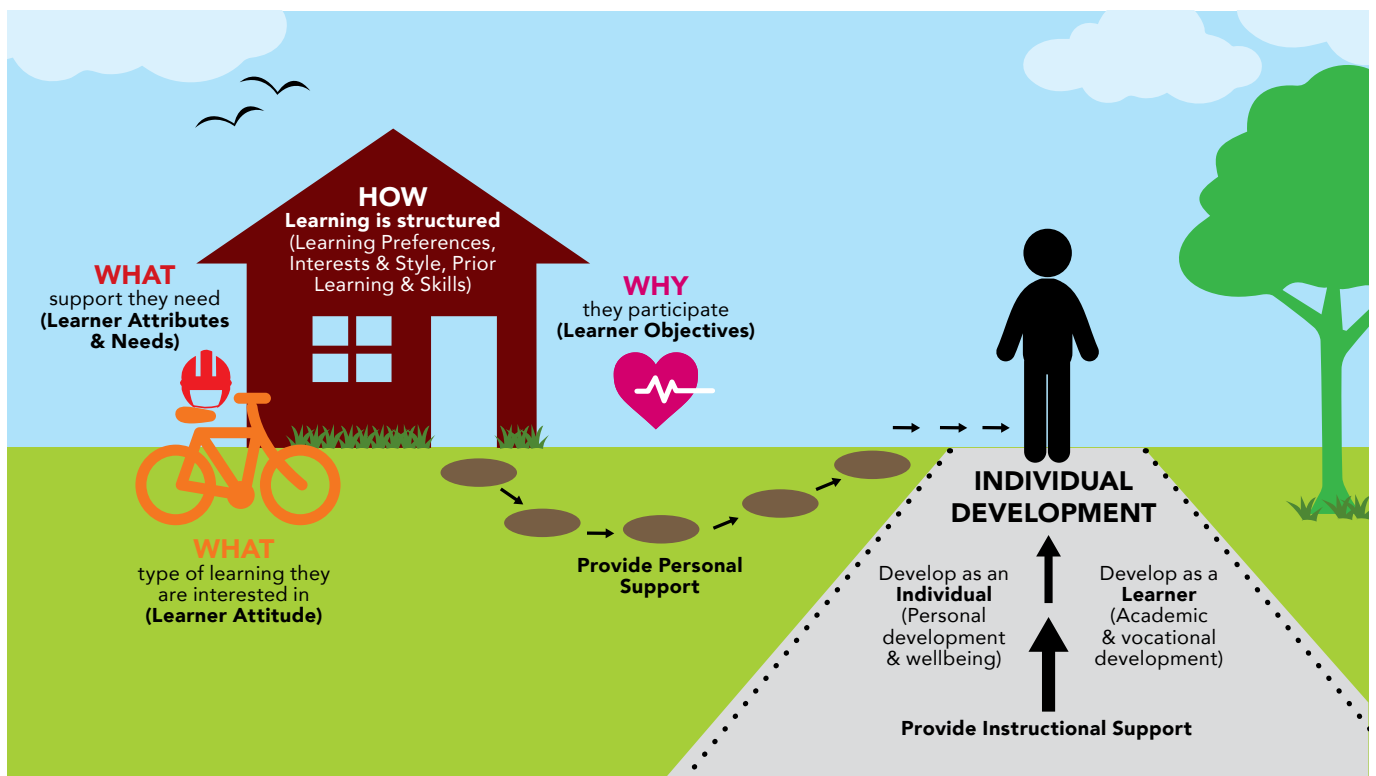
* Figure 4 based on original schematic diagram published in Hill, "Successful Schooling", 27–29.

Green Central, Central Coast NSW

CONTEXT Green Central, a social enterprise and alternative education site, has been the home of Youth Connections, Koori Connect, YC Industry Link, yG enterprise and BISEE. The Green Central site was funded under the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations Jobs Fund to create employment opportunities for young people on the New South Wales Central Coast during the global financial crisis. This region has a youth unemployment rate of 21%, a school retention rate to Year 12 of 61% and has one of the highest numbers of young parents and jobless families in Australia. Federal Government funding for Green Central was reduced from 2015.

HOW IT WORKS Green Central provides a powerful example of PRINCIPLE 1: Learning for all young Australians. From the outset it has focused strategically on local needs and opportunities on the Central Coast, making the impact far greater than the sum of its parts. In 2010, Youth Connections undertook the major refurbishment and renovation of an abandoned state government juvenile justice vocational learning centre. Using the local skilled tradesmen and training local young people through apprenticeships and mentorships, the site buildings were retrofitted and refurbished, organic gardens planted, the natural landscape restored. Through these combined efforts, Green Central became a space for more learning options for local young people: social enterprises, a sustainable house, Indigenous Skills Centre, Education Centre, Media Centre, horticulture facility and alternative learning.

These developments have provided multiple and practical ways of recognising and addressing young people's diverse learning needs in an ongoing way. Over the past five years, dynamic, alternative education and training programs have continued to be delivered to those who have disengaged from the mainstream system.

OUTCOMES Each year, Youth Connections has worked with over 400 young people disengaged from education and their community in the NSW Central Coast Region. Even the early refurbishments alone have had outstanding longer-term results. For example, the establishment project created 65 apprenticeships and traineeships and resulted in 120 young people undertaking vocational training in Conservation and Land Management, Construction Pathways and Horticulture (Indigenous); 250 young people were provided with work experience opportunities, and, for the 12-month duration of the renovations and refurbishment, the retention rate for all apprentices and trainees was 100%. All apprentices were placed with host employers on completing the project.

SOURCES:

http://www.greencentral.com.au/about-us
https://open.abc.net.au/explore/81577

Rooty Hill High School, Western Sydney, NSW

CONTEXT With more than 40% of students having an Asian language background, repositioning the students and school community of Rooty Hill High School to understand and demonstrate its capacity to build relationships with Asia has been a deliberate objective of the school's leadership team. The school believes Australia's business, political, economic, employment and tourist relationship with Asia is going to grow, and this means that young people from Western Sydney will need to develop a deeper understanding and willingness to engage with Asian communities.

HOW IT WORKS This school's activity provides a strong example of PRINCIPLE 1: Learning for all young Australians because it demonstrates what can happen when educators recognise student diversity and local opportunity and start exactly where their own students are at. By recognising the characteristics of the local community and the student population, the whole of learning then can become more accessible to students. At Rooty Hill High School, Chinese perspectives are now taught across the curriculum: Asia literacy and cultural immersion is now embedded in the classroom for 200 Year 7 students each year, is part of the school's community outreach program for 150 Year 8 students each year, and for the first time in 2014, the school had a Higher School Certificate (HSC) Mandarin class. The program now supports an ongoing Outreach program with the partner primary schools, the study of Mandarin in the school, a teaching assistant who is a fully qualified teacher trained in China, and a cultural excursion and exchange program to China for students, parents and teachers. The school's Confucius Classroom is unusual in Australia as none of the students at the school speak Mandarin as their first language. The commitment of the teaching staff and school leaders to innovation through this program has been critical in positioning the school in the educational, Chinese and wider community.

OUTCOMES As a result of the primary Outreach and Year 7 LOTE (Languages other than English) program, all students are demonstrating greater confidence in addressing course requirements related to studying aspects of Asian culture in Years 7 –10. Increasingly, it is seen as the norm at the school to engage with Asian perspectives. Over the three years of the program, students supported by the commitment of the teaching staff have developed skills to enable them to transfer learning about Asia (and China in particular) across the range of courses they complete. Students have also shown improvement in academic performance; for example, of the students who sat the Youth Chinese Test in 2013, 40% achieved a credit or above. The results have shown strong growth over the three years since the program was introduced.

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This text is drawn from a full case study, see: Anderson, M. and E. Curtin, LLEAP Dialogue Series No 3: Growing ideas through evidence.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 2
PROVIDE A RANGE OF DIFFERENT LEARNING CHOICES

To meet the needs of diverse learners, DESIGN PRINCIPLE 2 highlights that education systems can provide a range of different options or 'learning choices'.

The 2012 Dusseldorp Forum report 'Learning choices: A map for the future' analysed over 400 inclusive and flexible programs and initiatives both inside and outside of schools.

Although there is much variety in these programs, they have important features in common, including: young people can attend by choice; the programs offer general education at secondary school level, enabling young people to achieve recognised credentials; and the programs aim to adapt the offer of education to suit the young people who attend.[88]
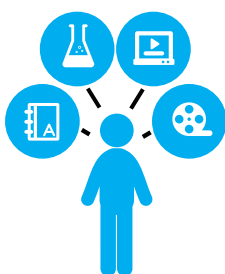
These programs are designed to meet the diverse needs for young people to be actively and positively engaged with their learning, achieving better life and learning outcomes and building pathways to further learning beyond school.[87]

. . . .

Different types of learning contexts

A range of choices can be offered in different learning contexts. The familiar mainstream context represents standard schooling, vocational training and the tertiary education system. But there are also opportunities available through embedded, complementary and adjacent contexts:

Embedded programs may be extra-curricular or additional learning options delivered within or through the schooling system, for example, specialist scaffolding/extension learning support programs and out-of-classroom activity-based learning programs.

Complementary offerings are extra-curricular or additional learning options delivered to complement or augment schooling activities, including out-of-school learning support and activity programs, personal and career based mentoring, brokerage and support services.

Adjacent flexible learning options are delivered in parallel to the mainstream system and are used to substitute for schooling, for example, specialist school and non-school-like settings providing personal, academic and vocational education.

A wide range of teaching approaches or programs can be run within each of these different contexts, including the schooling system. Individual approaches or programs will vary depending on the characteristics of the learners they are working with, the type of learning experiences they offer, the way they work and the extent to which they interface with other local education and support services as well as local cultures, circumstances and opportunities.[89]

To be most effective, different learning contexts can be understood as discrete parts of an integrated local system, where it is accepted that they provide equally legitimate education and learning options.

For education systems to work well, educators need to be able to piece together learning choices that will meet their students' personal and instructional support requirements. Recent policy changes in some states make this more possible, reflecting growing understandings that it is important for school principals to have the autonomy and resources to embed school engagement and learning programs and vocational development programs within their curriculum. This way they are enabled to set up structures to link into local service networks and personal and learning support programs to support their students.

FIGURE 5 – DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEARNING CONTEXTS*

- **Mainstream**
  Standard schooling, vocational training and the tertiary education system.

- **Embedded**
  Additional learning options delivered within and through the schooling system.

- **Complementary**
  Extra-curricular and additional learning options delivered to complement schooling.

- **Adjacent**
  Flexible learning options delivered parallel to the schooling system, as a substitute for school.

