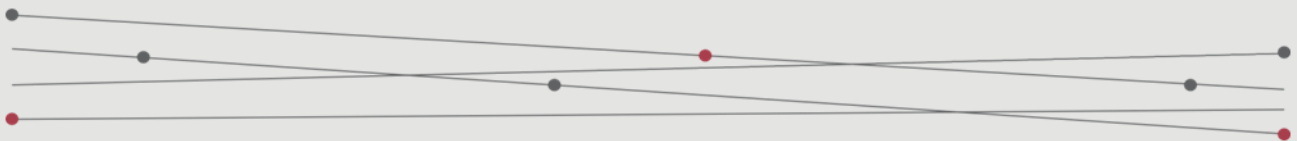


INTERIM EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON YOUTH ATTAINMENT AND TRANSITIONS

A REPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND
WORKPLACE RELATIONS

2 APRIL 2012



dandolopartners

Level 3, 150 Queen Street, Melbourne 3000 Victoria

T: +61 3 9211 0015 F: +61 3 9211 0014 E: enquiries@dandolo.com.au

www.dandolo.com.au

ABN 48 757 017 061

Contents

Executive summary	6
The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions.....	6
Evaluation of the National Partnership	6
The importance of youth attainment and transitions.....	7
Interim findings	8
Recommendations.....	10
Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation.....	10
1 Introduction	11
1.1 Purpose and focus of the evaluation	11
1.2 Challenges for the evaluation.....	11
1.3 Evaluation approach and methodology.....	12
1.4 Evaluation timeline and focus	16
1.5 Project Governance	16
1.6 This report.....	16
2 The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions	18
2.1 Background	18
2.2 The purpose and objectives of the National Partnership	18
2.3 NP objectives and performance indicators.....	19
2.4 Funding	20
2.5 Elements of the National Partnership.....	21
2.6 Delivery of the National Partnership.....	24
3 The importance of Youth Attainment and Transitions	25
3.1 What is the transition phase?.....	25
3.2 Why does it matter?	26
3.3 What influences transition outcomes?	27
3.4 What characterises the transition process in Australia?.....	30

3.5	An international perspective on transitions	30
3.6	Future challenges for national strategies to improve transition outcomes.....	31
4	Interim Findings.....	33
4.1	Introduction	33
4.2	Summary of findings	33
4.3	Elaboration of findings.....	35
4.4	Contribution of NP elements	56
5	Recommendations for improvement.....	60
5.1	Issues and recommendations at the National Partnership level	60
	Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation.....	61
	Attachment 1: The importance of Youth Attainment and Transitions.....	62
	What is the transition phase?	62
	Why does it matter?.....	63
	What influences transition outcomes?	65
	What characterises the transition process in Australia?	73
	An international perspective on transitions	75
	Future challenges for national strategies to improve transition outcomes.....	76
	Attachment 2: Data Analysis	78
	Limitations of the data sets.....	78
	Issues and recommendations to improve data reporting.....	80
	Participation – overall	81
	Participation – by sector	81
	Participation – Indigenous	84
	Participation – other target groups.....	85
	Attainment – overall.....	88
	Attainment – by sector	88
	Attainment – Indigenous.....	90
	Attainment – other target groups	92
	Transition – overall	95

Transition – other target groups	100
International comparisons	101
Attachment 3: Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions	108
Introduction	108
Summary of findings	109
Elaboration of findings	111
Recommendations for improvement.....	120
Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation.....	120
Attachment 4: School Business Community Partnership Brokers 121	
Introduction	121
Summary of findings	125
Elaboration of findings	128
Summary of recommendations for improvement.....	143
Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation.....	143
Appendix 1: Guidance from Stakeholder Feedback on Success Factors.....	144
Attachment 5: Youth Connections	146
Introduction	146
Summary level findings	150
Elaboration of the findings	152
Issues and recommendations for improvement.....	166
Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation.....	167
Attachment 6: National Career Development	168
Introduction	168
Summary findings	169
Elaboration of findings	171
Issues and recommendations for improvement.....	177
Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation.....	177
Attachment 7: Compact with Young Australians	178

Introduction.....	178
Summary findings.....	179
Elaboration of findings.....	181
Issues and recommendations for improvement.....	185
Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation.....	185
Attachment 8: Stakeholder engagement.....	186
Attachment 9: Evaluation Framework.....	187
Introduction.....	187
National Partnership.....	190
Maximising Youth Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions.....	196
School Business Community Partnership Brokers.....	200
Youth Connections.....	204
National Career Development.....	209
Compact with Young Australians.....	214
Attachment 10: Reference list.....	217

Executive summary

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (the National Partnership or NP) in July 2009. The National Partnership seeks to lift educational outcomes and improve transitions for young Australians to further education, training or employment. Specifically, the National Partnership focuses on 15–24 year olds, young people at risk, and the educational attainment and engagement of young Indigenous Australians. Over the term of the NP and in addition to \$100 million in potential reward payments, \$623 million has been allocated across the five elements of the National Partnership:

- **Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST)** - for the development and implementation of state-based initiatives to improve education and training outcomes for young people
- **School Business and Community Partnership Brokers** – to build partnerships with education and training providers, business and industry, parents and families and community groups to support young people in attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications, and to reach their full educational and social potential
- **Youth Connections** – to provide a continuum of services to support young people at risk of disengaging from education or training, not attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications and not making successful transition to further study, training or work
- **National Career Development** – to develop and maintain a range of national projects and resources for the benefit of all States and Territories. In addition, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has embarked on the development of new National Career Development Strategy to provide guidance on how best to support young people to gain the skills to manage their learning and career directions
- **The Compact with Young Australians** (the Compact) – which included a National Youth Participation Requirement for all young people, entitlement to an education or training place and strengthened participation requirements for some income support payments.

Evaluation of the National Partnership

DEEWR engaged dandolopartners to assess the effectiveness, appropriateness, governance and implementation of the NP. In order to make that assessment, the evaluation seeks to address the question:

“Have the National Partnership elements as a package contributed to young people’s engagement with education and training to improve participation, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians?”

The evaluation is a three-year project and is focused on evaluating the NP as a whole and does not provide a detailed assessment of individual programs and activities that are occurring within individual elements of the NP or jurisdictions. This report presents findings and recommendations from the first of three stages of the evaluation. This first stage focused on understanding movements in targeted outcomes since the NP commenced and what is currently happening across jurisdictions and education and training sectors to progress those outcomes. Findings and recommendations will help inform improvements in the NP and elements within the term of the NP and set a benchmark for subsequent stages of the evaluation to monitor progress.

The evaluation findings have been informed by a review of international and Australian literature and program documentation, such as survey results, progress reports and detailed administrative data, analysis of national participation, attainment and transition outcome data and consultations with stakeholders (more than 240), including Australian and State/Territory governments, non-government education sectors, schools, businesses, service providers, community agencies, career industry representatives and young people.

The importance of youth attainment and transitions

The distinctive institutional arrangements and policy settings that are put in place during the transition phase in education, the labour market and the income support system reflect the importance of successful school to work transitions not only for the individual, but also for society and the economy as a whole. Failing to complete high school carries costs for individuals: increased risk of unemployment, lower earnings and lower labour force participation rates. These risks are apparent in the short and the long term. For the economy as a whole they translate into reduced levels of GDP and lower national productivity. Wider social costs can be found in health, civic and social engagement and crime. While labour market outcomes from the transition phase are quite good in Australia compared to many other OECD countries, upper secondary completion rates are at best average and have been static in recent years in the face of ongoing improvement in the OECD as a whole.

Transition outcomes are the result of a complex mix of the economic and social context, institutional arrangements in education, the labour market and the income support system and personal qualities, such as resilience and self-confidence. Among the more important influences are the state of the labour market as a whole, the structure of advantage and disadvantage and in particular socio-economic status, early educational achievement and the ways in which school climate and school quality influence engagement with and interest in learning. Labour market conditions appear to have a greater impact on some transition outcomes in Australia than elsewhere, with youth unemployment rates being more susceptible to economic downturns than in many other OECD countries. Table ES.1 below summarises factors that influence transition outcomes.

TABLE ES.1 – FACTORS INFLUENCING TRANSITION OUTCOMES

Economic and social context	Institutional arrangements	Personal qualities
<p>State of the labour market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater impact than elsewhere Large Global Financial Crisis impact <p>The structure of advantage and disadvantage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio economic status Geographical location Type of school Immigrant status Indigenous status 	<p>Education and training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School climate and quality Pedagogy Curriculum breadth and choice Types of institutions available Career guidance School-work combinations School-community links/social capital Pathways: quality and diversity <p>Labour market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth wages Training wages Employment protection <p>Income support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment benefit levels Unemployment benefit conditions Education participation payments 	<p>Educational achievement</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Resilience</p> <p>Self confidence</p> <p>Aspirations</p> <p>Career planning skills</p>

The transition process in Australia has been changing in recent years, increasing the policy challenge associated with achieving improved outcomes. Full-time employment opportunities have been declining, the transition to stable employment after leaving education has become longer and transitions are more uncertain and more unstable. Since the early 1990s there has been a notable increase in the proportion of young people who are neither in education, employment nor training.

The key to improving Australia's transition outcomes overall is to raise outcomes among the lowest achievers and the most disadvantaged. While the factors listed above have a strong impact, they are not all determining. For example, many young people who are disadvantaged or low achievers are characterised by good transition outcomes.

Strategies that can improve outcomes for low achievers and the disadvantaged are evident from the research literature. For example: a positive school climate that increases learning engagement; motivation and having a career goal; self-confidence; and personal support in the form of mentoring, tutoring, and addressing welfare needs. Whole of school approaches are important, not only interventions that target the individual student. For those young people who do drop out of school, international experience shows that early intervention designed to reinsert them into education is important, as are mutual obligation approaches to income support. International experience also suggests that good overall transition outcomes can be the result of a range of policy settings and that there is no silver bullet.

Interim findings

This NP clearly addresses many of the factors known to influence transition outcomes. It focuses on young people that are most at risk of disengaging from education and training, including young people living in areas of disadvantage and Indigenous young people, seeks to strengthen education and training institutional capacity, supports partnerships between schools, business and community, establishes participation requirements for young people and seeks to improve personal qualities and aspirations of young people to improve outcomes.

The NP has increased the focus on youth attainment and transition outcomes across the Commonwealth and State/Territory governments, education and training sectors and other key stakeholders. It has been a catalyst for collaboration across these groups - to identify barriers to achieving those outcomes and for programs that can address those barriers in a way that reduces duplication of effort between the States, Territories and Commonwealth.

Nevertheless, it is important to be realistic about what the NP might achieve, given the strength of the impact upon transition outcomes of the state of the labour market, of socio-economic status and of early educational achievement. We need to recognise the influence of related issues such as curriculum choice, school climate and learning engagement that are central to re-engaging disaffected learners who, when compared to their peers and considering what is currently available, require more varied learning options and support services to keep them engaged. Also, the nature of most initiatives in this domain is that they take time for their full impact to be evident.

In terms of progress toward targeted participation, attainment and transition outcomes for the NP:

- Since the NP was introduced, there has been a slight increase in school participation levels, particularly amongst 16-17 year olds. This suggests that NP activity, particularly the Compact, is having an impact. However, other factors such as the GFC have also had an impact on participation levels
- It is too soon to say whether attainment levels have changed since the commencement of the NP

- The NP may have had some positive impact upon the number of young people who are unemployed and not in education or training. However, the increasing number of young people not in the labour force and not engaged in education or training is a concern and if it continues may require a concerted policy response.

With respect to the impact of the NP elements:

- MEAST funding has helped jurisdictions to maintain and expand existing initiatives (and implement some new ones) to support young people focused on improving participation, attainment and transition outcomes. Jurisdictions valued the flexibility in the MEAST funding arrangements that allowed them to determine where funding could be effectively allocated to address specific needs and complement existing initiatives. However, smaller States and Territories pointed out that the amount of this funding constrained their ability to introduce large-scale reforms to address identified issues and objectives
- The introduction of the Partnership Broker model is a significant shift in the nature of Commonwealth support for school partnership activities. While progress is being made against targeted outcomes, the model is not embraced by jurisdictions and Partnership Brokers have faced some significant challenges in its implementation
- Youth Connections has effectively broadened the support available to disengaged and at risk young people across the country. The range of services delivered under Youth Connections appear to be effective in supporting disengaged young people and transitioning them back in to education and training. However, the scale of demand for these services is large and exceeds the Youth Connections' program providers' funded capacity
- The States and Territories value the provision of existing Commonwealth-funded career development activities and resources and are keen to see the Commonwealth commit to their continued provision. DEEWR has committed to the development of a new National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) within the term of this NP. However, its development has been delayed and interviewed education, training and career industry stakeholders (including those who have been involved in research projects that will inform the NCDS) were concerned about their limited knowledge of the status and scope of the NCDS
- The Compact was introduced to encourage young people to participate in education and training at a time of labour market contraction. Its introduction resulted in a more consistent national approach to requirements for young people to participate in compulsory education and training and it appears to be associated with some increase in participation among targeted cohorts. However, it is difficult to separate this increase in participation from the impact of the GFC.

The NP has a broad scope that is consistent with the over-arching policy objectives outlined in the National Education Agreement. However, compared to other NPs, it was not a policy response that was developed in a highly considered way using a comprehensive evidence-base. Time pressures meant that this NP was effectively a packaging of existing and proposed programs aligned with targeted participation and attainment improvements. As a result, the balance of resources and activity applied across alternatives may not be optimal (i.e. placing emphasis where it has the greatest impact) and this is an area that will be explored further in the second year of this evaluation.

Collaboration between the Commonwealth, jurisdictions and service providers has generally been effective – largely attributed to NP leadership and governance arrangements. The NP complements related NPs and Commonwealth and state/territory initiatives. However, the complexity of this policy and support landscape means that there are some overlaps and gaps in service coverage.

Effective governance mechanisms have been established at national, jurisdictional and program levels. Performance reporting is in place and stakeholders identified some areas where this could be improved – particularly to address identified flaws in performance indicators, measures and data sources. Stakeholders also indicated an intent to improve knowledge sharing and non-government representation in reported activities and achievements.

Recommendations

At the NP level, this evaluation identified a number of higher order issues and recommendations that warrant attention. This included recommendations to:

- Strengthen the capacity of schools and training providers to engage young people who are returning to education and training or are at risk of disengaging
- Improve current NP performance measurement and reporting
- Address the challenges and resource demands of service delivery in remote and disadvantaged locations
- Increase knowledge sharing across jurisdictions about initiatives, outcomes and lessons learned.

Issues and recommendations were also presented for each of the NP elements that related to:

- Opportunities to improve data capture, performance reporting and knowledge sharing
- Areas for further investigation as part of detailed reviews or evaluations of individual programs
- Improving communication about programs and their achievements and impacts
- Opportunities to clarify roles and responsibilities to address potential overlaps in activity.

Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation

Year two of the evaluation will be focused on presenting findings and options to inform a decision about the future of the NP and its elements. Planning for the next phase of the evaluation is not yet complete, however, it is likely that it will consider the following:

- Have there been measurable changes in youth attainment and transition outcomes since the NP was introduced?
- Has the NP and its elements been implemented according to plan and achieved planned outcomes?
- What refinements need to be made in the last year of the NP?
- Are there factors that have a significant influence on youth attainment and transition outcomes that are not addressed by the NP?
- What options are available to lift educational outcomes and improve transitions following the conclusion of the NP?

In addition, there are element specific issues that were identified in year one that warrant further review which have been included in year two of the evaluation for the respective element.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and focus of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness (impact), appropriateness, governance and implementation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (the NP). In order to make that assessment, this evaluation has sought to answer the overarching question:

“Have the National Partnership elements, as a package, contributed improved participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians, including young Indigenous Australians?”

The scope for this project is focused on evaluating the NP as a whole and does not intend to provide a detailed assessment of the individual programs and activities that are operating under the NP. Specifically, the evaluation:

Covers	Does not cover
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement of movement in participation, attainment and transition outcomes using reliable national data sources • Acknowledgement of other factors and initiatives that contribute to or impact targeted outcomes (e.g. impact of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), issues faced in regional and remote areas) • Investigation of the value of a national, collaborative approach to initiatives aimed at improving those outcomes (predominantly through qualitative research and supported by literature review) • High level evaluation of elements in terms of their contribution to the NP goals • Examination of whether and how the separate elements of the NP work together • Summary of findings and options for the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed evaluation of individual programs and activities that would require acquisition and analysis of new primary data. Where possible, findings from evaluations being conducted of elements/ programs at Commonwealth, jurisdiction or sector level will be incorporated • A comparative assessment of performance and contributions made by school sectors, States and Territories or service providers • A quantification of elements' contribution toward targeted outcomes – as attribution is not possible • Reward funding decisions – this evaluation will not contribute toward reward funding decisions

1.2 Challenges for the evaluation

A number of challenges anticipated for this evaluation were identified and helped inform the evaluation approach that was adopted. Some of the more significant anticipated challenges are outlined in Table 1.1 below, together with strategies adopted to address them.

TABLE 1.1: PROJECT CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Project challenge	Strategies for addressing challenge
<p>Project causality - or accounting for the influence of external factors on youth attainment and transition outcomes. A wide range of factors (in addition to this NP) contribute to targeted outcomes. This evaluation needs to consider movements in targeted outcomes in context with influential “external” factors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research to identify and explore external factors that influence participation, attainment and transition outcomes • Where possible, use proxies that identify progress being made toward achievement of outcomes – i.e. develop an understanding of what is being done at Commonwealth and jurisdictional levels to work toward improved outcomes • Observe movements in targeted outcomes – before and since the introduction of the NP
<p>Assessing comparable and reliable data – consistent data is not collected across the States and Territories and available data sets have their limitations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on available and reliable data and work with DEEWR to facilitate access to identified datasets • Utilise available program datasets and analyses • Address data gaps effectively and efficiently through qualitative research • Early development of the evaluation framework (including identified datasets and qualitative research methods) in collaboration with DEEWR and the NP Multilateral Working Group (MWG)
<p>Understanding perspectives and managing sensitivities of a wide range of stakeholders – the NP operates within a complex “eco system” of stakeholders and there are a number of sensitivities relevant to the evaluation and potential outcomes, such as contextual factors, partners needing to be convinced of the credibility of the evidence base, findings and recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early engagement with the MWP, DEEWR and key decision-makers to confirm the evaluation purpose, questions and methodology, including stakeholders and engagement approach • Adopt a systematic approach to stakeholder engagement to ensure a representative, structured and consistent method within the time and budget available
<p>Representing the experience of young people at risk, particularly Indigenous youth – evaluation outcomes are heavily influenced by gains made with the most disadvantaged, and the engagement of young people is complex and sensitive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with young people, youth service providers, youth representative organisations, parents, family and community groups • Where possible, understand movements in targeted outcomes in and outside of schools (particularly VET sector) and for important cohorts (particularly Indigenous, low SES and remote)

1.3 Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation was conducted in three phases:

1. Development of the evaluation framework
2. Collection and analysis of data
3. Presentation of findings and recommendations

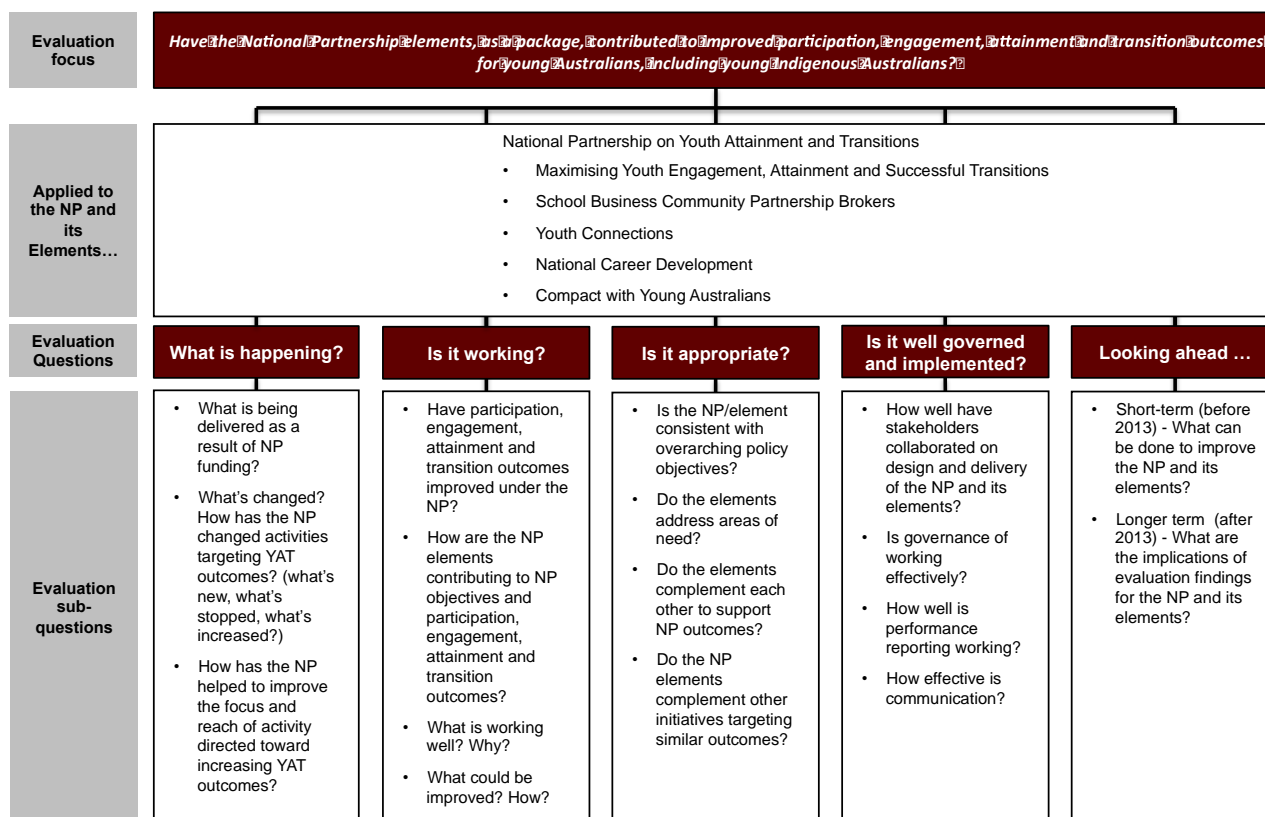
1.3.1 Development of the evaluation framework

Designing and implementing a sound and robust evaluation framework at the beginning of a project, including defined questions, measures and sources of data to be applied, is a critical element for any successful evaluation. Developed at the outset of the project in consultation with DEEWR and the Multilateral Working Group (MWG), the evaluation framework has currency for formative evaluation of the NP over its lifecycle, while maintaining a degree of flexibility to allow for changing emphases of each evaluation.

The framework was designed to allow for the efficient collection and replicable analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and provides for the presentation of valuable information and insights into how the NP elements, as a package, are contributing to improved participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians.

The key questions for this evaluation are presented in Figure 1.1 below and the Evaluation Framework is presented as Attachment 9.

FIGURE 1.1 KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS



1.3.2 Collection and analysis of data

A number of research methods were used to generate the evidence base required for this evaluation. These included literature review, data analysis and stakeholder engagement. Each of these methods is described in more detail below.

Literature review

As part of this evaluation, the project team reviewed:

- Relevant Commonwealth and State/Territory policy statements
- Program plans and performance reports
- State and Territory implementation plans and annual reports
- Relevant national and international evaluation reports, survey results and research reports relating to programs targeting youth participation, attainment and transitions.

Attachment 10 provides a comprehensive list of the literature reviewed as part of this project.

Data analysis

Data analysis focused on trends in participation, attainment and transition outcomes prior to and since the introduction of the NP. It used four principal annual data sets, each of which contains accessible and nationally consistent data^{1,2}. These are:

- *ABS National Schools Statistics Collection*: A collection which, inter alia, contains data on the population of students enrolled in secondary school³ by age and Indigenous status, and measures of apparent grade progression and apparent retention rates. However, it does not contain readily accessible information on groups such as low socioeconomic status students, students with disabilities and students from remote regions.
- *National VET in Schools Collection*: This contains population data on senior secondary students undertaking programs that provide credit towards a national VET qualification. Information on characteristics such as age, Indigenous status, socio-economic status⁴, disability status and geographical location is available, as well as on qualification completions.
- *National VET Provider Collection*: This contains population data on enrolments in publicly-funded and fee-for-service VET delivered by TAFE, other government providers and community providers, as well as publicly-funded VET delivered by private providers. It contains information on age, Indigenous status, socio-economic status, disability status and geographical location and on qualification completions. It excludes fee-for-service activity delivered by private providers.
- *ABS Labour Force Survey and Survey of Education and Work*: The monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS) uses a national household sample to report on labour force status and educational participation. The Survey of Education and Work (SEW) is a supplementary survey to the LFS conducted in May each year and contains additional information on educational participation and attainment. Both surveys' estimates are subject to error margins, particularly in smaller States and Territories and for smaller sub-populations. Both surveys provide limited data on individual characteristics other than those such as age and gender.

A summary of findings from the data analysis is presented in Chapter 4. Detailed tables that support that analysis are included in Attachment 2.

Stakeholder engagement

A broad range of stakeholders were consulted as part of this evaluation through interviews, focus groups and field visits. In conjunction with DEEWR and the MWG, a stakeholder engagement plan for this evaluation was developed at the outset of the project to guide the consultation process. In total, more than 240 stakeholders were consulted through this evaluation. Further information about the stakeholder groups is presented in Attachment 8.

¹ Analysis was limited to 2000-2011. This allowed trends prior to the introduction of the NP to be assessed, and comparisons to be made between these trends and movements in participation, attainment and transitions following the GFC (2008-2009) and the introduction of the NP. Such comparisons do not, of course, imply causation.

² DEEWR's Higher Education Statistics Collection and OECD data were also drawn upon. Data sets such as the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth, the Survey of Education and Training, ATAC data and Centrelink data were not included in the current analysis but may be considered in future years of the NP evaluation.

³ As of the first of August each year.

⁴ This can be derived from ABS SEIFA data.

1.3.3 Presentation of findings and recommendations

An iterative approach was taken to project reporting:

- The evaluation team informed DEEWR executive and program managers on evaluation progress and interim findings throughout the project
- Preliminary findings and recommendations were presented to DEEWR at the end of January 2012 and to the MWG Throughout the project, the evaluation team has actively engaged DEEWR and the MWG in mid February 2012
- The draft report was presented to DEEWR at the end of February 2012, with finalisation of the final report in March 2012.

1.4 Evaluation timeline and focus

This evaluation is a three-year project, with this report representing findings and recommendations from the first of three evaluations. Figure 1.2 outlines the evaluation focus across the three-year period.

FIGURE 1.2: EVALUATION TIMELINE AND FOCUS



1.5 Project Governance

Representatives from DEEWR and the MWG oversee this evaluation. The MWG, which is comprised of representatives from all States and Territories, and the Catholic and independent education sectors, was established to support the effective implementation of the NP. As part of its role, the MWG has played a key role in the development and implementation of the evaluation, including confirming the approach to the evaluation and arranging stakeholder consultations.

The dandolopartners' evaluation team provides regular progress reports to the DEEWR project manager and executive team.

1.6 This report

This report outlines findings and recommendations from the first (interim) evaluation of the NP on Youth Attainment and Transitions. The report is divided into five sections that summarise the background, context, findings and recommendations from this evaluation:

1. Introduction – provides background to the evaluation and the evaluation approach
2. The National Partnership on YAT – outlines the purpose and objectives, elements and delivery model for the NP
3. The Importance of YAT – puts the into context why improving youth participation, attainment and transitions is important, and those factors that influence outcomes targeted by this NP
4. Interim Findings – presents the findings of this evaluation, including an assessment of progress toward targeted outcomes, progress of the NP elements, appropriateness of NP activities and governance and implementation of the NP
5. Recommendations for Improvement – outlines recommendations identified at NP and element level to address issues identified in this evaluation, with a view to strengthening the NP

The report also includes a number of Attachments that underpin project findings and recommendations and which provide additional detail about research methods:

- Attachment 1: Importance of YAT – expands the contextual discussion in Section 3

- Attachment 2: Data Analysis – expands the data analysis included in Section 4
- Attachments 3-7: present the interim findings for each of the NP elements:
 - Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions
 - Partnership Brokers
 - Youth Connections
 - National Career Development
 - Compact with Young Australians

These attachments have been designed so that readers with an interest in evaluation findings for individual elements of the NP can access that content in one location. There is therefore some duplication of content between the overall summary of findings (Section 4) and individual attachments.

- Attachment 8: Stakeholder Engagement – lists the stakeholder groups engaged throughout the evaluation
- Attachment 9: Evaluation Framework – presents the evaluation framework agreed by DEEWR and the MWG
- Attachment 10: References.

2 The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions

2.1 Background

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (the NP) in July 2009. The NP seeks to lift educational outcomes and improve transitions for young Australians to further education, training or employment. Specifically, the NP focuses on 15 – 24 year olds, young people at risk and the educational attainment and engagement of young Indigenous Australians (see Section 3 for further information on the importance of improving youth attainment and transition outcomes).

The NP builds on the previous COAG commitments to lift the Year 12 or equivalent attainment to 90 per cent by 2020, and to at least halve the gap in attainment for Indigenous Australians. Following the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), young people with low education and skill levels were thought to be particularly vulnerable and it was recognised that even greater priority needed to be given to maximising youth retention, engagement and attainment. As a result, it was agreed to accelerate the development of the NP as well as bringing forward the 2020 attainment target to 2015, which is a key outcome of the NP.

To support the COAG resolution, the Commonwealth agreed to consolidate and streamline the existing suite of Commonwealth youth career and transitions programs and funding (which were primarily under the banner of Career Advice Australia) into four of the elements under the NP. Given the economic climate at the time, and to minimise disruption to services and enable a rapid response, the Commonwealth decided to build on existing Commonwealth infrastructure in the short term.

2.2 The purpose and objectives of the National Partnership

The NP seeks to:

- Increase the participation of young people in education and training
- Ensure that young people make a successful transition from school to further education, training or full-time employment
- Increase the attainment rate of young people aged 15 – 24 years, including Indigenous youth.

Through the NP Agreement, the Commonwealth, and States and Territories have committed to:

- Working towards achieving improvements in high level outcomes for schooling agreed by COAG in the *National Education Agreement* and in the 2008 *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*
- Working towards increasing the qualifications and skill level of the Australian population as agreed by COAG in the *National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development*
- Achieving improvements in the number of young Australians making successful transitions from schooling into further education, training or employment

- Working collaboratively with the non-government school, training, business and community sectors to improve the support provided to young Australians to increase educational outcomes, attainment and improve transitions for further education, training or employment, with particular focus on 15 to 24 year olds and young people at risk
- Developing a skilled and ready Indigenous workforce by increasing the educational attainment and engagement of young Indigenous Australians.⁵

2.3 NP objectives and performance indicators

Table 2.1 outlines the NP outcomes and performance indicators. The NP Agreement included the first three outcomes and the latter three were added during the negotiation of State and Territory NP implementation plans.

TABLE 4.2: NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Outcome	Performance Indicator
Increased participation of young people in education and training	Enrolment of full- time equivalent students in Years 11 and 12
	Enrolment of Indigenous full- time equivalent students in Years 11 and 12
	Enrolment of Indigenous full- time equivalent students in Years 9 and 10
	15- 19 year olds without a Year 12 certificate and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a vocational education and training (VET) course at Certificate II level or higher
	Indigenous 15- 19 year olds without a Year 12 certificate and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a vocational education and training (VET) course at Certificate II level or higher
Increased attainment of young people aged 15- 24, including Indigenous youth	The proportion of young people aged 20- 24 who have attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above
	The proportion of young Indigenous people aged 20- 24 who have attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above
Young people make a successful transition from school to further education, training or full- time employment	The proportion of young people aged 15- 24 participating in post- school education, training or employment six months after leaving school
Improved Indigenous attendance	Attendance rates for Indigenous students in years 1-10 in government schools
Improved Indigenous retention	Apparent retention Years 7/8 to Year 10, by Indigenous status
	Apparent retention Years 7/8 to Year 12, by Indigenous status
Improved Indigenous participation and engagement	School level strategies

Source: Council of Australian Governments, *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions*, 2009, p.5 and DEEWR, *National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions Annual Report*, 2011.

⁵ Australian Government (2009) *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions*, paragraph 15.

2.4 Funding

COAG has allocated \$623 million over five years to implement five elements in all States and Territories under the NP. The funding arrangements per financial year are outlined in Table 2.1 below.

TABLE 2.1: FUNDING ALLOCATION ACROSS NP ELEMENTS, 2009-10 TO 2013-14

Initiative	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions	18,751	37,501	37,501	37,501	18,751	150,007
School Business Community Partnership Brokers	17,409	34,818	34,818	34,818	17,409	139,271
Youth Connections	35,850	71,700	71,700	71,700	35,850	286,800
National Career Development	4,650	9,442	11,763	14,156	7,028	47,039
The Compact for Young Australians	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Admin Expenditure	76,600	153,461	155,782	158,175	79,038	623,117

Source: Australian Government, National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions

Reward funding of up to \$100 million is also available to States and Territories based on the achievement of participation and attainment targets set out in the NP (see Table 2.2 below). These targets are designed to indicate progress towards the 2015 COAG target of 90 per cent Year 12 or equivalent attainment for 20 – 24 year olds by 2015.

TABLE 2.2: REWARD FUNDING

Reward funding	Year funding available	Targets	Baseline
Up to \$50 million	2011	Achievement of improved participation of young people in 2010 as measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total enrolment of full-time equivalent students in Years 11 and 12 Total number of 15-19 year olds without a Year 12 certificate and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a VET course at Certificate II level or higher 	National Schools Statistics Collection August 2008 data (as published in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and VET enrolments from NCVER
Up to \$50 million	2013	Achievement against the 2012 Year 12 or equivalent attainment targets, including recognition of current achievement and increase over current baseline Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates	2007 ABS Survey of Education and Work

Note: The assessment of state and territory eligibility for reward payments is outside the scope of this evaluation.

2.5 Elements of the National Partnership

Table 2.3 provides a brief outline of the five NP elements, with more detailed information on each outlined in Attachments 3 to 7.