* Figure 5 Schematic diagram developed by Regina Hill, Effective Philanthropy, 2012.

Beacon Program Cressy District High School, Tasmania

CONTEXT The Beacon Foundation (Beacon), established in 1988, is a non-profit organisation working in around 115 secondary schools, involving over 13,000 students across all Australian states and territories. Within each school, Beacon works with students, business and community to inspire and motivate young people to stay engaged at school and develop positive pathways into further education, training or employment, believing that every young Australian can develop an independent will to achieve personal success for themselves and their community. Beacon focuses on students who are falling between the cracks, typically from areas that experience socio-economic disadvantage or disproportionately high youth unemployment or disengagement. Beacon works intensively with schools for up to five years to build and embed a solid career education framework. Cressy District High School (CDHS) is a state government coeducational school (Kindergarten to Year 10) serving the Northern Midlands, a rural area south of Launceston. CDHS joined the Beacon program in 2005 and has embedded elements of the Beacon program within the school curriculum, running a weekly Inspiring Futures Pathway Planning class for all students in the high school sector (180 students); the primary sector (180 students) and the kindergarten (28 students) deliver a curriculum that sequentially develops elements of the Beacon program.

HOW IT WORKS This is a strong example of learning choices because of the many learning options opened up to students. Through the Inspiring Futures program, Beacon provides a variety of engagement techniques designed to offer students access to real world aspirations linked to where they live. These include: Guest Speakers Program, Mock Interviews, Try a Trade, Pathway Planning, 1-to-1 Support, College Orientation, University Tours, Further Education Site Visits, Career and Industry Tours, Grade 7–10 Work Placement, Grade 10 Work Experience, Industry Expos run by students, and Work Inspirations Projects where students spend time with staff at a large local employer (like a hospital or local council) learning about organisational roles and activities.

OUTCOMES Across all schools, 96.8% of Beacon students are still in education nine months after completing Year 10 (2013). In 2012, 97% of students reported that Beacon activities helped them gain industry knowledge, learning aspirations or employability skills. The number of CDHS students continuing their training and education beyond Year 10 increased from 58% in 2009, to 72% in 2010, to 86% in 2011 and to 97% in 2013.

SEE full case study at www.bit.ly/dusseldorpBEACON

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This example, drawn and adapted from V. Plows, K. Te Riele and D. Bottrell (2014), is based on a vignette developed by the Victoria Institute for Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning (part of the Australian Government's Collaborative Research Network) and supported by the Ian Potter Foundation for the project, Putting the jigsaw together: innovative learning engagement programs in Australia.

BEACON PROVIDES A VARIETY OF ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES DESIGNED TO OFFER STUDENTS ACCESS TO REAL WORLD ASPIRATIONS

COMPLEMENTARY CONTEXT EXAMPLE

The Aspiration Initiative Academic Enrichment Program

A project of the Aurora Education Foundation (NSW, Vic., WA)

CONTEXT School completion rates for Indigenous students have been very low compared with almost every other demographic group in Australia and average more than 30 percentage points below the rates for non-Indigenous students.

Current government statistics show that only three in every 100 Year 8 Indigenous Australian students are eligible to go to university (on their own marks) when they finish school.

Furthermore, in some fields, those who do make it to university are more than twice as likely to drop out as non-Indigenous students. There are many initiatives, national and state-based, to address this. Existing initiatives are often oriented to Indigenous students who live remotely, require remedial support, or demonstrate a talent in sport or the performing arts. Fewer initiatives are oriented to the academic potential of all Indigenous students and the intellectual frameworks of Indigenous cultures.

HOW IT WORKS The Aspiration Initiative's (TAI's) Academic Enrichment Program is a 5½-year pilot program, providing 90 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students with intensive and continuous educational support in three states. The program is a good example of PRINCIPLE 2, Providing Learning Choices, because it prepares students to take up educational opportunities. It does this through: 1) academic enrichment camps (for 20 days annually), and 2) providing intensive and continuous educational support. This support includes tutoring, mentoring, work experience opportunities, social and emotional support and academic resources. On camps, students engage with university-level academic activities; organisational skills to equip students for study are also taught. The focus on collaborative learning has helped build a supportive academic cohort of students. These experiences assist students to better identify tensions and develop strategies for addressing challenges at personal, community or societal levels. Between camps, an Indigenous state coordinator visits students, families and schools, to provide additional support. TAI spends approximately 1,500 hours with each student over the course of the 5½-year program. If they choose to enrol, most will be the first in their family to attend university.

Foundational to the program is the assertion that cultural identity is a positive influence that motivates, enhances and supports high-level academic achievement. The program is strengths-based and also assists students to identify and respond to low expectations and deficit discourses (public stories about deficit), ensuring they have the knowledge, skills and strategies to make informed choices and navigate educational environments from a place of strength.

OUTCOMES Whereas, nationally, only three in 100 Year 8 Indigenous students are eligible (on the basis of their marks) to go to university when they finish school, 61% of TAI students are currently on a Year 12 ATAR pathway. By way of comparison, this exceeds the average rate for both non-Indigenous and Indigenous students at the same schools in two of the program states, and is above the Indigenous rate in the third state. In all, 95% of TAI students are on an education pathway towards university, with some already attending university through foundation and bridging programs.

SEE: Helme and Lamb, "Closing the Gap"; Clear Horizon Consulting, "The Aspiration Initiative".

95%
TAI STUDENTS ARE ON AN EDUCATION PATHWAY TOWARDS UNIVERSITY
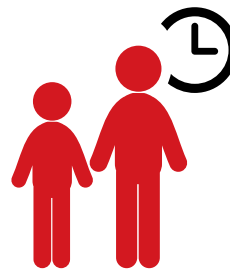
1,500^{hrs}
SPENT WITH EACH STUDENT OVER THE COURSE OF THE 5^{1/2} YEAR PROGRAM

Edmund Rice Flexible Learning Centre, Townsville, Queensland

CONTEXT Established in 2006, Townsville Flexible Learning Centre (TFLC) is one of 14 sites operated by Youth+, an initiative of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA). TFLC provides a place and an opportunity for young people to re-engage in education in a suitable, flexible learning environment. Students have usually experienced complex educational, social, developmental, psychological, health, legal or familial situations and have been disenfranchised by mainstream education. TFLC provides for students of diverse backgrounds and both genders, with particular sensitivity to Indigenous culture and socio-economic disadvantage. In 2012, 107 students were enrolled at TFLC.

HOW IT WORKS This program is a good example of PRINCIPLE 2 because it restores to students a sense of having capacity to make choices about their futures. Graduates have identified the importance of learning in a safe place with a sense of equality and the freedom to learn at their own pace. All students undertake a Personal Learning Plan that relates to their life experience and responds holistically to their learning needs including: literacy, numeracy and relevant life skills, promoting confidence, enjoyment of healthy, fulfilling lives and responsible citizenship. The Junior curriculum (Year 8–10) is based on the Key Learning Areas of the Queensland curriculum. Senior students (Year 11–12) undertake nationally accredited Certificate I-III vocational courses, the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA). Electives and project-based learning include Farm, Music, Sport, Fishing, Gym, Woodwork, Fibre-glassing, Film and Photography, Cooking, Barista, Art, Outdoor Education and Cultural Activities. Young people are encouraged to understand and be guided by four common ground principles that emphasise democratic relationships rather than rules: respect, participation, being safe and legal, and honesty.

OUTCOMES Average student attendance is 72% (2012). Since 2008 TFLC has provided educational opportunities to hundreds of young people, with an enrolment of around 100 students each year. Graduates describe personal success in completing Year 12, obtaining employment, stable housing and relationships and continuing studies at TAFE. In all, 21% of 2012 graduates went into full-time, part-time or casual employment, 4% went on to further VET Certificate studies, apprenticeships or traineeships, and 12.5% returned to school.

SEE full case study at
www.bit.ly/dusseldorpEREA

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This example, drawn and adapted from D. Bottrell, K. Te Riele and V. Plows (2014) is based on a vignette and case study developed by the Victoria Institute for Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning (part of the Australian Government's Collaborative Research Network) and supported by the Ian Potter Foundation for the project Putting the jigsaw together: innovative learning engagement programs in Australia.

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72%
AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN 2012 WITH AROUND 100 STUDENTS ENROLLED EACH YEAR

'I COME HERE BECAUSE…'
Young people speak about barriers to attending school.
www.bit.ly/dusseldorpYOUNGVOICES

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 3
TAILOR MODELS OF PRACTICE TO MATCH THE LEARNER

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 3 recognises the dual support and learning needs that must be addressed for young people to achieve in education. Some young people will find it more difficult than others to access or engage in learning opportunities. They may face a range of barriers and challenges, including:

information barriers – lack of information about available learning and career options, limited understanding of and/or confidence to negotiate the education system

structural barriers – lack of access to appropriate, locally available learning and development options

access barriers – limited ability to access available learning opportunities because of, for example, lack of access to transport, the cost or availability of childcare, or family, community and work responsibilities

educational barriers – difficulty engaging in learning activities because of, for example, past difficulty or gaps in learning at school, poor school performance, weak language, literacy and numeracy skills, learning anxiety and/or early school-leaving

personal barriers – limited capacity to engage in study due to, for example, poor housing, low income, health or learning limitations or impairments

aspirational barriers – negative attitudes to learning arising from, for example, negative prior experiences of education, limited exposure to family, peers or community members who have had a positive experience of learning or who are involved in education or work, and/or lack of awareness of career options or unformed career goals or plans

economic/career barriers – lack of local employment or career options, lack of exposure to or awareness of career options, lack of access to career planning and/or support.

FIGURE 6 – TAILORING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET THE LEARNER WHERE THEY ARE AT*
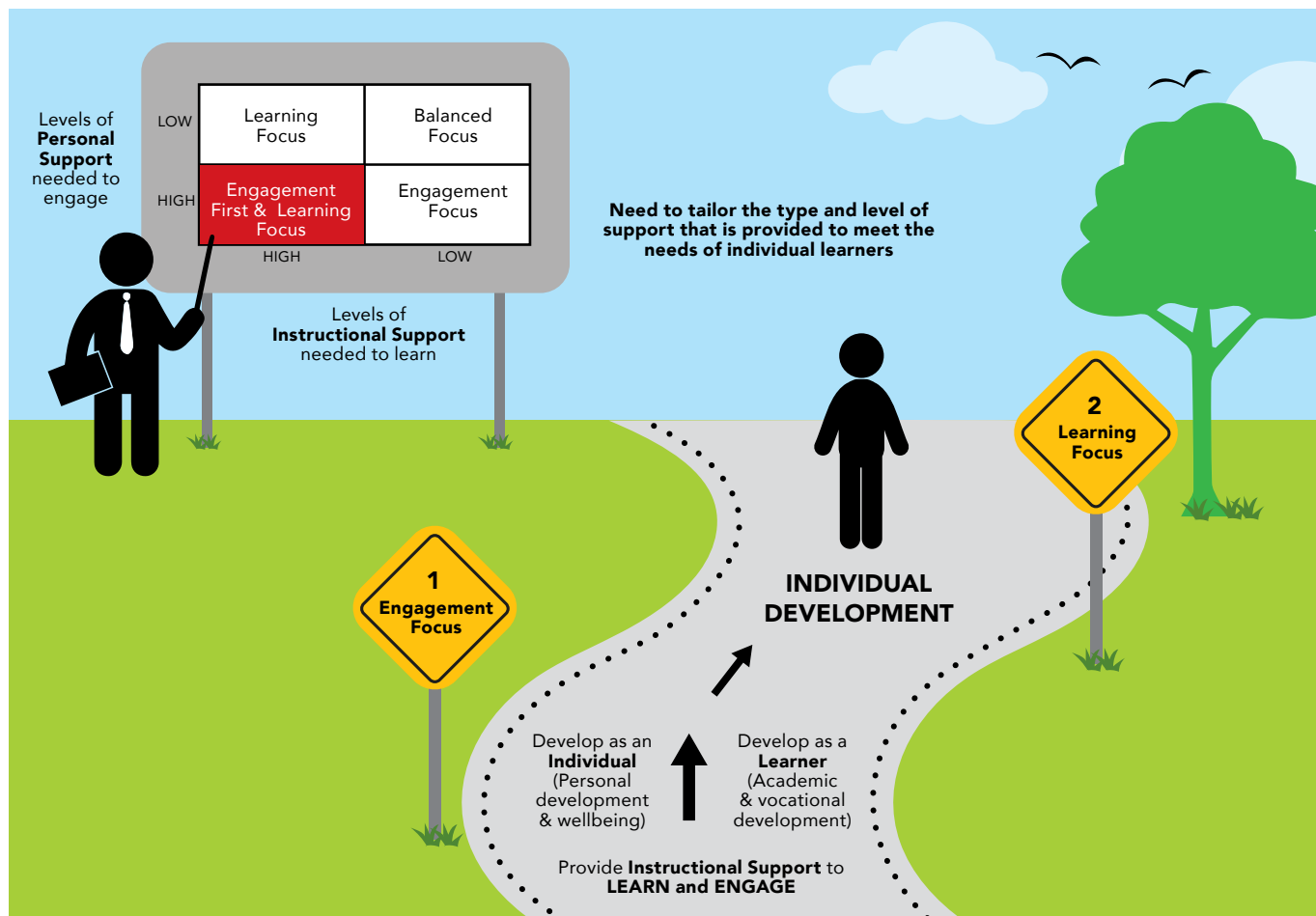
*   Figure 6 based on original schematic diagram published in Hill, "Successful Schooling", 27–29.

"I LEARN BETTER WHEN..."
Young people speak about what works for them in learning.
www.bit.ly/
dusseldorpYOUNGVOICES

900
FLEXIBLE LEARNING
PROGRAMS

While all learners need encouragement and support in order to engage in learning and to learn successfully, some young people have these base level needs directly addressed in their families and communities, while others do not yet have that level of support. Ensuring that all young people are provided with support to overcome barriers and achieve involves a range of players and partnerships.

Working in this way requires educators to go beyond more traditional models of education and to take dual responsibility for learners' personal support as well as learning needs. To provide the right mix of supports, at a local level it is important for educators to link into and coordinate with a broad range of service providers, such as health and community services, and other community members beyond parents, carers and families of the learners. At a system level, that requires policy-makers, practitioners and community members to take a broad view of the education system and to build in information-sharing and coordination structures so that service providers (and learners) can identify and access locally available support options.

Flexible learning organisations offer a useful model of this dual focus in action. The online Learning Choices Database on the Dusseldorp Forum's website identifies over 900 flexible learning organisations across Australia who work with 70,000 young people per year.[90]

The core business of flexible learning organisations includes offering:

engagement and support to establish trusted relationships with the young people so they can engage in learning and physically access the networks and services they need

appropriately targeted curriculum and instruction to ensure the courses or programs offered meet the needs of the young people they are working with, are targeted at an appropriate level, are designed and structured to be relevant and take into account the young person's interests and their learning and career objectives.

There is an important role for schools as well as NGO partners, in directly addressing educational barriers by playing such a dual role for students. International PISA research highlights this point:

> All of these findings suggest that schools may have an important role to play in fostering resilience. They could start by providing more opportunities for disadvantaged students to learn in class by developing activities, classroom practices and teaching methods that encourage learning and foster motivation and self-confidence among those students … Focusing these activities on disadvantaged students is crucial, as they are the students who are least likely to receive this support elsewhere.[91]

Engaging and supporting learners is best understood as a collectively shared area of expertise, across the learning sector. The report from the Putting the Jigsaw Together project, analysing the contributions that flexible learning programs make to the education sector as a whole, identifies the following points:

- Across learning settings, staff are the greatest asset. They build the strong relationships that are the foundation of young people's engagement with learning.

- Young people want to learn, and want access to the improved life opportunities that such learning enables. They demonstrate great insight in what they want and need to learn as well as how this is best accomplished.

- Flexible learning programs can serve as showcases of educational innovation. Recognition of the success and innovation of flexible learning programs can facilitate system-wide improvements enhancing the educational experiences and attainments for all young Australians.[92]

Young learners explain how this dual approach from educators, offering support first and learning second has made education accessible to them.

In the twenty first century, the system- wide task of engaging and supporting learners requires a significant re-think. In order to address the barriers to learning faced by so many of Australia's young people, it will be important to tailor models of practice to more closely match these learners' needs. Australian research, international research and young people themselves explain why a dual focus on support and learning is important, for schools and for systems as a whole. As demonstrated here and in a growing body of other research, insights from the flexible learning sector offer useful insights for system-wide improvements.[93]

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 3
EXAMPLE

Youth Off The Streets, Key College, Redfern, NSW

CONTEXT Established in 1996, Key College Redfern is one of four accredited independent high schools serving disadvantaged young people operated by Youth Off The Streets (YOTS). The college provides educational opportunities for young people aged 14–18 who have become disengaged from education and who are homeless or have unstable accommodation. Most young people attending Key College are living in youth refuges. They receive strong support to overcome barriers to a positive and healthy lifestyle and achieve their Record of School Achievement, Higher School Certificate, or skills for further vocational education, apprenticeships and/or employment. In 2011, 21 young people were enrolled at the College and 24% of the group were Aboriginal.

HOW IT WORKS Key College is a good example of PRINCIPLE 3, Tailoring models of practice to match the learner, because it offers a broad curriculum catering for students' academic, psychological and vocational needs. Teachers identify the 'wrap-round' support for students in the personalised small school environment as key to young people achieving, including those with high and complex needs. An Individual Learning Plan is designed each term with a focus on literacy and numeracy tailored to each student's interests and talents. Individual Learning Plans may include vocational training and work experience as well as mainstream subjects that will enable students to obtain the Record of School Achievement or Higher School Certificate. Support includes a range of Youth Off the Streets services and programs in health and mental health, drug and alcohol education, careers counselling, Service Learning, leadership camps, mentoring and assistance with housing and legal issues, breakfast, lunch and clothing (when necessary). In the 2012 annual Youth Off the Streets online survey, feeling safe (87.9%) and respected by staff (97.1%) contributed to young people's overall positive experience of the program.

OUTCOMES Positive outcomes indicating the success of this program include: young people re-engaging in education, experiencing a sense of belonging, obtaining school, TAFE or other training certificates, participating in a range of community activities and establishing stable accommodation. In 2012, nine of 27 students gained their School Certificate. Six obtained the TAFE Certificate of Attainment in work skills and two obtained the White Card for employment in the construction industry. Six students were awarded the Senior First Aid Certificate. Some participants go on to TAFE studies; others have taken up apprenticeships, traineeships or secured employment. The Year 10 attendance rate in 2011 was 74%. In the 2012 annual YOTS online survey, 87.9% of young people thought that the program had helped them to 'achieve things I didn't think I could'.

SEE full case study at www.bit.ly/dusseldorpKEYCOLLEGE

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This example, drawn and adapted from D. Bottrell, K. Te Riele and V. Plows (2014), is based on a vignette and case study developed by the Victoria Institute for Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning (part of the Australian Government's Collaborative Research Network) and supported by the Ian Potter Foundation, for the project Putting the jigsaw together: innovative learning engagement programs in Australia.

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74%
YEAR 10 ATTENDANCE
RATE IN 2011

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 4
PROVIDE PATHWAYS

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 4 acknowledges the importance of having clear and productive ways ahead.

Among Australian state governments there is increasing recognition of the legitimacy of young people having alternative paths through education systems. At the very least, this is a timely recognition of the 20% of young people, who Australian research reveals, do not follow the linear K–12 pattern through school.[94]

Internationally, there is now a widespread recognition of the value of lifelong learning and of learner mobility within and between systems; for example, these are underpinning concepts in the education policies towards 2020 of the European Commission and the Council of Europe.[95] Australian research, too, highlights the way in which traditional schooling, with its lock-step grades relating to particular age-points, is an outmoded approach in the twenty-first century.[96]

20%
OF YOUNG PEOPLE
DO NOT FOLLOW THE
LINEAR K–12 PATTERN
THROUGH SCHOOL

Recognising alternative pathways means being clear about the possibilities and limitations of the options being offered to young people.

One early criticism of non-formal education programs was that – on their own – these programs can become cul-de-sacs for young people, meeting their immediate needs, supporting them and providing vital nodes of social and civic engagement, but providing no legitimate way back into credentialed education or other skilled work. In contrast, the idea or concept of pathways reflects a commitment to quality education, and for investments in learning to lead somewhere valuable for young people. Reflecting the tone of Australia's education policies, the best approaches will recognise the value of both non-formal learning for engagement in civic and community life, as well as providing a path for the future.[97]

At the same time, the concept of pathways is problematic. In Australia research that draws on young people's experiences demonstrates that pathways that may be assumed in the minds of adult educators often bear little resemblance to the lived experiences of young people, and because of the many barriers they encounter (through personal circumstance, context or changed policies) their 'pathway' may be experienced more like a roller coaster ride or brick wall.[98]

Other young people, due to life situations or times of crisis are simply not able to think about pathways, destinations and futures; all energies are caught up with simply just managing now.[99]

It also cannot be ignored that in many towns, particularly rural and regional, employment options are limited, and so the traditional notion of pathways does not match the lived realities.