TABLE 2.3: OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ELEMENTS

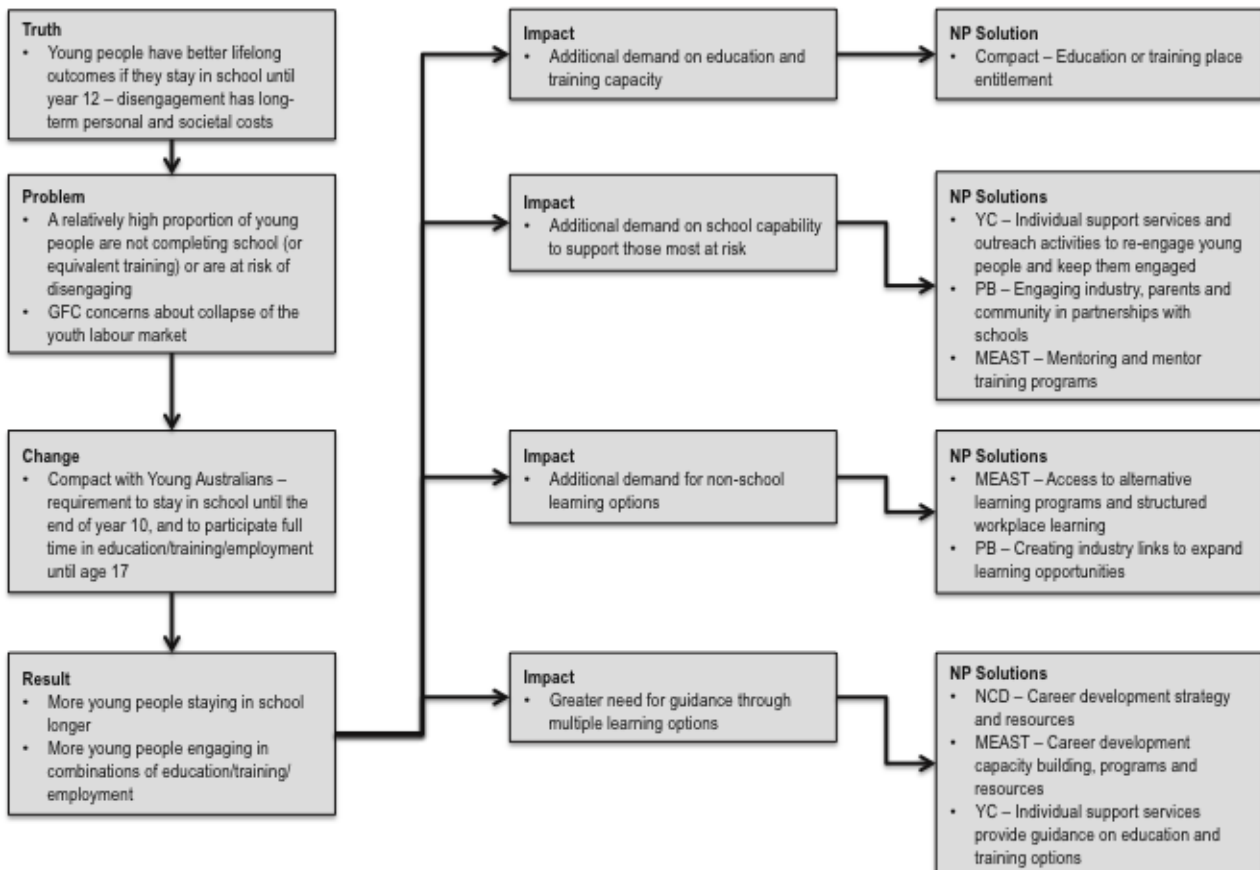
Element	Focus	Total Funding	Funding Mechanism
Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST)	<p>The MEAST element supports the development and implementation of state-based initiatives to improve education and training outcomes for young people.</p> <p>Funding is available for the three reform areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Learning Pathways • Career Development • Mentoring <p>MEAST initiatives are implemented by the jurisdictions.</p>	\$150 million over four years	Project Payment made annually to States and Territories ⁶
School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers)	<p>The Partnership Brokers element focuses on building partnerships with education and training providers, business and industry, parents and families, and community groups to support young people in attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications, and to reach their full educational and social potential.</p> <p>Contracted service providers deliver this element.</p>	\$139 million over four years	Commonwealth Own Purpose Expense (COPE) ⁷
Youth Connections	<p>The Youth Connections element offers a continuum of services to support young people at risk of disengaging from education or training, not attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications, and not making successful transition to further study, training or work through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualised and flexible support services • Outreach and re-engagement activities • Strengthening services <p>Contracted service providers deliver this element.</p>	\$287 million over four years	COPE
National Career Development	<p>A National a National Career Development Strategy will be formulated to provide a strategic approach to career development information, advice, guidance and support.</p>	\$47 million over five years	COPE
The Compact with Young Australians	<p>The Compact with Young Australians has three elements to promote skills acquisition and ensure young people are learning or earning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A National Youth Participation Requirement for all young people to participate in schooling and/or education, training or employment until the age of 17 years • Entitlement to an education or training place for 15 – 24 year olds • Strengthened participation requirements for some types of income support 	\$0	Not applicable

⁶ Unlike other National Partnerships, these payments are not dependent on the achievement of set milestones.

⁷ This is Commonwealth expense for the use of goods and services and associated transfer payments by the Commonwealth Government in the conduct of its own general government activities.

Under the NP, the Commonwealth, States and Territories have committed to implementing a range of elements that are focused on strengthening participation requirements, lifting qualification levels, supporting successful transition from schools, especially for young people at risk, and communicating the importance of education and training for young people. Our representation of the NP logic is documented in Figure 2.1 below.

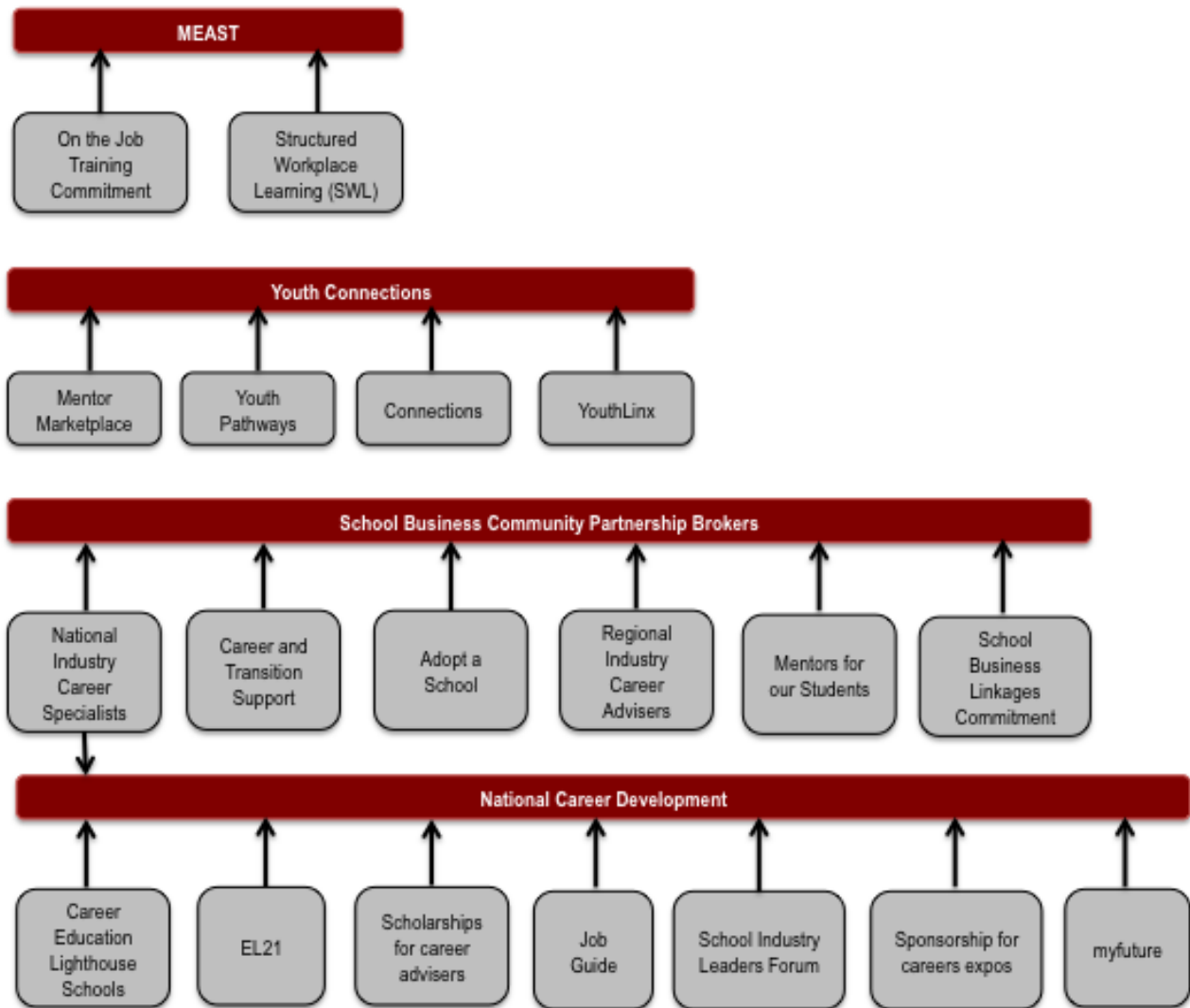
FIGURE 2.1: NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP LOGIC



Note: MEAST – Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions, NCD – National Career Development, PB – School Community Business Partnership Broker

Figure 2.2 below depicts the earlier Commonwealth youth, career and transition programs and strategies that were expanded, consolidated or streamlined under the four new elements of the NP: MEAST, Partnership Brokers, Youth Connections and National Career Development.

FIGURE 2.2: CONSOLIDATION AND STREAMLINING OF EXISTING COMMONWEALTH PROGRAM AND STRATEGIES UNDER THE NP



The Commonwealth worked collaboratively with the States and Territories to design and tailor each of the NP elements to allow for flexibility in the delivery of the initiatives, remove duplication and overlap, and complement and enhance existing State and Territory based policies and programs. For this reason, there is variation in the programs across jurisdictions.

2.6 Delivery of the National Partnership

2.6.1 Roles

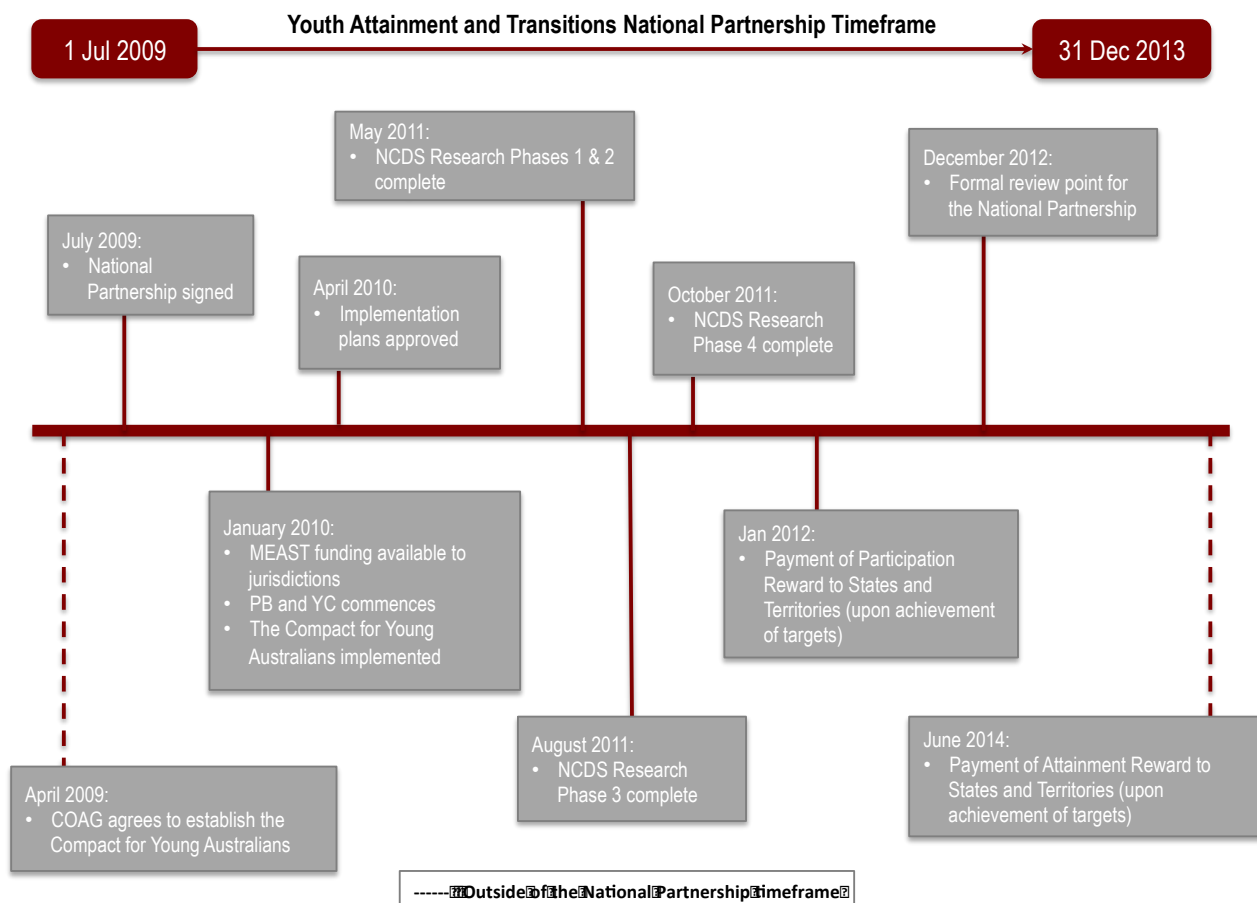
The NP clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and jurisdictions in relation to young people, careers and transitions as being:

- Commonwealth: primary responsibility for youth labour-market programs
- States and Territories: primary responsibility for the delivery of education and training, including vocational education and training and structured work placements.

The NP also allows for the transfer of the Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections elements to the States and Territories following demonstrated achievement of outcomes by States and Territories. All States and Territories, with the exception of South Australia, have indicated that they will not seek a transfer of the two program elements and, as such, have agreed to extend the service provider contracts to the 31 December 2013 (the end of the NP).

2.6.2 Timelines

The NP commenced on 2 July 2009, upon the signing of the Agreement and will expire on 31 December 2013.



3 The importance of Youth Attainment and Transitions

3.1 What is the transition phase?

In advanced OECD economies the transition phase is normally regarded as beginning at the first age at which young people are legally able to become employed (generally 15), and as ending at an age when most are no longer studying but are in full-time employment, although there are many variations around this rough rule of thumb. It is a distinctive phase in young people's lives, marked not only by a progressive movement towards economic independence, but also by other significant life changes: emotional and personal maturation; a progressive sharpening and crystallisation of career identity and occupational preferences; reduced dependence upon parental support for income and accommodation; and the beginning of family formation.

All of these changes are closely linked, and their successful resolution is important not only for young people individually, but also for public policy more broadly. They produce a distinctive set of policy issues that have substantial longer term economic and social consequences. The policy challenges of the transition phase are separate from, although linked to, challenges that confront policy makers in earlier periods of young people's lives such as ensuring sound and equitable educational achievement as a basis for participation in society as a citizen and worker. It is a period in which the basis is laid for many of the personal and vocational skills that will determine individuals' labour market trajectories for decades to come, in which education and training qualifications are obtained that are valued in the labour market and that make a profound difference to life chances, and in which the basis is laid for economic returns over the life span.

The transition phase is characterised by a number of distinctive features of education and training systems and of the labour market. During the transition phase participation in education and training ceases to be compulsory, and the choice that young people have about whether or not to take part in learning forces policy makers to take greater account of the relevance of education and training to young people's present and future lives, and of whether or not learning is engaging and interesting. The emergence of a choice about whether or not to participate is associated with increased choice about what and where to study. The curriculum ceases to be uniform for all, or nearly uniform, and different areas of study begin to compete for young people's interest and engagement. Increasing choice is also evident in the types of institutions that young people can attend, and in the emergence of qualifications that are differentiated in terms of their value in the labour market and in other parts of the education system.

Within the labour market the transition phase is marked by a number of features designed to ensure that labour markets are "youth friendly" and that young people can more easily acquire valued skills during the move towards economic independence. These include: youth wages that help to protect the inexperienced from competition from older workers; training arrangements such as apprenticeship and traineeships designed to provide a structured and managed progression towards competence; training wages designed to recognise the progressive movement towards recognised competence; and the possibility of combining education and part-time work.

Despite these mechanisms to protect young people during the transition phase, it remains a risky one for many: inexperience, low skills and a lack of qualifications are associated with increased risks of becoming unemployed, of dropping out of the labour market and education completely, and of unstable early career patterns, all of which have consequences down the track.

3.2 Why does it matter?

All of the risks associated with the transition phase become greater when young people fail to complete Year 12 or the equivalent. The costs of failing to complete upper secondary education are borne not only by individual young people, but also by society at large. This underpins the importance of the transition phase as a distinctive set of issues for public policy.

Australian Year 12 or equivalent completion rates are at best average when compared to many other advanced OECD economies, and have remained flat over the last decade in the face of ongoing improvement within the OECD as a whole⁸. At the most aggregate level, this is associated with reduced levels of GDP and reduced national productivity. For those who have not completed Year 12, labour force participation rates are lower, wages are lower, and unemployment rates are higher than for those who have completed Year 12. In 2005 Access Economics estimated that if Year 12 retention rates were to increase to 90% (from the estimated real retention rate at the time of 80%⁹) GDP would be increased by 1.1%, Federal government revenue would increase by 0.27% of GDP, and that this would be achieved at a cost of only 0.05% of GDP in increased educational spending¹⁰. More recently, analysis of HILDA data by the National Institute of Labour Studies for the Nous Group has shown that school dropouts are more likely to be employed casually, to experience unemployment spells, and are less likely to be employed on a permanent and full-time basis than are those who have completed Year 12¹¹. And the labour market penalty for failing to complete upper secondary education seems to be much higher in Australia than elsewhere in the OECD: among 20-24 year-olds who have left education, unemployment is more than three times higher for those who have not completed upper secondary education than for those who have¹².

Each of these consequences of failing to complete Year 12 carries an economic cost in terms of reduced wages and productivity: for example hourly wages have been estimated to be 15% higher for those who complete Year 12 than for school dropouts¹³.

The benefits for individuals and for society of increased upper secondary completion go beyond the economic: increased secondary school completion is associated with improved health, wider civic and social engagement, increased happiness and wellbeing, and reduced crime¹⁴. A recent OECD review of the benefits of reducing early school leaving and preventing school dropout concludes that:

“Completing upper secondary education makes for a greater number of citizens that cost society less and produce more. High investments in dropout prevention strategies is money well spent. The benefits in terms of higher tax revenues, less public spending on health, public assistance and criminal justice largely outweigh the costs.”¹⁵

⁸ In 2009 83% of 25-34 year-olds had completed upper secondary education compared to an OECD average of 81%; 45% had completed tertiary education compared to an OECD average of 37%.

⁹ In other words taking into account those who complete Year 12 or the equivalent in the years after leaving school.

¹⁰ Access Economics (2005)

¹¹ Nous Group (2011)

¹² In the OECD as a whole it is slightly over twice as high: in countries such as Finland, Germany and Switzerland it is only around half again as high. Reference: DEECD state indicators report.

¹³ Nous Group (2011)

¹⁴ Schuller and Desjardins (2007).

¹⁵ Lyche, C. (2010)

3.3 What influences transition outcomes?

The transition process is complex. It is a result of the economic and social context within which the transition takes place; of the institutional arrangements within education, the labour market and the income support system that mediate the external context; and of the characteristics of young people themselves. Some of the factors that influence school-to-work transitions are more important than others; their relative importance can be changed by the ways that they interact; some are more important at some points in the transition than at other points; and some factors can be regarded as influences upon outcomes at one stage but as outcomes at a later stage¹⁶. An added complication is that we normally judge the success or otherwise of the transition using several yardsticks: educational criteria such as attainment rates; labour market criteria such as earnings and unemployment rates; and personal criteria such as happiness and job satisfaction. Most of the factors that influence the transition can, and do, have different impacts upon different types of outcomes¹⁷. Table 3.1 below summarises factors that influence transition outcomes – these are discussed in more detail below.

TABLE 3.1 – FACTORS INFLUENCING TRANSITION OUTCOMES

Economic and social context	Institutional arrangements	Personal qualities
<p>State of the labour market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater impact than elsewhere • Large GFC impact (cf OECD) <p>The structure of advantage and disadvantage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SES • Geographical location • Type of school • Immigrant status • Indigenous status 	<p>Education and training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School climate and quality • Pedagogy • Curriculum breadth and choice • Types of institutions available • Career guidance • School-work combinations • School-community links/social capital • Pathways: quality and diversity <p>Labour market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth wages • Training wages • Employment protection <p>Income support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment benefit levels • Unemployment benefit conditions • Education participation payments 	<p>Educational achievement</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Resilience</p> <p>Self confidence</p> <p>Aspirations</p> <p>Career planning skills</p>

One of the most significant influences upon Australia's transition outcomes is the overall state of the labour market. Youth unemployment rates, among both teenagers and young adults, are highly dependent upon the overall state of the economy and are highly correlated with the overall unemployment rate. This is not necessarily the case in other advanced economies, and the relationship between transition outcomes and the overall health of the labour market, particularly among teenagers, seems

¹⁶ For example educational attainment is strongly influenced by educational achievement and by socio-economic status, yet is in its own right a significant influence upon labour market outcomes.

¹⁷ For example immigrant status has a positive although not strong relationship to educational outcomes but a negative although not strong relationship to labour market outcomes.

stronger in Australia than in almost all other OECD countries¹⁸. This suggests that elsewhere factors such as the nature of the institutional arrangements that support the transition may have a greater impact upon its outcomes than in Australia.

Another highly important influence upon transition outcomes is the structure of advantage and disadvantage within the wider society and the distribution of economic, social and cultural resources. The socio-economic status of young people's families is the most significant of these influences. Lower levels of socio-economic background are associated with: lower levels of engagement in learning; lower rates of upper secondary completion; lower university entry scores at the end of Year 12; lower rates of participation in higher education; and lower rates of participation in successful, smooth or uninterrupted pathways between school and work¹⁹. Other contextual factors such as geographical location, Indigenous status, type of school attended, and immigrant status can also be shown to have an influence upon transition outcomes, but once the impact of socio-economic status has been taken into account the impact of these factors is substantially less than the impact of socio-economic status itself, and in some cases disappears completely.

The impact of contextual factors upon the transition to work takes place within and is mediated by institutional arrangements within education and training, the labour market and the income support system. These include factors such as: the range of curriculum choice offered to young people; the types of educational institutions (schools, colleges) and programs (general or vocational) that are provided; career guidance arrangements; employment protection rates; student participation in the labour market; youth wage rates; safety nets for school dropouts; and income support provision and eligibility requirements.

The impact of such institutional arrangements can be difficult to observe at a single point in time and within a single jurisdiction, but can become evident when they change over time, when countries with different types of arrangements are compared, or by comparing outcomes for different groups. Examples of the impact of institutional arrangements upon transition outcomes include: in the Australian Capital Territory student engagement, participation and attainment all increased following the replacement of Year 7-12 schools with separate junior high schools and senior secondary colleges in the mid 1970s; the introduction of reforms designed to widen curriculum choice within Australian states and territories can be shown to have resulted in increased school participation; the introduction of comprehensive safety net arrangements to create early intervention for school dropouts in Norway in the mid 1990s was associated with a rapid reduction in the numbers neither in education nor employment; countries in which a high proportion of students work part-time have better youth employment outcomes than countries where few students are employed, and longitudinal studies show that Australian students who are employed have better labour market outcomes than those who do not combine work and study; in countries where employment protection rates are high, the average duration of youth unemployment is higher than in countries such as Australia where it is low; arrangements that create and encourage close relationships between schools, employers and communities can increase student engagement with learning and improve post-school employment outcomes; and career education and guidance can be shown to have an impact upon career decision making skills and knowledge of employment opportunities, and to have a small but positive overall impact upon educational participation and attainment.

The nature of the pathways that young people take part in (general education; full-time vocational education; or apprenticeship-type) seems to matter less than the quality of these pathways and the diversity of the choices that they offer. Labour market outcomes (pay, employment) do differ between pathways, but this can largely be explained by the different characteristics of the

¹⁸ Over the 1990-2010 period 96% of the variation in teenage unemployment rates could be accounted for by the overall unemployment rate, the highest figure among the 25 countries for which comparable data is available, among which the average was only 57%. Refer to relevant table/chart in Attachment 1. (Table A2.36)

¹⁹ Penman (2004).

young people that enter them: for example students in general education programs tend to have higher achievement levels and come from more advantaged social backgrounds than students in vocational pathways.

A large body of evidence shows that the quality and nature of schooling has a significant influence upon transition outcomes, over and above the social composition of the school or average student achievement levels. Young people who enjoy school and find what they are learning interesting are less likely to drop out than are those who dislike school and find what it has to offer boring: a positive school climate is likely to be associated with increased engagement with learning, and hence with increased participation. Highly bureaucratic and impersonal school climates, on the other hand, encourage disengagement with learning and early school leaving.

A number of personal characteristics influence transition outcomes. Gender is one such factor, with boys and girls typically demonstrating different patterns of educational preferences and occupational choice, and having differing overall educational and labour market outcomes²⁰. Achievement in basic skills such as literacy and numeracy is one of the most powerful influences on both educational and labour market outcomes: in longitudinal studies the impact of educational achievement measured at the age of 14 or 15 upon educational attainment and labour market outcomes tends to rival that of the socio-economic characteristics of students. Other personal characteristics associated with transition outcomes, although to a lesser extent than gender and educational achievement, include factors such as resilience, self-confidence, aspiration levels and career planning skills.

The key to improving Australia's overall transition outcomes is to improve outcomes among the lowest achievers and the most disadvantaged. While early educational achievement and socio-economic status are powerful influences upon later educational attainment and labour market chances, and while individual factors that signal disadvantage can compound in their impact, they are not all-determining. Australian longitudinal data shows that low achievers and the disadvantaged demonstrate a wide range of outcomes, whatever the average for the group: understanding what can produce good outcomes among groups that otherwise might be expected not to succeed provides important pointers for public policy. And while many of the steps that can reduce early school leaving need to be taken in primary and lower secondary education, interventions at the upper secondary level can also be shown to work.

OECD studies show that resilient students – those disadvantaged students who beat the odds and succeed at school – spend more time learning than disadvantaged low achievers, are engaged and confident learners, and are more motivated, engaged and self-confident, even after accounting for a host of student and school background factors²¹. Australian studies using PISA data of low-achieving students who have successful post-school outcomes emphasise the importance of motivation, of being engaged with learning and of experiencing a positive school climate. They show the importance of having career plans, and of information and support for job-finding at the point of leaving school and immediately afterwards²². Other research shows that effective strategies targeted at low-achieving and disadvantaged students can include mentoring and career guidance, addressing welfare needs and family outreach, tutoring, and individual case management. However, approaches targeted at individual students need to be complemented by whole-of-school strategies that include initiatives targeted at teacher development and by an emphasis upon the role of school leadership in producing improved engagement and completion²³.

²⁰ The overlap is substantial, but on average girls tend to achieve better educational outcomes, and boys tend to achieve better labour market outcomes.

²¹ OECD (2011)

²² Thomson and Hillman (2010)

²³ Lamb and Rice (2008).

3.4 What characterises the transition process in Australia?

The transition process in Australia is characterised by a number of features that differ somewhat from the process that can be observed in some other OECD countries²⁴. It appears to be somewhat more fragmented than in some other countries, with those who have left school likely to have many changes between employment, unemployment, education and other activities before settling down to secure full-time employment. The incidence of part-time work among students is high when compared to many other OECD countries, and the labour market is quite a “youth friendly” one. Although the apprenticeship-type pathway is smaller than in some other countries, it is larger than in others. The general education pathway is somewhat larger in Australia and the vocational pathway is somewhat smaller than in many other OECD countries, particularly when compared to European countries, although not when compared to some Anglo-Saxon countries. And Australia is one of the few countries in which lower secondary and upper secondary schooling typically take place within the same institutional setting: elsewhere within the OECD separate post-compulsory schools or colleges are the norm. This pattern appears to be associated with a somewhat reduced curriculum choice in Australia, and with a participation rate that is somewhat lower than it might otherwise be.

The Australian transition process has been changing in a number of important ways in recent years. One is the increasing length of the transition. Since the mid 1980s the average period that young people take to settle into full-time work after leaving education has grown from a little over one year to nearly five years, and the period between finding any job and finding full-time work has also expanded. The period since the early 1990s has also been notable for an increase in the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (the NEET category), and within this group by a rise in the number of inactive youth not seeking employment. This category increased in size during the recession of the early 1990s and has shown little decline since then²⁵. Another marked feature of the transition landscape in recent years has been a sharp decline in full-time employment opportunities, a decline that has been most evident during periods of economic downturn, and in particular during the recession of the early 1990s and the 2008-09 GFC, but which has not been confined to them²⁶. As elsewhere in the OECD, the prospects for a permanent recovery of these jobs are minimal²⁷. These changes in the labour market have coexisted with relatively static school participation and Year 12 completion rates, and with minimal change in TAFE participation by young people who are not in school.

3.5 An international perspective on transitions

A rise in the proportion of young people who are neither in education, employment nor training and an increasingly lengthy transition period are not unique to Australia, and have been experienced by many other OECD countries in recent years²⁸. Nevertheless on some measures Australia's transition outcomes compare favourably to the OECD as a whole. For example among 15-24 year-olds who had left education in 2009, 76% were employed, a figure exceeded only by the Netherlands, Austria and Denmark, and well above the OECD average of 64%; long-term unemployment among youth is only about half the rate observed in the OECD as a whole, and young people move into work more swiftly after they leave education than in many other OECD countries. These outcomes owe much to the strength of our economy and labour market, with strong growth, high labour force participation and high employment rates in recent years. It can also be attributed to the strongly “youth friendly” nature of our labour

²⁴ Transition policies are a shared responsibility in Australia, both between levels of government, public and private providers, and education, labour and welfare authorities, but all of these features can be found elsewhere.

²⁵ DSF Reality and Risk 1998 and successive issues of HYPAF.

²⁶ Between August 1990 and August 2011 the proportion of 15-19 year-olds in full-time work fell from 14.2% of the age group to 6.0%, and the total number of teenagers employed full-time fell by a half: from 387,400 to 187,900.

²⁷ Scarpetta et al. (2010)

²⁸ Quintini, Martin and Martin (2007)

market compared to many other OECD countries²⁹. However, as indicated in Section 3.3 above, the flip-side of this is that Australia's transition outcomes seem to be more strongly influenced by economic downturns (and by implication less dependent upon the strength of our institutional arrangements to support transitions) than in many, if not most, other OECD countries. And while our labour market outcomes are quite good, from a comparative perspective, our school (upper secondary) participation and attainment rates are at best average and have been flat in recent years in the face of ongoing improvement in the OECD as a whole.

“Australia is indeed characterised by a relatively low retention rate in education beyond age 16, as compared with many other OECD countries.” (OECD, 2009, p. 13)

International experience shows that there is no single solution to young people's transition problems and countries can achieve good outcomes in quite different ways. Nevertheless there are a number of common elements. In its 2000 review of the school-to-work transition³⁰ the OECD suggested that successful overall transition outcomes can arise from a mix of factors: a strong economy and a healthy and “youth friendly” labour market; well organised pathways connecting initial education to work or further study; widespread opportunities to combine work and education; tight safety nets for those at risk; good information and guidance; and effective institutions and processes.

A more recent OECD review that focused heavily upon youth labour market issues³¹ has highlighted a number of key policy messages:

- Mutual obligation approaches that combine carrots and sticks and activation strategies are important in helping to prevent and address welfare dependency during the transition phase
- Raising the school leaving age as a strategy can be effective, but it will give rise to enforcement issues and, to be successful, needs a strong central focus upon wider learning choices and upon raising motivation and engagement with learning
- A focus upon those who are most at risk is needed well before they leave school, requires early intervention for those who drop out of school and flounder in the labour market, requires intensive intervention and is costly, but can lead to a high social benefit in the form of reduced crime and drug dependency as well as labour market gains.

3.6 Future challenges for national strategies to improve transition outcomes

The NP on Youth Attainment and Transitions and its elements clearly address many of the factors that research evidence shows to be effective in achieving successful transition outcomes, as well as reflecting some of the strategies for achieving effective outcomes that emerge from international reviews. For example, Youth Connections clearly focuses upon those most at risk in the transition; Partnership Brokers concerns itself with improving school-community links; the Compact strengthens our mutual obligation approach to income support; the National Careers Strategy will focus upon ways to improve career services for youth; *inter alia* MEAST seeks to extend opportunities for young people to combine workplace experience with education; and the way in which the NP is being implemented is attempting to improve intergovernmental processes in support of the transition.

Nevertheless it is important to be realistic about what the NP might achieve given the strength of the impact upon transition outcomes of the state of the labour market, of socio-economic status, and of early educational achievement and given the scale of

²⁹ OECD (2009). This is the result of factors such as a high incidence of part-time employment by students, low rates of employment protection, the existence of youth wages and training wages, and the existence of apprenticeship arrangements.

³⁰ OECD (2000)

³¹ OECD (2010) *Off to a Good Start? Jobs for Youth*, Paris.

its focus upon some key issues such as curriculum choice, school climate and learning engagement that appear central to re-engaging disaffected learners.

This phase of the evaluation of the NP is focused on understanding the progress being made by the various elements of the NP in addressing barriers to improving transition outcomes.

The next phase of this evaluation will include a focus on:

- Whether there is any emerging evidence that suggests that refinements are needed to the current policy settings for raising Australia's school completion rate, reducing the number of young people who are on the margins of the labour market and better meeting the needs of those young people who struggle hardest to achieve at school
- Whether current arrangements present an adequate and appropriate response – and whether alternatives should be explored.

4 Interim Findings

4.1 Introduction

This section of the report presents:

- A summary of findings from the interim evaluation
- Elaboration of findings from data analysis and stakeholder engagement
- A summary of the contribution being made by each of the NP elements.

Further detail in relation to evaluation findings and recommendations is presented in the following attachments:

- Attachment 2 presents the results of data analysis undertaken to assess movements in targeted outcomes
- Attachments 3-7 present the findings and recommendations for each of the NP elements.

4.2 Summary of findings

dandolopartners worked with DEEWR and the Multilateral Working Group to develop the questions that needed to be asked to understand how the NP is contributing to its outcomes. Table 4.1, below, provides a summary the answers to those questions and a rating of how well this element is progressing at this point. These “headline” findings are elaborated upon in the sub-sections that follow.

Legend:
















-  Denotes substantial progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Denotes some progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Denotes minimal progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Not clear, based on available information

TABLE 4.1: ASSESSMENT AGAINST EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation Question	Assessment
What is happening?	
Has the NP led to changes in activities directed toward participation, attainment and transition outcomes?	 <p>There is an elevated profile for, and sharpened focus on, YAT issues and outcomes across jurisdictions</p> <p>The NP has been a catalyst to improve collaboration across education and training sectors to better understand issues and strategies to improve participation, attainment and transitions</p> <p>The NP has increased attention and support for young Australians who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education and training</p> <p>While funding is seen as limited by jurisdictions, it has enabled them to bolster existing (and implement some new) initiatives</p>

Is it working?		
Has young people's participation in education and training increased?		There has been a slight increase in participation levels since the NP was introduced, mainly amongst younger cohorts (16-17 year olds). The Compact appears to be having an impact in this regard, however the influence of other factors such as the GFC needs to be recognised
Has young people's attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications increased?		It is too soon to say whether attainment levels have changed during the term of the NP
Are more young people making successful transitions from school?		The NP may have had some positive impact upon the number of young people not in education and unemployed. However, the number of disengaged young people appears to be increasing – and the state of the labour market has the most significant influence on transition outcomes.
Is it appropriate?		
Is the NP consistent with overarching policy objectives?		The NP is consistent with the National Education Agreement and jurisdictional policy direction – focused on increasing compulsory participation age, (re)engaging at risk young people and increasing attainment through education and training places Stakeholders see the NP as an evolution of prior initiatives, rather than a comprehensive new policy/response
Does the NP address areas of need?		The policy imperative that initiated the NP appears to remain – there is an increasing number of disengaged young people NP funding is directed towards areas of need – but stakeholders identified challenges and capacity constraints to meet those needs
How does the NP and its elements complement other NPs and programs targeting similar outcomes?		Increased collaboration between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions has resulted in better alignment of objectives and programs – but there is scope to review potential areas of overlap
Is it well governed and implemented?		
How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the NP?		Collaboration has generally been strong during the NP
Is governance of the NP working effectively?		Appropriate governance arrangements are in place at national, jurisdictional and program levels – although it is difficult for some stakeholders to participate in these Positive relationships can generally be seen between stakeholders and the Commonwealth
How well is performance reporting working?		Key NP measures and data sources (that underpin reward payments) are flawed State and Territory performance reporting is in place, but could be improved to address needs of the non-government sector and present impacts/lessons learned from jurisdictional activities Program administration and quality of reporting was challenging at first but is improving
How effective is communication?		Stakeholders generally understand NP objectives and value – Partnership Brokers and National Career Development are exceptions

4.3 Elaboration of findings

4.3.1 What is happening?

Has the NP led to changes in activities directed toward participation, attainment and transition outcomes?



There is an elevated profile for, and sharpened focus on, YAT issues and outcomes across jurisdictions

The NP has been a catalyst to improve collaboration across education and training sectors to better understand issues and strategies to improve participation, attainment and transitions

The NP has increased attention and support for young Australians who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education and training

While funding is seen as limited by jurisdictions – it has enabled them to bolster existing (and implement some new) initiatives

To date, the NP appears to have helped drive a more focused and co-ordinated effort across a range of activities that are directed toward improving participation, attainment and transition outcomes. Based on consultations with NP stakeholders as well as a review of State/Territory and program implementation plans and reported progress, it would appear that:

- The NP has helped elevate the profile of youth participation, attainment and transition issues and the importance of improving those outcomes. Setting targets and having the funding commitments packaged together as an(?) NP has signalled to stakeholders that progress in those areas is a national priority. The NP has supported a range of expanded activities under each of its elements. The nature of that expanded activity and its impact is summarised later in this section and in more detail in Attachments 3-7
- The NP has been a catalyst to improve dialogue across education and training sectors to better understand barriers to improving participation, attainment and transition outcomes and strategies to address them (see Section 4.2.4 below)
- The NP appears to have sharpened stakeholders' focus on issues faced by young Australians who have disengaged or who are at risk of disengaging from education and training (see Section 4.2.3 below). However, following through with support to engage this cohort is complex and resource intensive. Safety net services, such as Youth Connections, are already at capacity, with unmet demand for support services. There are also significant implications for schools and training providers to adapt practices and expand curriculum and support services to engage this cohort.
- NP funding, through MEAST, has helped jurisdictions to maintain and expand existing initiatives – and implement some new ones - to support young people and improve participation, attainment and transition outcomes. However, smaller States and Territories pointed out that the amount of this funding constrained their ability to introduce systemic reforms to address identified issues and objectives (refer Attachment 3 for more detail).

4.3.2 Is it working?

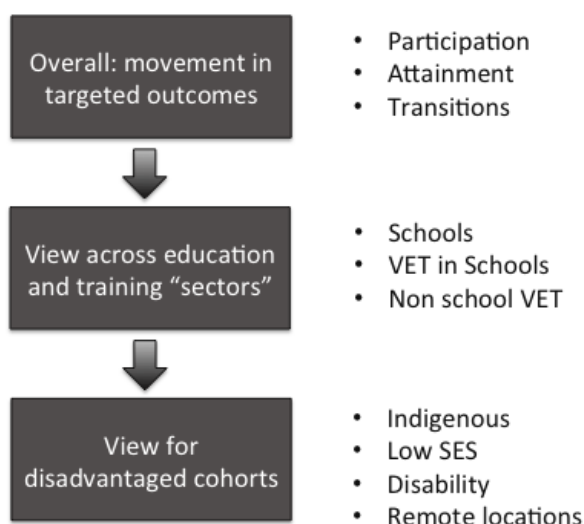
Introduction

The NP is targeting improved participation of young people in education and training, attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications and transitions from school to further education, training or full-time employment. As indicated earlier in this report, it is unlikely that progress against these outcomes will be recorded in the early years of the NP – and a range of factors influence these outcomes making it impossible to attribute movements in measures of these outcomes to this NP or its elements.

To assess progress against the NP's targeted outcomes, this evaluation considered performance indicators identified in the NP Agreement (also presented in Section 2.3 of this report) as well as additional indicators, based on available and reliable national data sets (presented in the agreed Evaluation Framework – Attachment 9).

This section reports on movements in measures of participation, attainment and transition – in aggregate, across sectors, and for targeted cohorts, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, below.

FIGURE 4.1 PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS



There are a number of points that need to be kept in mind when reviewing the data presented in the following sub-sections – in particular:

- It is still early in the NP's lifecycle, with most NP elements only approved in 2010. The Youth Compact is an exception here, with changes to participation requirements and allowance entitlements being implemented across jurisdictions by the end of 2009
- There is a time lag in collection and availability of data to assess movements in participation, attainment and transitions – with movements in participation typically identified before movements in attainment and transitions which can take longer to observe
- Change is not causation – factors other than the NP influence outcomes (as outlined in Section 3) and the labour market is a significant determinant of participation and transition outcomes in Australia
- Data presented here helps set a benchmark for future evaluations. Any recent changes need to be monitored to determine if they are sustained. Similarly, no movement in outcomes to date may not mean there won't be change in the future
- Recording of Indigenous status has improved over time, impacting reported data movements
- VET data only covers publically funded VET delivery, which can be delivered by public or private VET providers. Data relating to activity in the private VET (fee for service sector) is not available.

In conducting this evaluation, we have explored a range of data sets and views of that data. These data sets and their limitations are outlined in more detail in Attachment 2.

Has young people's participation in education and training increased?

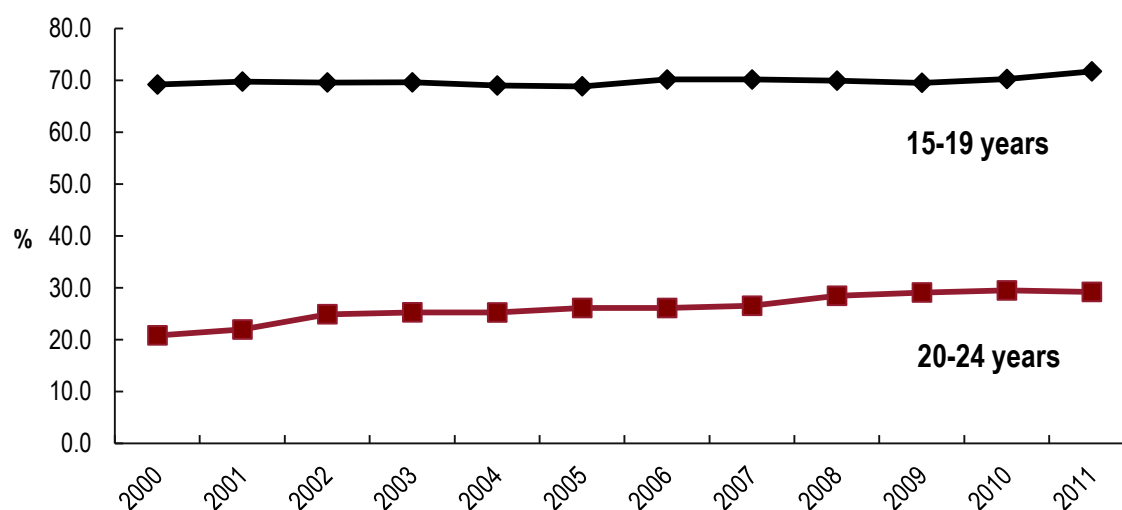


There has been a slight increase in participation levels since the NP was introduced – mainly amongst younger cohorts (16-17 year olds). The Compact appears to be having an impact in this regard, however the influence of other factors such as the GFC needs to be recognised

Overall movement in participation

Over the last decade, the proportion of 15 to 19 year olds participating in full-time education has remained fairly constant at around 70%, showing a slight increase to 72% in 2010 and 2011 (see Figure 4.2). Between 2000 and 2009 the proportion of 20 to 24 year olds in full-time education increased from about 21% to 29% but has not increased since then. In comparison with other OECD countries, the educational participation of 15 to 19 year olds in Australia is at best average, and the gap between Australia and the OECD average is widening. In terms of the educational participation of 20 to 24 year olds, however, we are better than many OECD countries, and have kept pace with the OECD as a whole.

FIGURE 4.2: TOTAL FULL TIME EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION BY 15-24 YEAR OLDS, 2000-2011



Source: ABS, *Labour Force Survey*.

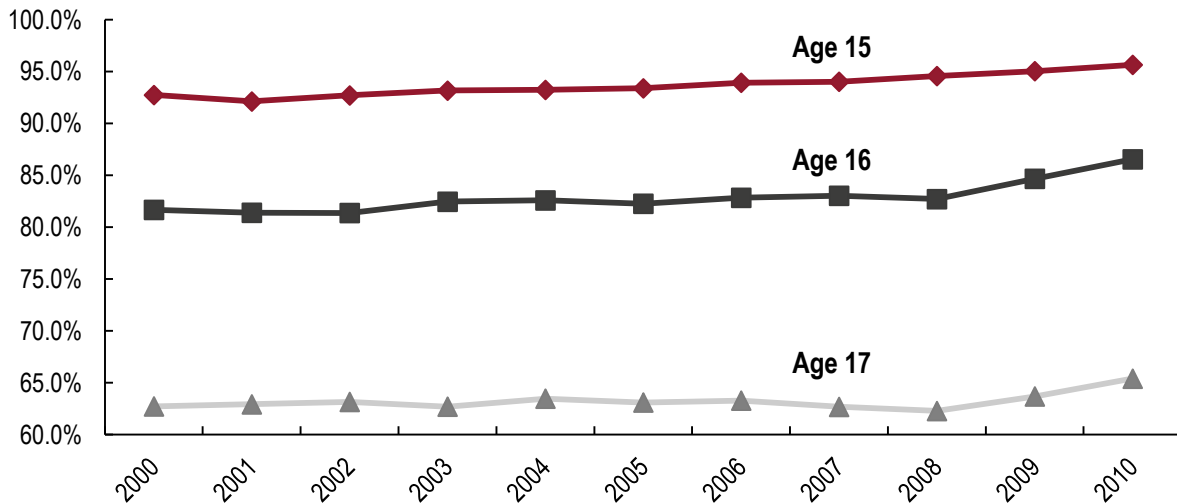
The recent slight increase in total participation among 15-19 year olds appears to be coming partly from 16-17 year olds in secondary school (indicating a possible positive impact of the Compact) and partly from 18-19 year olds in higher education.

Post-school VET participation does not appear to have made a contribution to any increases, with rising school participation being partly balanced by falling post-school VET participation. Increased participation among 20 to 24 year olds stems mostly from increasing higher education enrolments rather than from VET. Any impact that the NP may have had upon these trends is difficult to disentangle from the impact of the GFC and other factors.

Movements in school participation

There was little increase in school participation among 15-17 year olds between 2000 and 2008 (see Figure 4.3). However, between 2008 and 2010, school participation rose 3.8 percentage points among 16 year olds and 3.1 percentage points among 17 year olds. This could reflect a positive impact of the Compact on school participation for this cohort, but the GFC will also have had an impact.

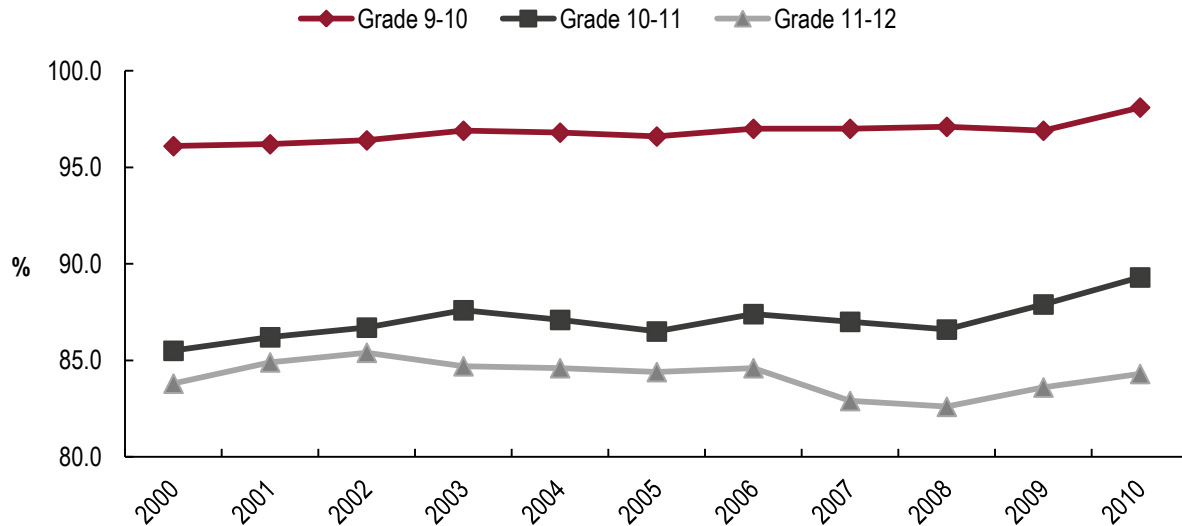
FIGURE 4.3: TOTAL FULL TIME SECONDARY SCHOOL PARTICIPATION BY 15-17 YEAR OLDS, 2000-2010



Source: ABS, National School Statistics Collection; Population by Age and Sex, states and territories.

Progression rates from Year 9 to Year 10 showed a very minor increase to 2009, but a rise of 1.2 percentage points from 2009 to 2010. This coincides with the introduction of the NP, in particular the introduction of the Compact. Progression rates from Years 10 to 11 and from Years 11 to 12 fluctuated between 2000 and 2008, but have shown increases of 2.7 and 1.7 percentage points respectively in 2009 and 2010 (see Figure 4.4). These increases coincide both with the GFC and the introduction of the NP.

FIGURE 4.4: APPARENT GRADE PROGRESSION RATES, GRADES 9 TO 12, 2000-2010



Source: ABS, National School Statistics Collection.

When changes in reporting requirements are taken in to account, participation in VET in Schools has shown no apparent growth between 2005 and 2010: thus here is little evidence of any impact from the NP to date.

Movements in VET participation

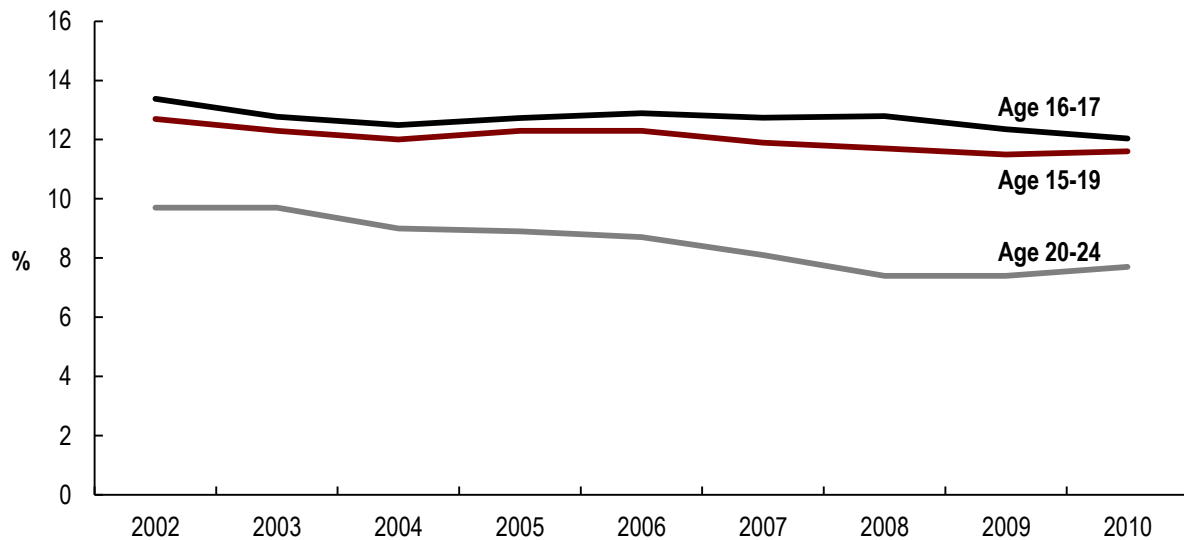
Between 2002 and 2008/2009 there was a slight decline in VET participation among 15 to 19 year olds and 20-24 year olds who were not attending school and who had not completed Year 12 (see Figure 4.5). Among non-school 20-24 year olds who had not

completed Year 12, VET participation fell somewhat faster than among 15-19 year olds. This decline appears to have levelled out and possibly reversed since 2009 – and we intend to monitor this trend in future evaluations to see if it is sustained.

In 2009 and 2010, there was a slight decline in participation among the 16-17 year old cohort. However, this needs to be considered in conjunction with increased school participation of this cohort in the same period.

These trends do not suggest an impact of the NP upon the level of VET participation among the relevant groups at this point in time.

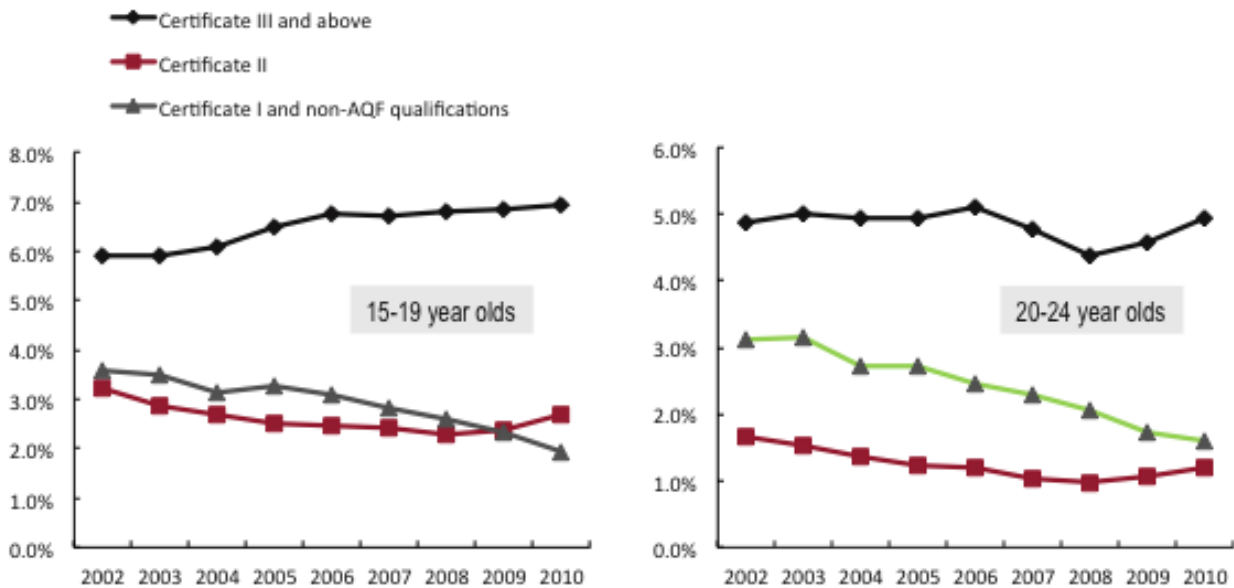
FIGURE 4.5: VET PARTICIPATION, PERSONS AGED 15-24 YEARS NOT AT SCHOOL AND WITHOUT YEAR 12, 2002-2010



Source: NCVET

Since 2002 there has been a change in the composition of VET enrolments among young people who have left school without completing Year 12. Among both 15-19 year olds and 20-24 year olds enrolments in courses below Certificate II have been trending downwards since 2002. However, among both groups, participation in Certificate II courses rose slightly between 2008 and 2010 (refer Figure 4.6 below). This suggests that the NP may have had a slight impact on the composition of VET participation among the relevant groups.

FIGURE 4.6: VET PARTICIPATION, PERSONS AGED 15-24 YEARS NOT AT SCHOOL AND WITHOUT YEAR 12, 2002-2010



Source: NCVET

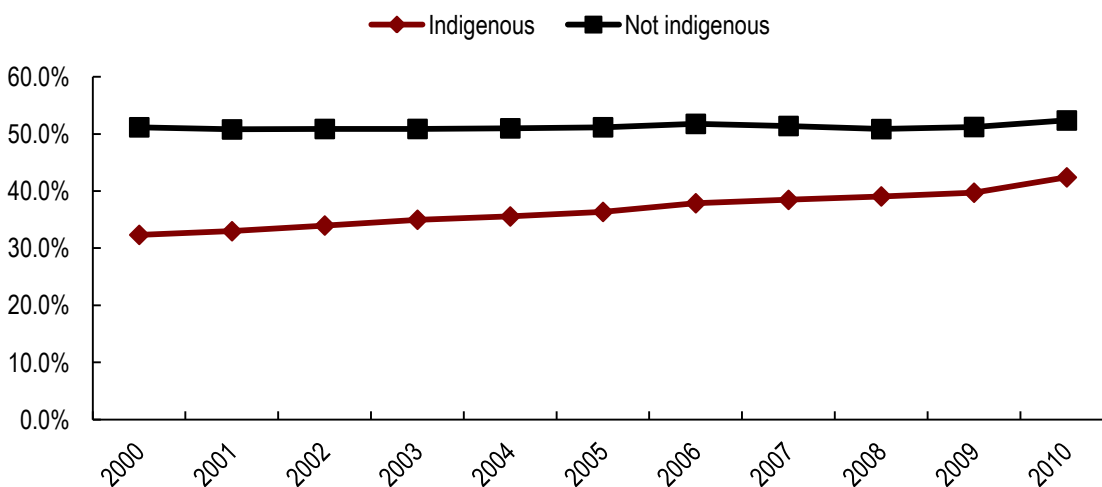
Movements in higher education participation

Between 2006 and 2010 the proportion of 18 to 24 year olds participating in higher education grew steadily from 27.5% to 31.2%. However, this appears to be unrelated to the introduction of the NP.

Movements in participation for Indigenous young Australians

Participation in secondary school by Indigenous youth appears to have increased at a steady rate over the past decade, from 32.3% in 2000 to 42.4% in 2010. More recently, the rate of increase since 2009 appears to be at least as great as among non-Indigenous youth (see Figure 4.7). At this point, it is difficult to assess whether the NP may have had an impact on improved participation levels. For example, identification of Indigenous students has improved, which has impacted reported outcomes for this cohort. This trend will continue to be monitored over the course of this evaluation.

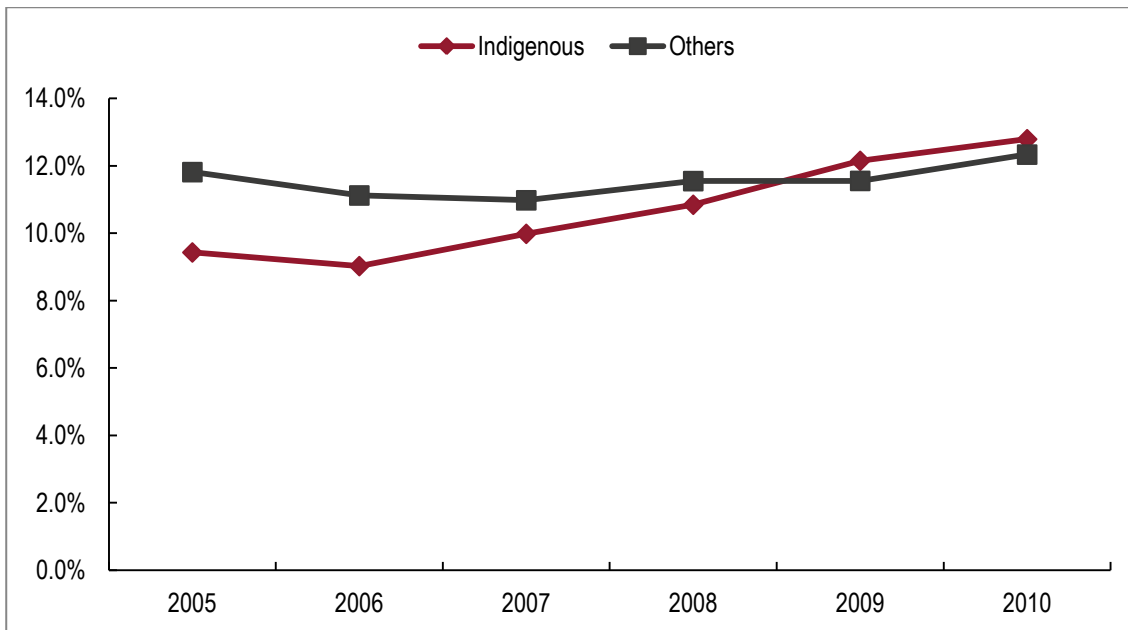
FIGURE 4.7: SECONDARY SCHOOL PARTICIPATION BY INDIGENOUS 15-19 YEAR OLDS, 2000-2010



Source: ABS, National Schools Statistics Collection.

The trend in participation in VET in Schools by Indigenous youth been increasing since 2006, but has not changed appreciably since the NP was introduced, as indicated in Figure 4.8 below.

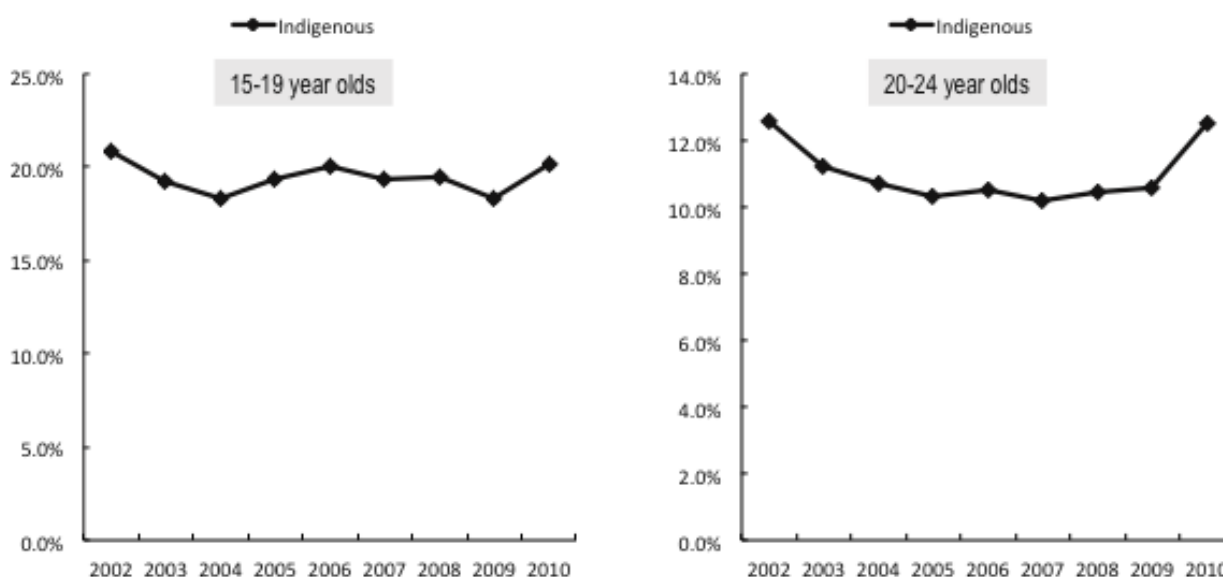
FIGURE 4.8: VET IN SCHOOLS PARTICIPATION BY INDIGENOUS 15-19 YEAR OLDS



Source: NCVET (excludes Queensland data)

Participation in VET by non-school Indigenous 15 to 19 year olds without Year 12 has been variable since 2000 (refer Figure 4.9 below). However, there was an increase of 1.8 percentage points between 2009 and 2010 with participation returning to just below 2002 levels. A similar trend was observed for Indigenous 20 to 24 year olds without Year 12. The increase from 2009 coincides with the NP's introduction, but it is unclear that it is caused by it. This trend will be monitored in future evaluations to see if it is sustained.

FIGURE 4.9: VET PARTICIPATION BY INDIGENOUS YOUTH WHO HAVE LEFT SCHOOL WITHOUT COMPLETING YEAR 12



Source: NCVET

Movements in participation for other disadvantaged cohorts

There were no apparent changes in VET or VET in Schools participation by low SES youth, youth with a disability or youth living in remote areas over the period under consideration. No information is available on school participation by youth from these target groups.

Has young people's attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications increased? **It is too soon to say whether attainment levels have changed during the term of the NP**

Overall movement in attainment levels

The NP targets increased attainment levels by measuring the proportion of 20 to 24 year olds who have completed Year 12 or a Certificate II qualification. Nationally, this measure appears to have increased steadily between 2001 and 2010 when it reached a peak of 85.6%, before declining to 84.1% in 2011. There is no evidence as yet that the NP has led to improvements in this key attainment indicator. However, as attainment indicators are slower to respond than participation indicators, it may be too early to expect any impact from the NP at this stage.

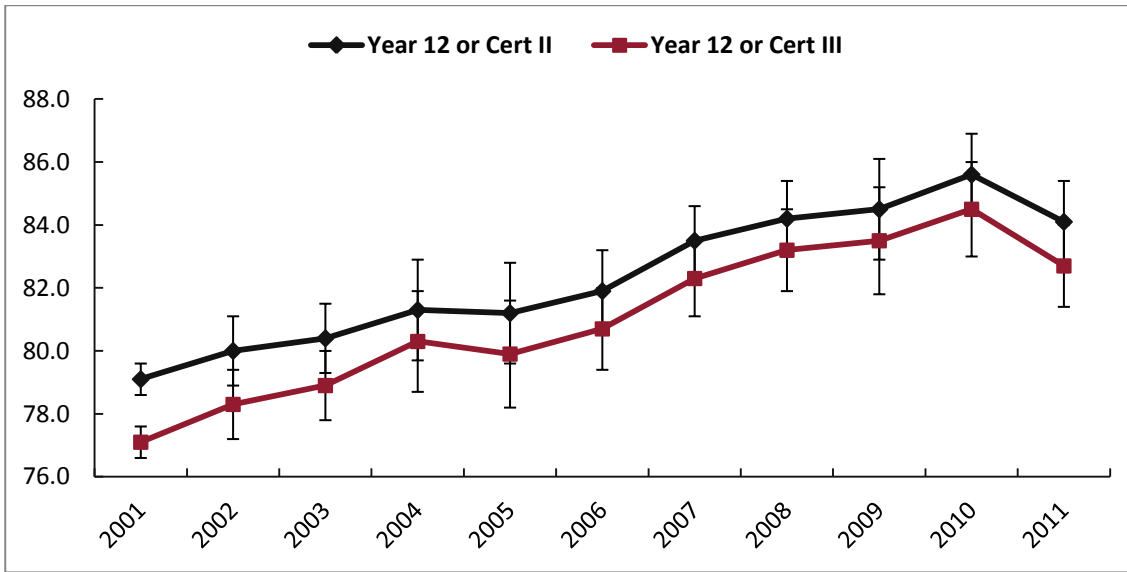
The OECD reports upper secondary (Year 12 or equivalent) attainment rates for people aged 25 to 34. Looking at that cohort, in 2009, Australia's upper secondary (Year 12 or equivalent) attainment rate (83%) was only a little above the OECD average of 81%³².

To the issue of whether Certificate II qualifications are a reasonable equivalent to Year 12 attainment, this evaluation sought to understand whether a significantly different picture emerged for attainment levels of Year 12 or Certificate III qualifications –

³² See Section 3 and Attachment 2

presented in Figure 4.10 below. In summary, there would appear to be only marginal difference (around 1 percentage point) between using Certificate II or III to measure Year 12 or equivalent attainment.

FIGURE 4.10: PERCENTAGE OF 20 TO 24 YEAR OLDS WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 OR ACHIEVED A CERT II OR III QUALIFICATION

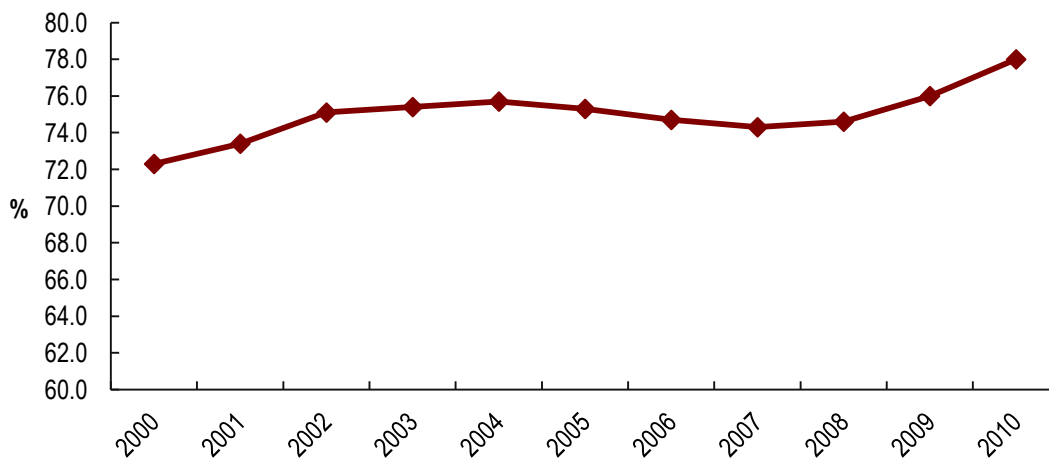


Source: Survey of Education and Work

Movements in school attainment

Apparent Year 12 retention rates have increased from 72% in 2000 to 75% in 2002, remained fairly steady until 2008 and then increased from 2008 to 2010 to 78% (see Figure 4.11). This suggests a possible impact of the NP, but the impact of the GFC is also likely to have contributed to this movement.

FIGURE 4.11: APPARENT YEAR 12 RETENTION, 2000-2010



Source: ABS, National Schools Statistics Collection.

The proportion of students completing at least Year 10 fluctuated over the 2000-2011 period. It began to rise in 2006, prior to the introduction of the NP, rose 1.5 percentage points in the first year of the NP, but did not continue to increase in 2011. Little impact of the NP on this key indicator is apparent at this stage.

The proportion of 15 to 17 year olds completing a VET qualification through a VET in Schools program has been increasing steadily since 2006. Since data for VET in Schools completions is only available up to 2009, it is too early to tell whether the NP has had any impact.

Movements in VET attainment

The proportion of 15-24 year olds completing a publicly funded VET qualification at Certificate II level or higher each year is relatively small (less than five per cent of the age group), and increased very little between 2002 and 2009³³. It is too early to tell whether the NP has had any impact in this regard.

Movements in attainment for Indigenous young Australians

Year 12 attainment by Indigenous youth appears to have risen strongly between 2000 and 2008 (from 36.4% 47.2%), but has levelled since 2008³⁴. In comparison, non-Indigenous attainment has remained relatively stable, although it is much higher in absolute terms. At this stage there is no strong evidence for an impact of the NP on Year 12 attainment by Indigenous youth.

There was little change in the proportion of 15 to 17 year old Indigenous youth completing VET in Schools qualifications between 2005 and 2008, but this is followed by an increase of 3.0 percentage points in 2009. There was a slight rise of approximately one percentage point from 2006 to 2009 in non-school VET completions at Certificate II and above by Indigenous 15 to 24 year olds. Without more recent data, it is too soon to tell whether the NP is making an impact on Indigenous VET attainment.

Movements in participation for other disadvantaged cohorts

Between 2006 and 2009 there were no appreciable changes in VET in Schools and VET completions by youth from low SES backgrounds, youth from remote regions or young people with a disability. No information was available on Year 12 attainment by these groups. At this stage it is not possible to tell whether the NP has made an impact on attainment for these target groups.

Are more young people making successful transitions from school?



The NP may have had some positive impact upon the number of young people not in education and unemployed. However, the number of disengaged young people appears to be increasing – and the state of the labour market has the most significant influence on transition outcomes.

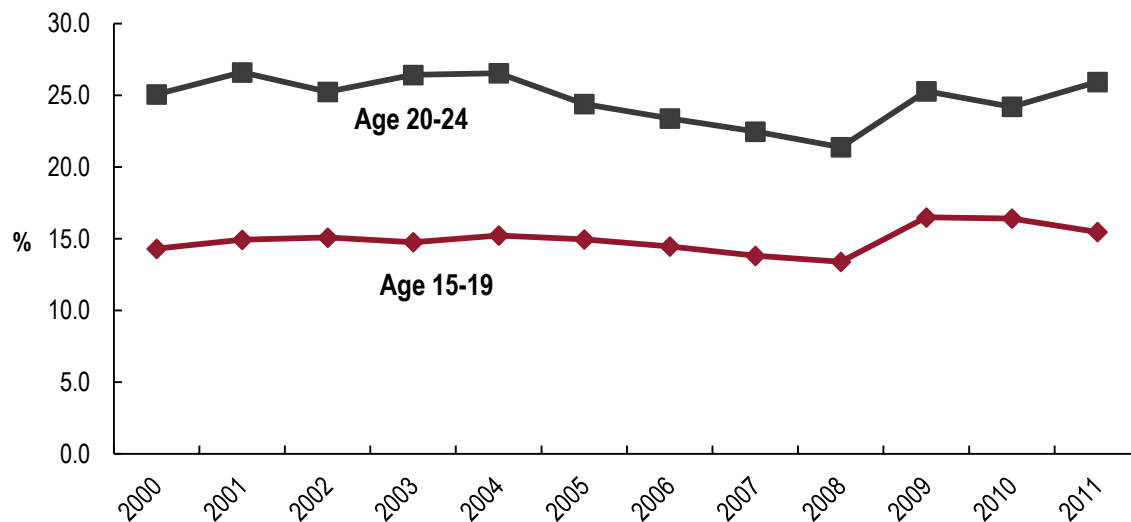
Overall movement in transitions

Between 2008 and 2009 the proportion of 15 to 24 year olds not fully engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) rose by around three percentage points following the GFC, and has still not returned to pre-GFC levels (see Figure 4.12).

³³ Note that this excludes VET qualifications attained through private providers unless through publicly funded places.

³⁴ However the identification of Indigenous youth in schools by ABS has improved over the period.