Both of the above perspectives (that pathways are important, and that pathways are not actually existing or clear for many young people) highlight the value of attending to the real-world options facing young people. One size will not fit all. Also, both perspectives highlight the value of young people being able to understand those realities, understand why certain choices are important and the importance of having the necessary supports.

What all this highlights is that real, locally appropriate pathways will only exist when all elements of an inclusive learning system are acknowledged and working together. Well working systems provide: multiple entry and re-entry points, possibly non-formal; flexible learning pathways within and between different formalised, credentialed learning contexts; and 'translation points', that is, ongoing articulation between learning and life – life-long learning.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 4
EXAMPLE

Skills for Tomorrow, Hunter TAFE, Wyong Shire, NSW

CONTEXT Set up in 2012 in response to the Federal Government's Teenage Parent Measure (an extension of the Compact with Young Australians), Skills for Tomorrow offers young mothers the opportunity to gain a foundation qualification as well as additional vocational credentials, while also offering high quality childcare for their children. The program is delivered by the Hunter Institute of TAFE in partnership with several government, non-government and community organisations. The main location is in Wyong shire, a regional area with a teenage pregnancy rate of 6.4%, compared to the NSW state average of 4.1%. During 2012–2013 four cohorts participated, three at Blue Haven and one at The Entrance, with a total of almost 50 students.

HOW IT WORKS This program provides a particularly good example of PRINCIPLE 4, Provide pathways, because of its partnership approach to providing clear pathways to local learners. The program is offered in two stages over 18 weeks, plus a long-term follow-up stage. During the first phase, students complete a foundation qualification (Certificate II in Skill for Work and Training or in Community Services). During stage two, the students move on to take some classes to gradually familiarize themselves with the TAFE environment and to complete vocational taster units (some of which may count towards a Certificate III) in fields such as Children's Services, Health Services and Barista Skills. These courses are chosen in response to local employment needs and student interest. By offering childcare and transport, the program addresses the most common barriers to returning to education for young parents. Upon completion, the follow-up phase enables ongoing mentoring for up to three years through the Reaching Your Destination program to maintain community connection and access to services, and, where relevant, to assist transition into Certificate III courses at TAFE or into work. Staff have identified the educational scaffolding, wrap-around community support (including early childhood services), interagency collaboration and the strengths-based philosophy as fundamental to the program's success. Students identify peer support (the other girls) and 'having the crèche right there' as supporting their engagement.

OUTCOMES Attendance was nearly 100% for the first cohort (2012). Mid-course, 100% of students rated their satisfaction as 4 or 5 on a 1–5 scale (5+ excellent). Course completion rates of Certificate II and Certificate III pre-vocational units are 92% (cohort 1, 2012) and 100% (cohort 2, 2012). Of the two 2012 cohorts, 62% of graduates are enrolled in further study, such as a Certificate III in Health Services.

SEE full case study at www.bit.ly/dusseldorpSFT

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This example, drawn and adapted from V. Plows, K. Te Riele and D. Bottrell (2014), is based on a vignette developed by the Victoria Institute for Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning (part of the Australian Government's Collaborative Research Network) and supported by the Ian Potter Foundation for the project Putting the jigsaw together: innovative learning engagement programs in Australia.

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HELPING TEENAGE PARENTS WITH SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 5
PROVIDE NAVIGATION SUPPORTS

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 5 notes that young people need different types and levels of support to navigate their education system. Some will be able to navigate particular elements of their system on their own so long as they have ready access to information about what learning options are available to them. Other young people will need more short-term support to help them identify and work through the available options, work out what is best for them and link into it; and still others will require very intensive, sustained case management style support in order to be able to move at all.

To be effective, the education system needs to provide appropriate navigation supports for learners to help them to overcome entry and transition point barriers and support them to translate learning outcomes into improved life and career outcomes.
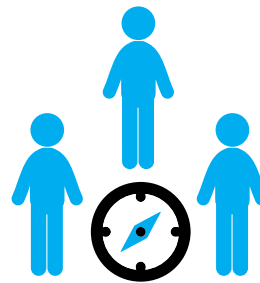
PROVIDING APPROPRIATE NAVIGATION SUPPORT TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

FIGURE 7 – FLEXIBLE NAVIGATION SUPPORT*

SELF NAVIGATE		GUIDED		SUPPORTED
Provide access to information	+	Provide coaching and advice	+	Provide more intensive 1:1 support

LOW ← **NAVIGATION SUPPORT** → HIGH
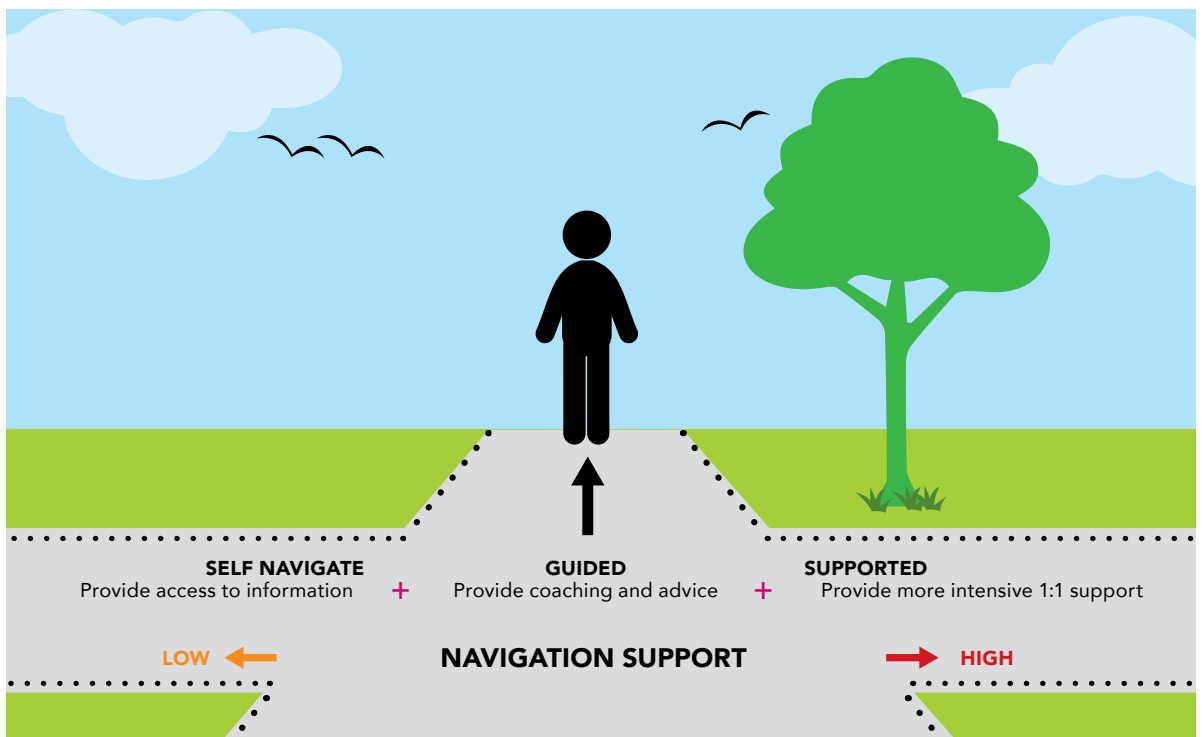
* Figure 7 based on original schematic diagram developed by Regina Hill, Effective Philanthropy, 2012.

**DESIGN PRINCIPLE 5
EXAMPLE**

NETschool, Bendigo Senior Secondary College, Victoria

CONTEXT Established in 2005, NETschool, a campus of Bendigo Senior Secondary College (BSSC) government school, provides a highly personalised alternative educational setting for young people aged 15–19 who are unable to attend mainstream schooling but have a strong desire to gain formal qualifications. Learners are enrolled at BSSC with full access to teachers, staff and resources, but their learning takes place via a Centre for home-based learning. The program is suitable for learners with a history of non-attendance at school due to physical or mental health issues, trauma, ongoing family issues, poor relationships with students and teachers, bullying, and/or who are pregnant or young mothers. Learners represent the full cross-section of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds found across Greater Bendigo. NETschool works with up to 70 students at any one time.

HOW IT WORKS This program provides a strong example of PRINCIPLE 5, Provide navigation supports, because of three elements: 1) the one-on-one support, 2) increased capacity to transition because of the real connections to students' lives, and 3) the relationship between student, NETschool and home. To be accepted into the program, students need to show commitment to improved wellbeing and be supported by a significant other (parent/guardian/caseworker). On acceptance to the program students are assigned to a mentor and mentor group of 10 to 12 learners. Students work with their mentor to develop an individual learning plan (ILP) based on their interests, abilities and goals that is periodically reviewed and renewed. NETSchool provides literacy and numeracy support and research-based learning (where students choose what to study and plan their work around personal interest projects) and commence study for their Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL, Year 12), Victoria Certificate of Education (VCE, Year 12) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications. Learners' work is self-paced and may include learning support by email with a teacher or attending classes at the main campus. Young mothers and learners who are not ready to attend the Centre can undertake home-based learning. With support from their home-based mentor, they negotiate individual learning plans and their level of participation at the Centre. Babies and toddlers are welcomed.

OUTCOMES In 2009, 19 Centre-based learners covered 37 VCAL units. Students on the program felt they were learning to learn and aiming to succeed; 89% of students enrol in or stay in mainstream education or training or find employment. Former students have also gone on to university.

SEE full case study at www.bit.ly/dusseldorpNETSCHOOL

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This example, drawn and adapted from K. Te Riele, D. Bottrell, D. and V. Plows, V. (2014), is based on a vignette developed by the Victoria Institute for Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning (part of the Australian Government's Collaborative Research Network), supported by the Ian Potter Foundation, for the project Putting the jigsaw together: innovative learning engagement programs in Australia

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89%
STUDENTS ENROL IN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 6
AN ENABLING STATE

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 6 is about the enabling role of the state, with state here specifically meaning 'government'. Many of the early design principles are best addressed by NGOs in touch with local needs and opportunities. Working in the ways described by the learning sector organisations requires attending to a range of institutional barriers and making sure that service delivery and coordination functions are appropriately resourced and supported. This enabling role of the state particularly addresses the following areas:

Resources and infrastructure
Sufficient resources and infrastructure are needed to ensure an appropriate supply and mix of learning and support services can be delivered to meet local demand, both in terms of the provision of physical infrastructure, through which to deliver programs and services, and the funding and provision of an appropriate mix of services themselves.

Standards and regulations
The state (i.e. government) has a key role in defining how education becomes credentialed and legitimate through curriculum requirements and flexibilities.

Data collection and management
Data collection and management systems, such as appropriate IT systems and data collection and sharing protocols (including common learner assessment processes), are necessary to enable information sharing among service providers so that young people can move more effectively between different parts of the education system. This will also allow system managers to monitor learner and system performance and help to inform ongoing system design and development.

Information sharing and coordination
As with data collection above, appropriately structured and resourced information sharing and coordination processes and systems are required to support effective service coordination and allow local service providers to collaborate across the broader education system in their area. This is often specifically the focus of state-supported alternative education networks.

Professional and personal skills development
Appropriate ongoing training and development opportunities are needed to support quality service delivery as well as system design and management. This, too, is often specifically a focus for alternative education networks.

Policy management, funding, standards and regulation look different across the different states. The key design challenge is that the work be appropriately resourced, coordinated and targeted at state, territory, regional and local levels to support effective and efficient service system operation and management.

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All aspects of inclusive learning systems can be informed and framed by a culture that is itself inclusive, sets an expectation of excellence and is committed to continuous improvement.

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An important element identified in the learning sector conversations is that service providers across the different contexts all meet appropriate standards of practice. These standards link into appropriate learner assessment, data management and pathway coordination systems so that learners, parents and service providers can both create and identify locally available learning options, enabling learners to better access and move within and between different parts of their system.[100]

Sector participants have shown that greater school autonomy works when it is complemented by sufficient strategy, support and information at a state system level to enable school leaders to plan systematically and make good decisions for their students and communities. The principles of local autonomy work for educators of all types when complemented by appropriate, transparent, standards and resourcing processes at state, territory and Commonwealth levels.

International research backs these local observations from the sector, with PISA results finding:

> the countries that improved the most, or that are among the top performers, in education (specifically in the recent research, in reading), are those that establish clear, ambitious policy goals, monitor student performance, grant greater autonomy to individual schools, offer the same curriculum to all 15-year-olds, invest in teacher preparation and development, and support low-performing schools and students.[101]

Listed above are some of the ways in which an enabling state can best support organisations working with young people. The three following, and notably different, practical models from South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales demonstrate a variety of enabling state-supported systemic approaches, including articulation between learning settings and tailoring learning activities to local need.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 6
EXAMPLE 1

Innovative Community Action Network (ICAN), South Australia

CONTEXT Recognising that traditional schooling can be inaccessible for many young people, the South Australian Government, in 2004, made a long-term, system-level investment in solutions to re-engage young people into a learning pathway. Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN) provide South Australian students with an opportunity to learn outside of mainstream schooling, while still being enrolled as a student in a high school. In 2007, as a result of the ICAN learnings, the South Australian Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) established a Flexible Learning Options (FLO) enrolment strategy. Under this strategy, students can be flexibly enrolled, which gives them resources for learning plus a qualified youth worker to support them through any social and emotional challenges that may be acting as barriers to their learning. Students are also supported to access health and other personal support services where appropriate.

HOW IT WORKS The unique feature of this learning system is that the school principal remains responsible for the student and may use the resources for whatever the student needs – the principal can bring the resources into the school, or the student can go out. Operating under a central (DECD) support team, five staff support schools and flexible learning centres by providing expertise in secondary flexible learning and accreditation. Ten Community Development staff work with local communities through local ICANs and FLO school/community networks. This partnership supports the co-designing of local solutions and helps communities to obtain ongoing funding to leverage resources. Schools are enabled to measure and report on student learning, literacy and numeracy engagement, and on the use of any additional targeted funds for student engagement; while senior government has accountability for, and is enabled to report on, monitor and co-ordinate engagement and FLO student learning outcomes across regions and districts.

OUTCOMES Five thousand young people are involved through 60 flexible learning centres and other school-based and community-based accredited learning options, with evaluations showing increased effectiveness for students throughout the 14 years of operation. The DECD reported that, in 2012, direct support was provided through ICAN to up to one in ten secondary students in government schools in South Australia. Reported student characteristics show the strategy appears to be reaching its intended target group. In addition, the 2012 Deloitte Access Economics study of ICAN/FLO quantified the employment-related benefits of young people staying at school longer through ICAN. The analysis showed that the investment made in ICAN over the years 2007–2010 will have yielded $4.1 million in direct net present benefits to South Australia to 2016, equivalent to benefit to cost ratio of 1.9. Had the analysis included other benefits such as increased health, reduced crime and reduced inter-generational disadvantage, the benefit to cost ratio would have been even higher.

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Based on material from: ARTD, "Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN)."

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 6
EXAMPLE 2

CARE Schools, Western Australia

CONTEXT The CARE model has developed over a period of almost 20 years in Western Australia, with the umbrella Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) instrumental in its development. In this critical segment of the suite of public/private responses catering for at-risk young people, the schools are regulated by the Department of Education Services and funded in a relatively sustainable fashion by State and Commonwealth Governments according to socio-economic status and per student methodologies. In a pre-budget 2014 announcement, the West Australian government committed an extra $1 million per year to CARE schools for the three years from 2014–2017.

HOW IT WORKS This model is a powerful example of how the state – in this case the Western Australian State Government – can enable transformative work in challenging learning settings. Significantly, it is the young people in CARE schools who highlight improved levels of confidence as the most important outcome achieved from their contact with the CARE School model. This is attributable firstly to the flexibility of the modified curriculum programs in which existing barriers to learning are addressed, and secondly to the provision of wrap-around support focused primarily on mental and emotional health and wellbeing. In most of Western Australia's CARE schools, the support also encompasses the difficult areas of a rolling intake (and reintegration if the young person is absent for a period), transportation, accommodation and finances. All of the schools are required to provide students with State/Commonwealth approved curriculum which, in general, is delivered in significantly modified form to accommodate low and/or non-existent standards of literacy and numeracy. Teaching methodologies frequently focus on practical, tactile tasks, with an emphasis on assisting the young person to the stage where they can engage successfully in further training and/or employment. To achieve these ends the skilled staffing and appropriate resourcing of the schools has been vital.

OUTCOMES In 2015, 1060 students were enrolled in 10 CARE schools across WA. Metrics highlight improvements with respect to attendance, participation, engagement, attainment and transitions to employment.

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Based on material from: The Western Australia Curriculum and Re-engagement (CARE) Schools Charter (AISWA, 2014).

Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, NSW (BOSTES)

CONTEXT The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards in NSW (BOSTES) is responsible for school curriculum, assessment and teaching and regulatory standards in NSW schools. In collaboration with schools and other learning organisations, BOSTES has been focusing on making flexible pathways available to students in the senior years of schooling. The key to opening up flexible local learning options has been BOSTES' clarity with standards and requirements.

HOW IT WORKS This curriculum support arrangement provides a strong example of PRINCIPLE 6, an Enabling state. The information and support provided by the Board allows school principals to tailor learning programs to address local needs. BOSTES has articulated a series of options for credentialing at Years 10, 11 and 12. An example is the Record of School Achievement (ROSA), which formally recognises school achievement for the student choosing to leave before completing the Higher School Certificate (HSC). As a cumulative credential, it records all results on school-based assessment (no external tests), records courses the student has participated in but did not complete before leaving school, and has optional literacy and numeracy test results. For the HSC, course requirements are identified; importantly, the pathways include accumulation, repeating courses, recognition of prior learning, acceleration, school-based traineeships and apprenticeships. Likewise for ATAR (University Entrance), the requirements are broken down so that the essential components are visible.

Details, advice and support materials are available on the BOSTES website: http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/.

OUTCOMES The clarity and support of the BOSTES Curriculum Team is now being identified by some NSW school principals as being foundational to their own success in tailoring local learning options to suit their students. Principals are publicly reporting that in their carefully, locally designed courses at non-HSC, HSC and ATAR levels, students who were previously struggling or failing, are now supported in tailored learning environments by a core team of staff. They can succeed and can leave school with credentials. As they explain, this represents a profound change for the school, wider community and for the individual lives concerned. For example, ALESCO Learning Centre Illawarra is a registered and accredited non-denominational, independent school, specifically designed for the inclusion of young people who would flourish with the right support in an alternative school environment. ALESCO Centre are making use of BOSTES input so that they can include the essential components of Years 9 and 10 and complete a Higher School Certificate, but to do this very responsively in relation to students, monitoring wellbeing and learning, and designing a model of classroom activity in which their students can learn, thrive and succeed. Another successful example is Norwest Anglican Senior College, a co-educational senior trade college that offers an alternative model to traditional schools. Students can learn in an innovative project-based environment in Years 11 and 12, importantly, with no homework, textbooks, timetables, bells or classroom changes. They can start their trade career, complete the first year of an apprenticeship/traineeship by the time they finish Year 12 and get their HSC with no external HSC exams.

SEE: http://www.alescoillawarra.nsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Alesco-Brochure-2015.pdf, and http://www.sasc.nsw.edu.au/our-schools/trades-norwest-anglican-senior-college