FIGURE 4.12: 15-24 YEAR OLDS NOT FULLY ENGAGED IN EDUCATION, TRAINING OR EMPLOYMENT, 2000-2011



Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work – refer Table A2.29 in Attachment 2

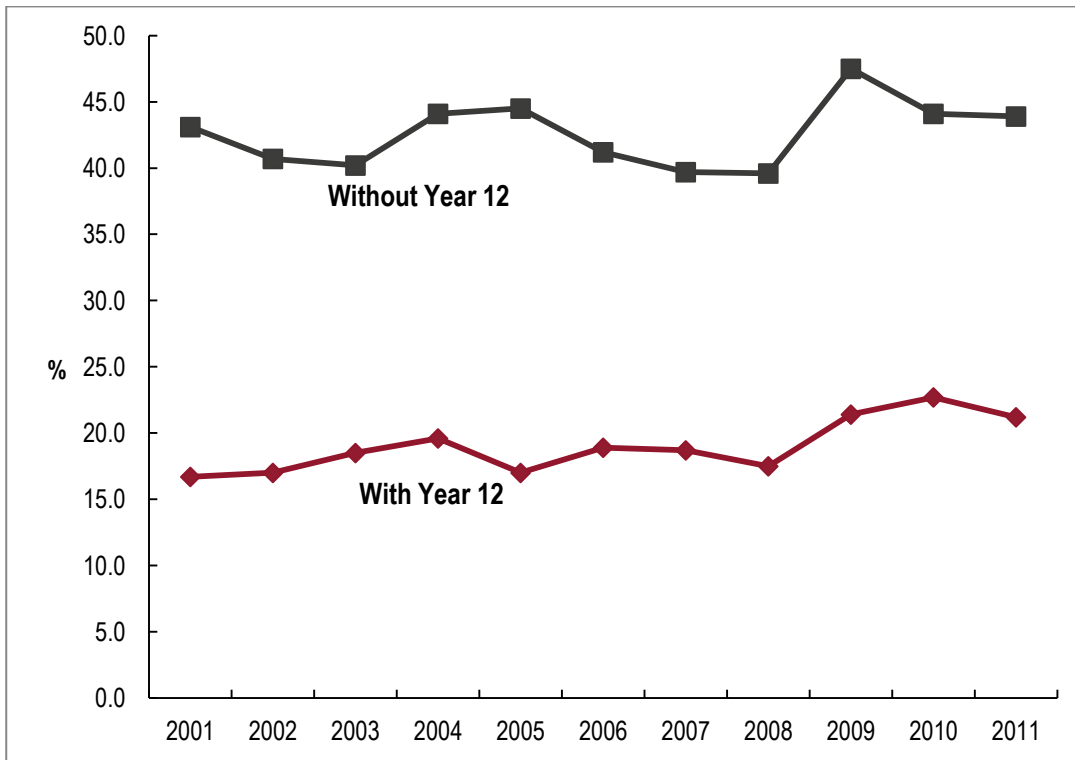
A similar pattern of disengagement levels rising following the GFC and remaining high after it is apparent from other similar indicators: the proportion of 18-24 year olds not fully engaged in employment, education or training at or above Certificate III level; 15-19 year old school leavers not fully engaged; and persons aged 17-19 not in education and not employed. The rise in levels of non-engagement following the GFC was particularly large among immediate school leavers (nearly six percentage points), and among school leavers who have not completed Year 12 (nearly eight percentage points).

Among 15 to 19 year olds, the increase in the size of the NEET group between 2008 and 2009 was among the highest in the OECD, despite the GFC having a smaller impact on the labour market as a whole in Australia than in most OECD countries. However, the increase in the size of the 20 to 24 year old NEET group was lower than in most OECD countries³⁵.

So far the NP appears to have had little if any impact on the overall proportion of disengaged youth, or upon the relative disadvantage of those without Year 12, as depicted in Figure 4.13 below. In 2011 disengagement levels were over twice as high (43.9%) among those who had not completed Year 12 as among those who had completed Year 12 (21.2%) – reinforcing the importance of Year 12 attainment on improving transition outcomes.

³⁵ See Section 3 and Attachment 2

FIGURE 4.13: SCHOOL LEAVERS NOT FULLY ENGAGED – COMPARING THOSE WITH AND WITHOUT YEAR 12 ATTAINMENT



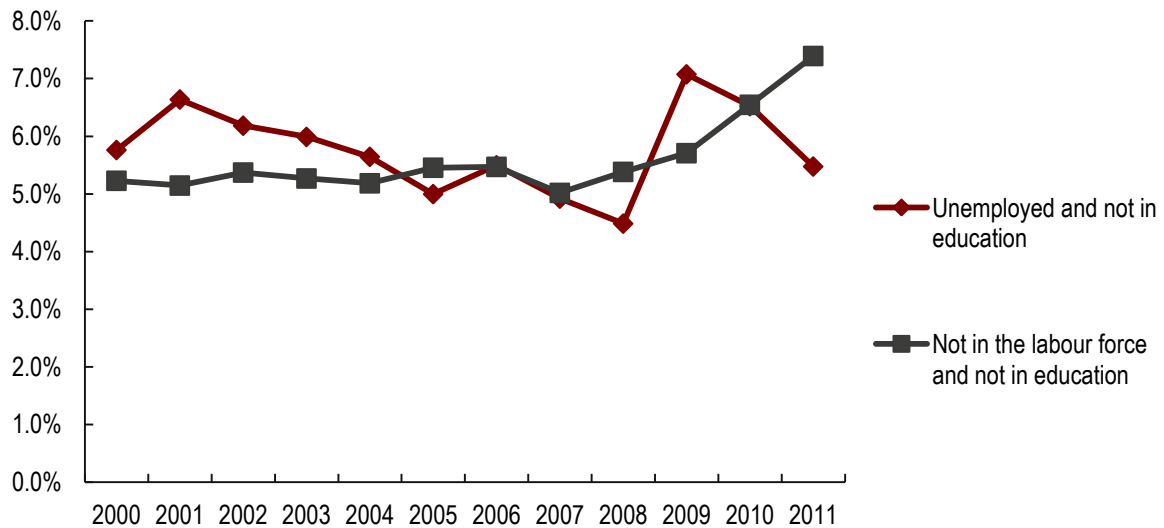
Source: Survey of Education and Work

For 17-19 year olds, Figure 4.14 disaggregates trends in the group that is disengaged (the NEET group) into those who are unemployed and not in education and those neither in the labour force³⁶ nor in education. It shows that the proportion who are unemployed after leaving education decreased by 1.6 percentage points between 2009 and 2011 (but has still not returned to pre-GFC levels), whereas the proportion of the age group neither in the labour market nor in education has been rising since 2008, and has shown no signs of declining since the NP was introduced. The decline in the size of the numbers unemployed and not in education is unlikely to be due to improvements in employment levels in the labour market as a whole since the GFC, as levels of full-time employment among 15-19 year olds have continued to decline since 2008³⁷. Thus it is possible that at least some of this decline may be due to the impact of the NP. However, the NP has had no apparent impact upon the group who are neither in education nor actively seeking work, which continues to rise. This is a concerning trend and will challenge safety net services (such as Youth Connections) that aim to support this cohort and have them re-engage in education and training.

³⁶ In other words neither employed nor unemployed.

³⁷ From 246,000 in May 2008 to 209,200 in May 2009, and to 191,900 in May 2011 (Source: ABS 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Table 03a).

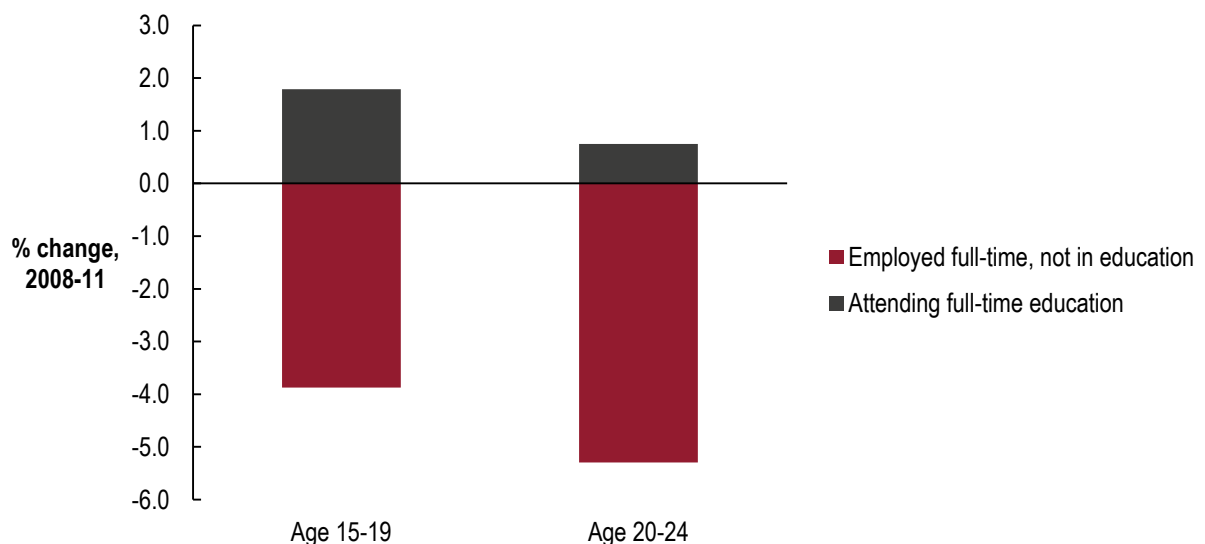
FIGURE 4.14: PROPORTION OF 17 TO 19 YEAR OLDS NOT EMPLOYED AND NOT IN EDUCATION



Source: 6291.0.55.001 *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery*, Table 03b. Labour force status for 15-19 year olds by Educational attendance, Age and Sex

Figure 4.15 shows that the rise in the size of the NEET group since the GFC, is associated with the fact that the fall in full-time employment has been substantially larger than the rise in full-time educational participation. Between 2008 and 2011, the proportion of young people in full-time employment fell by a much greater amount than the proportion in full-time education rose: a fall of 3.9 percentage points compared with a rise of 1.8 percentage points for 15 to 19 year olds and a fall of 5.3 percentage points compared with a rise of 0.8 percentage points for 20 to 24 year olds. This is a major explanation for the rise in disengagement levels since 2008. It would seem the NP has had insufficient impact upon full-time educational participation to fully offset the fall in full-time employment.³⁸

FIGURE 4.15: CHANGE IN THE PROPORTION OF 15 TO 24 YEAR OLDS EMPLOYED FULL-TIME OR ATTENDING FULL-TIME EDUCATION, 2008-11 (MAY)



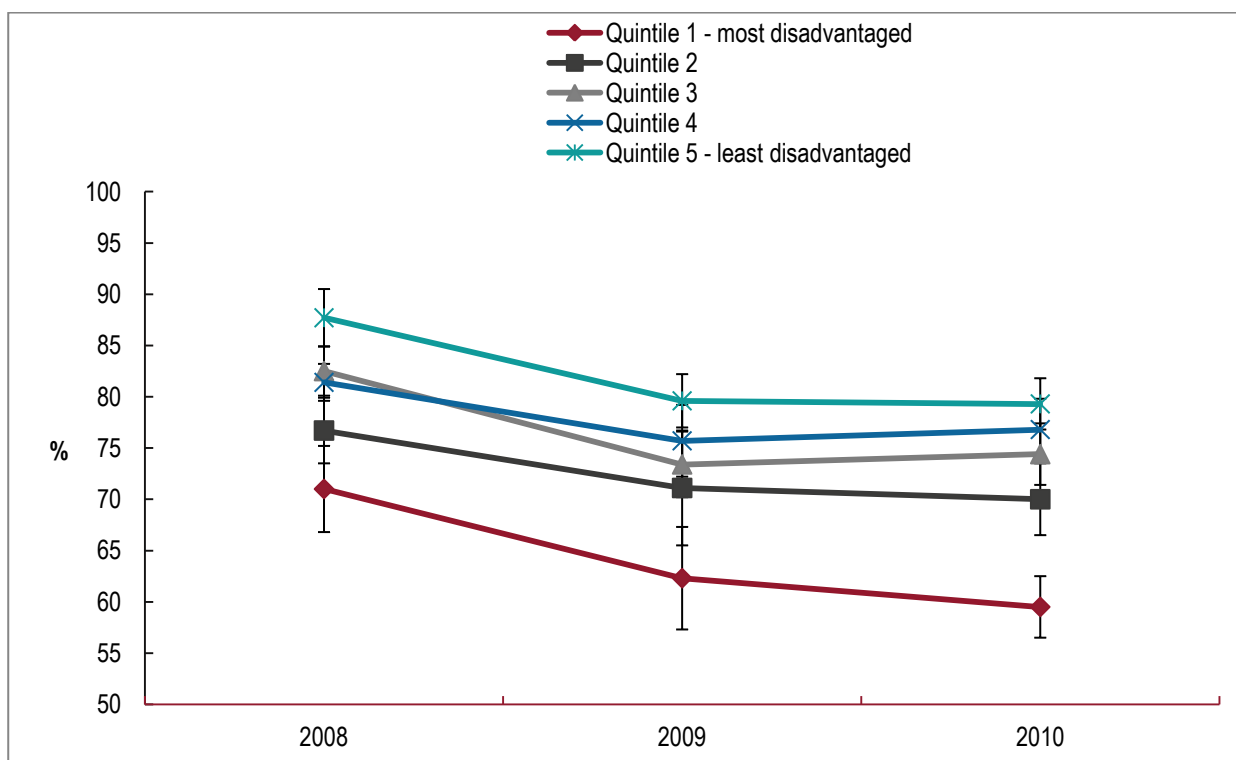
Source: 6291.0.55.001 *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery*, Table 03a.

³⁸ Young people in part-time employment and not in education are considered to be at risk.

Movements in transitions for disadvantaged cohorts

Young people from the most disadvantaged SES quintiles are less likely to be fully engaged in post-school education or employment than young people from the least disadvantaged quintiles (refer Figure 4.16 below). In 2008, there was a difference of 16.7 percentage points between the highest and lowest quintiles in the proportion of 18 to 24 year olds fully engaged; by 2010, this gap in outcomes had widened a little to 19.8 percentage points. This reinforces the need to understand and address the needs of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds if we aim to lift overall outcomes. We will continue to monitor this measure to understand movement in transition outcomes over the course of the NP.

FIGURE 4.16: FULLY ENGAGED³⁹ 18-24 YEAR OLDS BY SES QUINTILE



Source: COAG Reform Council, based upon Survey of Education and Work data

4.3.3 Is it appropriate?

Is the NP consistent with overarching policy objectives?



The NP is consistent with the National Education Agreement and jurisdictional policy direction – focused on increasing compulsory participation age, (re)engaging at risk young people and increasing attainment through education and training places

Stakeholders see the NP as an evolution of prior initiatives, rather than a comprehensive new policy/response

The overarching national policy objectives related to the NP are outlined in the National Education Agreement and the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development. The YAT NP is one of a number of NPs that have been established that contribute to the objectives of these National Agreements. This NP is consistent with the National Agreements and the policy directions of States and Territories. For example, the NP’s focus on increasing the compulsory participation age and increasing attainment through education and training places were reforms that were already under way in a number of jurisdictions prior to the

³⁹ In employment or in education and training at or above Certificate III level

NP. The focus on re-engaging at risk young people has been given greater significance through this NP – highlighting the need to “lift the floor” to achieve targeted participation, attainment and transition outcomes.

Due to time pressures, the NP was not preceded by a comprehensive policy development process that included extensive needs assessment or gap analysis. It is predominantly an aggregation of already proposed initiatives, as outlined in Section 2.1 of this report. Stakeholders indicated that the NP would have been benefited from a more considered policy development process. For the future, a comprehensive assessment of needs, government roles and responsibilities should be undertaken. This is more likely to ensure that the balance of resources and activity applied across alternative initiatives/levers is optimised – placing emphasis where it has the greatest impact.

The YAT NP operates within the framework outlined in the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (IGA).⁴⁰ The IGA clarifies when it is appropriate for an NP to be developed. The NP is broadly consistent with the objectives of the IGA⁴¹ in that:

- The NP is aimed at the achievement of national youth participation and attainment outcomes
- The benefits of Commonwealth involvement extend nation-wide – e.g. through the Partnership Broker and Youth Connections programs and National Career Development activities and resources
- Activities should result in some spill over benefits that extend beyond the boundaries of a single State and Territory through information sharing
- There are flexible conditions attached to payments to the States (MEAST funding)
- The Compact with Young Australians addresses the need for policy harmonisation in compulsory education, training and employment participation.
- The NP also intended to transfer responsibility for youth careers and transitions programs from the Commonwealth to States and Territories to achieve greater clarity in roles and responsibilities.

The NP uses a collection of different mechanisms in its different elements:

- Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST) is a grant paid to States and Territories to deliver activities that fit in a broad framework agreed with the Commonwealth
- School Business Community Partnership Brokers (PB) and Youth Connections (YC) are Commonwealth funded and managed programs delivered by contracted service providers
- National Career Development contracts service providers to deliver resources and activities
- The Compact with Young Australians (Compact) involves changes to State and Territory education participation requirements and to national income support legislation.

Program models other than an NP could have been used to deliver these elements, but there have been a number of benefits to implementing the NP elements as a package. In particular, it has:

- Raised the profile of the importance of youth attainment and transitions resulting in a greater amount of attention from stakeholders within and outside of government for the elements, than if implemented separately
- Created an expectation and framework for leveraging across the programs through governance committees and service provider networks (however, this has been more limited than anticipated)

⁴⁰ Council of Australian Governments, *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations*, http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/intergovernmental_agreements.aspx, 2011.

⁴¹ Standing Council on Federal Financial Relations, *Developing National Partnerships under the Federal Financial Relations Framework*, Federal Finances Circular No.2011/02, 2011, p.4.

- Encouraged cross-jurisdictional information sharing through the Multilateral Working Group
- Broadened the focus of youth attainment and transitions policy analysis beyond individual programs and initiatives to allow consideration of how different ‘carrots’ and ‘sticks’ work together to influence outcomes
- Resulted in more tailoring of Commonwealth programs to State and Territory circumstances than was evident in similar programs prior to the NP.

These benefits may not have been achieved if a different program model had been adopted. However, there have been some drawbacks associated with implementing the NP elements as a package. It has constrained the focus of the activities to the NP cohort. For example, stakeholders indicated that there would be benefit in having a lifelong National Career Development Strategy; however, because the NCDS is NP-funded its primary focus is young people aged 5 to 24 years.⁴²

Year 2 of this evaluation will consider how implementing the NP elements as a package contributed to the NP outcomes and present findings and options to inform a decision about the future of the NP and its elements.

<p>Does the NP address areas of need?</p>		<p>The policy imperative that initiated the NP appears to remain – there is an increasing number of disengaged young people</p> <p>NP funding is directed towards areas of need – but stakeholders identified challenges and capacity constraints to meet those needs</p>
---	---	---

The NP was established to improve young people’s engagement with education and training to improve participation, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians. While there have been some positive movements in targeted outcomes during the period of the NP (see Section 4.2), the policy imperative remains. For example:

- The proportion of 17 to 19 year olds not employed and not in education has increased during this time (see Figure 4.14)
- The disparity in transition outcomes for young people with and with Year 12 qualifications remains (see Figure 4.13)
- Educational attainment targets remain to be reached
- The spread in levels of education/employment engagement between our most and least disadvantaged young people remains (see Figure 4.16).

As outlined in Chapter 3 of this report, there are many factors that influence transition outcomes, including the economic and social context, institutional arrangements and personal qualities of young people. The NP addresses many of these factors, as well as supporting some of the strategies for achieving effective outcomes that emerge from international reviews.

Nevertheless it is important to be realistic about what the NP might achieve, given the strength of the impact upon transition outcomes of the state of the labour market, of socio-economic status and of early educational achievement. It is also important to be realistic, given the scale of the challenges ahead, about the scale of the NP and of its focus upon some key issues such as curriculum choice, school climate and learning engagement that appear central to re-engaging disaffected learners. Whether the NP is sufficient in scale and scope to address the central challenges of raising Australia’s school completion rate, reducing the number of young people who are on the margins of the labour market, and better meeting the needs of those young people who struggle hardest to achieve at school will be key questions for the next phase of this evaluation. In the second year of the evaluation it will be important to develop an understanding of the types of activities that might deliver the best return on investment in terms of attainment and transition outcomes.

⁴² This age range is an extension of the NP’s target age group of 15 to 24 year olds.

Many of the NP initiatives have been directed towards supporting young people at higher risk of disengaging from education or training. Youth Connections, for example, has provided individual support services to young people experiencing barriers to engagement in education and training, and a number of MEAST initiatives are targeted towards particular cohorts of young people more at risk of disengagement (e.g. migrant and Indigenous young people).

Jurisdictional stakeholders identified a number of challenges and capacity constraints to meet the needs of disengaged young people, both within and beyond the scope of the NP (i.e. in the broader education, training, employment and social welfare environment). For example:

- Demand for Youth Connections services exceeds providers' capacity to deliver (expanded in Attachment 5)
- The capacity for Partnership Brokers to delivery on an ambitious remit within the term of their contracts or this NP was raised as a concern by many stakeholders
- The ability of all programs to meet stakeholder needs in remote areas was raised as a significant and perennial challenge. Some suggestions from stakeholders for improvement in this area are greater collaboration with communities and service providers in remote locations and the use of technology (where practical and available). The YAT National Network has established a remote provider network and a remote area research project to improve flexibility and integration of remote servicing. There would be benefit in DEEWR assessing outcomes from those activities that could point to ways in which the service delivery model could be adapted to better service young people in remote areas.⁴³

As a result of a combination of factors (including the introduction of the Compact with Young Australians), stakeholders identified an increased proportion of young people who are 'harder to help' within the education and training sectors. This has implications for the Commonwealth, schools and training providers. To more effectively support this cohort, education and training providers need to explore a number of strategies including:

- Increase the use of alternative teaching strategies and of learning options that increase young people's engagement with learning, including literacy and numeracy and job readiness resources and courses for young people who need them
- Broaden the range of curriculum choice so that the personal and vocational interests of all young people can be achieved
- Ensure that enough safety net services, mentoring, or other personal support services are available for those likely to leave school early
- Establish resources and support to address common barriers to engagement that relate to low literacy, numeracy and work readiness skills of young people
- Address the staff development needs of teachers to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge required to meet the needs of the least engaged students
- Ensure that sufficient funding for personal support services, alternative learning programs, appropriate teaching strategies, wider curriculum choice and teacher staff development is available.

All of these issues are difficult to address within current funding models.

Jurisdictional education and training stakeholders also acknowledged that there may be some specific cohorts of young people at greater risk of disengagement, including young people:

- Who are in state care or involved in the juvenile justice system


⁴³ DEEWR is currently undertaking a review of remote participation and employment services with a view to introducing improvements from 1 July 2013. Findings of this review could apply to remote servicing provided through the Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections programs. Source: DEEWR, *Remote Servicing Review Consultations*, <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Indigenous/News/Pages/RemoteServicingReviewConsultations.aspx>>.

- Living in remote areas (particularly post-education and training employment pathways)
- Who leave school early and return to complete education and training in their early 20s.

Additional research may be warranted to assess the veracity of these concerns and the size of those cohorts.

The scale of demand (policy imperative) and capacity of existing support mechanisms in relation to areas of needs will be explored in year two of the evaluation to inform decisions about future policy responses. The points outlined above will help direct the focus of stakeholder engagement and research in year two of this evaluation.

How does the NP and its elements complement other NPs and programs targeting similar outcomes?



Increased collaboration between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions has resulted in better alignment of objectives and programs – but there is scope to review potential areas of overlap

The NP on Youth Attainment and Transitions spans the school (and equivalent) and further education, training and employment stages and focuses on all young people (with recognition of the need to address the issue of social inclusion, including responding to Indigenous disadvantage in the NP). This NP complements other NPs across the stages and target groups. Table 4.2 maps NPs related to the YAT NP by primary target group and stage of education and training.

TABLE 4.2: HOW THE YOUTH ATTAINMENT AND TRANSITIONS NP FITS IN THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP CONTEXT

Primary target	Stage of education and training		
	Early childhood education	School (and equivalent)	Further education, training and employment
All	Early Childhood Education NP TAFE Fee Waivers for Childcare Qualifications NP National Quality Agenda to Early Childhood Education and Care NP	Youth Attainment and Transitions NP Pre-apprenticeship Training NP School Pathways Program ⁴⁴ NP	
		Smarter Schools – Teacher Quality; Literacy and Numeracy NP Trade Training Centres in Schools Programs NP Digital Education Revolution NP Building the Education Revolution NP	Productivity Places Program NP Better TAFE Facilities NP Education Investment Fund ⁴⁵ NP
Indigenous	Closing the Gap: Indigenous Early Childhood Development NP		Indigenous Economic Participation NP
Low socio-economic status		Smarter Schools – Low Socio-economic Status School Communities NP	

As mentioned earlier, one of the main benefits of the NP has been the increased level of collaboration between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories in the youth attainment and transitions area. In practice, this has meant that there has been a greater level of jurisdictional engagement in Commonwealth program design and implementation than for other programs (see Attachment 4 Partnership Brokers and Attachment 5 Youth Connections), and consideration of the interaction between Commonwealth and State/Territory initiatives that were implemented during the term of the NP (see Attachment 3 MEAST). In most

⁴⁴ This is an agreement between the Commonwealth and the States of Western Australia and South Australia.

⁴⁵ Education Investment Fund Agreements have been made between the Commonwealth and the States of Western Australia and New South Wales.

cases this has resulted in better alignment of Commonwealth, State and Territory objectives and more complementarity in the services delivered.

However, this is a complex support landscape and there is some potential for overlaps in services that should be front of mind for jurisdictional stakeholders and service providers – to ensure that services and provider capacity is complementary and strengthens the support extended to young people. For example:

- Across Commonwealth initiatives, such as the Partnership Broker program and Local Employment Coordinators
- Between initiatives within jurisdictions (such as ICANs in SA, Youth Connection in the ACT or Industry Engagement Officers in the NT) and related NP programs such as Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections
- Across NP programs, such as mentoring activities supported under Youth Connections (Individual Support Services) and under MEAST-funded initiatives
- Across related education, training, labour market, welfare and income support portfolios.

Monitoring potential overlaps or gaps will be an ongoing aspect of the formative evaluation of the NP.

4.3.4 Is it well governed and implemented?

How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the NP?



Collaboration has generally been strong during the NP

As outlined previously, due to the timeframe within which the NP was developed, State and Territory collaboration with the Commonwealth on the design of the NP was limited. However, in program planning and implementation, jurisdictional and Commonwealth stakeholders indicated that collaboration between them has been active and positive on this NP – particularly when compared to their experience on other NPs. This was mainly attributed to the strength of NP leadership and the effectiveness of the Multilateral Working Group.

It is worth noting that the Commonwealth held discussions with the States and Territories to determine where responsibilities should lie for delivery of the Commonwealth-funded Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers programs. The outcome of those discussions saw responsibility reside with the Commonwealth. However, the NP set out the expectation that funding for the Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections programs will be transferred from the Commonwealth to the States and Territories following demonstrated achievement of outcomes negotiated as part of implementation plans, reflecting the 'reform areas' targeted by each State and Territory. Outcomes included increased participation and engagement of young people aged 15-24 in education and training, improved student engagement in their learning and increased numbers of young people making smooth and efficient transitions from school to further education, training and employment. Following the transfer, States and Territories were not required to continue the specific programs, but to continue using the funding for additional careers and transition support services.⁴⁶


Of the States and Territories that expressed views on the transfer of funding, none intended to take on the responsibility from the Commonwealth. Reasons cited for this included:

- Requirements to qualify for transfer developed following the signing of the NP were more stringent than implied by the NP

⁴⁶ Council of Australian Governments, *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions*, p.10.

- Funding – in particular, concerns that no additional administrative funds for the program would accompany the transfer of responsibility and that funding would cease at the end of the NP. This would mean that States and Territories would need to acquire funding to continue the programs, or wind down the programs.


Given those barriers, it is unlikely that the States and Territories would support a transfer of responsibilities for those programs within the term of the NP.

<p>Is governance of the NP working effectively?</p>		<p>Appropriate governance arrangements are generally in place at national, jurisdictional and program levels – although difficult for some to participate</p> <p>Positive relationships with Commonwealth</p>
---	---	---

States and Territories viewed their relationship with the Commonwealth in the area positively and were complimentary about the openness of communication through the YAT NP Multilateral Working Group. As outlined in Attachment 3 (MEAST), all States and Territories have established, or incorporated into existing arrangements, committees to oversee the implementation of the NP in their jurisdiction. The Commonwealth and State and Territory committees have all involved representatives from government and non-government school and training sectors and some also have included non-government organisations. These committees have worked together to resolve implementation issues, and to report to the Commonwealth on NP activities and outcomes.

Committees at both the Commonwealth and State and Territory levels have to date been predominantly focused on implementation. Opportunities exist to explore strategies to improve knowledge sharing of the outcomes of NP-funded initiatives, with the MWG a potential channel to disperse relevant evaluation and research findings across jurisdictions.

However, some smaller jurisdictions and non-government school sector representatives consider the combined governance arrangements at the national and state level to be out of proportion with the amount of funding provided through the NP. Stakeholders reported that it was difficult to accommodate participation in the design and delivery of NP activities (including participation in governance meetings and developing reporting) amongst their other roles within their existing funding. In some jurisdictions, non-government school sector stakeholders raised concerns about the amount and method of distribution of funding from States and Territories to non-government school sectors. Although no clear preference was presented it was evident that the strength of collaboration was contingent on strong engagement in design, governance and reporting on initiatives. In the future, there would be merit in considering that the governance arrangements were appropriate to the quantum of the investment.

<p>How well is performance reporting working?</p>		<p>Key NP measures and data sources (that underpin reward payments) are flawed</p> <p>State and Territory performance reporting is in place, but could be improved to address needs of the non-government sector and present impacts/lessons learned from jurisdictional activities</p> <p>Program administration and quality of reporting was challenging at first but is improving</p>
---	---	---

States and Territories agreed to report against a range of performance indicators aligned to the NP outcomes. Some of these indicators underpin decisions about reward funding for States and Territories. However, there are a number of limitations associated with these indicators, measures and sources of data. Limitations include the robustness of the data (e.g. error margins for the Survey of Education and Work and comparative data for Indigenous attainment), difficulty in accessing data and ability to access the data in the timeframe required to meet reporting requirements.

Issues with the performance indicators and data sources were well understood by interviewed stakeholders and were raised through the MWG and a sub-group was established to investigate the issues. However, no nationally consistent, reliable alternative was able to be identified. Addressing this issue is complex and costly. For example, the establishment of a national longitudinal study of school leavers which builds on the existing State and Territory school leaver surveys and on the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth would be an ideal solution. A national survey would improve understanding of transition pathways and how they are affected by different interventions. However, not all jurisdictions have implemented a longitudinal survey, there may be inconsistencies in data captured in those States and Territories that have one in place and the cost of establishing a nationally consistent data set is not likely to be achieved within the term of this NP and would be extensive. Longer term, this may warrant investigation.

The Commonwealth and States and Territories have jointly produced annual reports relating to NP activity and progress for each jurisdiction. The reports include progress against defined performance indicators, an overview of the jurisdictional context, description of activities undertaken with MEAST funding, outline of implementation of the Compact with Young Australians components (e.g. education and training place entitlement), and a status update on the Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections programs. The Partnership Broker and Youth Connections sections clearly outline the outcomes of the programs. However, in most reports it is less clear what the impact of other initiatives has been. There is an opportunity to improve the reporting of impacts and lessons learned across the NP. Most stakeholders indicated they would like to see knowledge sharing improve in this regard.

An issue raised by many interviewed non-government sector stakeholders was a lack of acknowledgement of the characteristics and contribution of the non-government education sectors in the jurisdictional annual reports. Non-government stakeholders felt that annual reports presented as government sector reports as a result of the language used and relatively small focus on non-government sector activities and achievements. The Commonwealth, States and Territories are encouraged to appropriately acknowledge cross-sector efforts in future reporting.

Youth Connections and Partnership Broker service providers raised concerns about the complexity and time taken to comply with reporting requirements of the respective programs – especially early in program implementation and relating to the use of the YATMIS database. DEEWR stakeholders also indicated that this reflected in the usefulness of reporting produced in the early stages of those programs. However, all service provider and DEEWR stakeholders indicated that progress has been made to address these early issues. Some options were raised that could be explored in more detail with service providers to ameliorate concerns about data capture, including providing regular communication about actions being taken to address concerns and reviewing opportunities for service providers to use data to assist them to deliver their services. These are explored in more detail in Attachments 4 and 5.

How effective is communication?



Stakeholders generally understand NP objectives and value – Partnership Brokers and National Career Development are exceptions

At the NP level, a communication strategy was developed and appears to have been implemented. Stakeholders consulted throughout this evaluation generally had a good understanding of the objectives and value of the NP. There were some communication issues at the element levels, particularly the development of the National Career Development Strategy and the role and value of Partnership Brokers. Those issues and recommended actions are addressed in Attachments 4 and 6.

4.4 Contribution of NP elements

Outlined below is a summary of evaluation findings relating to each of the NP elements. Attachments 3 to 7 provide a more detailed presentation of findings and recommendations.

4.4.1 Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

MEAST funding was used by government and non-government education sectors to maintain structured work placement programs (main area of investment), bolster career development resources and support and (to a lesser extent) provide mentoring support to young people.

These initiatives align with the MEAST objectives which aim to improve the diversity of the education and training experience, help young people to be informed about pathways through education and training to employment and support them through these pathways. MEAST funding is also being used in some States and Territories to track early school and post-school leavers to better understand how young people move through pathways, so that more targeted and systemic support can be provided.

Jurisdictions valued the flexibility in the MEAST funding arrangements that allowed them to determine where funding could be effectively allocated to address specific needs and complement existing initiatives. However, education and training authority stakeholders (particularly in smaller jurisdictions) indicated that the amount of funding constrained the scope of initiatives they were able to implement. Funding in those jurisdictions tended to go toward smaller targeted initiatives or to bolster existing initiatives, rather than large scale programs.

MEAST-funded activities are consistent with the NP objectives – expanding jurisdictional capacity to support young people in more locations and, in many cases, expanding support for cohorts at higher risk of disengaging from education and training. MEAST has helped improve collaboration between government and non-government education sectors, and education and training sectors to better understand and address youth attainment and transition issues.

MEAST-funded activities have been planned, approved and implemented – but most were not implemented until 2011. As a result, it is too early to understand their impacts and achievements.

4.4.2 Partnership Brokers

It is important to stress that this report does not reflect a detailed evaluation of the Partnership Brokers program – but does recommend that one should occur. Findings and recommendations are based on reported program data and consultations with a sample of approximately 30 Partnership Brokers and partners, DEEWR program and contract managers, as well as around 125 stakeholders representing government and non-government education and training sectors across all States and Territories, (stakeholder groups engaged in this evaluation are presented in Attachment 8). This evaluation provides a high level assessment of the status and progress of this element of the NP toward targeted outcomes.

The Partnership Broker program represents a significant shift in the Commonwealth's approach to supporting the formation and operation of partnerships between schools, businesses, parents and community groups. This shift was driven by the view that strategic, regionally owned and driven partnerships would provide greater impact and more sustainable change than the approach taken by preceding programs, which provided services for and on behalf of schools and were seen to displace effort and create dependence. Providers of those programs had reported that their rigid scope did not meet the specific needs of communities such

as early intervention and addressing entrenched social issues, where flexibility and building the capacity of stakeholders to enter into partnerships are required.

Since commencement of the program, Partnership Brokers have actively responded to their contract requirements and more than 1,400 partnerships (outside Victoria) are now supported by the Partnership Broker network. There would also appear to have been some expansion in the types of partnership activities compared to earlier programs - particularly in areas such as increased support for primary schools and Indigenous young people.

Partnership Brokers report against Key Performance Measures (KPMs) that are linked to program outcomes. On those measures, and based on stakeholder feedback, there is evidence of achievement and progress toward targeted outcomes, for example:

- The number of active and self-sustaining partnerships is increasing
- Partnership Brokers appear to be successful in forming new partnerships
- Brokered partnership activities and benefits are starting to gain momentum
- Partners see the program as important and valuable.

All stakeholders acknowledged that the remit of PB providers is a very ambitious one, and that they face some significant challenges and issues that may limit the success of the program if they are not addressed. The nature and extent of these issues warrants attention in a more detailed evaluation of the program. Key issues that emerged from consultations with DEEWR contract managers and education and training stakeholders include:

- The role and value of Partnership Brokers is not well understood or appreciated
- Jurisdictional support for the Partnership Broker model is critical to success, but is lacking
- Establishing sustainable partnerships takes time and success may not be realised within the term of provider contracts – or the term of this NP
- There is some overlap between Partnership Broker activity and other initiatives being implemented in some jurisdictions
- Some providers may not have the capacity to succeed
- Service delivery is costly and difficult to support in larger service regions and remote locations.

In addition, a number of interviewed partners and education and training stakeholders are concerned that linkages made by Partnership Brokers will not convert into sustainable partnerships without ongoing and “hands on” support from service providers – to facilitate partnership activities early, and provide ongoing support. While DEEWR has advised that the Partnership Brokers role includes “hands-on” support, particularly early in a partnership’s development, interviewed education and training stakeholders relayed a concern that Partnership Brokers may see this as outside their brief.

The importance and value of partnerships between schools, business and the community was universally recognised by interviewed stakeholders. There is also evidence that steps are being taken to tailor partnerships to address regional needs and providers report that they are effective in addressing those needs.

Governance of the Partnership Broker program has involved the establishment of jurisdictional and national networks of service providers. Those networks are now well established and service providers are keen to increase the focus of network activities on program improvements and knowledge sharing. Partnership Brokers value the support extended by DEEWR to help them in their role.

4.4.3 Youth Connections

This report does not reflect a detailed evaluation of the Youth Connections program. Findings and recommendations are based on reported program data and consultations with a sample of at least 15 Youth Connections providers, 20 young people and case workers, DEEWR program and contract managers, as well as around 125 stakeholders representing government and non-government education and training sectors across all States and Territories, (stakeholder groups engaged in this evaluation are presented in Attachment 8). This evaluation provides a high level assessment of the status and progress of this element of the NP toward targeted outcomes.

In comparison with previous Commonwealth safety net programs to improve outcomes for at risk young people, Youth Connections is a more flexible service delivery model, provides greater regional coverage and provides a more holistic suite of services across a broader continuum of disengagement. Youth Connections supports young people who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education, training and work. These are typically young people (45% are 15-16 years old) who face many significant barriers to engagement in education, training and work. This represents a complex service delivery challenge for service providers who are facing demands for service delivery that exceed their capacity to deliver.

Youth Connections service model has three components: Individual Support Services, Outreach and Re-engagement and Strengthening Services in the Region. Individual Support Services are helping young people to re-engage in education and training by addressing barriers to engagement and reconnecting young people to education and training. Outreach and Re-engagement activities had a slow start, but activities are starting to build resilience and self-esteem in young people and connect them to a range of support services. Service providers do not consistently understand the objectives of the Strengthening Services in the Region component and this funding element (albeit a small percentage of overall funding) is being directed toward a wide range of activities.

Youth Connections is consistent with the NP objectives and funding is being directed towards areas of need. A significant proportion of young people being supported by Youth Connections service providers live in low SES locations and reflect disadvantaged cohorts. The governance of the program is working well, however, administration and reporting was seen by service providers to be complex and time consuming, especially early in the program's establishment.

4.4.4 National Career Development

Under the NP, the Commonwealth provides a range of career development activities and resources to support young people, education and training providers and career practitioners across the country. There was a universal view across interviewed education, training and careers industry stakeholders that those career development activities and resources are valued. Those stakeholders want to see the Commonwealth commit to the continued provision of those resources and are keen to see that commitment reflected in the new National Career Development Strategy.

Within the term of this NP, DEEWR has committed to the development a National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) in collaboration with the States and Territories and engaging education, training and career industry stakeholders. The NCDS will provide guidance on how best to support young people to gain the skills to effectively manage their learning and career directions across their lifespan.

Delays in the completion of research projects have meant that the NCDS was not completed in time to be considered in this evaluation. The completion date for the NCDS has been rescheduled from November 2011 to March/April 2012.

The research process underpinning development of the NCDS has been extensive and consultation has involved more than 5,000 stakeholders representing the school, VET and ACE sectors, the careers industry and academics. States, Territories and non-government sectors have participated in research activities and are represented on the National Career Development Working Group (NCDWG) that was formed to advise on this element of the NP and career development issues more broadly.

Reports from two of the five research projects were published on the DEEWR website in December 2011. Summaries of research reports have been presented to the NCDWG and CICA. Other research papers have not been released more widely because of delays in completing research projects and a concern that findings and recommendations could contain commercially sensitive information (e.g. relating to current resource providers) and should not be released before obtaining Ministerial approval.

This has meant that interviewed education, training and career industry stakeholders who were involved in research activities or had an interest in research outcomes were largely unaware of research outcomes and the direction that will be taken by the NCDS. This poses a risk for the success of the NCDS and its implementation and needs to be addressed.

4.4.5 The Compact with Young Australians

The Compact was introduced to encourage young people to participate in education and training at a time of labour market contraction. Its introduction resulted in a more consistent national approach to requirements for young people to participate in compulsory education and training, and it appears to be associated with some increase in participation among targeted cohorts. However, it is difficult to separate this increase in participation from the impact of the GFC.

A sizeable proportion of the target cohort has remained not in education and not in the labour market since the introduction of the Compact and the GFC. Increases in the number of young people now required to participate in education and training who previously might not have stayed in school have created capacity and capability pressures for some schools that warrant further investigation.

State and Territory government representatives said the Compact was a catalyst for closer collaboration across the education and training systems and sectors and, in some cases, for collaboration between schools, VET and support services for young people. One outcome of this collaboration in different States and Territories has been clearer processes for helping early school leavers transition into further education, training and employment. Despite these positive outcomes, there is some room for improvement in the reporting of the Compact's impact – particularly in accessing data that might help understand the take up of education and training places as a result of changes in income support.

5 Recommendations for improvement

5.1 Issues and recommendations at the National Partnership level

The following table summarises issues identified at the NP level and strategies to address them. In addition:

- Issues and recommendations for the individual elements of the NP are outlined at the end of Attachments 3 to 7
- Issues and recommendations relating to data sources to evaluate NP performance are presented in Attachment 2.

Issue	Recommendations
<p>Performance measurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NP performance measures and data sources are flawed • Lack of robust comparative and longitudinal data • Reporting doesn't adequately reflect non-government sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing already identified issues regarding NP-level performance measures and data sources is not practical within the remaining term of the NP. • Longer term, however, the feasibility of establishing a nationally consistent longitudinal study of school leavers, building on existing State/Territory surveys, should be explored to improve understanding of transition pathways. Note: additional issues and recommendations to improve the quality of data sources are presented in Attachment 2. • Jurisdictions to work with non-government sector representatives to determine strategies to better reflect the contributions of Catholic and Independent schools in annual reports
<p>(Re)engagement of "at risk" or disengaged young people presents significant challenges for schools and training providers</p>	<p>Work with education and training providers to explore strategies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the use of alternative teaching strategies and of learning options that increase young people's engagement with learning, including literacy and numeracy and job readiness resources and courses for young people who need them • Broadening the range of curriculum choice so that the personal and vocational interests of all young people can be achieved • Ensuring that enough safety net services such as Youth Connections, mentoring or other personal support services for those likely to leave school early are available • Establishing resources and support to address common barriers to engagement that relate to low literacy, numeracy and work readiness skills of young people • Addressing the staff development needs of teachers to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge required to meet the needs of the least engaged students • Ensuring that sufficient funding for personal support services, alternative learning programs, appropriate teaching strategies, wider curriculum choice and teacher professional development is available
<p>Remote service delivery is a significant (and perennial) challenge across most elements, particularly Youth Connections, Partnership Brokers and MEAST</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a difficult issue to address within current funding and resourcing arrangements. However, findings and recommendations from the current research project being undertaken by YAT National Network on this topic should be reviewed, assessed and, where appropriate, implemented
<p>Impact and lessons learned from NP-funded initiatives are not well understood amongst stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore strategies to improve knowledge sharing about jurisdictional issues and initiatives • Use the MWG as a channel to disperse relevant evaluation and research findings across jurisdictions

Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation

Planning for the next phase of the evaluation is not yet complete, however, it is likely that it will consider the following:

- Have there been measurable changes in youth attainment and transition outcomes since the NP was introduced?
- Has the NP and its elements been implemented according to plan and achieved planned outcomes?
- What refinements need to be made in the last year of the NP?
- Are there factors that influence youth attainment and transition outcomes that are not addressed by the NP?
- What options are available to improve youth attainment and transition outcomes following the conclusion of the NP?

In addition, considering findings from year one of the evaluation, there are areas that emerged that warrant inclusion in year two of the evaluation for each element.

Attachment 1: The importance of Youth Attainment and Transitions

What is the transition phase?

In advanced OECD economies the transition phase has normally been regarded as beginning at the first age at which young people are legally able to become employed (generally 15 years), and as ending at an age when most are no longer studying but are in full-time employment⁴⁷. There are many variations around this rough rule of thumb. Clear definitions of starting and ending points become more difficult as the overlap between attending education and participation in the labour force grows, and as changes to compulsory education and training participation requirements replace the notion of a single clear cut point for the end of compulsory education.

The NP on Youth Attainment and Transitions (the NP) and its participation and completion requirements are a good illustration of this blurring of the distinction between compulsory and non-compulsory educational participation and between the point at which educational participation can end and employment can begin. Young people can become employed at the age of 15 in all States and Territories, but must complete Year 10 whatever their age. After completing Year 10 they must remain in education and training until the age of 17 if they have not been able to find work for at least 30 hours per week. As a consequence, the notion of a single legal age at which compulsory education ends no longer exists in Australia⁴⁸.

Regardless of how it is formally measured, the transition period is a distinctive phase in young people's lives, marked not only by a progressive movement towards economic independence, but also by other significant life changes: emotional and personal maturation; a progressive sharpening and crystallisation of career identity and occupational preferences; reduced dependence upon parental support for income and accommodation; and the beginning of family formation. All of these changes are closely linked and their successful resolution is important not only for young people individually, but also for public policy more broadly. They produce a distinctive set of policy issues that have substantial longer-term economic and social consequences. The policy challenges of the transition phase are separate from, although linked to, challenges that confront policy makers in earlier periods of young people's lives; for example ensuring sound and equitable educational achievement as a basis for participation in society as a citizen and worker. It is a period in which the basis is laid for many of the personal and vocational skills that will determine individuals' labour market trajectories for decades to come, in which education and training qualifications are obtained that are valued in the labour market and that make a profound difference to life chances.

The transition phase is characterised by a number of distinctive features of education and training systems and of the labour market. During the transition phase participation in education and training ceases to be compulsory. The choices that young people make about whether or not to take part in further education forces policy makers to take greater account of the relevance of education and training to young people's present and future lives and whether or not learning is engaging and interesting. The emergence of a choice about whether or not to participate is associated with increased choice about what and where to study. The curriculum ceases to be uniform or nearly uniform for all. Different areas of study begin to compete for young people's interest and

⁴⁷ For measurement purposes, the OECD (2000) defines the transition as beginning at the first age at which 75% of the population are in education and not working, and as ending at the first age at which 50% of the population are not in education and are working, and a variant on this definition has been adopted here (see Section A1.4 below).

⁴⁸ As a result of these changes Australia's arrangements now more closely resemble those of countries such as Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands in which young people may leave full-time education and training at the age of 15 or 16, but must remain in some form of part-time education and training until the age of 18.

engagement: the distinction between predominantly general education programs and predominantly vocational education programs emerges. Within general education programs the notion of a compulsory core of learning, other than English, largely disappears in Australia (although not in many other OECD countries), with young people being able to select what they study from a wide range of subjects within quite broadly defined and loose parameters. Those who opt for vocational education are faced with a plethora of programs, each oriented towards different occupational areas. Generally within these programs the extent of subject (or module) choice is typically quite limited compared to the level of choice available within general education programs⁴⁹. Increasing choice is also evident in the types of institutions that young people can attend (schools, public and private VET providers, and community-based or other providers), and in the emergence of qualifications that are differentiated in terms of their value in the labour market and in other parts of the education system. Choice becomes even more complex for young people when the same or similar programs and qualifications are available within different types of institutions. For example in Victoria, in principle each of the Victorian Certificate of Education, the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning and VET qualifications may be offered by schools, TAFE colleges or adult education providers, resulting in nine broad qualification-institutional pathway options for young people after the end of Year 10. Such complexity and choice underlines the importance of effective information and advice systems if the transition phase is to be effective.

Within the labour market the transition phase is marked by a number of features designed to ensure that labour markets are “youth friendly”⁵⁰ and that young people can more easily acquire valued skills during the move towards economic independence. These include: youth wages that help to protect the inexperienced from competition from older workers; training arrangements such as apprenticeship and traineeships designed to provide a structured and managed progression towards competence; training wages designed to recognise the progressive movement towards recognised competence; and the possibility of combining education and part-time work through arrangements such as apprenticeship, structured work placements, internships and part-time or vocation employment.

Despite these mechanisms to protect young people during the transition phase, it remains a risky one for many: inexperience, low skills and a lack of qualifications are associated with increased risks of becoming unemployed, of dropping out of the labour market and education completely and of unstable early career patterns, all of which have consequences down the track. Australian research supports international evidence in emphasising the importance of the success of the initial transition from school and its implications for the longer term. For example Lamb and McKenzie (2001) show that if the first post-school year is spent in a positive way (in structured training, full-time work or study) there is a strong likelihood that full-time work will be the main pattern experienced over the next six years. However, for those whose main activity in the first post-school year is working part-time (but not studying), or being unemployed, or outside the labour force altogether, only a minority subsequently experience a successful pathway over the next six years⁵¹.

Why does it matter?

All of the risks associated with the transition phase become greater when young people fail to complete Year 12 or the equivalent. As a simple illustration, in May 2011 the proportion of 15-19 year old school leavers not fully engaged in education, training or employment was more than twice as high among those who had not completed Year 12 (44%) as it was among those who had

⁴⁹ Sweet, R. (2010) Upper Secondary Curriculum Structures in OECD Countries, Victorian Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development and Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Melbourne.

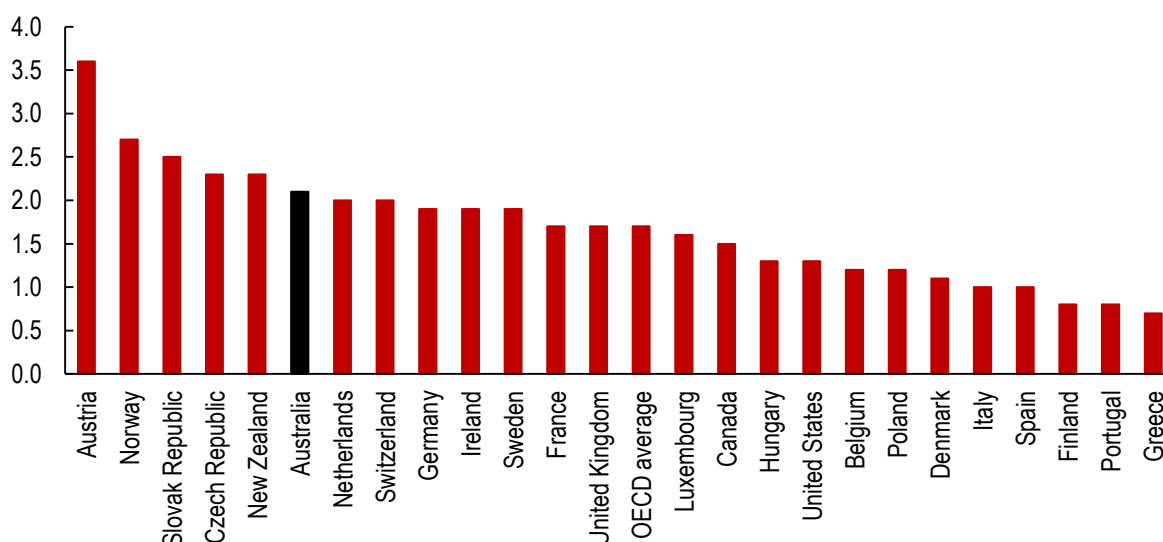
⁵⁰ OECD (2000) *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making the Transition Work*, Paris; OECD (2010) *Off to a Good Start? Jobs for Youth*, Paris.

⁵¹ Lamb, S. and McKenzie, P. (2001) Patterns of Success and Failure in the Transition from School to Work in Australia, *LSAY Research Report No. 18*, ACER, Melbourne. See also OECD (1998) “Getting started, settling in: The transition from education to the labour market”, *Employment Outlook*, Paris, pp. 81-122.

completed Year 12 (21%).⁵² The costs of failing to complete upper secondary education and of failing to make a successful transition to work are borne by individual young people, but also by society at large. This underpins the importance of the transition phase as a distinctive set of issues for public policy.

Australian Year 12 or equivalent completion rates are at best average when compared to many other advanced OECD economies, although our tertiary attainment rate is better than average. In 2009, 83% of 25-34 year olds had completed upper secondary education compared to an OECD average of 81%; however 45% had completed tertiary education compared to an OECD average of 37%.⁵³ Furthermore, educational participation among 15-19 year olds in Australia has remained flat over the last decade in the face of ongoing improvement within the OECD as a whole. In 2000 82% of 15-19 year old Australians were participating in education compared to an OECD average of 77%; in 2009 our participation rate was 80% compared to an OECD average of 82%.⁵⁴ As a result we are falling further and further behind the rest of the OECD. To compound the problem, the labour market penalty for failing to complete upper secondary education seems to be somewhat higher in Australia than elsewhere in the OECD: among 20-24 year olds who have left education, unemployment is twice as high for those who have not completed upper secondary education as it is for those who have. In countries such as Finland, Germany and Switzerland it is only around half again as high (Figure A1.1).

FIGURE A1.1 RELATIVE LABOUR MARKET DISADVANTAGE OF 20-24 YEAR OLDS WITHOUT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION¹



1. Among 20-24 year-olds who are not in education, the proportion unemployed among those who have not completed upper secondary education (ISCED<3) to the proportion unemployed among those who have completed upper secondary education or post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3/4).

Source: Attachment 2, Table A2.33

Our relatively low upper secondary participation and completion rates translate directly into reduced levels of GDP and reduced national productivity. For those who have not completed Year 12, labour force participation rates are lower, wages are lower, and unemployment rates are higher than for those who have completed Year 12. In 2005 Access Economics estimated that if Year 12 retention rates were to increase to 90% (from the estimated real retention rate at the time of 80%⁵⁵) GDP would be increased by 1.1%, Federal government revenue would increase by 0.27% of GDP, and that this would be achieved at a cost of only 0.05% of

⁵² See Attachment 2, Table A2.29.

⁵³ See Attachment 2, Table A2.32.

⁵⁴ OECD Education at a Glance 2010 Table C1.2 and Education at a Glance 2011 Table C1.1 a.

⁵⁵ In other words taking into account those who complete Year 12 or the equivalent in the years after leaving school.

GDP in increased educational spending⁵⁶. More recently, analysis of HILDA data by the National Institute of Labour Studies has shown that school dropouts are more likely to be employed casually, to experience unemployment spells, are less likely to be employed on a permanent and full-time basis and have lower hourly wages than are those who have completed Year 12.⁵⁷

The benefits for individuals and for society of increased upper secondary completion go beyond the economic: it is associated with improved health, wider civic and social engagement, increased happiness and wellbeing and reduced crime⁵⁸. A recent OECD review of the benefits of reducing early school leaving and preventing school dropout concludes that:

*“Completing upper secondary education makes for a greater number of citizens that cost society less and produce more. High investments in dropout prevention strategies is money well spent. The benefits in terms of higher tax revenues, less public spending on health, public assistance and criminal justice largely outweigh the costs.”*⁵⁹

What influences transition outcomes?

The transition process is complex. It is a result of the economic and social context within which the transition takes place; of the institutional arrangements within education, the labour market and the income support system that mediate the external context; and of the characteristics of young people themselves (see Table A1.1). Some of the factors that influence school-to-work outcomes are more important than others; their relative importance can be changed by the ways that they interact; some are more important at some points in the transition than at other points; and some factors can be regarded as influences upon outcomes at one stage but as outcomes at a later stage.⁶⁰ An added complication is that we normally judge the success or otherwise of the transition using several yardsticks: educational criteria such as attainment rates; labour market criteria such as earnings and unemployment rates; and personal criteria such as happiness and job satisfaction. Most of the factors that influence the transition can, and do, have different impacts upon different types of outcomes.^{61,62}

⁵⁶ Access Economics (2005) *The Economic Benefit of Increased Participation in Education and Training*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Sydney.

⁵⁷ Nous Group (2011) *Schooling Challenges and Opportunities: A Report for the Review of Funding for Schooling Panel*, DEEWR, Canberra.

⁵⁸ Schuller, T. and Desjardins, R. (2007) *Understanding the Social Outcomes of Learning*, OECD/CERI, Paris.

⁵⁹ Lyche, C. (2010) Taking on the Completion Challenge: A Literature Review on Policies to Prevent Dropout and Early School Leaving, *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 53, Paris.

⁶⁰ For example educational attainment is strongly influenced by educational achievement and by socio-economic status, yet is in its own right a significant influence upon labour market outcomes.

⁶¹ For example immigrant status has a positive although not strong relationship to educational outcomes but a negative although not strong relationship to labour market outcomes.

⁶² See Raffe, D. (2008) “The concept of transition system”, *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 21, (4), pp. 277–296; Sweet, R. (2009) *Factors Influencing Youth Transitions: A Review of the Evidence*, Victorian Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development and Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Melbourne.

TABLE A1.1 INFLUENCES ON TRANSITION OUTCOMES

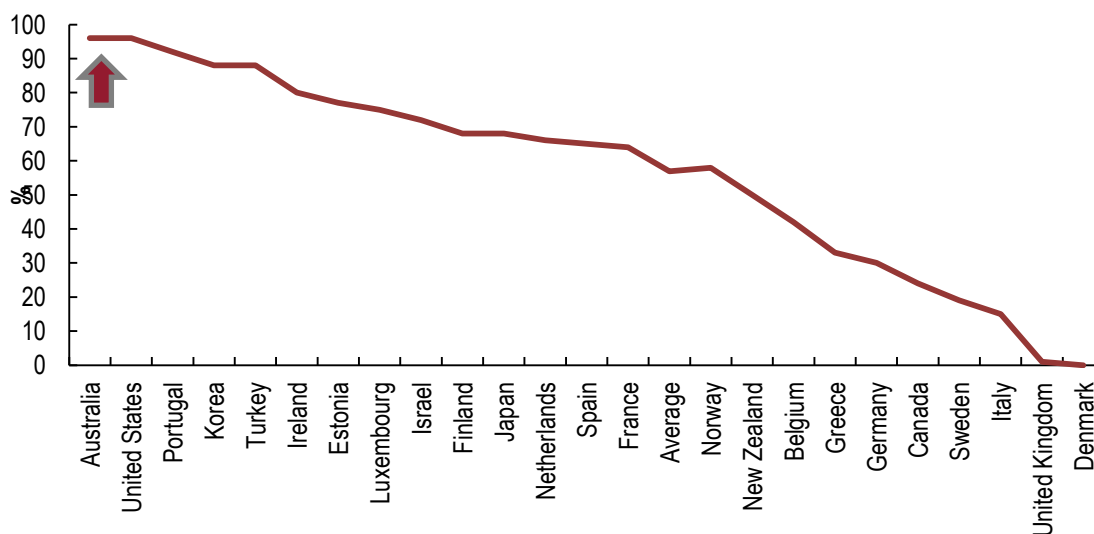
Economic and social context	Institutional arrangements	Personal qualities
State of the labour market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater impact than elsewhere • Large GFC impact (cf OECD) The structure of advantage and disadvantage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SES • Geographical location • Type of school • Immigrant status • Indigenous status 	Education and training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School climate and quality • Pedagogy • Curriculum breadth and choice • Types of institutions available • Career guidance • School-work combinations • School-community links/social capital • Pathways: quality and diversity Labour market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth wages • Training wages • Employment protection Income support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment benefit levels • Unemployment benefit conditions • Education participation payments 	Educational achievement Gender Resilience Self confidence Aspirations Career planning skills

One of the most significant influences upon Australia's transition outcomes is the overall state of the labour market. Youth unemployment rates, among both teenagers and young adults, are highly dependent upon the overall state of the economy and are highly correlated with the overall unemployment rate. This is not necessarily the case in other advanced economies, and the relationship between transition outcomes and the overall health of the labour market, particularly among teenagers, seems stronger in Australia than in almost all other OECD countries. Figure A1.2 shows that over the 1990-2010 period, which included two major economic downturns in nearly all OECD economies, 96% of the variation in teenage unemployment rates could be accounted for, or explained by, the unemployment rate among 25-64 year olds. This was the highest in the OECD, equalled only by the United States. Among the 25 countries for which comparable data is available, the average was only 57%: in Denmark there was no relationship at all between teenage unemployment levels and overall unemployment rates over the period. While Australian teenage unemployment rates appear to be almost completely predictable from overall adult unemployment levels, teenage unemployment is typically lower than might be expected on the basis of the overall health of the labour market in countries such as Germany, Japan and Switzerland⁶³. Taken together these suggest that elsewhere factors such as the nature of the institutional arrangements that support the transition may have a greater impact upon its outcomes than in Australia⁶⁴.

⁶³ And in countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Italy teenage unemployment is typically higher than might be expected on the basis of overall unemployment levels.

⁶⁴ However it needs to be noted that the same type of relationship between overall labour market conditions and transition outcomes may not apply in the case of indicators other than teenage unemployment. For example we would not expect indicators such as educational participation and attainment or the distribution of attainment across social categories to be as sensitive to variation in the state of the labour market.

FIGURE A1.2 VARIATION IN TEENAGE (15-19 YEAR OLD) UNEMPLOYMENT PREDICTED FROM ADULT (25-64 YEAR OLD) UNEMPLOYMENT, 1990-2010



Source: Attachment 2, Table A2.34

Another very important influence upon transition outcomes is the structure of advantage and disadvantage within the wider society and the distribution of economic, social and cultural resources⁶⁵. The socio-economic status of young people's families is the most significant of these influences, having both a direct influence upon transition outcomes such as labour force participation rates and an indirect influence through its impact upon factors such as educational achievement that have a direct influence upon outcomes. Lower levels of socio-economic background are associated with: lower levels of engagement in learning; lower rates of upper secondary completion; lower university entry scores at the end of Year 12; lower rates of participation in higher education; and lower rates of participation in successful, smooth or uninterrupted pathways between school and work⁶⁶. As an example, Table A2.31 shows that the proportion of 18-24 year olds who are fully engaged in education and training is a third again as high among those from the highest SES quintile as it is among those from the lowest SES quintile (79% compared to 59%).

Other contextual factors such as geographical location, Indigenous status, type of school attended and immigrant status can also be shown to have an influence upon transition outcomes, but once the impact of socio-economic status has been taken into account, the impact of these factors is substantially less than the impact of socio-economic status itself, and in some cases disappears completely.

The impact of contextual factors upon the transition to work is mediated by institutional arrangements within education and training, the labour market and the income support system. These include factors such as: the range of curriculum choice offered to young people; the types of educational institutions (schools, colleges) and programs (general or vocational) that are provided; career guidance arrangements; employment protection rates; student participation in the labour market; youth wage rates; safety nets for school dropouts; and income support provision and eligibility requirements⁶⁷.

The impact of such institutional arrangements can be difficult to observe at a single point in time and within a single jurisdiction. Their impact is also difficult to independently assess in relation to the impact of other factors because they are far more difficult to

⁶⁵ See, for example, Shavit, Y. And Müller, W. (1998) *From School to Work: A Comparative Study of Educational Qualifications and Occupational Destinations*, Clarendon Press, Oxford and Penman, R. (2004) *What Do we Know About the Experiences of Australian Youth: An Easy Reference Guide to Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth Research Reports, 1996-2003*, ACER, Melbourne.

⁶⁶ PISA 2009 Australian report/ PISA 2009 Table III.1.5, Penman (2004) op.cit.

⁶⁷ For an overview see Sweet (2009) op.cit.

measure than factors such as SES and educational achievement⁶⁸. However the role played by institutional arrangements in transition outcomes can become evident when they change over time, when countries with different types of arrangements are compared, or by comparing outcomes for different groups. Examples of the impact of institutional arrangements upon transition outcomes include:

- in the Australian Capital Territory student engagement, participation and attainment all increased following the replacement of Year 7-12 schools with separate junior high schools and senior secondary colleges in the mid-1970s⁶⁹
- the introduction of reforms designed to widen curriculum choice within Australian States and Territories can be shown to have resulted in increased school participation⁷⁰
- the introduction of comprehensive safety net arrangements to create early intervention for school dropouts in Norway in the mid-1990s was associated with a rapid reduction in the numbers neither in education nor employment⁷¹
- countries in which a high proportion of students work part-time have better youth employment outcomes than countries where few students are employed (Figure A1.3), and longitudinal studies show that Australian students who are employed have better labour market outcomes than those who do not combine work and study⁷²
- in countries where employment protection rates are high, the average duration of youth unemployment is longer than in countries such as Australia where it is low⁷³
- arrangements that create and encourage close relationships between schools, employers and communities can increase student engagement with learning and improve post-school employment outcomes⁷⁴
- career education and guidance can be shown to have an impact upon career decision-making skills and knowledge of employment opportunities, and to have a small but positive overall impact upon educational participation and attainment⁷⁵.

⁶⁸ One of the rare exceptions is Gängl, M. (2001) Education and Labour Market Entry Across Europe: The Impact of Institutional Arrangements in Training Systems and Labour Markets, *Working Paper*, Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES), <http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/catewe/papers/PAPER5.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Anderson, D., Saltet, M. and Vervoorn, A. (1980) *Schools to Grow In: An Evaluation of Secondary Colleges*, ANU Press, Canberra.

⁷⁰ Vickers, M. and Lamb, S. (2002) "Why state policies matter: The influence of curriculum policy on participation in post-compulsory education and training", *Australian Journal of Education*, Vol. 46 (2), pp. 172-188.

⁷¹ OECD (2000) op. cit..

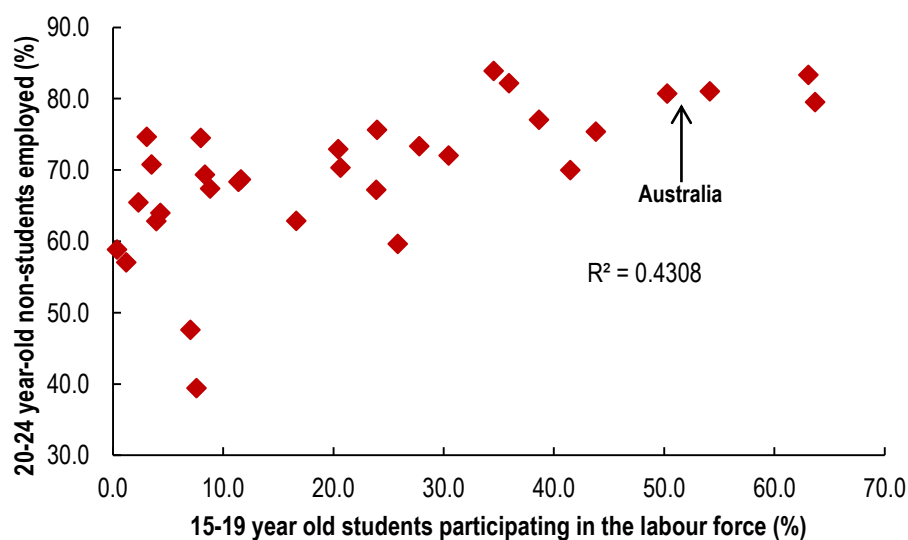
⁷² Robinson, L. (1999) The Effects of Part-time Work on School Students, *LSAY Research Report No. 9*, Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne.

⁷³ OECD (2000) op.cit..

⁷⁴ Cumming, J. and Carbines, B. (1997) *Reforming Schools Through Workplace Learning*, National Schools Network, Ryde; Rosenbaum, J. (1999) "Preconditions for effective school-to-work linkages in the United States", In Stern, D. & Wagner, D. (1999) *International Perspectives on the School-to-Work Transition*, Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ, pp. 503-538; ACER (2008) *Schools First: Final Report*, Melbourne; PhillipsKPA (2010) *Unfolding Opportunities: A Baseline Study of School-business Relationships in Australia*, DEEWR, Canberra.

⁷⁵ Bezanson, L. (2008) *Career Development. From Under-Represented to Inclusive: Opening Doors to Post-Secondary Participation*, The Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation, Montreal; Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) (2007) *The Public Benefits of Career Development Services: A Position Paper*, CICA, Sydney.

FIGURE A1.3: LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES AMONG 15-19 YEAR OLD STUDENTS AND EMPLOYMENT RATES AMONG 20-24 YEAR OLD NON-STUDENTS, OECD COUNTRIES, 2009



Source: Attachment 2, Table A2.35

The nature of the pathways that young people take part in (general education; full-time vocational education; or apprenticeship) seems to matter less than the quality of these pathways and the diversity of the choices that they offer. Labour market outcomes (pay, employment) do differ between pathways, but this can largely be explained by the different characteristics of the young people that enter them: for example students in general education programs tend to have higher achievement levels and come from more advantaged social backgrounds than students in vocational pathways.⁷⁶

A large body of evidence shows that the quality and nature of schooling has a significant influence upon transition outcomes, over and above the social composition of the school or average student achievement levels. Young people who enjoy school and find what they are learning interesting are less likely to drop out than are those who dislike school and find what it has to offer boring. A positive school climate is likely to be associated with increased engagement with learning, and hence with increased participation. Highly bureaucratic and impersonal school climates, on the other hand, encourage disengagement with learning and early school leaving.⁷⁷

A number of personal characteristics influence transition outcomes. Gender is one such factor, with boys and girls typically demonstrating different patterns of educational preferences and occupational choice, and having differing overall educational and labour market outcomes.⁷⁸ Achievement in basic skills such as literacy and numeracy is one of the most powerful influences on both educational and labour market outcomes. In longitudinal studies the impact of educational achievement measured at the age of 14 or 15 upon educational attainment and labour market outcomes tends to rival that of the socio-economic characteristics of

⁷⁶ Ryan, P. (1998) "Is apprenticeship better? A review of the economic evidence," *Vocational Education and Training*, Vol. 50 (2) pp. 289-325; Ryan, P. (2001) "The school-to-work transition: A cross-national perspective", *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 39 (March), pp. 34-92; Ryan, P. (2003) "Evaluating vocationalism", *European Journal of Education*, Vol. 38 (2), pp. 147-162; Karmel, T. and Liu, S. (2011) *Which Paths Work for Which Young People?*, NCVER, Adelaide.

⁷⁷ See, for example: Quinn, T. "The influences of school policies and practices on dropout rates", *NASSP Bulletin*, Vol. 75 (No. 538) pp.73-83; Field, S., Kuczera, M., and Pont, B. (2007) *No More Failures: Ten Steps to Equity in Education*, OECD, Paris; OECD (2010) *Strong Performers and Successful Reformers: Lessons from PISA for the United States*, Paris; Lyche (2010) op.cit; OECD (2012) *Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools*, Paris.

⁷⁸ The overlap is substantial, but on average girls tend to achieve better educational outcomes, and boys tend to achieve better labour market outcomes.

students.⁷⁹ Table A1.2, for example, shows that at age 25 Year 12 completion rates among those who were in the highest achievement quintile at the age of 15 were 36% above those of the lowest quintile of achievers, and the proportion not working was 46% higher among the lowest achievers than among the highest achievers.

TABLE A1.2: TRANSITION OUTCOMES FOR 25 YEAR OLDS IN 2009 BY ACHIEVEMENT QUARTILE¹

Transition outcome by age 25:	Achievement quartile			
	Q1 (Lowest)	Q2	Q3	Q4 (Highest)
Completed Year 12 (%)	69	79	88	94
Completed Year 12 or Certificate III or higher (%)	87	93	98	98
Not working (unemployed or NILF) (%)	14	12	9	8
Permanent/ongoing employment (%)	62	67	73	73
In full-time education or full-time employment (%)	69	75	77	83
Not in education and in full-time employment (%)	67	72	75	82.
Average weekly pay for those in full-time employment (\$)	\$1,011	\$1,104	\$1,082	\$1,148
Satisfied with the kind of work you do (%)	95	95	95	94

Other personal characteristics associated with transition outcomes, although commonly to a lesser extent than gender and educational achievement, include factors such as resilience, self-confidence, aspiration levels and career planning skills. Young people who have high self-esteem, who are confident and who understand themselves, who have a good understanding of educational and work opportunities, who focus upon their future education and work and who are able to plan and to make decisions, achieve better transition outcomes than do young people who show the reverse characteristics⁸⁰. Australian longitudinal studies show that aspirations, a sense of achievement and self-confidence are all significantly related to transition outcomes. Low ambitions and aspirations can compound the effects of low achievement and disadvantaged backgrounds, but high ambitions and aspirations can help to counteract them.⁸¹

The relationship between personal characteristics such as self-confidence and planning skills and transition outcomes has important implications for policy. While the youth research literature emphasises the complementary roles of structure and agency in influencing young people's outcomes⁸², Australian policy has tended to focus largely upon the development of effective structures and institutional arrangements to facilitate the transition. Policies to develop competent and effective young people who can successfully manage their transitions and navigate their way through an uncertain post-school world have tended to receive less attention. This is in contrast to some other countries, such as Denmark, where the development of resilience, personal

⁷⁹ Penman (2004) op.cit.. summarises Australian evidence from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth.