Based on material from: Sarah Humphreys (BOSTES), Gaynor McKinnon (Tradewest), Rhonda Thearle (ALESCO Illawarra Learning Centre), in three keynote addresses presented to the Exploring the Edge Conference, Alternative Education Alliance and Association of Independent Schools in NSW, Sydney, 17 November 2014.
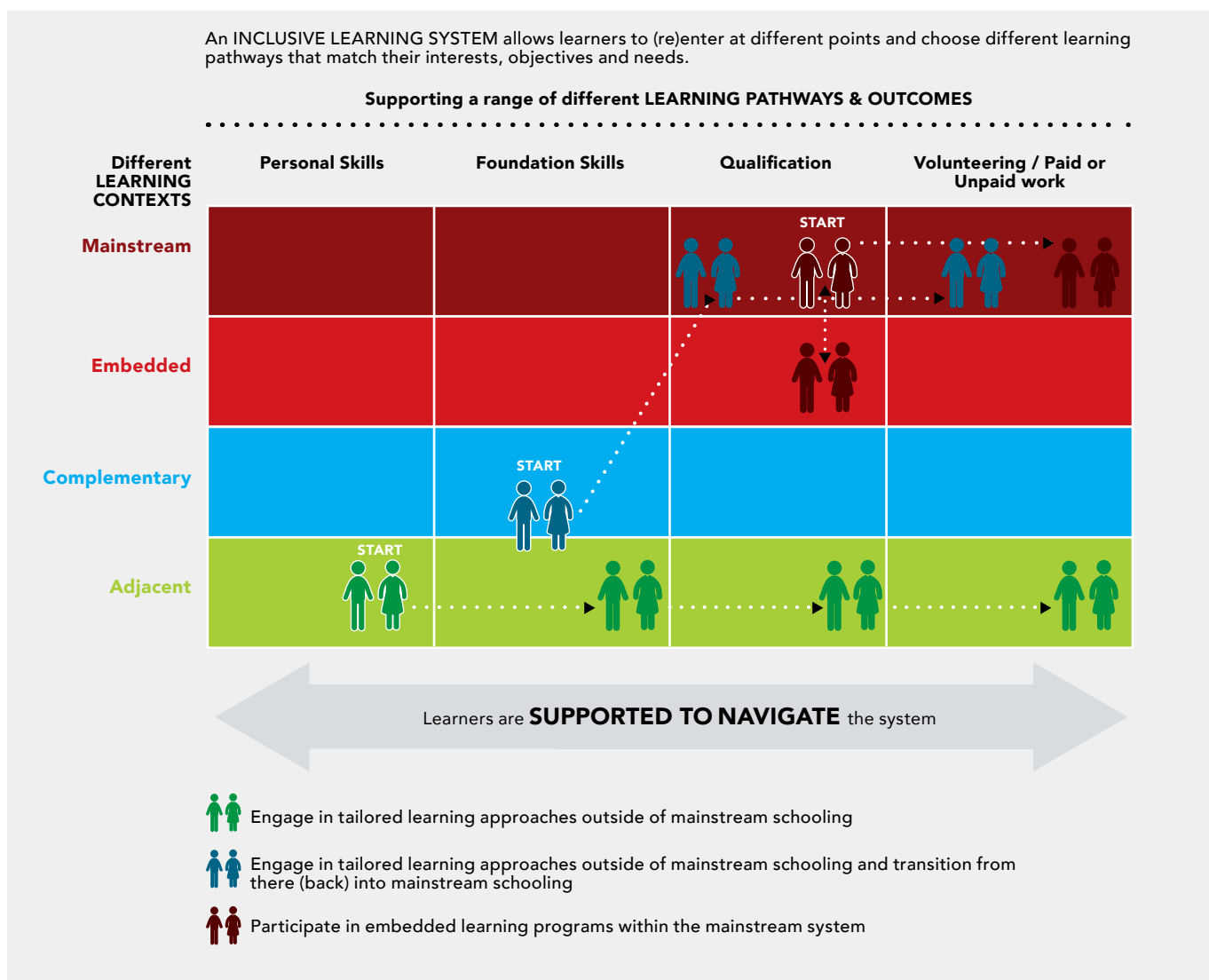

STUDENTS CAN START THEIR TRADE CAREER BY THE TIME THEY COMPLETE YEAR 12

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 7
A NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS

Combined, the six previous design principles work towards a series of state-based inclusive learning systems where: more young people can access learning options that work for them; they can enter and re-enter the system at different points; they can find learning pathways that match their capacities and needs; and they can get the support they need to understand and navigate the system and translate their learning outcomes into improved life and career outcomes.

The diagram below shows the learner able to move between different types of learning experiences as needed: mainstream, embedded, complementary or adjacent to schooling. This better reflects the realities of young people's lives than the more traditional structural requirements that all will move at the same pace, through the same system, to the same ends in similar communities. The key point – the capacity to move as needed throughout the learning journey – highlights the essential role of a learning system that supports mobility.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 7 highlights the unique role of a federal government in enabling state-based education systems to effectively do their work, as illustrated in the final example below.

FIGURE 8 – FLEXIBLE LEARNER PATHWAY MAP*

An INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEM allows learners to (re)enter at different points and choose different learning pathways that match their interests, objectives and needs.

Supporting a range of different LEARNING PATHWAYS & OUTCOMES

Different LEARNING CONTEXTS	Personal Skills	Foundation Skills	Qualification	Volunteering / Paid or Unpaid work
Mainstream			START	
Embedded				
Complementary		START		
Adjacent	START			

Learners are **SUPPORTED TO NAVIGATE** the system

Engage in tailored learning approaches outside of mainstream schooling

Engage in tailored learning approaches outside of mainstream schooling and transition from there (back) into mainstream schooling

Participate in embedded learning programs within the mainstream system

* Schematic diagram developed by Regina Hill, Effective Philanthropy, 2012.

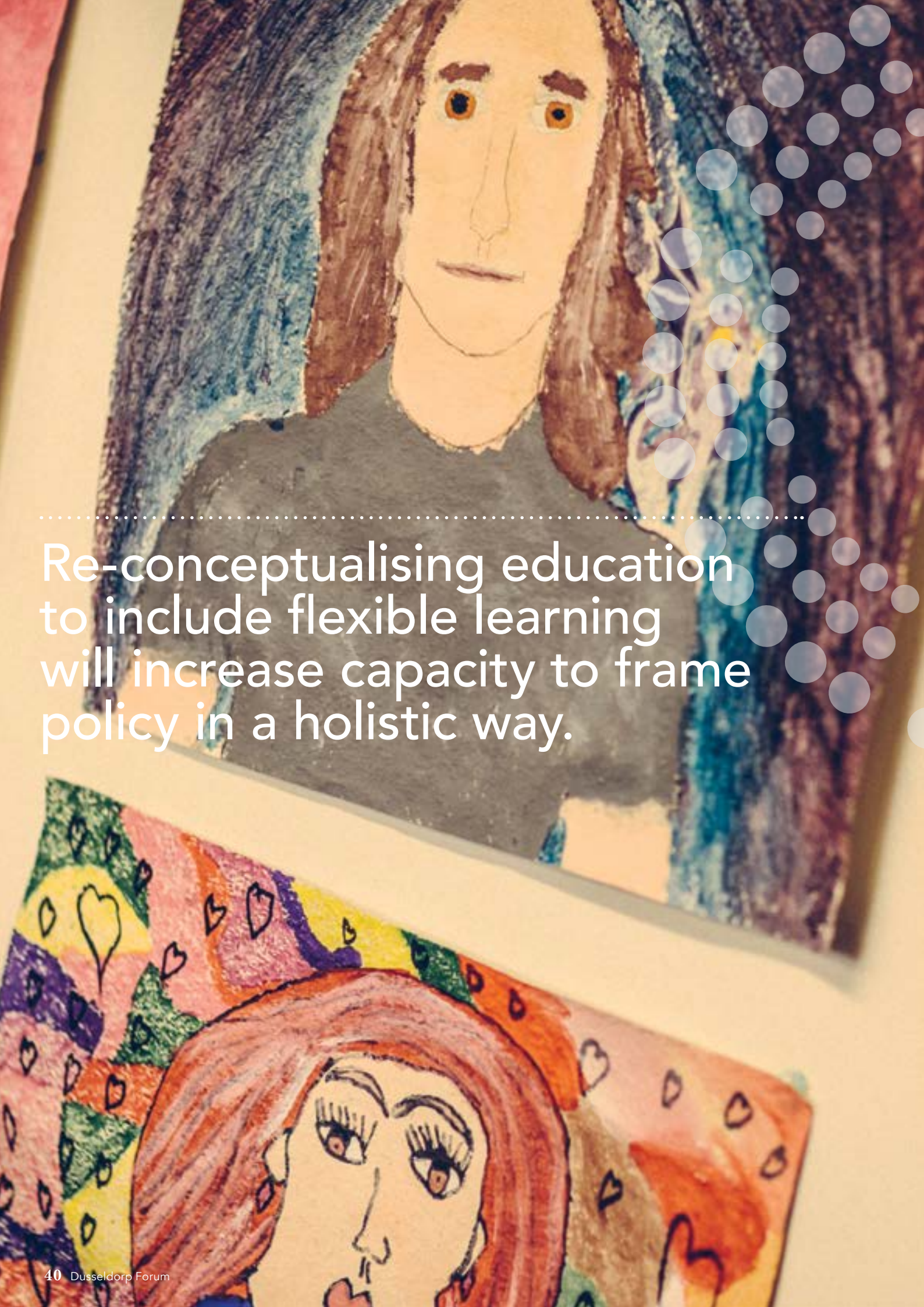## Strategic Federal Supports Partnerships Brokers, 2009–2014

CONTEXT From 2009 to 2014, the Australian government funded the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions. Central elements of this were: the Partnership Brokers, working to build up local partnerships, resources and options; and the organisation Youth Connections, which worked directly with local young people disengaging from learning. The work of these were then integrated with local career development and support agencies, for example, the Local Learning and Employment Networks in Victoria, to value add and strengthen the work of each.

HOW IT WORKED This investment of federal government resources in the strengthening of the existing and long-term work of state-funded organisations, regions and communities provides a useful example of DESIGN PRINCIPLE 7, a National commitment to inclusive learning systems. Partnership Brokers focused on building networks, on collaboration and coordination between organisations, and worked towards co-designing and creating better outcomes for local young people. The strength of the program was in having staff resourced to link the multiple agencies that worked with young people without being school–industry prescriptive. This difference maximised opportunities to work with local issues in creative, holistic ways. The key design elements of the Partnership Brokers included freedom and quick movement, resulting in the ability to draw on both state and nation-wide resources and networks as well as local government, not-for-profits, and local business resources. This meant being able to move nimbly at the same pace as business to build up partnership documents and provide ways ahead for local corporate citizenship. A particular strength was the close working relationship of the Partnership Brokers with Youth Connections, providing a critical mass of client contact, activity and local intelligence. Where this was integrated with existing long-term work across the different states, for example, the Local Learning and Employment Networks in Victoria, these strengths were amplified. This national program of regionally based activity focused on the challenging areas of providing navigation supports, coordination and resourced networking supports.

OUTCOMES A network of over 100 Partnership Brokers supported around 1,600 partnerships and more than 5,000 partner organisations Australia-wide. One network alone reported that 'more than 700 partnerships were brokered over the course of the program, and more than a 40% of these are now entirely self-sustaining'. DEEWR committed more than $200 million in funding for the program between January 2010 and December 2014. The value of social returns exceeded DEEWR's cash investment by between 1.1 times and 3.7 times across the different regions. Almost 100,000 young people were engaged in the activities supported by Youth Connections. The focus has been about supporting young people to finish Year 12 or equivalent and get a job. The Youth Connections Destination Study shows that over 80% of participants were in work or study 18 months after finishing the program.

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Based on material from The Smith Family, "Community Partnership Brokers" and SVA Consulting, "Youth Partnership Destination Study".

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5,000
PARTNER
ORGANISATIONS
NETWORK

Re-conceptualising education to include flexible learning will increase capacity to frame policy in a holistic way.

4 STRENGTHENING EXISTING SYSTEMS

While many educators understand and use inclusive learning practices, inputs from the learning sector indicate a number of practical areas that deserve attention.

Policy cycles ebb and flow; there are trends to support inclusive learning as well as trends away from that support, in some cases putting at risk the work that has already been done. This section identifies and discusses several of the most significant factors which, if attended to, can support and strengthen inclusive learning systems.

RECOGNISING A BROADER PERSPECTIVE: WHAT MAKES UP THE EDUCATION SYSTEM?

Australian education policies on the whole still reflect a view that education = schools. One example of this is the recent review of the Australian Curriculum, which failed to acknowledge that education of Australian young people happens in a variety of settings.[102] In practice, this siloed perspective means that most states tend to distinguish between 'mainstream' and 'non-mainstream' parts of the education system and see them as separate service systems rather than parts of a single system.

The integrated, flexible view of learning systems proposed in this report, instead sees young people moving within and across different parts of the system as would best meet their needs as learners.

This type of approach – prioritising flexibility, inclusivity and life-long learning – is not new and is accepted internationally as best practice.

The Council of Europe has incorporated it in their youth policies for many years, and it is again detailed in their Priority Plan towards the year 2020.[103,104] Similarly, in Australia the emerging evidence from nation-wide practices of inclusive learning is that learning systems do require particular attributes to ensure that inclusive programs are scaffolded by the same legitimacy and resourcing afforded to learning programs in the formal schooling system.

Separating different learning contexts into 'mainstream' and 'non-mainstream' makes it easier to fall into the trap of viewing the 'non-mainstream' or 'alternative' parts of the system and, by implication, the learners they support, as being somehow deficient, inferior or subordinate to the school-based education system. This fails to recognise the important role those learning contexts play in engaging and re-engaging learners, and in offering legitimate and flexible pathways. Re-conceptualising education to include flexible learning will increase systemic capacity to frame policy in a holistic way. It will increase, too, the possibility of resourcing the coordinating and support structures needed by service providers (and learners) to identify and access appropriate learning and support options and to move within and between different parts of the education system.

ADDRESSING GAPS IN THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF SERVICE OFFERINGS IN SOME LOCATIONS

There continues to be variation in the provision of services across different areas. Data indicates a considerable unmet demand, with thousands of students on waiting lists, for embedded, ancillary and adjacent learning opportunities to complement schooling settings in a number of rural, regional and metropolitan areas.[105]

Variation in service quality across the systems also reflects uneven recognition and resourcing of professional skills development. This includes variation in standards for students to achieve accredited learning and appropriate outcomes-based assessment.

INVESTING IN INFORMATION SHARING AND COORDINATION SYSTEMS

Service providers and learners often have difficulty identifying what other education and support services are available in the local area. Inroads are being made to address this through Local Area Brokers and state- and territory-based regional coordination models (as shown earlier in the DESIGN PRINCIPLE 6 examples). Nevertheless, it is often difficult for individual service providers to navigate their own local service system, and that, in turn, makes it difficult for them to support their learners in the same navigation.

Coordination between different learning contexts or settings is often dependent on the strength of the relationship between individual service providers and is supported at a system level only in patches. Limitations in data collection and management systems make it difficult for service providers to share information about learners or to make sure that learners do not 'get lost' or left unsupported if they move out of the schooling system. It also becomes more difficult to implement effective accountability management systems at both an individual service provider level and a system management level.

Useful resources for service providers include current and recent developments like the *Putting the Jigsaw Together* project, with its case studies and shared information and evidence across the flexible learning sector.[106]

ADDRESSING DIRECT AND INDIRECT CONSTRAINTS ON ABILITY TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE LEARNER SUPPORT

The need to provide learners with both the instructional and personal support they need – at a system level – in order to successfully engage in learning is widely recognised. A number of factors are highlighted here that would provide an appropriate mix and level of support.

Curriculum requirements – allow flexibility in curriculum content and delivery requirements to lessen constraints on the ability to tailor learning responses to fit the learner and the learner cohort.

Resourcing – provide resources to meet additional instruction and personal support requirements for particular learners requiring greater remedial or extension work, or provide support to establish and/or manage collaborations with other local service providers to meet that resource need.

Professional and personal training and development – provide personal and professional training to assist teachers and other education, support, administrative and system management staff to build the knowledge, confidence and skills they need to support every student; and design and manage flexible education systems to allow this training.

Some recent developments of particular interest here are: the National Curriculum and its relation to flexible and inclusive learning; changes in funding arrangements, including the development of needs-based funding; and the intersection between disability legislation and flexible learning contexts.

RE-THINKING NAVIGATION SUPPORTS

Although different models are being used to provide learners with support to navigate the education system, these models are often not sufficiently flexible or adequately funded and networked to cover the needs of learners across the spectrum, particularly as their needs change. The following points for action indicate directions of focus for building more inclusive education systems.

Cultural change – change the prevailing split system thinking that distinguishes between mainstream and non-mainstream settings and replace it with broader, single system perspectives that recognise the different learning contexts as forming parts of a single learning system.

Policy prioritisation and coordination – expand the focus of existing education system reforms beyond schools to include broader learning systems, such as those in embedded, complementary and adjacent learning contexts; strengthen cross-government policy coordination, funding, compliance and regulation.

Funding models – review funding models applying to non-mainstream settings and learner pathway support and incorporate those models as part of a broader, overall funding reform agenda (complementing the existing thinking in the Review of Funding for Schooling).[107]

System coordination – improve information sharing and coordination structures to better support cross-service provider coordination and improve the ability of learners to identify and access flexible learner pathways.

Learner voice and engagement – strengthen the learner voice and improve young people's ability to influence what and how education and learning opportunities are delivered by supporting learners (to articulate and advocate for what they need) and by improving service providers' ability to engage with prospective learners.

Navigation supports – strengthen navigation supports for learners to help them overcome entry and transition point barriers and to translate learning outcomes into improved life outcomes.

Professional and personal skills development and training – strengthen pre- and in-service training for teachers and educators to improve teaching quality and better prepare professional staff to meet both the instructional and personal support needs of their learners; build the skills and knowledge of educational administrators and system managers so they may understand what is required to design, implement and oversee inclusive education systems that meet the instructional and personal support needs of all young people.
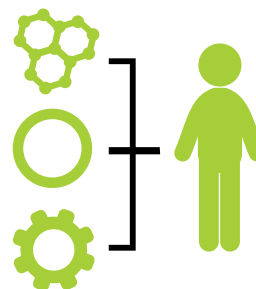
DIFFERENT MODELS ARE BEING USED TO SUPPORT LEARNERS ACROSS THE SPECTRUM

It is time to have a national conversation about what we know and about building more inclusive learning systems.

5

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS

'The Case', as advocated, discussed and demonstrated through this report, argues the following:

Engaging more young people in learning is a priority and, therefore, so is designing learning systems that work for them.

We know what works, and people are doing it all over the country. As demonstrated in this report, there is a great body of practice knowledge, good evidence of successful programs, some strong learning cultures, and, increasingly, some states (governments) are adding systemic supports. Where governments provide systemic supports for good programs, these become even more effective. Where these supports are long-term, there is real impact.

It is now time to build more inclusive learning systems, to pull all this evidence together, to use what we know, to work collectively to make change, and to create systems that work.

Australia is committed to offering education systems that support all of its young people, but present education systems are not working as well as they could for at least one in five of Australia's young people. The research is clear that opportunities for those who participate in education are far better in terms of social and economic outcomes. For Australia to meet its potential as a twenty-first century economy, it is essential to have education systems that provide and maximise opportunities for all young people.

At a time when international research evidence is signalling that increasing numbers of young people are saying they feel they do not belong in Australian schools it is crucial to focus on building more inclusive learning systems.[108]

Most importantly, education systems need to recognise learner diversity and provide learning opportunities that fit the learners, rather than require learners to fit the system.

'The Case' has explored what an inclusive learning system looks like and how to build a system that works for all young people. As the research and examples demonstrated, key principles have been distilled from those successfully working to engage young people in learning.

AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING SYSTEM EMPLOYS THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES IDENTIFIED IN THIS REPORT:

1. prioritising learning for all *young Australians*

2. providing a range of *learning choices*, the *contexts or settings* in which learning can take place

3. tailoring *models of practice* to match the learner needs and goals, as these change over time

4. offering different *learning pathways* that match learner aspirations and living contexts

5. providing learners with *supports to navigate* their education system

6. having an *enabling state* with systemic supports: culture, resources, standards, processes and systems

7. being backed by *national commitment* to education for all young Australians through coordinated policy and targeted funding.

The research in this report has revealed strong networks of practitioners, managers and policy-makers across Australia, who carry deep knowledge about how to engage and re-engage young people in learning. They do this within, through, and often despite the lack of, systemic supports. Isolated case studies of success will remain just that until the dots are joined. It is time to pull all this knowledge together and to have a national conversation about what we know and about building more inclusive learning systems.

It is time to make change happen and to engage more young people in learning by creating learning systems that work.

Through linking up sites of good practice, our aims are to significantly increase the systemic support for engagement and rates of belonging, and, ultimately, give all young people access to quality learning opportunities. This will ensure flow-on benefits to individuals, community and country. As each of the populations and organisations involved in 'The Case' will testify, the impact of a well-designed inclusive system is profound. To have an even more powerful impact, educators and decision makers can employ these design principles across every state and territory.
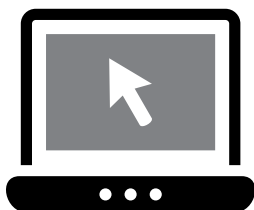
THE LEARNING CHOICES ONLINE DATABASE

Across Australia it is not always easy to find the right learning organisation.

Dusseldorp Forum website hosts an online resource, the Learning Choices Database http://dusseldorp.org.au/priorities/alternative-learning/program-database/

Learning Choices are programs and initiatives, both outside school and in schools, designed to meet the diversity of needs for young people to be actively and positively engaged with their learning, achieving better life and learning outcomes and building pathways to further learning beyond school.

Although there is much variety, what the programs listed on the site have in common is that: young people can attend by choice; they offer general education at secondary school level, enabling young people to achieve recognised credentials; and they aim to adapt the offer of education to suit the young people who attend.

dusseldorp.org.au

NOTES

Author citations here are in shortened form – that is, first author (or organisation), shortened title and page number where relevant.

Please refer to the Bibliography for the full source.

1   ACARA, National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012, 13.

2   Australia currently has a gap in national data about non-attendance for under-16s. In 2014, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) introduced the key components of the National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting (National Standards), on which government and non-government providers of attendance data are requested to draw when providing data for national reporting purposes. ACARA state that this will enable consistent and comparable reporting of attendance rates for students in Years 1 to 10 (including ungraded students where applicable) for government, Catholic and independent schools in Australia. The student attendance data collection will complement the data collected through the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). All school jurisdictions report against these for 2014, except NSW, who start in 2015.