⁸⁰ See for example Cassen, R., Feinstein, L. and Graham, P. (2008) "Educational outcomes: Adversity and resilience", *Social Policy and Society*, Vol. 8 (1), pp. 73-85; Ham, R., Junankar, R. & Wells, R. (2009) Occupational Choice: Personality Matters, *Discussion Paper No. 4105*, IZA (Institute for the Study of Labor), Bonn; Pinquart, M. Juang, L., and Silbereisen, R. (2003) "Self-efficacy and successful school-to-work transition: A longitudinal study", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 63 (3), pp. 329-346.

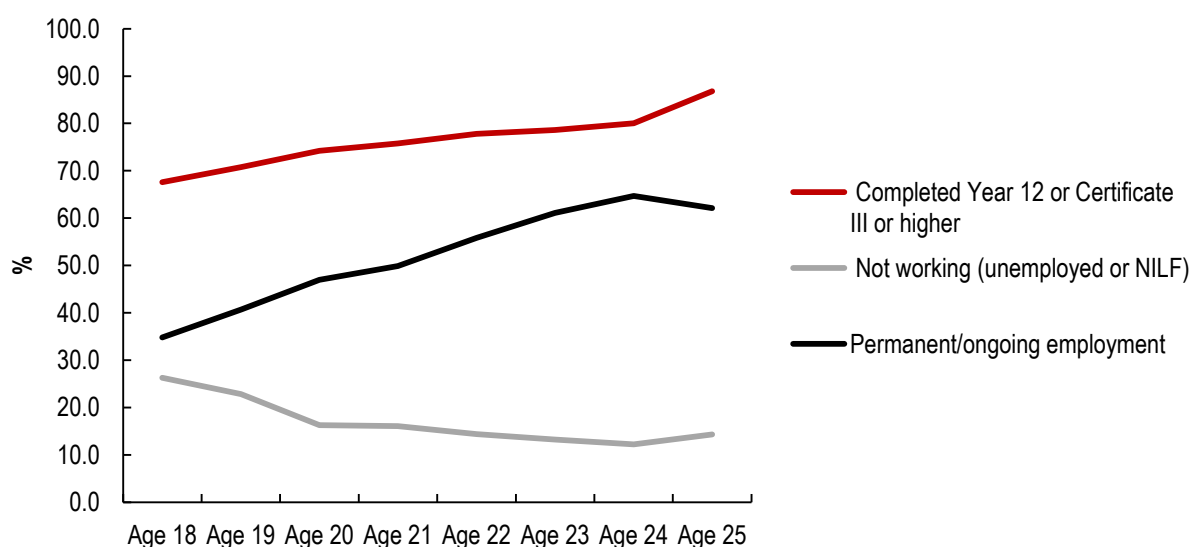
⁸¹ Croll, P. (2008) "Occupational choice, socio-economic status and educational attainment: A study of the occupational choices of young people in the British Household Panel Survey", *Research Papers in Education*, Vol. 23 (3), pp. 243-268.

⁸² Wyn, J. and Dwyer, P. (2000) "New patterns of youth transition in education", *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 52 (164), pp. 147-163; Evans, K. (2002) "Taking control of their lives? Agency in young adult transitions in England and the new Germany" *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 5 (3), pp. 245-269.

competence and effectiveness has tended to be seen as just as important in transition policies as the development of effective institutional arrangements.⁸³

The key to improving Australia's overall transition outcomes is to improve outcomes among the lowest achievers and the most disadvantaged. Early educational achievement and socio-economic status are powerful influences upon later educational attainment and labour market chances, and individual factors that signal disadvantage such as low achievement, low socio-economic status and living in a remote area can compound one another in their impact upon outcomes. However they are not all determining. Australian longitudinal data shows that low achievers and the disadvantaged demonstrate a wide range of outcomes, whatever the average for the group. Table A1.2, for example, shows that by the age of 25, the great majority of those who were in the lowest achievement quintile at the age of 15 in 1998 had completed Year 12 or a Certificate III qualification, and the majority were in permanent employment. The average weekly earnings and job satisfaction among the lower achieving group differed little from earnings and satisfaction levels among the highest achieving group. For the LSAY 1998 cohort, Figure A1.4 shows transition outcomes for the lowest achievement quintile for each year between the ages of 18 and 25. It emphasises the point that, regardless of the starting point, low achievers' outcomes tend to improve over time and their labour market outcomes tend to improve at a faster rate than their education outcomes.

FIGURE A1.4: TRANSITION OUTCOMES BY AGE FOR THE LOWEST ACHIEVEMENT QUINTILE, 1998 LSAY COHORT



Source: NCVET Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth 1998 Cohort Reports, <http://www.lsay.edu.au/cohort/1998/101.html>.

Figure a1.4: Transition outcomes by age for the lowest achievement quintile, 1998 LSAY cohort

Source: Attachment 2, Table A2.38

Understanding what can produce good outcomes among groups that otherwise might be expected not to succeed provides important pointers for public policy. And while many of the steps that can reduce early school leaving need to be taken in primary and lower secondary education, interventions at the upper secondary level can also be shown to work.

OECD studies show that resilient students – those disadvantaged students who beat the odds and succeed at school – spend more time learning than disadvantaged low achievers, are motivated, engaged and confident learners, even after accounting for a host of student and school background factors.⁸⁴ Australian studies using PISA data of low-achieving students who have

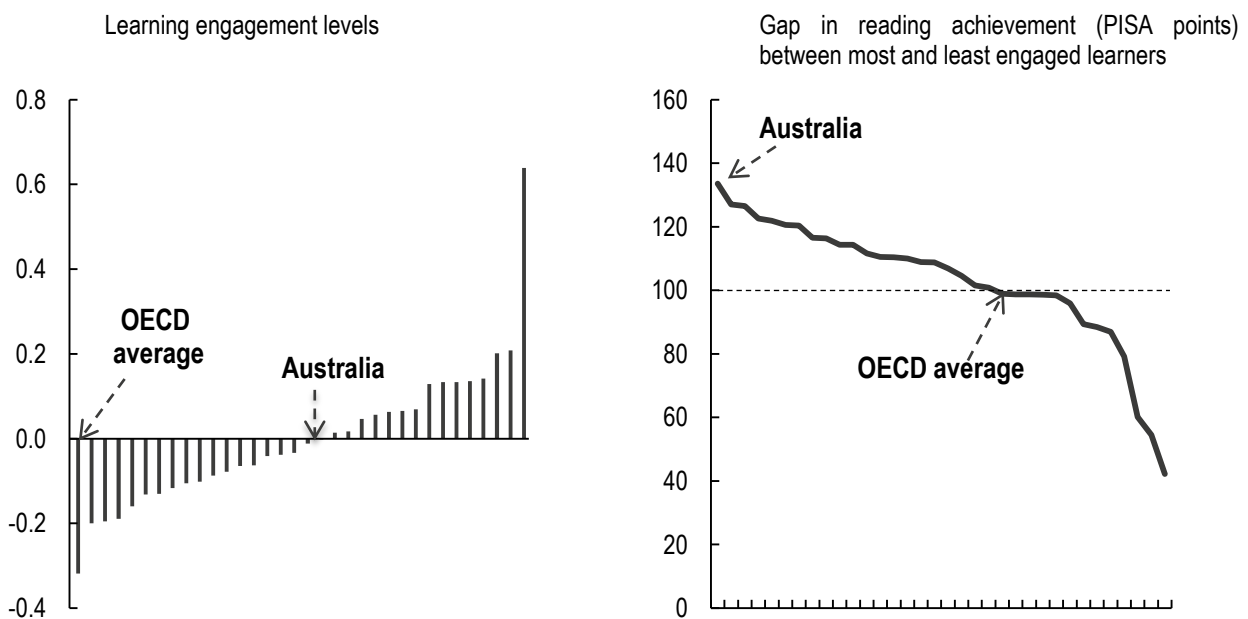
⁸³ OECD (1998) Thematic Review of the Transition from Initial Education to Working Life: Country Note: Denmark, Paris; Danish Ministry of Education (2008) *The Danish Vocational Education and Training System*, 2nd Edn., Copenhagen.

⁸⁴ OECD (2011) *Against the Odds: Disadvantaged Students Who Succeed in School*, Paris.

successful post-school outcomes emphasise the importance of motivation, of being engaged with learning and of experiencing a positive school climate. They show the importance of having career plans and of information and support for job-finding at the point of leaving school and immediately afterwards.⁸⁵ Other research shows that effective strategies targeted at low-achieving and disadvantaged students can include mentoring and career guidance, addressing welfare needs and family outreach, tutoring and individual case management.⁸⁶ However, approaches targeted at individual students need to be complemented by whole-of-school strategies that include initiatives targeted at teacher development and an emphasis upon the role of school leadership in producing improved engagement and completion.⁸⁷

PISA 2009 data suggests that the challenge that we face in raising engagement with learning is greater than in most other OECD countries. Figure A1.5 shows that while levels of learning engagement (with reading) among 15 year olds were average in 2009 when compared to other OECD countries, the gap in reading achievement between the most and least engaged learners was the greatest in the OECD. A similar pattern emerged in PISA 2006 with science engagement. Whether lack of interest in learning leads to low achievement, or low achievement leads to low interest in learning, the fact remains that we face a substantial challenge in raising achievement levels among those disinterested in learning and in raising interest in learning among low achievers. Both have implications for transition outcomes given the demonstrated links between both disengagement from learning and low achievement and early school leaving.

FIGURE A1.5 LEARNING ENGAGEMENT LEVELS AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS, 2009



Source: Attachment 2, Table A2.35.

⁸⁵ Thomson, S. and Hillman, K. (2010) *Against the Odds: Influences on Post-school Success of Low Performers*, NCVER, Adelaide.

⁸⁶ See for example the literature reviewed in Lamb, S. and Rice, S. (2008) *Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Melbourne.

⁸⁷ Lamb and Rice (2008) op. cit.; OECD (2012) op.cit.

What characterises the transition process in Australia?

The transition process in Australia is characterised by a number of features that differ somewhat from the process that can be observed in some other OECD countries.⁸⁸ It appears to be somewhat more fragmented than in some other countries, with those who have left school likely to have many changes between employment, unemployment, education and other activities before settling down to secure full-time employment. While this pattern appears to be similar to that observed in the United States, it stands in contrast to patterns in countries such as Germany and the Japan, where transition processes are smoother, with young people having fewer job changes and fewer changes of labour force status in the years immediately after leaving education.⁸⁹ The incidence of part-time work among students is high when compared to many other OECD countries⁹⁰, and the labour market is quite a “youth friendly” one, with many opportunities for education and employment to be combined, youth- and training-specific wage arrangements, and low levels of employment protection. Although the apprenticeship-type pathway is smaller than in some other countries, it is larger than in others. Only around 8% of 15-19 year olds take part in an apprenticeship or traineeship, compared to around 60% or more in Germany and Switzerland, and between a quarter and a half in Norway, Austria and Denmark. However, in countries such as Japan, Korea and the United States apprenticeship arrangements for youth to all intents and purposes do not exist⁹¹ The general education pathway is somewhat larger in Australia and the vocational pathway is somewhat smaller than in many other OECD countries, particularly when compared to European countries, although not when compared to some Anglo-Saxon countries.⁹² And Australia is one of the few countries in which lower secondary and upper secondary schooling typically take place within the same institutional setting: elsewhere within the OECD separate post-compulsory schools or colleges are the norm. This pattern appears to be associated with a somewhat reduced curriculum choice in Australia, and with a participation rate that is somewhat lower than it might otherwise be.⁹³

The Australian transition process has been changing in a number of important ways in recent years. One is the increasing length of the transition. In the mid 1980s young people took, on average, less than a year to find work after they had left education, and only a little over a year to find a full-time job. By 2011 it was taking them an average of three years to find any work after leaving education, and nearly five years to settle into a full-time job. In the mid 1980s most young people had found a full-time job by the time they were 18: now they are closer to the age of 23 before settling into full-time work (Figure A1.6).

The increasing length of the transition has been associated with an increasing gap between the time that it takes to find any job and the time that it takes to find a full-time job. This growing gap is part of the picture of a more unstable and uncertain transition process. Spending time in short-term, part-time and casual work is now much more frequent before young people settle into a career job. And over and above this form of uncertainty and instability, the period since the early 1990s has been notable for an increase in the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (the NEET category), and within this group

⁸⁸ Transition policies are a shared responsibility in Australia, both between levels of government, public and private providers, and education, labour and welfare authorities, but all of these features can be found elsewhere.

⁸⁹ OECD (1996) “Growing into jobs: Youth and the labour market over the 1980s and 1990s”, *Employment Outlook*, Paris, pp. 109-160; McKenzie, P. (2002) “Pathways for youth in Australia” In Burke, G. and Reuling, J. (Eds.) *Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning in Australia and Germany*, NCVET, Adelaide.

⁹⁰ Half of all 15-19 year-old students were in the labour force in 2009 compared to an OECD average of only 22%: See Figure A1.3 and table A2.35.

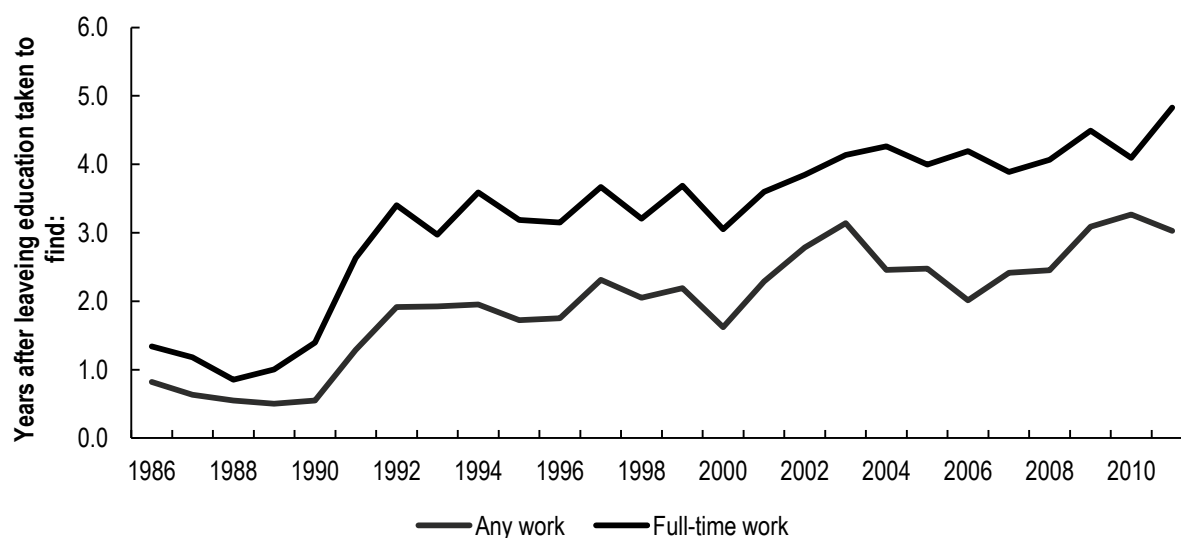
⁹¹ NCVET (2011) *Young People in Education and Training 2009*, Adelaide.

⁹² Sweet, R. (2009) “Apprenticeship, pathways and career guidance: A cautionary tale”, In Rauner, F., Smith, E., Hauschildt, U. and Zelloth, H. (Eds) *Innovative Apprenticeships: Promoting Successful School-to-Work Transitions*, Lit Verlag, Berlin, 2009.

⁹³ Sweet, R. (2009) *Structural Arrangements for the Provision of Senior Secondary Schooling*, Victorian Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development and Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Melbourne.

there has been a rise in the number of inactive youth not seeking employment. This category increased in size during the recession of the early 1990s and has shown little decline since then (see Figure 4.1 and Attachment 2, Tables A2.28-A2.30)⁹⁴.

FIGURE A1.6 THE DURATION OF THE TRANSITION FROM EDUCATION TO FULL-TIME WORK, 1986-2011



Source: Attachment 2, Table A2.36

Another marked feature of the transition landscape in recent years has been a sharp decline in full-time employment opportunities for teenagers, a decline that has been most evident during periods of economic downturn and, in particular, during the recession of the early 1990s and the 2008-09 Global Financial Crisis. However, this decline has not been confined to them (Figure A1.7).⁹⁵ As elsewhere in the OECD, the prospects for a permanent recovery of these jobs are minimal.⁹⁶ This is because the long-term decline in full-time employment among teenagers has a substantial (although not complete) basis in structural changes in the economy that raise productivity through the use of more advanced and efficient work processes and through technological innovation.⁹⁷ This reduces demand for under-trained, less skilled, inexperienced and low qualified labour. Labour market downturns provide firms with an additional impetus to improve efficiency and productivity: for this reason reduced employment opportunities for teenagers during recessions and, in particular for those without Year 12, tend to be a permanent feature of the labour market.

These changes in the labour market have co-existed with relatively static school participation and Year 12 completion rates, and with minimal change in TAFE participation by young people who are not at school.

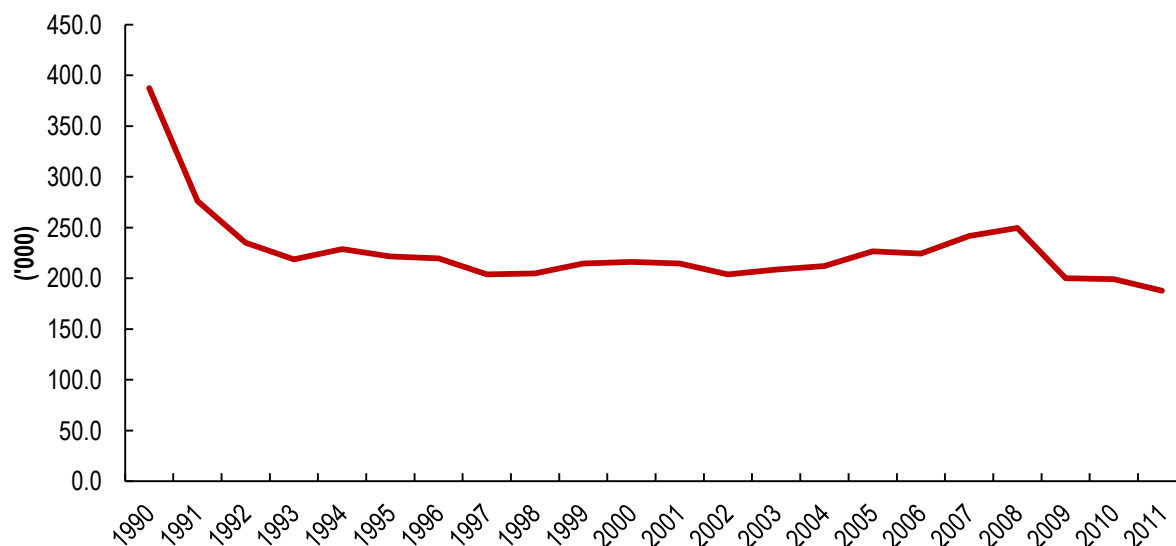
⁹⁴ See also Dusseldorp Skills Forum (1998) *Australia's Youth: Reality and Risk*. See also subsequent editions of the publication, later retitled to *How Young People are faring*, now published annually by the Foundation for Young Australians (<http://www.fya.org.au/research/research-publications/>).

⁹⁵ Between August 1990 and August 2011 the proportion of 15-19 year-olds in full-time work fell from 14.2% of the age group to 6.0%, and the total number of teenagers employed full-time fell by a half: from 387,400 to 187,900.

⁹⁶ Scarpetta, S., Sonnet, A. and Manfredi, T. (2010) *Rising youth unemployment during the crisis: How to prevent negative long-term consequences on a generation?* *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Papers*, No. 106, Paris.

⁹⁷ Sweet, R. (1987) *Australian trends in skill requirements: A critique of the current orthodoxy*, In Burke, G. and Rumberger, R. (Eds) *The Future Impact of Technology on Work and Education*, London: The Falmer Press, 1987.

FIGURE A1.7 15-19 YEAR OLDS EMPLOYED FULL-TIME, 1990-2011 ('000)



Source: Attachment 2, Table A2.37

An international perspective on transitions

A rise in the proportion of young people who are neither in education, employment nor training and an increasingly lengthy transition period are not unique to Australia and have been experienced by many other OECD countries in recent years.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, on some measures Australia's transition outcomes compare favourably to the OECD as a whole. For example, among 15-24 year olds who had left education in 2009, 76% were employed, a figure exceeded only by the Netherlands, Austria and Denmark and well above the OECD average of 64%; long-term unemployment among youth is only about half the rate observed in the OECD as a whole and young people appear to move into work more swiftly after they leave education than in many other OECD countries.⁹⁹

These outcomes owe much to the strength of our economy and labour market, with strong growth, high labour force participation and high employment rates in recent years. It can also be attributed to the strongly "youth friendly" nature of our labour market compared to many other OECD countries.¹⁰⁰ However, as indicated above, the flip-side of this is that Australia's transition outcomes seem to be more strongly influenced by economic downturns (and, by implication, less dependent upon the strength of our institutional arrangements to support transitions) than in many, if not most, other OECD countries. And while our labour market outcomes are quite good, from a comparative perspective our school (upper secondary) participation and attainment rates are at best average and have been flat in recent years in the face of ongoing improvement in the OECD as a whole.

"Australia is indeed characterised by a relatively low retention rate in education beyond age 16, as compared with many other OECD countries."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Quintini, G., Martin, J. and Martin, S. (2007) The Changing Nature of the School-to-work Transition Process in OECD Countries, *Discussion Paper* No. 2582, IZA (Institute for the Study of Labour), Bonn.

⁹⁹ See OECD (2011) *Education at a Glance*, Paris, Table C4.2a; OECD (2011) *Employment Outlook*, Paris; OECD (2009) *Jobs for Youth: Australia*, Paris.

¹⁰⁰ OECD (2009). *Jobs for Youth: Australia*, Paris This is the result of factors such as a high incidence of part-time employment by students, low rates of employment protection, the existence of youth wages and training wages, and the existence of apprenticeship arrangements.

¹⁰¹ OECD (2009) *Jobs for Youth: Australia*, Paris, p. 13..

International experience shows that there is no single solution to young peoples' transition problems and countries can achieve good outcomes in quite different ways. Nevertheless, there are a number of common elements. In its 2000 review of the school-to-work transition¹⁰² the OECD suggested that successful overall transition outcomes can arise from a mix of factors:

- A strong economy and a healthy and youth friendly labour market
- Well organised pathways, whatever their nature, connecting initial education to work or further study
- Widespread opportunities to combine work and education through methods such as apprenticeship, structured work placements, after school and holiday jobs
- Tight safety nets for those at risk, both before they leave school and for those who leave school without completing upper secondary education
- Good information and guidance
- Effective institutions and processes involving key stakeholders.

A more recent OECD review that focused heavily upon youth labour market issues¹⁰³ has highlighted a number of key policy messages that are consistent with those of the earlier review:

- Stronger apprenticeship arrangements
- Mutual obligation approaches that combine carrots and sticks and activation strategies are important in helping to prevent and address welfare dependency during the transition phase
- Raising the school leaving age as a strategy can be effective, but it will give rise to enforcement issues and, to be successful, needs a strong central focus upon wider learning choices and upon raising motivation and engagement with learning
- A focus upon those who are most at risk is needed well before they leave school, requires early intervention for those who drop out of school and flounder in the labour market, requires intensive intervention, and is costly, but can lead to reduced social costs in the form of reduced crime and drug dependency as well as labour market gains.

Future challenges for national strategies to improve transition outcomes

The NP and its elements clearly address many of the factors that research evidence shows to be effective in achieving successful transition outcomes, as well as reflecting some of the strategies for achieving effective outcomes that emerge from international reviews. For example, Youth Connections clearly focuses upon those most at risk in the transition; Partnership Brokers concerns itself with improving school-community links; the Compact strengthens our mutual obligation approach to income support; the National Careers Strategy will focus upon ways to improve career services for youth; inter alia MEAST seeks to extend opportunities for young people to combine workplace experience with education; and the way in which the NP is being implemented is attempting to improve intergovernmental processes in support of the transition.

Nevertheless, it is important to be realistic about what the NP might achieve, given the strength of the impact of the state of the labour market, socio-economic status and early educational achievement upon transition outcomes. It is also important to be realistic, given the scale of the challenges ahead, about the scale of the NP and of its focus upon some key issues such as curriculum choice, school climate and learning engagement that appear central to re-engaging disaffected learners. Whether the NP is sufficient in scale and scope to address the central challenges of raising Australia's school completion rate, reducing the

¹⁰² OECD (2000) *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making the Transition Work*, Paris.

¹⁰³ OECD (2010) *Off to a Good Start? Jobs for Youth*, Paris.

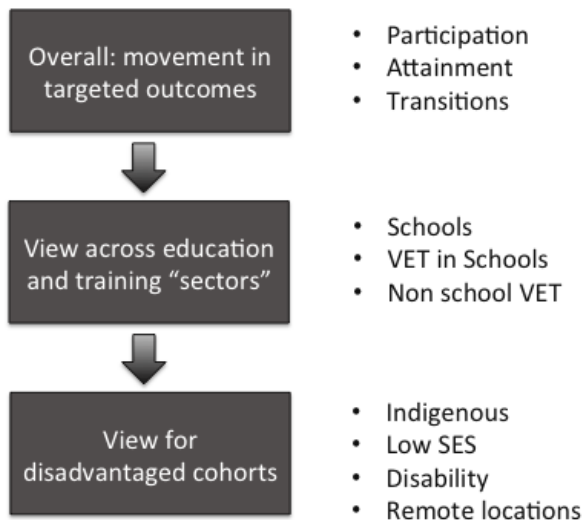
number of young people who are on the margins of the labour market and better meeting the needs of those young people who struggle to achieve at school will be key questions for the next phase of this evaluation.

Attachment 2: Data Analysis

This attachment presents the data tables underpinning the charts and analysis included in Chapter 4 – Interim Findings and Attachment 7 – Compact with Young Australians.

To assess progress against the NP's targeted outcomes, this evaluation considered performance indicators identified in the NP Agreement (also presented in Section 2.3 of this report) as well as additional indicators, based on available and reliable national data sets (presented in the agreed Evaluation Framework – Attachment 9).

This section reports on movements in measures of participation, attainment and transition – in aggregate, across sectors, and for targeted cohorts, as illustrated in below.



Limitations of the data sets

- Recording of Indigenous status has improved over time, making it difficult to assess whether changes in participation or attainment rates are due to improved participation or simply improved identification
- The National Schools Statistics Collection does not collect information on socio economic status, disability status or remoteness, so participation and attainment for these target groups is only available for the VET sector
- Nationally consistent administrative statistics on Year 12 completion are not available. Apparent retention rates are limited in that they do not take into account students repeating a year of education or returning to education as mature age students, students changing between full-time and part-time study, interstate or international migration, and inter-sector (affiliation) transfer
- Trends in VET in Schools participation were heavily influenced by a change in reporting requirements in Queensland in 2008, which led to an apparent large jump in participation as the identification of school-based training became easier. Queensland also saw a very large increase in the number of students whose Indigenous status was not known in 2010. As such, Queensland has been excluded from some tables so that any underlying trends may be more apparent

- There are data quality issues with the VET in Schools collection that render it less reliable for reporting against some student characteristics. In particular, disability status was unknown for around 70% of students in 2010. This is too unreliable for reporting purposes, so data on VET in Schools participation and attainment by disability status have not been presented here
- South Australia has been excluded from VET in Schools completions as the state is not able to provide a complete qualifications data set
- The National VET Provider collection only contains data on students training in government funded activity or any fee-for-service activity delivered by public RTOs. Since the mid-1990s the number of private VET providers has increased dramatically, as has the amount of full fee-for-service activity delivered by these RTOs. Unpublished work by NCVET suggests that there may be an almost equal number of students in fee-for-service training at these providers
- Reporting of VET completions lags behind reporting of VET enrolments; as such, data for VET completions is only currently available up to 2009
- The Survey of Education and Work and Labour Force Survey rely on self-reporting of educational participation and attainment; this may or may not be accurate. The use of survey data also means that changes from year to year may be due to sampling error and are often unlikely to be statistically significant. Where possible, 95% confidence intervals have been presented along with proportions to provide an indicator of the significance of differences. This limits the ability to consider subsets of the population such as those of low socio-economic status as the sample available can be quite small. These surveys cannot be used to examine attainment or transitions by Indigenous status.

Issues and recommendations to improve data reporting

Our ability to evaluate the impact of the NP was hampered by a range of data issues. These include the lack of appropriate data and significant levels of missing data. These are summarised below:

Issue	Recommendation
<p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Schools Statistics Collection does not collect information on student characteristics such as socio-economic status, remoteness, or disability status yet these are the targets of the interventions. The National VET in Schools Collection, while capable of capturing most relevant student characteristics to help evaluate the NP, shows much data reported by jurisdictions as 'not known' for a relatively large proportion of students. This is particularly the case for disability status, which was unknown for 70% of students in 2010. The major limitation of the National VET Provider Collection is that it only collects information on students enrolled at public providers or in government-funded places at private providers. Anecdotally there appears to have been strong growth in fee-for-service provision by private providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inclusion of these variables in future collections would be a valuable addition. This should be a priority for any evaluation of the NP. Increased effort to record these characteristics for all students is warranted. There is currently a push to capturing total VET activity across all providers and funding sources. However, this is unlikely to happen within the timeframe for this evaluation. This push should be supported by DEEWR and the MWG.
<p>Attainment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is currently no national readily available and consistent administrative data available on Year 12 completions, as there are a number of different Year 12 certificates across and within jurisdictions. Apparent retention rates as a proxy for Year 12 completions do not take into account issues such as population changes over time, students who don't complete or students who do not progress at the rate of one grade a year. Being based on the National Schools Statistics Collection it also does not allow for reporting on target groups such as low SES, remote or students with a disability. This is also a concern with the Survey of Education and Work (SEW), as it cannot reliably be used to report on attainment by subgroups of the population. This is unlikely to change, as investigations have shown that even doubling the overall size of the SEW sample will not sufficiently increase the reliability of reporting by subgroups. This is another reason to encourage the development of a national administrative data set that collects these characteristics for school students. The reporting of VET qualification completions currently lags behind the reporting of VET enrolments in the National VET Provider Collection, meaning that data on completions is only currently available up to 2009. Also the VET collection only captures completions by students enrolled at public providers or in government-funded courses run by private providers, meaning completions are particularly underestimated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inclusion of these variables in future collections would be a valuable addition in evaluating the extent and the demographic characteristics for young people are completing Year 12. It would be a more timely indicator than that provided by the Survey of Education and Work (based on 20 to 24 year olds). Efforts that support the current move to collect attainments by all VET students and in a timely fashion should be a priority.
<p>Transitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no existing national administrative data sets on transitions, so we have relied on survey data from the Survey of Education and Work and its parent survey, the Labour Force Survey. This reliance on survey data has its limitations, chief of which is that it makes it difficult to report on outcomes by subgroups of the population, particularly in terms of changes over time. The Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY) can address some of these limitations, but its data is generally not released quickly. 	<p>One option may be to draw on census data to report by characteristics such as Indigenous status, but this information is only available every five years so it would be difficult to link any changes to the NP.</p> <p>Consideration be given to more effectively utilising and quality assuring existing data sources, such as Centrelink data, to especially enable transition reporting for youth at risk.</p>

Participation – overall

Table A2.1: Total full-time educational participation

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 15-24 PARTICIPATING IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION AS AT MAY, 2000-11

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15 to 19 years	69.2%	69.7%	69.6%	69.6%	69.0%	68.8%	70.1%	70.1%	69.9%	69.5%	70.2%	71.7%
20 to 24 years	20.8%	21.9%	24.9%	25.2%	25.2%	26.1%	26.1%	26.5%	28.4%	29.1%	29.5%	29.2%

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Table 03b. Labour force status for 15-19 year olds by Educational attendance, Age and Sex

Participation – by sector

Table A2.2: Total full-time secondary school participation

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 15 19 YEARS ENROLLED FULL-TIME IN SECONDARY SCHOOL, 2000-10

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Age 15	92.7%	92.1%	92.7%	93.2%	93.2%	93.4%	93.9%	94.0%	94.6%	95.0%	95.6%
Age 16	81.7%	81.4%	81.4%	82.4%	82.6%	82.3%	82.8%	83.0%	82.7%	84.7%	86.5%
Age 17	62.7%	62.9%	63.2%	62.7%	63.5%	63.1%	63.3%	62.7%	62.3%	63.7%	65.4%
Age 18	12.7%	12.9%	13.2%	13.2%	13.3%	13.3%	13.6%	13.6%	14.3%	14.5%	15.5%
Age 19	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%

Source: ABS National Schools Statistics Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Table A2.3: Apparent grade progression rates

APPARENT PROGRESSION RATES, AUSTRALIA

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Years 9-10	96.1	96.2	96.4	96.9	96.8	96.6	97.0	97.0	97.1	96.9	98.1
Years 10-11	85.5	86.2	86.7	87.6	87.1	86.5	87.4	87.0	86.6	87.9	89.3
Years 11-12	83.8	84.9	85.4	84.7	84.6	84.4	84.6	82.9	82.6	83.6	84.3

Source: National Schools Statistics Collection Table 65a

Table A2.4: VET in Schools participation

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 15-19 YEARS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS BY SEX, 2005-10

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Males	12.3%	11.8%	11.6%	14.0%	14.6%	15.1%
Females	12.6%	11.8%	11.8%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Persons	12.5%	11.8%	11.7%	14.1%	14.5%	14.7%

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 15-19 YEARS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS BY SEX, EXCLUDING QUEENSLAND, 2005-10

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Males	11.7%	11.1%	11.0%	11.5%	11.9%	12.7%
Females	11.8%	11.0%	10.9%	11.6%	11.3%	11.9%
Persons	11.7%	11.0%	10.9%	11.5%	11.6%	12.4%

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Table A2.5: VET participation

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 15-24 ENROLLED IN VET, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO COMPLETED YEAR 12

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Age 15-19	12.7%	12.3%	12.0%	12.3%	12.3%	11.9%	11.7%	11.5%	11.6%
Age 20-24	9.7%	9.7%	9.0%	8.9%	8.7%	8.1%	7.4%	7.4%	7.7%
Age 16-17	13.4%	12.8%	12.5%	12.7%	12.9%	12.7%	12.8%	12.3%	12.0%

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

PERCENTAGE OF 15 -19 YEAR OLDS ENROLLED IN VET BY HIGHEST CURRENT QUALIFICATION LEVEL, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Certificate III and above	5.9%	5.9%	6.1%	6.5%	6.8%	6.7%	6.8%	6.8%	7.0%
Certificate II	3.2%	2.9%	2.7%	2.5%	2.5%	2.4%	2.3%	2.4%	2.7%
Certificate I and non-AQF qualifications	3.6%	3.5%	3.2%	3.3%	3.1%	2.8%	2.6%	2.3%	1.9%

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

PERCENTAGE OF 20-24 YEAR OLDS ENROLLED IN VET BY HIGHEST CURRENT QUALIFICATION LEVEL, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Certificate III and above	4.9%	5.0%	4.9%	4.9%	5.1%	4.8%	4.4%	4.6%	4.9%
Certificate II	1.7%	1.5%	1.4%	1.2%	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.2%
Certificate I and non-AQF qualifications	3.1%	3.1%	2.7%	2.7%	2.4%	2.3%	2.1%	1.7%	1.6%

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Table A2.6: Higher education participation

PERCENTAGE OF 18-24YEAR OLDS ENROLLED IN HIGHER EDUCATION

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	27.5%	28.5%	28.9%	30.0%	31.2%

Source: DEEWR Higher Education Statistics Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Participation – Indigenous

Table A2.7: Indigenous secondary school participation

PERCENTAGE OF INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15-19 YEARS ENROLLED FULL-TIME IN SECONDARY SCHOOL, 2000-2010

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Indigenous	32.3%	33.0%	34.0%	35.0%	35.6%	36.4%	37.9%	38.5%	39.1%	39.7%	42.4%
Not Indigenous	51.2%	50.8%	50.9%	50.9%	51.0%	51.2%	51.8%	51.4%	50.8%	51.2%	52.4%

Source: ABS National Schools Statistics Collection; ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0; ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 3238.0 (Series B projections)

Table A2.8: Indigenous VET in Schools participation

PERCENTAGE OF INDIGENOUS AND OTHER PERSONS AGED 15 -19 YEARS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS, 2005-10, EXCLUDING QUEENSLAND

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Indigenous	9.4%	9.0%	10.0%	10.8%	12.1%	12.8%
Others	11.8%	11.1%	11.0%	11.5%	11.6%	12.3%

Note: Others includes those whose Indigenous status is not known.