The national apparent retention rate for students from Year 7/8 to Year 12 was 79.9% in 2012 and 81.6% in 2013. Source: ABS 2015, 4221.0 Schools, Australia, 2013. Viewed at: http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4221.0main+features42013

About one-fifth of young people still do not complete Year 12 in an un-interrupted linear fashion from the start of high school. Source: Deloitte Access Economics, Youth Transitions Evidence Base: 2012 Update, 23.

3   Te Riele, "Putting the Jigsaw Together".

4   ABS 2015, 4221.0 - Schools, Australia, 2014. Viewed at: http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4221.0Main%20Features402014?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4221.0&issue=2014&num=&view=

5   Robinson, "How to escape education's death valley".

6   Barr et al., *Melbourne Declaration, 6.*

7   Ibid., 4.

8   OECD, *PISA 2012 Results,* 2013.

9   OECD, "Engagement with and at School".

10 FYA, "How Young People Are Faring", 2013.

11 Te Riele, "Learning Choices", 16 17.

12 OECD, "Improving Performance: Leading from the Bottom", 2.

13 Te Riele, "Putting the Jigsaw Together"; ARTD, "Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN)".

14 ARTD, "Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN)".

15 Slee, "Social Justice and the Changing Directions", 167.

16 Barr et al., *Melbourne Declaration.*

17 Atelier Learning Solutions, "Appendix 3: Principles of Good Practice in ICAN Program Design and Delivery"; Te Riele, "Putting the Jigsaw Together"; ARTD, "Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN)".

18 Holdsworth, "Learning Choices National Scan".

19 Te Riele, "Putting the Jigsaw Together"; Holdsworth, "Learning Choices National Scan".

20 Deslandes, National Policy Update 2014.

21 Te Riele, "Putting the Jigsaw Together".

22 Te Riele et al., Vignettes.

23 Te Riele, "Putting the Jigsaw Together".

24 Barr et al., *Melbourne Declaration.*

25 Nechvoglod and Beddie, *Hard to Reach Learners*, 32; Hill, "Successful Schooling: Techniques and Tools", 27-29.

26 Participation for both 15 19-year-olds and 20 24-year-olds has been on the increase since 2002. For 15 19-year-olds, overall participation has increased from 71% in 2002 to 74.7% in 2012, and for 20 24-year-olds participation increased from 24.7% in 2002 to 31.5% in 2012. As discussed in the FYA "How Young People Are Faring" 2013 report, p.9, part of this increase in full-time education participation is offset by decreases in full-time employment levels over the period.

27 Lamb and Robinson, *How Young People Are Faring 2012.*

28 COAG, Reform Council and McClintock, *Education 2011 Comparing Performance across Australia*;
    COAG, Education in Australia 2012 ; COAG Reform Council, *Education 2011* indicates that the
    proportion of 18 24-year-olds in 2011 fully engaged in full-time education and work was 72.5%. Fully
    engaged is defined as full-time employment, full-time education or training at or above Certificate
    III, both part-time employment and part-time education/training, or both full-time employment and
    full-time education/training. Moreover, according to the ABS (2012) Survey of Education and Work
    2008 2011, the number of young people aged 18 25 years and fully engaged in work and education has
    dropped by 3.6% since 2008.

29 More than one in four 17 24-year-olds (27.3%) nationally were not fully engaged in either work or study in
    2011. COAG, Education in Australia 2012, 51.

30 Dusseldorp Skills Forum, "Australia's Young Adults, the Deepening Divide". In 1997 25% of 20 24-year-
    olds were not in full-time education or work.

31 Thomson et al., *PISA 2012, 25*.

32 Ibid., 45.

33 COAG, *Education in Australia* 2012; FYA, "How Young People Are Faring 2012".

34 In 2009, an average of one in seven students performed below the proficiency baseline for all PISA
    domains compared with one in eight students in 2000. Thomson et al., "PISA in Brief".

35 Thompson et al., "PISA 2012 In Brief", 26.

36 Melbourne Graduate School of Education, "Schooling Challenges and Opportunities", 5.

37 OECD, *PISA 2009 Results*, 59.

38 COAG Reform Council, *Education 2011: Comparing performance across Australia*, 47.

39 ABS 2009 Survey of Education and Training in 4250.0.55.001 – Perspectives on Education and Training:
    Social Inclusion 2009.

40 ABS 4250.0 2009.

41 ABS 1301.0 2012.

42 ABS 4250.0 2009; ABS 6278.0 Education and Training Experience 2009, ABS 6278.0 2009.

43 In most OECD countries, graduation from secondary school is now viewed as the minimum level of
    educational attainment needed for successful participation of young people in further study and work.
    This is because in most nations, secondary education serves as the foundation for entry to university and
    other education and training opportunities as well as preparation for entry into the labour market. Over
    time, it has become more and more important in deciding how economic and other life benefits, such as
    good health and well-being, are distributed. Lamb et al., *School Dropout and Completion*, 1.

44 COAG, *National Education Agreement, 1.*

45 OECD, "Who Are the Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education?" 1.

46 Nechvoglod et al., *Hard to Reach Learners*, 9, 36.

47 *McLachlan et al., Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia.*

48 European Commission, Strategic Framework Education & Training 2020; Desmet, European and
    International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights; Devlin, "Young People,
    Youth Work and Youth Policy"; Lamb, "Introduction to the European Education Systems".

49 OECD, Who Are the Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education?, 1.

50 Nechvoglod et al., *Hard to Reach Learners*, 9.

51 McLachlan et al., *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia.*

52 OECD, "How Do Some Students Overcome Their Socio-Economic Background?", 4.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., 1.

55 Ibid., 2.

56 OECD, "Who Are the Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education?", 1.

57 OECD, "Improving Performance: Leading from the Bottom", 4.

58 Ibid.

59 OECD, "Are Countries Moving towards More Equitable Education Systems?", 1.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid., 2.

62 Ibid.

63 Access Economics, "The Economic Benefit of Increased Participation in Education and Training, NSW", ii.

64 Deloitte Access Economics, "The Socio-Economic Benefits of Investing in the Prevention of Early School
    Leaving", 23.

65 Slee, "Social Justice and the Changing Directions", 167-177.

66 Barr et al., *Melbourne Declaration.*

67 Australia, Department of Education, and Gonski, *Review of Funding for Schooling Final Report.*

68 Te Riele, "Learning Choices", 16 17.

69 AYAC, "Beyond Learn or Earn".

70   Stehlik and Patterson, *Changing the Paradigm,* 159; Wyn, *Touching the Future.*

71   Reid and McCallum, "Becoming Your Best".

72   Meschi and Vignoles, "The Determinants of Non-Cognitive and Cognitive Schooling Outcomes".

73   Cammarota, "From Hopelessness to Hope".

74   Homel et al., *School Completion*; Irvin et al., "Relationship of School Context"; Mair et al., "Are There Hopeless Neighborhoods?"

75   Watters and Diezmann. Community Partnerships for Fostering Student Interest and Engagement; Cammarota, "From Hopelessness to Hope"; Hartmann et al., "Exito"; Reid and McCallum, "Becoming Your Best"; Kahu, "MY LIFE IS IN MY WORDS. WALK WITH ME MISS!"

76   Irvin et al., "Relationship of School Context".

77   Law et al., "Searching for Autonomy"; Cammarota, "From Hopelessness to Hope".

78   OECD, "School autonomy and accountability": Are they related to student performance?; OECD, "What do students think about school?"

79   OECD, "Engagement with and at School".

80   OECD, "Do students have the drive to succeed?"; Clark, "Equitable Learning Outcomes"; Sahay et al., "Equipping Public Health Professionals for Youth Engagement"; Carter et al, "Self Determination Interventions"; Rapp-Paglicci et al., "Can a Self-Regulation Skills and Cultural Arts Program Promote Positive Outcomes?"

81   Wierenga, *Young People Making a Life.*

82   Maurizi et al., "The Role of Social Relationships"; Lee, "The Relationship Between Student Engagement and Academic Performance"; Tillery et al., "The Importance of Adult Connections"; Chapman et al., "School-Based Programs for Increasing Connectedness"; Werner and Brendtro, "Risk, Resilience, and Recovery"; Irvin et al., "Relationship of School Context"; Hayes, "Re-Engaging Marginalised Young People"; Black et al., "Reconnecting Young People with Learning"; OECD: "What can parents do to help their children succeed in school?"; OECD, "What do students think about school?"; Curtis and National Centre for Vocational Education Research (Australia), *Peer-Mentoring of Students*; Chan et al., "Pathways of Influence in School-Based Mentoring"; Farruggia et al., "Important Nonparental Adults"; Van Ryzin, "Exploring Relationships among Boys and Men"; Grant et al., "Development of Cities Mentor Project."

83   Taylor, *Stories of Early School Leaving.*

84   Nechvoglod and Beddie, *Hard to Reach Learners,* 20.

85   Hill, Government Advisory Papers and Consultations. 2012.

86   OECD, PISA "In-Focus" series, 2011-2013.

87   Te Riele, "Learning Choices".

88   Dusseldorp Forum, "Learning Choices Program Database".

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90   Dusseldorp Forum. "Learning Choices Flexible and Inclusive Learning Database"; Te Riele. "Putting the Jigsaw Together".

91   OECD, "How do some students overcome their socio-economic background?", 2.

92   Te Riele, "Putting the Jigsaw Together."; KPMG, *Re-engaging our kids*; ARTD. "Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN)."; Mills, "Flexischools have a lot to teach mainstream schools".

93   OECD, "How do some students overcome their socio-economic background?"; Te Riele, "Putting the Jigsaw Together."; Mills, "Flexischools have a lot to teach mainstream schools".

94   ABS 4221.0.

95   European Commission, "Strategic Framework Education & Training 2020".

96   Wyn, *Touching the Future.*

97   Barr et al., *Melbourne Declaration.*

98   Abbott-Chapman, "Making the Most of the Mosaic"; Dwyer et al., "Life-Patterns, Career Outcomes and Adult Choices"; Wierenga and Wyn, "Schools and Universities Are Not Railway Stations"; Cuervo and Wyn, "Reflections on the Use of Spatial and Relational Metaphors in Youth Studies".

99   Wierenga, *Young People Making a Life*; Wierenga and Wyn, "Schools and Universities Are Not Railway Stations".

100   Lamb et al., *Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion Report.*

101   OECD, "Who Are the Strong Performers?", 40.

102   Donnelly and Wiltshire, "Review of the Australian Curriculum: Final Report".

103   European Commission, "Strategic Framework – Education & Training 2020".

104   Ibid.

105   Holdsworth, "Learning Choices National Scan".

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