Source: National VET in Schools Collection; ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0; ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 3238.0 (Series B projections)

Table A2.9: Indigenous VET participation

PERCENTAGE OF INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 - 24 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
15 to 19 years	20.9%	19.3%	18.3%	19.3%	20.0%	19.3%	19.5%	18.4%	20.2%
20 to 24 years	19.8%	18.1%	16.8%	17.0%	18.0%	17.8%	17.2%	17.0%	18.8%

Source: National VET Provider Collection; ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0; ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 3238.0 (Series B projections)

Participation – other target groups

Table A2.10: VET in Schools participation, SES disadvantage

15 TO 19 YEAR OLDS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS BY SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS (SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE) AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL PARTICIPATION, EXCLUDING THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN, 2005-10

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	15.0%	15.0%	14.9%	14.6%	14.5%
Quintile 2	24.2%	23.7%	23.6%	23.7%	23.8%
Quintile 3	24.4%	21.9%	22.5%	22.6%	22.6%
Quintile 4	20.3%	22.5%	22.8%	22.9%	23.0%
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	16.1%	16.8%	16.3%	16.2%	16.0%

Source: National VET in Schools Collection

Table A2.11: VET in Schools participation, remoteness

15 TO 19 YEAR OLDS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS AS A PROPORTION OF ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION, BY STUDENT REMOTENESS (ARIA+) REGION, EXCLUDING QUEENSLAND, 2005-10

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Major cities	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Inner regional	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%
Outer regional	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%
Remote	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%
Very remote	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.4%	1.2%	1.3%

Note: Population not available by both remoteness region and age, so numbers are expressed as a percentage of the total population for that remoteness region

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

Table A2.12: VET participation, SES disadvantage

PERSONS AGED 15-19 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE) AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL, 2006-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL, THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 AND THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	15.4%	15.6%	15.8%	15.7%	15.7%
Quintile 2	27.3%	26.7%	25.7%	26.3%	26.6%
Quintile 3	23.1%	23.3%	23.9%	23.8%	23.7%
Quintile 4	20.7%	20.8%	21.3%	21.4%	21.5%
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	13.5%	13.5%	13.2%	12.8%	12.4%

Note: SEIFA was only collected from 2006
Source: National VET Provider Collection

PERSONS AGED 20-24 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE) AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL, 2006-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL, THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 AND THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	16.6%	17.3%	17.4%	17.7%	17.5%
Quintile 2	25.7%	25.6%	25.5%	25.5%	26.0%
Quintile 3	22.3%	22.3%	22.6%	22.7%	22.6%
Quintile 4	21.0%	20.5%	21.3%	21.2%	21.1%
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	14.4%	14.3%	13.2%	13.0%	12.7%

Note: SEIFA was only collected from 2006
Source: National VET Provider Collection

Table A2.13: VET participation, disability

PERSONS AGED 15-19 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET BY DISABILITY STATUS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL, THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 AND THOSE WHOSE DISABILITY STATUS IS NOT KNOWN

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
With a disability	5.9%	6.9%	7.1%	7.4%	7.6%	7.0%	6.6%	6.8%	7.5%
Without a disability	94.1%	93.1%	92.9%	92.6%	92.4%	93.0%	93.4%	93.2%	92.5%

Source: National VET Provider Collection

PERSONS AGED 20-24 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET BY DISABILITY STATUS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL, THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 AND THOSE WHOSE DISABILITY STATUS IS NOT KNOWN

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
With a disability	6.0%	6.4%	6.9%	7.6%	7.7%	7.1%	6.8%	6.9%	7.3%
Without a disability	94.0%	93.6%	93.1%	92.4%	92.3%	92.9%	93.2%	93.1%	92.7%

Source: National VET Provider Collection

Table A2.14: VET participation, remoteness

PERSONS AGED 15-19 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET AS A PROPORTION OF ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION BY STUDENT REMOTENESS (ARIA+) REGION, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Major cities	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Inner regional	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%
Outer regional	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%
Remote	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%
Very remote	2.1%	1.8%	1.6%	1.9%	2.0%	1.9%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%

Note: Population not available by both remoteness region and age, so numbers are expressed as a percentage of the total population for that remoteness region

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

PERSONS AGED 20-24 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET AS A PROPORTION OF ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION BY STUDENT REMOTENESS (ARIA+) REGION, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Major cities	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Inner regional	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Outer regional	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%
Remote	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%
Very remote	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.9%	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%

Note: Population not available by both remoteness region and age, so numbers are expressed as a percentage of the total population for that remoteness region

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

Attainment – overall

Table A2.15: Year 12 or Certificate II attainment

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 15–24 YEARS WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 (OR EQUIVALENT) OR ATTAINED A FORMAL QUALIFICATION AT CERTIFICATE II/III LEVEL OR ABOVE (%)

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Year 12 or Cert II	15-19 years	31.4	34.1	32.9	33.4	33.7	34.3	33.7	33.3	32.8	35.3	34.4
	20-24 years	79.1	80.0	80.4	81.3	81.2	81.9	83.5	84.2	84.5	85.6	84.1
Year 12 or Cert III	15-19 years	30.8	33.2	31.9	32.1	32.5	33.3	32.9	32.3	32.0	33.9	32.9
	20-24 years	77.1	78.3	78.9	80.3	79.9	80.7	82.3	83.2	83.5	84.5	82.7

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL FOR PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 15–24 YEARS WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 (OR EQUIVALENT) OR ATTAINED A FORMAL QUALIFICATION AT CERTIFICATE II/III LEVEL OR ABOVE (%)

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Year 12 or Cert II	15-19 years	0.7	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.0	1.5
	20-24 years	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.6	1.3	1.3
Year 12 or Cert III	15-19 years	0.7	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.3	0.9	1.5
	20-24 years	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.7	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.3

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

Attainment – by sector

Table A2.16: Secondary school attainment – Year 10 completion

PROPORTION OF SCHOOL LEAVERS AGED 15-24 WHO HAVE COMPLETED AT LEAST YEAR 10, 2000-11 (%)

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
95.6	not available		95.6	95.0	94.3	93.7	95.9	95.6	94.5	96.0	95.4

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

Table A2.17: Secondary school attainment – Year 12 retention

APPARENT RETENTION RATES, 2000-10

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Year 7/8 - Year 12	72.3	73.4	75.1	75.4	75.7	75.3	74.7	74.3	74.6	76.0	78.0

Source: National Schools Statistics Collection

Table A2.18: VET in Schools qualification attainment

VET IN SCHOOLS COURSE COMPLETIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL 15-17 YEAR OLDS, 2005-9, EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Age 15	0.8%	1.0%	1.4%	3.3%	4.5%
Age 16	6.5%	5.7%	7.3%	9.6%	10.9%
Age 17	12.8%	11.3%	12.7%	15.0%	16.5%

Note: South Australia did not submit a complete dataset for qualifications completed
 Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Table A2.19: VET certificate II and above attainment

COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL 15-24 YEAR OLDS, 2002-9, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
15 to 19 years	3.4%	3.4%	3.4%	3.5%	3.3%	3.2%	3.3%	3.8%
20 to 24 years	4.4%	4.2%	4.2%	4.5%	4.4%	4.8%	4.9%	5.2%

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Attainment – Indigenous

Table A2.20: Indigenous Year 10 retention

APPARENT RETENTION RATES FROM YEAR 7/8-YEAR 10 BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2000-10

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Indigenous	83.0	85.7	86.4	87.2	85.8	88.3	91.3	90.5	89.8	90.9	95.8
Non-Indigenous	98.0	98.4	98.5	98.9	98.5	98.6	98.9	99.4	99.9	100.1	101.0

Source: National Schools Statistics Collection

Table A2.21: Indigenous Year 12 retention

APPARENT RETENTION RATES FROM YEAR 7/8-YEAR 12 BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2000-10

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Indigenous	36.4	35.7	38.0	39.1	39.8	39.5	40.1	42.9	47.2	45.4	47.2
Non-Indigenous	73.3	74.5	76.3	76.5	76.9	76.6	76.0	75.6	75.6	77.3	79.4

Source: National Schools Statistics Collection

Table A2.22: Indigenous VET in Schools attainment

VET IN SCHOOLS COURSE COMPLETIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF 15-19 YEAR OLDS BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2005-9, EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Indigenous	2.8%	2.4%	2.8%	2.9%	5.9%
Others	4.4%	4.0%	4.7%	6.0%	6.7%

Note: 'Others' includes those whose Indigenous status is not known. South Australia did not submit a complete dataset for qualifications completed.

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0, ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Series B

Table A2.23: Indigenous VET attainment

COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE AS A PERCENTAGE OF 15-24 YEAR OLDS BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2002-9, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL

		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Indigenous	15 to 19 years	2.6%	2.3%	2.0%	2.2%	1.9%	1.9%	2.3%	2.7%
	20 to 24 years	3.5%	3.0%	2.8%	2.9%	2.8%	3.1%	3.4%	3.8%
Others	15 to 19 years	3.5%	3.4%	3.5%	3.6%	3.4%	3.3%	3.3%	3.8%
	20 to 24 years	4.4%	4.3%	4.3%	4.6%	4.5%	4.9%	5.0%	5.3%

Note: 'Others' includes those whose Indigenous status is not known. South Australia did not submit a complete dataset for qualifications completed.

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0, ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Series B

Attainment – other target groups

Table A2.24: VET in Schools attainment, SES disadvantage

VET IN SCHOOLS COURSE COMPLETIONS BY 15-19 YEAR OLDS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE) AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2005-9, EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	16.1%	13.6%	13.8%	13.2%
Quintile 2	25.5%	21.7%	21.5%	22.1%
Quintile 3	21.9%	20.9%	21.8%	22.1%
Quintile 4	20.2%	24.1%	24.4%	24.6%
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	16.3%	19.7%	18.5%	17.9%

Note: South Australia did not submit a complete dataset for qualifications completed

Source: National VET in Schools Collection

Table A2.25: VET in Schools attainment, remoteness

VET IN SCHOOLS COURSE COMPLETIONS BY 15-19 YEAR OLDS AS A PROPORTION OF ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION BY REMOTENESS (ARIA+) REGION, 2005-9, EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Major cities	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
Inner regional	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
Outer regional	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%
Remote	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.9%	1.0%
Very remote	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.8%	0.9%

Note: Population not available by both remoteness region and age, so numbers are expressed as a percentage of the total population for that remoteness region. South Australia did not submit a complete dataset for qualifications completed

Source: National VET in Schools Collection. ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

Table A2.26: VET attainment, SES disadvantage

COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE BY 15-24 YEAR OLDS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE) AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2006-9, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN

		2006	2007	2008	2009
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	15 to 19 years	13.8%	14.0%	14.5%	13.7%
	20 to 24 years	13.4%	13.1%	13.7%	13.8%
Quintile 2	15 to 19 years	24.2%	24.4%	24.2%	23.9%
	20 to 24 years	23.3%	22.7%	23.7%	23.2%
Quintile 3	15 to 19 years	22.0%	22.4%	22.6%	22.8%
	20 to 24 years	21.1%	21.5%	22.0%	21.9%
Quintile 4	15 to 19 years	22.5%	21.9%	22.1%	22.9%
	20 to 24 years	23.4%	23.0%	22.0%	22.5%
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	15 to 19 years	17.5%	17.3%	16.6%	16.7%
	20 to 24 years	18.8%	19.8%	18.6%	18.6%

Source: National VET Provider Collection

Table A2.27: VET attainment, disability

COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE BY 15-24 YEAR OLDS BY DISABILITY STATUS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2002-9, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND WHOSE DISABILITY STATUS IS NOT KNOWN

		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
With a disability	15 to 19 years	3.2%	4.0%	3.8%	4.3%	4.6%	4.5%	4.3%	4.7%
	20 to 24 years	3.2%	3.8%	3.9%	4.4%	4.7%	4.0%	4.0%	4.3%
Without a disability	15 to 19 years	96.8%	96.0%	96.2%	95.7%	95.4%	95.5%	95.7%	95.3%
	20 to 24 years	96.8%	96.2%	96.1%	95.6%	95.3%	96.0%	96.0%	95.7%

Source: National VET Provider Collection

Table A2.28: VET attainment, remoteness

COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE BY 15-24 YEAR OLDS AS A PROPORTION OF ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION BY REMOTENESS (ARIA+) REGION, 2002-9, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL

Major cities	15 to 19 years	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
	20 to 24 years	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Inner regional	15 to 19 years	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
	20 to 24 years	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Outer regional	15 to 19 years	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
	20 to 24 years	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Remote	15 to 19 years	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
	20 to 24 years	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Very remote	15 to 19 years	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
	20 to 24 years	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%

Note: Population not available by both remoteness region and age, so numbers are expressed as a percentage of the total population for that remoteness region

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

Transition – overall

Table A2.29: Young people not fully engaged [SEW]

PROPORTION OF PERSONS NOT FULLY ENGAGED IN EDUCATION, TRAINING OR WORK BY AGE, AUSTRALIA, 2001-10 (%)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15 to 19 years	13.4	12.9	13.2	12.4	13.9	13.1	12.8	12.5	15.5	14.8	14.1
20 to 24 years	23.5	22.8	23.1	22.5	21.5	21.1	20.0	19.5	22.2	21.8	22.5

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15 to 19 years	0.4	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.3
20 to 24 years	0.6	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.3	2.0	1.7	1.5

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 18-24 YEARS NOT FULLY ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING AT OR ABOVE CERTIFICATE III LEVEL (NEA INDICATOR 10) (%)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	28.6	27.0	27.5	27.2	26.0	26.0	24.5	23.7	27.3	27.3	27.5

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	0.5	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.4

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 18-24 YEARS WHO ARE FULLY ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING AT OR ABOVE CERTIFICATE III LEVEL (NEA INDICATOR 10), BY SEX (%)

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Males	Fully engaged through full-time employment ¹	51.4	50.5	50.0	50.8	53.1	54.0	53.2	52.4	47.1	47.2	47.5
	Fully engaged through full-time education/training at or above Certificate III level ¹	21.7	24.7	23.9	23.9	22.4	22.2	24.4	25.4	25.7	25.8	26.8
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level ²	1.9	1.9	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.3	2.9	3.0	2.3	2.2	2.4
	Total fully engaged ³	75.0	77.0	76.3	77.3	78.4	78.5	80.5	80.9	75.1	75.2	76.7
	Not fully engaged	25.0	23.0	23.7	22.7	21.6	21.5	19.5	19.1	24.9	24.8	23.3
Females	Fully engaged through full-time employment ¹	39.5	37.0	36.3	35.6	35.2	37.5	37.4	38.8	34.8	34.4	32.1
	Fully engaged through full-time education/training at or above Certificate III level ¹	25.7	29.1	29.3	28.9	30.0	28.7	29.6	29.6	32.3	31.7	32.3
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level ²	2.5	2.6	3.0	3.7	4.3	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.9	3.7
	Total fully engaged ³	67.7	68.8	68.6	68.1	69.5	69.3	70.2	71.5	70.3	70.0	68.2
	Not fully engaged	32.3	31.2	31.4	31.9	30.5	30.7	29.8	28.5	29.7	30.0	31.8
Persons	Fully engaged through full-time employment ¹	45.6	43.9	43.3	43.3	44.3	45.9	45.5	45.7	41.1	41.1	39.9
	Fully engaged through full-time education/training at or above Certificate III level ¹	23.7	26.9	26.6	26.4	26.2	25.4	26.9	27.5	28.9	28.7	29.5
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level ²	2.2	2.3	2.7	3.2	3.5	2.7	3.1	3.1	2.7	3.0	3.1
	Total fully engaged ³	71.4	73.0	72.5	72.8	74.0	74.0	75.5	76.3	72.7	72.7	72.5
	Not fully engaged	28.6	27.0	27.5	27.2	26.0	26.0	24.5	23.7	27.3	27.3	27.5

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

¹ Excludes persons in both full-time employment and full-time education/training.² Comprises persons in full-time employment and full-time education/training at Certificate III level or above; and part-time employment and part-time education/training.³ Fully Engaged comprises persons in full-time employment; full-time education/training at Certificate III level or above; or both part-time employment and part-time education/training at Certificate III level or above.

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL FOR PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 18-24 YEARS WHO ARE FULLY ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING AT OR ABOVE CERTIFICATE III LEVEL (NEA INDICATOR 10), BY SEX (%)

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Males	Fully engaged through full-time employment ¹	0.9	1.7	1.7	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.3	1.7	2.1
	Fully engaged through full-time education/training at or above Certificate III level ¹	0.9	1.5	1.5	1.8	2.0	1.7	2.0	1.7	2.4	2.0	2.6
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level ²	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7
	Total fully engaged ³	0.7	1.4	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	2.1
	Not fully engaged	0.9	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	2.1
Females	Fully engaged through full-time employment ¹	1.0	1.7	1.6	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.6	2.2	1.7	1.7
	Fully engaged through full-time education/training at or above Certificate III level ¹	0.9	1.6	1.6	2.3	2.4	2.1	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.3	1.9
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level ²	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.8
	Total fully engaged ³	0.8	1.6	1.5	2.0	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.5	2.7	2.1	1.5
	Not fully engaged	1.0	1.6	1.6	2.0	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.5	2.7	2.1	1.5
Persons	Fully engaged through full-time employment ¹	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.8	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.7	1.3	1.4
	Fully engaged through full-time education/training at or above Certificate III level ¹	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.8	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level ²	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.5
	Total fully engaged ³	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.4
	Not fully engaged	0.5	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.4

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

¹ Excludes persons in both full-time employment and full-time education/training.

² Comprises persons in full-time employment and full-time education/training at Certificate III level or above; and part-time employment and part-time education/training.

³ Fully Engaged comprises persons in full-time employment; full-time education/training at Certificate III level or above; or both part-time employment and part-time education/training at Certificate III level or above.

Table A2.30: School leavers not fully engaged, by educational attainment [SEW]

PROPORTION OF SCHOOL LEAVERS AGED 15 -19 NOT ENGAGED IN POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND/OR EMPLOYMENT, BY LEVEL OF SCHOOLING (NEA INDICATOR 9) (%)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Completed Year 12	16.7	17.0	18.5	19.6	17.0	18.9	18.7	17.5	21.4	22.7	21.2
Did not complete Year 12	43.1	40.7	40.2	44.1	44.5	41.2	39.7	39.6	47.5	44.1	43.9
Total	27.5	25.9	26.9	28.8	27.8	26.9	26.3	25.7	31.6	30.2	29.3

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Completed Year 12	1.3	2.0	2.1	2.4	2.7	2.0	2.5	1.9	2.9	3.2	3.0
Did not complete Year 12	2.3	3.5	3.4	3.9	3.5	3.4	3.5	4.0	4.4	4.6	3.6
Total	1.2	1.9	1.9	2.5	2.1	1.7	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.9	2.5

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

Table A2.31: Young people not in education and not fully employed [LFS]

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 15 24 NOT IN EDUCATION AND NOT FULLY EMPLOYED AS AT MAY, 2000-11

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Employed part-time and not in education	8.1%	8.6%	8.5%	9.0%	9.5%	9.2%	8.6%	8.6%	8.3%	9.6%	9.2%	9.5%
Unemployed and not in education	5.4%	6.0%	5.2%	5.2%	4.5%	4.3%	4.1%	3.5%	3.6%	5.0%	4.6%	4.6%
Not in the labour force and not in education	6.0%	6.0%	6.4%	6.3%	6.9%	6.2%	6.3%	6.1%	5.6%	6.5%	6.7%	6.9%

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Tables 03b & 03c

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 17-19 NOT IN EDUCATION AND NOT EMPLOYED AS AT MAY, 2000-11

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Unemployed and not in education	5.8%	6.6%	6.2%	6.0%	5.6%	5.0%	5.5%	4.9%	4.5%	7.1%	6.5%	5.5%

Not in the labour force and not in education 5.2% 5.1% 5.4% 5.3% 5.2% 5.5% 5.5% 5.0% 5.4% 5.7% 6.5% 7.4%

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Table 03b

Table A2.32: Proportion of persons aged 15-24 employed full-time and not in education and attending full-time education, 2008-2011 (%)

	Age 15-19			Age 20-24		
	Employed Full Time	Not attending full-time education	Attending full-time education	Employed Full Time	Not attending full-time education	Attending full-time education
May-2008		16.7	69.9	50.2		28.4
May-2009		14.0	69.5	45.6		29.1
May-2010		13.4	70.2	46.3		29.5
May-2011		12.8	71.7	44.9		29.2
2008-2011 change (%)		-3.9	1.8	-5.3		0.8

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Table 03a

Transition – other target groups

Table A2.33: Transition outcomes, SES disadvantage

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 18-24 YEARS WHO ARE FULLY ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING AT OR ABOVE CERTIFICATE III LEVEL (NEA INDICATOR 10), BY SES BASED ON SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE QUINTILES (%)

	2008	2009	2010
Quintile 1 - most disadvantaged	71.0	62.3	59.5
Quintile 2	76.7	71.1	70.0
Quintile 3	82.5	73.4	74.4
Quintile 4	81.4	75.7	76.8
Quintile 5 - least disadvantaged	87.7	79.6	79.3
95% confidence interval			
	2008	2009	2010
Quintile 1 - most disadvantaged	4.2	5.0	3.0
Quintile 2	3.2	5.6	3.5
Quintile 3	2.4	3.2	3.0
Quintile 4	1.8	3.5	3.0
Quintile 5 - least disadvantaged	2.8	2.6	2.5

Source:

AG Reform Council (2011) *Education 2010: Comparing performance across Australia – Statistical Supplement*, available from http://www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/docs/education/2010compare/education_2010_statistical_supplement.pdf; COAG Reform Council (2010) *National Education Agreement: Performance report for 2009 – Volume 2: Performance Data*, available from http://www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/docs/NEA_report_2009_Vol2.pdf

International comparisons

Table A2.34: Educational attainment among 25-34 year-olds, 2009

	Proportion of 25-34 year-olds who have attained at least:	
	Upper secondary education	Tertiary education
Australia	83	45
Austria	88	21
Belgium	83	42
Canada	92	56
Chile	86	35
Czech Republic	94	20
Denmark	86	45
Estonia	86	37
Finland	90	39
France	84	43
Germany	86	26
Greece	75	29
Hungary	86	25
Iceland	70	36
Ireland	86	48
Israel	87	43
Italy	70	20
Korea	98	56
Japan	m	63
Luxembourg	84	44
Mexico	42	20
Netherlands	82	40
New Zealand	79	47
Norway	84	47
Poland	93	35
Portugal	48	23
Slovak Republic	95	21
Slovenia	93	30
Spain	64	38
Sweden	91	42
Switzerland	90	40
Turkey	42	17
United Kingdom	82	45
United States	88	41
OECD average	81	37

Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2011, Table s A1.2a and A1.3a.

Table A2.35: Labour market disadvantage of low-qualified youth, 2006¹

Country	Index of relative labour market disadvantage
Australia	2.1
Austria	3.6
Belgium	1.2
Canada	1.5
Czech Republic	2.3
Denmark	1.1
Finland	0.8
France	1.7
Germany	1.9
Greece	0.7
Hungary	1.3
Ireland	1.9
Italy	1.0
Luxembourg	1.6
Netherlands	2.0
New Zealand	2.3
Norway	2.7
Poland	1.2
Portugal	0.8
Slovak Republic	2.5
Spain	1.0
Sweden	1.9
Switzerland	2.0
United Kingdom	1.7
United States	1.3
OECD average	1.7

1. Among 20-24 year olds who are not in education, the proportion unemployed among those who have not completed upper secondary education (ISCED<3) to the proportion unemployed among those who have completed upper secondary education or post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3/4).

Source: OECD, special tabulation for Sweet, R. (2009) *State as Nation State? A Comparative Perspective on Victorian Transition Indicators*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Melbourne.

Table A2.36: Teenage unemployment rates predicted from adult unemployment rates, 1990-2010¹

PROPORTION OF THE VARIATION IN THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG 15-19 YEAR OLDS EXPLAINED BY THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG 25-64 YEAR OLDS, OECD COUNTRIES, 1990-2010 (%)

Country	%²
Australia	96
United States	96
Portugal	92
Korea	88
Turkey	88
Ireland	80
Estonia	77
Luxembourg	75
Israel	72
Finland	68
Japan	68
Netherlands	66
Spain	65
France	64
Average	57
Norway	58
New Zealand	50
Belgium	42
Greece	33
Germany	30
Canada	24
Sweden	19
Italy	15
United Kingdom	1
Denmark	0
Average	57

1. The analysis was limited to those OECD countries for which unemployment rate data was available for the full 1990-2010 period. This period was selected as it included two labour market downturns (the early 1990s recession and the GFC) in practically all OECD countries.

2. Multiple correlation (R²) values multiplied by 100.

Source: Derived from data downloaded from OECD.Stat

Table A2.37: Reading engagement and reading achievement, PISA 2009¹

	Mean index of enjoyment of reading	Difference in reading achievement between the top and bottom quartiles of the reading engagement index (PISA points)
Australia	0.00	134
New Zealand	0.13	127
France	0.01	127
Ireland	-0.08	123
Sweden	-0.11	122
Finland	0.05	121
Iceland	-0.06	120
United Kingdom	-0.12	117
Switzerland	-0.04	116
Austria	-0.13	114
Norway	-0.19	114
Czech Republic	-0.13	112
Germany	0.07	110
Luxembourg	-0.16	110
Belgium	-0.20	110
Canada	0.13	109
United States	-0.04	109
Hungary	0.14	107
Greece	0.07	105
Japan	0.20	102
Denmark	-0.09	101
Italy	0.06	99
Slovenia	-0.20	99
Poland	0.02	99
Spain	-0.01	99
Estonia	-0.03	98
Netherlands	-0.32	96
Korea	0.13	89
Portugal	0.21	88
Slovak Republic	-0.10	87
Israel	0.06	79
Chile	-0.06	60
Turkey	0.64	54
Mexico	0.14	42
OECD average	0.00	103

1. Entries are arranged in descending order of the size of the gap in reading achievement between the most and the least engaged learners.
Source: OECD (2011) *PISA 2009 Results: Learning to Learn: Student Engagement, Strategies and Practices*. Vol. III, Table III.1.1.

Table A2.38: Labour force participation rates among teenage students and employment rates among young adult non-students, 2009

	15-19 year old students who are in the labour force (%)	20-24 year old non-students who are employed (%)
Australia	50.3	80.7
Austria	35.9	82.2
Belgium	3.5	70.8
Canada	43.8	75.4
Czech Republic	23.9	75.6
Denmark	63.7	79.5
Estonia	3.9	62.9
Finland	20.6	70.3
France	8.8	67.4
Germany	27.8	73.4
Greece	2.3	65.5
Hungary	0.4	58.9
Iceland	38.6	77.1
Ireland	11.4	68.4
Israel	7.0	47.6
Italy	1.2	57.1
Luxembourg	8.0	74.5
Mexico	16.6	62.9
Netherlands	63.1	83.3
New Zealand	41.5	70.0
Norway	34.5	83.9
Poland	4.3	64.0
Portugal	3.1	74.7
Slovak Republic	11.6	68.7
Slovenia	8.3	69.4
Spain	25.8	59.7
Sweden	20.4	72.9
Switzerland	54.1	81.0
Turkey	7.6	39.4
United Kingdom	30.4	72.0
United States	23.9	67.2
OECD average	22.3	68.9

Source: OECD Education at a Glance, 2011, Table C4.2a.

Table A2.39 Average duration of the transition, 1986 – 2011¹

	First age at which half of the age group is not attending full-time education (1)	First age at which half of the age group is employed and not attending full time education (2)	First age at which half of the age group is employed full-time and not attending full-time education (3)	Years after leaving education taken to find:	
				Any work (4)	Full-time work (5)
1986	16.8	17.6	18.1	0.8	1.3
1987	17.1	17.7	18.3	0.6	1.2
1988	17.1	17.7	18.0	0.6	0.9
1989	17.2	17.7	18.2	0.5	1.0
1990	17.4	17.9	18.8	0.5	1.4
1991	17.6	18.9	20.2	1.3	2.6
1992	17.7	19.6	21.1	1.9	3.4
1993	17.8	19.7	20.8	1.9	3.0
1994	17.8	19.8	21.4	2.0	3.6
1995	17.7	19.5	20.9	1.7	3.2
1996	17.8	19.5	20.9	1.7	3.1
1997	17.9	20.3	21.6	2.3	3.7
1998	17.9	20.0	21.1	2.0	3.2
1999	17.9	20.1	21.6	2.2	3.7
2000	17.9	19.5	21.0	1.6	3.1
2001	18.0	20.2	21.6	2.3	3.6
2002	17.9	20.7	21.7	2.8	3.8
2003	17.9	21.1	22.1	3.1	4.1
2004	17.9	20.4	22.2	2.5	4.3
2005	17.8	20.3	21.8	2.5	4.0
2006	17.9	19.9	22.1	2.0	4.2
2007	17.9	20.3	21.8	2.4	3.9
2008	18.0	20.4	22.0	2.5	4.1
2009	17.9	21.0	22.4	3.1	4.5
2010	17.9	21.2	22.0	3.3	4.1
2011	17.9	20.9	22.7	3.0	4.8

1. The values in the table are calculated from single year of age data on educational and labour force status for 15-25 year olds in May of each year. Column 4 is obtained by subtracting column 1 from column 2; column 5 is obtained by subtracting column 3 from column 1. The methodology is adapted from a methodology for calculating transition durations that first appeared in OECD (1996) "Transition from school to work", *Education Policy Analysis*, Paris.

Source: ABS 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Tables 03b and 03c.

Table A2.40: Persons aged 15-19 employed full-time, 1990-2011 ('000)

	('000)
Aug-90	387.4
Aug-91	276.0
Aug-92	235.2
Aug-93	218.6
Aug-94	228.9
Aug-95	221.5
Aug-96	219.7
Aug-97	203.8
Aug-98	204.7
Aug-99	214.5
Aug-00	216.2
Aug-01	214.4
Aug-02	203.8
Aug-03	208.6
Aug-04	212.1
Aug-05	226.4
Aug-06	224.3
Aug-07	241.6
Aug-08	249.6
Aug-09	200.1
Aug-10	199.2
Aug-11	187.9

Source: ABS 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Tables03a

Table A2.41: Transition outcomes by age for the lowest achievement quintile, 1998 LSAY cohort

	Age 18	Age 19	Age 20	Age 21	Age 22	Age 23	Age 24	Age 25
Completed Year 12 or Certificate III or higher	67.6	70.8	74.2	75.8	77.8	78.6	80.0	86.8
Not working (unemployed or NILF)	26.3	22.8	16.3	16.1	14.4	13.2	12.2	14.3
Permanent/ongoing employment	34.8	40.7	47.0	49.9	55.8	61.1	64.7	62.1

Source: NCVER Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth 1998 Cohort Reports, <http://www.lsay.edu.au/cohort/1998/101.html>

Attachment 3: Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

Introduction

The Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST) element of the NP provides annual funding to States and Territories to support state-based initiatives to improve educational and transitional outcomes for young people. Funded initiatives must fall under one of the following areas identified for reform - Multiple Learning Pathways, Career Development and Mentoring (each of these reform areas is described in more detail later in this Attachment).

Funding arrangements

Under the NP, the Commonwealth allocated \$150 million over four years to the MEAST element. Payments are made annually (in July) to States and Territories and, unlike other NPs, are not contingent on the achievement of set milestones. Negotiated MEAST funding allocations vary across the jurisdictions as outlined in Table A3.1 below.

TABLE A3.1 MEAST FUNDING, BY YEAR AND JURISDICTION

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
ACT ¹⁰⁴	331,250	662,500	662,500	662,500	331,250	2,650,000
NSW	4,246,250	8,492,500	8,492,500	8,492,500	4,246,250	33,970,000
NT	178,875	357,750	357,750	357,750	178,875	1,431,000
QLD	2,797,500	5,595,000	5,595,000	5,595,000	2,797,500	22,380,000
SA	968,375	1,936,750	1,936,750	1,936,750	968,375	7,747,000
TAS ¹⁰⁵	303,000	606,000	606,000	606,000	303,000	2,424,000
VIC ¹⁰⁶	8,520,000	17,040,000	17,040,000	17,040,000	8,520,000	68,160,000
WA	1,406,000	2,811,000	2,811,000	2,811,000	1,406,000	11,245,000
TOTAL	18,751,250	37,501,500	37,501,500	37,501,500	18,751,250	150,007,000

Source: State and Territory Implementation Plans

¹⁰⁴ ACT funding increased from the original allocation of \$412,000 per year due to allocation of \$250,000 per year in Partnership Brokers funding to the ACT Government.

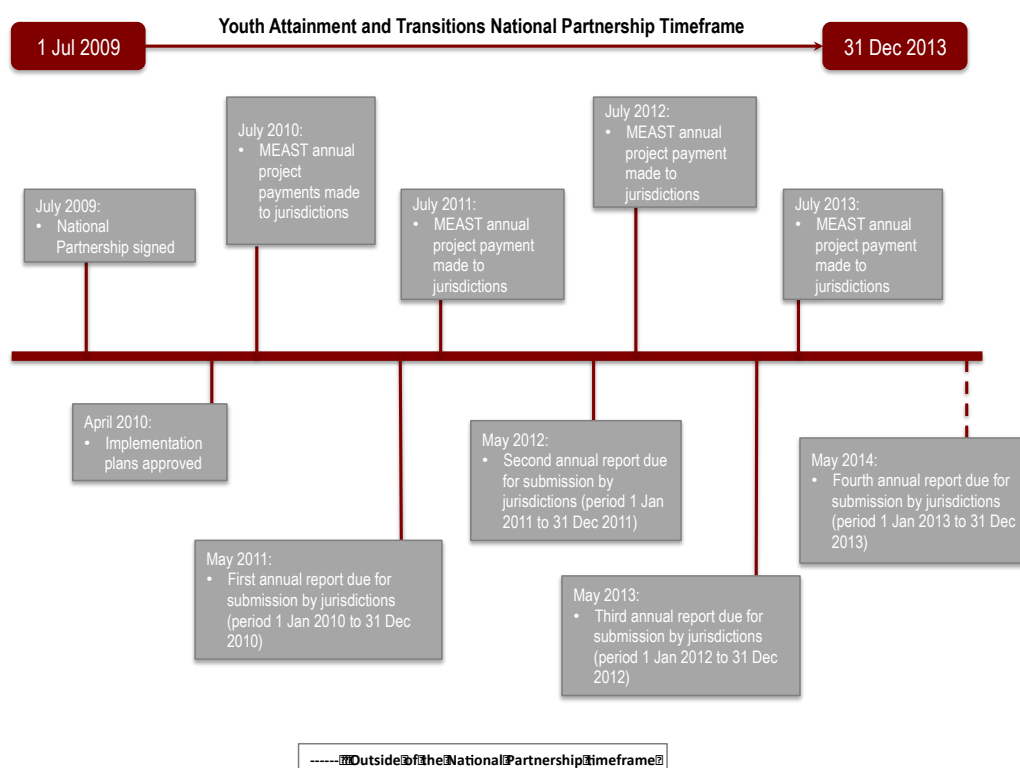
¹⁰⁵ Tasmanian funding decreased from the original allocation of \$603,000 per year due to \$24,000 in funding being redirected to the Partnership Brokers element to ensure the viability of that program in Tasmania.

¹⁰⁶ As agreed in negotiating the Victorian Implementation Plan, \$42 million in Partnership Broker program funding is dispersed to Victoria through the MEAST element to support the implementation of that program through the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs). The Victorian Government co-funds the LLEN initiative.

MEAST timeline

The MEAST implementation timeline is outlined in Figure A3.1. The final reporting requirement falls outside of the NP timelines, with States and Territories due to deliver their final reports in May 2014.

FIGURE A3.1: MEAST TIMELINE



Summary of findings

MEAST funding was used by government and non-government education sectors to maintain structured work placement programs (main area of investment), bolster career development resources and support and, to a lesser extent, provide mentoring support to young people.

These initiatives align with the MEAST objectives which aim to improve the diversity of the education and training experience, help young people to be informed about pathways through education and training to employment and support them through these pathways. MEAST funding is also being used in some States and Territories to track early school and post-school leavers to better understand how young people move through pathways, so that more targeted and systemic support can be provided.

Jurisdictions valued the flexibility in the MEAST funding arrangements that allowed them to determine where funding could be effectively allocated to address specific needs and complement existing initiatives. However, education and training authority stakeholders, particularly in smaller jurisdictions, indicated that the amount of funding constrained the scope of initiatives they were able to implement. Funding in those jurisdictions tended to go toward smaller targeted initiatives or to bolster existing initiatives, rather than large scale programs.

MEAST-funded activities are consistent with the NP objectives – expanding jurisdictional capacity to support young people in more locations and, in many cases, expanding support for cohorts at higher risk of disengaging from education and training. MEAST has

helped improve collaboration between government and non-government education sectors and education and training sectors to better understand and address youth attainment and transition issues.

MEAST-funded activities have been planned, approved and implemented, but most were not implemented until 2011. As a result, it is too early to understand their impacts and achievements.

dandolopartners worked with DEEWR and the Multilateral Working Group to develop the questions that needed to be asked to understand how this element is working toward NP outcomes. Table A3.2 provides a summary of the answers to those questions and a rating of how well this element is progressing at this point. These high level observations are elaborated upon in the text that follows.

It is important to note that this evaluation was not intended to assess individual MEAST-funded initiatives or provide an assessment of jurisdictional activities. Findings reflect an overall view of how MEAST funding has changed activity, whether that activity is working toward NP outcomes and an assessment of governance and implementation arrangements for this element of the NP. Examples of specific State and Territory MEAST-funded initiatives are presented to illustrate the types of activities being implemented, rather than as exemplars of funded initiatives.

Legend:
















-  Denotes substantial progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Denotes some progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Denotes minimal progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Not clear, based on available information

TABLE A3.2: ASSESSMENT AGAINST EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation Question	Assessment
What is happening?	
<p>Has the NP changed the activity and focus of career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring initiatives?</p>	<p> The time taken to establish the NP meant that most MEAST initiatives were not implemented until 2011 – meaning it is too early to understand the impact MEAST-funded initiatives</p> <p>MEAST funding enabled jurisdictions to bolster existing initiatives and introduce some new ones that are consistent with NP objectives</p> <p>Focus and flexibility of MEAST funding is valued by jurisdictions – although limited in its capacity to implement large scale change in smaller jurisdictions</p>
Is it working?	
<p>If <i>Career Development</i> was a focus of MEAST funding, did it help improve access to quality career development?</p>	<p> MEAST-funded activities helped lift career development capacity and skills across schools and training providers</p>
<p>If <i>Multiple Learning Pathways</i> were a focus of MEAST funding, did it help improve access to a broader range of multiple</p>	<p> Primary focus for most MEAST funding was to maintain and improve quality and quantity of structured work placement programs</p> <p>MEAST funding was also directed toward improving access to VETiS, strengthening data and special projects</p>

learning pathways for young people?		
If <i>Mentoring</i> was a focus of MEAST funding, did it improve access to a variety of quality mentoring opportunities?		Mentoring is recognised as valuable to support young people to help them engage effectively in education and training and to make successful work transitions. However, this appears to have been a lesser priority in most jurisdictions to date
Is it appropriate?		
Is MEAST consistent with the NP objectives?		MEAST-funded initiatives are focused on NP objectives – with an emphasis on support for 15-18 year olds
Does MEAST address areas of need?		Funded activities are being directed toward expanding regional coverage, support for disadvantaged young people and improving understanding of needs by strengthening data (destination surveys) and knowledge (research)
Does MEAST complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?		Complements existing Commonwealth and jurisdictional programs aimed at improving youth attainment and transition outcomes, however momentum may not be able to be maintained post-NP
Is it well governed and implemented?		
How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of this element?		MEAST has helped improve collaboration between government and non-government education sectors and education and training sectors to better understand and address youth attainment and transition issues.
Is governance of the element working effectively?		Governance arrangements are working effectively – although some non-government stakeholders expressed concern about the equity of funding allocation
How well is performance reporting working?		Reporting and knowledge sharing about specific initiatives and impacts could be strengthened
How effective is communication?		Good understanding of MEAST-funded initiatives in jurisdictions – albeit not necessarily linked to Commonwealth funding

Elaboration of findings

What is happening?

Has the NP changed the activity and focus of career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring initiatives?		<p>The time taken to establish the NP meant that most MEAST initiatives were not implemented until 2011 – meaning it is too early to understand the impact MEAST-funded initiatives</p> <p>MEAST funding enabled jurisdictions to bolster existing initiatives and introduce some new ones that are consistent with NP objectives</p> <p>Focus and flexibility of MEAST funding is valued by jurisdictions – although limited in its capacity to large scale change in smaller jurisdictions</p>
--	---	---

The YAT NP lists a range of reform areas and ‘indicative actions’ as a menu of options for States and Territories to consider as they planned MEAST-funded initiatives most relevant to their local context (see Table A3.2). States and Territories used MEAST funding to maintain and extend existing initiatives and to introduce new initiatives.

TABLE A3.3 MEAST 'REFORM AREAS', INDICATIVE ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

Reform Area	Indicative Actions	Examples of MEAST-funded initiatives
Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering universal high quality individualised career development and pathways planning Involving business and industry and parents/families, in young people's career development Improving the industry relevance of career advice and tailoring it appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Development Frameworks and resources (Vic, ACT, WA) Professional development in career education (QLD, SA, Vic) Additional places in Industry Pathways Program (SA)
Multiple learning pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving access to a broader range of more flexible, relevant and engaging learning options Creating opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom Providing comprehensive program and subject choice, flexible timetabling and instruction methods Increasing engagement by Indigenous young people and young people with a disability Improving student progression and credit transfer to higher skill and qualification levels Improving access to structured workplace learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for structured workplace learning (Vic, SA, QLD, NSW, ACT) Improved VETiS and VET delivery (QLD, NSW, WA, NT) Industry engagement and participation (NT) Alternative education programs (ACT) New, expanded and extended destination surveys (QLD, Tas, SA)
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the provision of a variety of meaningful quality mentoring opportunities Improving mentor training programs and increasing the numbers of trained mentors Increasing the use of mentoring to support young people to development resilience and provide direct assistance at important transition points in their lives Adopting national benchmarks relating to the design and implementation of mentoring programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship Support Officers (Vic) Attendance and Retention Counsellors (Tas) Career Mentoring Network Initiative (Vic) Koorie Transitions Coordinators (Vic) Mentoring pilot programs (WA, SA, NSW)

Source: National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions, p. 14. Note: targeted projects are not listed in the MEAST initiatives column.

The time taken to establish the NP has meant that most MEAST initiatives were not implemented until 2011. It is therefore too early to understand the impact of these initiatives. Some States and Territories have commenced formative evaluations of initiatives that have received MEAST funding with more evaluations planned across the remaining years of the NP. Reports from these evaluations will be reviewed as part of the 2012 NP YAT evaluation.

MEAST funding was applied across government and non-government education sectors in all jurisdictions. The predominant application of this funding was to maintain and enhance structured work placement programs. Funding was also applied to expand career development resources and capacity and, to a lesser extent, provide mentoring support to young people. MEAST funding is also being used in some States and Territories to track early school and post-school leavers to better understand how young people move through pathways, so that more targeted and systemic support can be provided.

Jurisdictional stakeholders indicated that they value the flexibility in the MEAST funding arrangements that allows them to determine where funding could be effectively allocated to address specific needs and complement existing initiatives. However, stakeholders, particularly in smaller jurisdictions, highlighted that the amount of funding constrained the scope of initiatives they were able to implement and their ability to introduce systemic changes.

Is it working?

If *Career Development* was a focus of MEAST funding, did it help improve access to quality career development?



MEAST-funded activities helped lift career development capacity and skills across schools and training providers

Career development was a focus of MEAST funding in many States and Territories. Where career development was a focus of MEAST funding, initiatives have been targeted at:

- Improving the quality of career development skills and capacity of career advisers and teachers to support young people to make effective transitions through school and between school and post-school destinations
- Improving access to career development support, particularly amongst disadvantaged cohorts of young people.

States and Territories have used MEAST funding to help lift career development skills and capacity through the development of careers policy frameworks and supporting material and support for careers advisers to undertake career education qualifications. Victoria, for example, has developed and implemented a Careers Curriculum Framework, which provides a 'scaffold' for career education programs across the school and training sectors. The ACT has developed a Career and Transition Framework, which is an internet resource that operates as a 'one stop shop' for career advisers and young people to access career and transition services, resources and providers with the aim of generating relationships between stakeholders.

Some States and Territories have used MEAST funding to provide study grants for career education qualifications (such as Certificate IV in Career Development). In Victoria the grants are open to a broad range of career practitioners, including Youth Connections and Local Learning and Employment Networks (Partnership Brokers). In addition, Regional Career Development Officers have been introduced to run professional learning with career practitioners across schools in all sectors, Adult and Community Education providers and TAFE providers. In SA, the grants are open to careers advisers and teachers and are supplemented with the introduction of industry placements and industry focus days. One component of the ACT's Career and Transition Framework is pathways planning. MEAST funding has been used to develop pathways planning documents and deliver professional learning workshops for teachers and youth workers on how to use pathways planning.

These initiatives will build the capacity of careers practitioners to provide informed and effective career development to young people during and after the NP. With greater numbers of career advisers and increased career development skills amongst teachers, other educators and service providers that interact with young people, it is anticipated that access to career development support and resources will increase, which could lead to improved transition outcomes for young people.

If *Multiple Learning Pathways* were a focus of MEAST funding, did it help improve access to a broader range of multiple learning pathways for young people?



Primary focus for most MEAST funding was to maintain and improve quality and quantity of structured work placement programs

MEAST funding was also directed toward improving access to VETiS, strengthening data and special projects

Structured workplace learning is a long-running strategy to support young people's understanding of the workplace and potential career options and provides an opportunity to further develop their knowledge of skills of industry in the field of their vocational studies. Under the NP responsibility for structured workplace learning was effectively transferred to the States and Territories. A number of States and Territories (including ACT, NT, SA, Vic and NSW) chose to use MEAST funding to maintain structured workplace learning support previously provided through the Australian Government's Local Community Partnership (Student to

Industry) program. MEAST funding was typically used to fund positions to work with schools and employers to source and manage student workplace learning placements.

Given the predominant focus on structured work placements, States need to begin preparing for likely shortages in work placement numbers post-July 2012 with the introduction of the new requirements for long-term unemployed to complete work placement or voluntary work.

Some States and Territories have gone beyond maintaining the pre-NP programs to focus on improving the quality and quantity of structured workplace learning placements. In the ACT, for example, industry focused checklists have been developed to assist employers to gather evidence of student competence. As a result, it is felt that employers now have a better understanding student needs, and that work placements are better suited to employers' needs. In the NT, MEAST funded a greater number of Industry Engagement and Participation Officers, resulting in support for structured workplace learning placements in more locations. In NSW, structured work placements are mandated for the majority of VET in Schools courses. MEAST funding has been used to assist increasing numbers of students to fulfil the mandatory requirement through a Workplace Co-ordination program.

MEAST funding has not been used to fund structured work placements in some jurisdictions. This has meant that schools have had to take on responsibility for developing relationships with employers and sourcing and managing placements that were previously funded and managed through the Local Community Partnership program. This has had a flow on impact on school workload, particularly in schools with large numbers of students participating in vocational courses.

In addition to supporting structured work placement programs, the scope of activities that States and Territories are implementing in the multiple learning pathways area is very broad, ranging from the types of education and training provided, efforts to engage target cohorts of young people and systems to transfer credits to higher skill and qualification levels. Common activities introduced by States and Territories include initiatives to increase access to VET in Schools (VETiS), initiatives aimed at increasing the number of students that can achieve full VET certificates, early leaver and school leaver destination surveys and special projects to better understand and address local barriers to young people making successful transitions from school.

VETiS refers to vocational training delivered by schools. It can form the initial stages of a vocational education and training pathway. Some States and Territories have introduced initiatives to increase access to VET in Schools. In NSW, for example, VETiS is now offered across the State to students in Years 9 and 10, providing a new pathway for students who might otherwise have left school but are now required to remain until they complete Year 10. Students can now begin studying towards an apprenticeship, traineeship or other qualification in Year 9. As part of a broader reform, the NT Government has expanded access to VETiS courses that are aligned with local labour market priorities and underpinned by structured workplace learning.

States and Territories have also used MEAST funding to make changes so that more students can achieve full VET certificates. These changes are aimed at expanding the number of young people that complete education and training courses that are counted towards State and Territory attainment NP target. The ACT Government, for example, is providing support for existing alternative programs and stakeholders to assist students at risk of disengaging to achieve Certificate II nationally accredited qualifications. A different approach was taken in WA where funding has been provided through the Department of Corrective Services to deliver additional Certificate IV Workplace Training and Assessment qualifications for their training delivery staff. This investment will build the capacity of the Corrective Services RTO division to deliver more VET training at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels for 19-24 year olds detainees in custodial centres.

Most States and Territories have used funding to introduce, trial or expand destination surveys of early school leavers and/or young people that have completed Year 12. All of the surveys provide an information base to support policy development and actions needed to help young people engage and remain engaged in education and training, but some are also linked to support services. The new Tasmanian Early Leavers Survey, for example, provides each education sector with a list of early leavers who indicated through the telephone survey that they would like someone to contact them in relation to future education and training option. The sectors are then responsible for following up with the young people to provide guidance and advice to on education and training options to improve their transition outcomes.

States and Territories have also used MEAST funding to better understand and address the skills demands of young people in particular areas. For example, the Western Australian Government has scoped for a project to undertake skills recognition of early school leavers working in retail.

Jurisdictions have also invested in initiatives to explore options to (re)engage young people in education and training who might/have disengaged from “traditional” learning environments. For example, both the ACT and NSW established funding pools for projects aimed at supporting students to engage and re-engage in education and training. Funded projects in the ACT included research into the best models for re-engaging young people and tutoring support to young people in alternate education programs.

More broadly, and prior to the NP, Victoria introduced the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) to provide an alternative to the more academically-focused Victorian Certificate of Education. VCAL combines general and vocational studies with personal development and has a strong emphasis upon applied and contextual learning.

If *Mentoring* was a focus of MEAST funding, did it improve access to a variety of quality mentoring opportunities?



Mentoring is recognised as valuable to support young people to help them engage effectively in education and training and to make successful work transitions. However, this appears to have been a lesser priority in most jurisdictions to date.

There is evidence that mentoring can help young people to engage more effectively in learning and to make successful transitions to work.¹⁰⁷ Research and stakeholder feedback also indicates that mentoring programs are resource-intensive to establish and manage on a sustainable basis. There are also many initiatives outside of MEAST that support mentoring programs,¹⁰⁸ making the landscape a difficult one for jurisdictions to navigate. For example, Youth Connections effectively provides mentoring support to disengaged young people through its Individualised Support Services.

In the States where mentoring was a focus of MEAST funding, activities are aimed at providing targeted cohorts of young people with access to mentoring opportunities, in particular young people not at school and young people considered to be at risk of disengaging. The mentoring activities funded are predominantly new initiatives. For young people not at school, Victoria has extended support for young apprentices through an expanded Apprenticeship Support Officers program, which aims to increase the rate of apprenticeship completions and increase the number of skilled workers in targeted areas by providing early intervention support and dispute resolution services. SA is planning to pilot a mentor program in Trade Training Centres in SA with the aim of embedding mentoring into the operation of Trade Training Centres by guiding, supporting and encouraging young people through available education and training opportunities.

¹⁰⁷ Dusseldorp Skills Forum and Australian Industry Group, *It's Crunch Time: Raising youth engagement and attainment*, 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Australian Youth Mentoring Network, *Australian Mentoring Programs*, <http://www.youthmentoring.org.au/programs.php>, 2012 .

Victoria has also introduced two new initiatives that provide mentoring support to targeted groups. Koorie Transitions Coordinators have been employed to provide targeted support to Indigenous young people and their families and communities, coordinating and providing services that can give this vulnerable group extra assistance as needed. The Career Mentoring Network initiative will aim to improve the long-term lifelong learning and employment prospects of current students from three targeted groups: Koorie students, English as a Second Language and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students, including refugees and students from low SES families experiencing intergenerational poverty and unemployment.

Is it appropriate?

Is MEAST consistent with the NP objectives?



MEAST-funded initiatives are focused on NP objectives – with an emphasis on support for 15-18 year olds

MEAST funding is being used to achieve the NP's objectives of improving youth attainment and transition outcomes. For example, MEAST-funded initiatives are:

- Encouraging and supporting participation of young people in education and training who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging
- Maintaining access to vocational learning options, particularly structured workplace learning, that aim to improve the relevance of education and training and improve transition outcomes
- Improving attainment through access to, and recognition of, qualifications in a broader range of areas and at higher levels
- Supporting young people to make successful transitions through careers and pathways planning and mentoring support.

The MEAST funding model gives States and Territories the flexibility to invest in a broad range of activities that contribute to youth attainment and transition outcomes. The majority of funding has been targeted towards young people in the 15-18 year old age group, with fewer activities focused on young people between 19-24 years making transitions into the workforce.

Does MEAST address areas of need?



Funded activities are being directed toward expanding regional coverage, support for disadvantaged young people and improving understanding of needs by strengthening data (destination surveys) and knowledge (research)

A number of States and Territories have used MEAST funding to target cohorts of young people that are not engaged in the traditional school environment, Indigenous young people, young people that are recent migrants and young people with disabilities. For young people disengaged from schooling, the ACT has extended funding for alternative education programs and WA has aimed to increase the number of Corrective Services staff that work with 19-24 year old detainees in custodial centres that have vocational training delivery qualifications. Localised programs have been introduced in a number of States and Territories for Indigenous young people, particularly focused on career pathways planning and mentoring support (e.g. Career Mentoring Network Initiative in Vic, Dare to Dream program in QLD).

Fewer States and Territories have introduced and/or extended programs for young people that are recent migrants or young people with disabilities with MEAST funding. NSW has funded the Migrant Youth Access program aimed at preparing recent arrivals to Australia for workplace learning and supporting young people during workplace experience. Both NSW and SA have maintained structured workplace learning programs for students with special needs. SA has expanded the existing School to Work Transition program to include more schools in metropolitan and regional areas and continue collaboration with TAFE SA.

Many jurisdictions have applied MEAST funding to bolster their capacity to support service provision in more locations. For example, MEAST funding in the NT has helped expand activities across Territory Growth Towns.

States and Territories have also used MEAST funding to address gaps in understanding of youth attainment and transition barriers and options to address them. Early school leaver and post-year 12 destination surveys are common tools that have been introduced and expanded under MEAST. These surveys have been supplemented, to a lesser extent, in some jurisdictions by research projects aimed at getting a better understanding of the factors influencing youth attainment and transitions. These initiatives have been positioned to provide the information needed to address areas of need.

Destination surveys such as those implemented in Victoria (*On Track*), WA (being expanded to include non-government sector) and Queensland can be valuable in monitoring the overall outcomes of school leavers for policy purposes at the state or territory level. They can also provide individual schools with information on the destinations of their students, and this can be used for purposes such as improved career information and guidance and curriculum change. But they can also be of great value in detecting and contacting individual school leavers who have not made a successful transition to work or further study and who need additional assistance. Thus their value can be seen at the system level, at the school level, and at the individual level.

Does MEAST complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?



Complements existing Commonwealth and jurisdictional programs aimed at improving youth attainment and transition outcomes, however momentum may not be able to be maintained post-NP

States and Territories have predominantly used MEAST funding to continue, extend and expand existing programs and initiatives targeting youth attainment and transition outcomes. Some States, such as QLD, have promulgated the NP objectives through regional and local planning of initiatives funded from NP and non-NP sources linked to local participation and attainment targets. This has been an effective way of maximising the benefits of NP funding.

Initiatives focused on building capacity in the education, training and youth sectors are likely to produce long-term benefits beyond the term of the NP. Initiatives in this category include study grants to build skills and capacity of careers practitioners and professional learning for trainers in custodial centres.

Many stakeholders expressed a concern that momentum for existing MEAST-funded initiatives (and impacts) may not be sustained beyond the NP. In some cases, it will be difficult for States and Territories to maintain the activities that are being funded when MEAST funding ceases. Planning needs to begin to determine what will occur after MEAST funding ceases, whether these initiatives will be sustained from other funding sources or whether they will be terminated with an appropriate exit strategy.

Is it well governed and implemented?

How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of this element?



MEAST has helped improve collaboration between government and non-government education sectors, and education and training sectors to better understand and address youth attainment and transition issues.

States and Territories took different approaches to the design and delivery of MEAST initiatives, including:

- The State or Territory government developing and running programs and developing resources for the benefit of young people in government and non-government education and training
- Splitting MEAST funding between school sectors based on a formula with each sector responsible for designing and delivering initiatives in line with their particular needs and objectives
- The State or Territory government running a submissions process to allocate funding to non-government school sectors and “tendering” organisations.

Non-government school sectors were involved (to varying degrees) in designing MEAST initiatives in all States and Territories. Non-government school sectors were the stakeholders most commonly engaged during the design of initiatives, however, in some jurisdictions a broader range of government departments and other stakeholders, such as community service providers, were engaged in the design and delivery of initiatives. Where stakeholders were not involved in the design and delivery of initiatives it was more common for them to report that the activities were not tailored to the school sector or young people that they represented.

Multilateral Youth Commitments were often cited as an important vehicle for collaboration and commitment to understanding and addressing YAT issues and objectives. For example, the ACT Youth Commitment Steering Group oversees the ACT Youth Commitment which is a pledge signed by government non-government education and organisations (such as higher education providers, and business and community associations) to work collaboratively with other organisations to ensure that the transfer of a young person from one agency to another happens effectively so that no young person in the ACT is lost from education, training or employment. Victoria adopted a similar approach with its Local and Regional Youth Commitments between regional education department offices, non-government sector and education providers. The NP has given the Commitments more momentum and have resulted in an agreed approach to referrals between schools and VET providers in all regions.

A different approach to achieving the same ends was adopted in Tasmania. Memorandums of Understanding were signed between the Department of Education and post-Year 10 education and training providers setting out funding and participation targets that will contribute to Tasmania's participation and attainment targets. The premise of the MoUs is that shared responsibility for ensuring young people make successful transitions.

In States and Territories where funding decisions had been decentralised to a regional level, some stakeholders raised concerns about the risk of doubling up on activities across regions, and a lack of communication between key players to identify and address overlaps or gaps in understanding of issues or support services.

Is governance of the element working effectively?



Governance arrangements are working effectively – although some stakeholders expressed concern about the amount of resources required to participate in NP governance, and some non-government stakeholders were concerned about the equity of funding allocation

All States and Territories have established, or incorporated into existing arrangements, committees to oversee the implementation of MEAST initiatives. These committees have worked together to resolve implementation issues and to report to the Commonwealth on NP activities and outcomes. They typically involved representatives from government and non-government school and training sectors, but some also have other non-government organisations represented. Some smaller jurisdictions and non-government education authorities raised concerns about the amount of resources required to participate in NP governance mechanisms and to prepare reporting.

In the early stages of the NP, the State and Territory governance committees have been focused on planning and implementing initiatives. As more information becomes available about the outcomes of MEAST-funded initiatives it would be useful for this to be shared both within jurisdictions and across States and Territories, including through the NP YAT Multilateral Working Group.

Some non-government school sector stakeholders raised concerns about the amount and method of distribution of MEAST funding. These concerns were not universal. Some States and Territories provide funds directly to non-government schools, others include non-government schools in funded service delivery. Some States have allocated funding and services on a “per capita”

basis, while in others non-government stakeholders highlighted that funding and services were skewed to the government section. There was no clear preference or solution presented. What was evident, however, was that the strength of collaboration appeared to be greatest where there was a strong investment in cross-sectional engagement in design, governance and reporting on initiatives. This issue pertains to the broader Federal Financial Relations Framework and has been dealt with differently in different national partnerships. A benefit of the funding approach taken under the YAT NP is that it has encouraged non-government and government sectors to collaborate on NP implementation and reporting.

How well is performance reporting working?



Reporting and knowledge sharing about specific initiatives and impacts could be strengthened

States and Territories are required to provide annual reports to the Commonwealth against the outcomes, performance benchmarks and performance indicators specified in the NP. One section of the Annual report centres on MEAST initiatives. The level and type of information provided on MEAST activities varies across States and Territories. Few of the reports include a breakdown of MEAST funding by area or initiative (in total and as a proportion of other funding for the initiative). Without this information it is difficult to determine the relative investment and effectiveness of different types of initiatives. This impedes the usefulness of reporting to assist in informing decision-making on making future investments in the YAT policy area. DEEWR has revised the annual reporting template for 2011 to encourage States and Territories to ensure that information demonstrating the targeting of funding and the impact of initiatives is reflected in the report. It is anticipated that this will help address this issue.

Many jurisdictions have planned and started to undertake formative evaluations of the impact of MEAST-funded initiatives. Where evaluations are planned it would be useful to assess the performance of the initiatives in relation to the YAT NP outcomes. In Victoria, for example, the formative evaluations of career development initiatives that were part-funded by MEAST assessed the extent to which the initiatives intended to maximise engagement, attainment and successful transitions.

Most stakeholders identified a desire to improve knowledge sharing across jurisdictions. For example, sharing outcomes from evaluations of MEAST-funded initiatives and research projects; and summaries of specific initiatives and lessons learned. This could happen via the MWG and coordinated by DEEWR.

How effective is communication?



Good understanding of MEAST-funded initiatives in jurisdictions – albeit not necessarily linked to Commonwealth funding

MEAST funding was applied to both an expansion of existing initiatives as well as the creation of new ones. Relevant education and training stakeholders that were consulted in this evaluation had a good understanding of those initiatives in their State or Territory - albeit many weren't aware of the extent of MEAST funding that was applied to those initiatives. This isn't seen as a failing of the communication effort undertaken by the States and Territories, as it is appropriate to present initiatives in the context of existing reforms or activities in those jurisdictions.

Recommendations for improvement

Outlined in the table below is a summary of key issues that emerged from evaluation findings, along with recommendations for how they can be addressed.

TABLE A3.4 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Issues	Recommendation
Stakeholders are concerned that the momentum and impact of MEAST-funded initiatives will not be sustained beyond the NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth and States to pursue strategies to identify and sustain high value initiatives post NP
In many jurisdictions, schools have had to take on responsibility for SWP's – challenging their capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine implications for schools, how they are working to address these issues and whether additional support might be needed
Through current reporting arrangements, it is difficult to understand specific MEAST-funded initiatives being implemented and their impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the granularity of annual reporting to better understand the allocation of MEAST funds to new and existing initiatives and the impact that they have had Where research or evaluations of jurisdictional initiatives are planned, share findings across jurisdictions to understand impact and lessons learned

Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation

Considering findings from this evaluation, the following areas emerged that warrant inclusion in the next summative evaluation of the NP in 2012:

- Impact of MEAST-funded initiatives on access to career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring
- Alignment with other initiatives targeting similar outcomes
- The contribution of MEAST-funded initiatives to YAT outcomes
- Barriers to implementation of mentoring initiatives and progress on planned initiatives.

Attachment 4: School Business Community Partnership Brokers

Introduction

Objectives

The School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers) program supports a national network of service providers to build partnerships that aim to improve education and transition outcomes for young Australians. The program seeks to facilitate stakeholder connections, build community capacity and infrastructure and drive the government's education reform and social inclusion agendas through the brokering of partnerships that foster a strategic, whole-of-community approach to supporting the learning and development of young people. This rationale is consistent with the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians agreed by the Australian and State and Territory governments. It is also consistent with contemporary practice in countries such as the UK and supports the case made by thought leaders such as Black (2008), amongst others, that partnerships, and in particular those that span across sectors, are one of the most effective mechanisms for large-scale reform within the education system as they can drive real change.¹⁰⁹

Partnership Brokers are responsible for building new partnerships and enhancing existing partnerships at the local level. The role of a Partnership Broker includes working with local stakeholders to identify the needs of young people in their region, helping partners to agree on how they can work together towards a common purpose and supporting partnerships to achieve their goals. Stakeholders engaged by Partnership Brokers include:

- Education and training providers
- Business and industry
- Parents and families
- Community groups.

A suite of Commonwealth programs, including the youth and transitions programs listed in Table A4.1 below, ceased on 31 December 2010. The funding from this suite of programs was consolidated under the YAT NP and its five elements, including the Partnership Broker, MEAST (see Attachment 3) and Youth Connections (see Attachment 5) elements.

¹⁰⁹ Black, Rosalyn (2008). *Beyond the classroom: Building new school networks*, ACER Press: Camberwell.

TABLE A4.1: YOUTH AND TRANSITION PROGRAMS PRECEDING PARTNERSHIP BROKERS

Program	Description
Career and Transition Support program	Local Community Partnerships between schools, parents, businesses and community to help young people access career development and transition support
Adopt a School	Local Community Partnerships brokered school/business partnerships to keep young people engaged in their schooling through hands-on learning projects
Mentors for our Students Commitment	This initiative targeted identified skill shortage careers in the trades, maths, science and engineering
Schools Business Linkages Commitment	This initiative sought to improve linkages between schools and businesses and develop innovative, high quality work and training programs for VET in Schools students
Regional Industry Career Advisors	Working with the Local Community Partnerships, the advisors provided regionalised career industry information, advice and resources and engaged business with schools
National Industry Career Specialists (NICS)	This initiative involved ten NICS' developing and providing industry sector-specific career advice and information on skills needs

Partnership Broker service providers

The Partnership Broker program operates in 113 service regions across Australia, with 107 Partnership Brokers providing national program coverage.¹¹⁰ In Victoria, changes were made to the existing Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) contracts to incorporate Partnership Broker services in order to reduce duplication of activity. In other States and Territories, a range of service providers were selected to provide Partnership Broker services. Those organisations included not for profit community agencies and Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Key timelines

The Partnership Brokers element commenced on 1 January 2010 and will run until 31 December 2013.

Targeted outcomes

The effectiveness of the Partnership Brokers element is measured through the monitoring evaluation and reporting framework (MERF). Key Performance Measures (KPMs) that reflect program outcomes attributable to partnerships and the contribution of Partnership Brokers are one component of this. The key outcomes and KPMs for the Partnership Brokers program are shown in Table A4.2. The effectiveness of current performance reporting is discussed in more detail later in this attachment.

TABLE A4.2: PARTNERSHIP BROKER OUTCOMES AND KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Outcome	Key Performance Measures (KPMs)
High quality partnerships that link key stakeholders together with shared commitment, goals and outcomes to improve young people's education and transition outcomes	<p>The extent to which partnerships demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Goal – partners have a clear, shared, realistic goal • Shared Decision Making – each partner contributes meaningfully to the planning and implementation of the program and is involved in the decisions that are made • Communication – there is effective communication between partners • Commitment and Investment – all organisations are committed to the partnership and make a considerable investment to it

¹¹⁰ Some service regions are amalgamated for Partnership Broker services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review – partners monitor and review their partnership and progress towards goals
Partnerships are developed that address the needs of a region and involve a number of stakeholder groups to improve young people's education and transition outcomes	<p>The extent to which partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address an existing or emerging regional issue (e.g. for a particular industry or for a particular cohort of disadvantaged young people) • Bring together key representative bodies or organisations from a range of stakeholders across the four key stakeholder groups • Have consulted and demonstrate shared ownership of a solution • Develop and implement innovative strategies that address a regional issue
Education and training providers partnering with stakeholders in their community to ensure all young people participate in challenging, relevant and engaging learning that broadens personal aspirations and improves education and transition outcomes	<p>Have partnerships achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for meaningful learning as a result of education and training providers partnering with other stakeholders • An increase in the number of education and training providers who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Have increased their career practitioner capacity – Have increased opportunities for young people to access trained mentors¹¹¹
Business and industry actively engaged in sustainable partnerships that support the development of young people, contribute to the skills and knowledge of the future workforce and improve young people's education and transition outcomes	<p>Have partnerships achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the number of businesses providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quality workplace and community learning opportunities for young people – Mentoring/coaching opportunities for young people – Professional development opportunities for teachers and career practitioners
Parents and families participating in partnerships that provide an informed and supportive environment for all young people to enable lifelong learning and career and pathway planning and improve their education and transition outcomes	<p>Have partnerships achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the number of parents and families that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Have improved understanding of the link between learning and career aspirations – Are better informed about learning and career options – Are confident to interact with education and training providers, employers and community groups to support participation and engagement of their children – Are actively engaged in supporting learning inside and outside the 'classroom' – Are actively involved in career transition planning for their children
Community groups participating in partnerships that harness resources and build social capital to support young people to identify and achieve their goals and improve their education and transition outcomes	<p>Have partnerships achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the number of community groups that partner with stakeholders to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Build networks and linkages among agencies to support young people – Identify and respond to emerging trends and skill needs with reference to young people – Harness and grow community resources for young people – Align services for young people and reduce service duplication and resource wastage – Provide mentoring and coaching opportunities for young people – Provide young people with opportunities to connect with the community – Improve young people's employability and life skills

¹¹¹ Note: This is no longer an aspect of the KPM framework and will be reflected in updated guidelines

Funding arrangements

The program is currently funded as a Commonwealth Own Purpose Expense (COPE). Under the NP, the Commonwealth allocated \$139 million over four years to the Partnership Broker Program – summarised in Table A4.3, below. It should be noted that the Commonwealth also provides approximately \$43m over four years to the Victorian Government through the MEAST element.

TABLE A4.3: PARTNERSHIP BROKER FUNDING¹¹²

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
ACT ¹¹³	\$251,500	\$503,000	\$503,000	\$503,000	\$251,500	\$2,012,000
NSW	\$7,066,250	\$14,132,500	\$14,132,500	\$14,132,500	\$7,066,250	\$56,530,000
NT	\$300,625	\$601,250	\$601,250	\$601,250	\$301,625	\$2,405,000
QLD	\$4,558,750	\$9,117,500	\$9,117,500	\$9,117,500	\$4,558,750	\$36,470,000
SA	\$1,645,375	\$3,290,750	\$3,290,750	\$3,290,750	\$1,645,375	\$13,163,000
TAS ¹¹⁴	\$538,875	\$1,077,750	\$1,077,750	\$1,077,750	\$538,875	\$4,311,000
VIC ¹¹⁵	0	0	0	0	0	0
WA	\$2,297,500	\$4,595,000	\$4,595,000	\$4,595,000	\$2,297,500	\$18,380,000
Sub-Total	\$16,658,875	\$33,317,750	\$33,317,750	\$33,317,750	\$16,658,875	\$133,271,000
NT Top-up ¹¹⁶	\$550,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$550,000	\$4,400,000
National ¹¹⁷	\$200,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$200,000	\$1,600,000
TOTAL	\$17,408,875	\$34,817,750	\$34,817,750	\$34,817,750	\$17,408,875	\$139,271,000

Allocation of funding was negotiated between each jurisdiction and the Commonwealth. The agreed funding approach differed across jurisdictions to account for differences in the service regions. For example, several jurisdictions introduced a base level of funding for the regions and then supplemented that funding based on the number of students in a region, weighted for the remoteness of those students. One jurisdiction used a combination of measures, including apparent retention rates, number of schools and remoteness to allocate funding, with another focused on the remoteness and 'at risk' measures. Another jurisdiction divided their funding allocation into equal portions for each of their regions.¹¹⁸

¹¹² Source: DEEWR documentation

¹¹³ ACT funding decreased from the original funding allocation of \$753,000 per year due to allocation of \$250,000 in Partnership Broker funding to the ACT Government. This funding is paid to the ACT Government Treasury by the Commonwealth Treasury through the MEAST payment allocation.

¹¹⁴ Tasmanian funding increased from the original allocation of \$96,000 over 4 years through the provision of \$24,000 per year in funding to the Partnership Brokers from the Tasmanian MEAST element to ensure the viability of the program in Tasmania.

¹¹⁵ \$10,676,000 per year is paid to the Victorian Government by the Commonwealth through the MEAST payment allocation, in part to deliver the Partnership Broker element in the state.

¹¹⁶ \$400,000 is allocated for program evaluation, change management and network activities, while the remaining \$1.1 million has been allocated to the Northern Territory.

¹¹⁷ \$400,000 is allocated for program evaluation, change management and network activities, while the remaining \$1.1 million has been allocated to the Northern Territory.

¹¹⁸ DEEWR Documentation (2011).

Summary of findings

It is important to stress that this report does not reflect a detailed evaluation of the Partnership Brokers program, but does recommend that one should occur. Findings and recommendations are based on reported program data and consultations with a sample of approximately 30 Partnership Brokers and partners, DEEWR program and contract managers, as well as around 125 stakeholders representing government and non-government education and training sectors across all States and Territories, (stakeholder groups engaged in this evaluation are presented in Attachment 8). This evaluation provides a high level assessment of the status and progress of this element of the NP toward targeted outcomes.

The Partnership Broker program represents a significant shift in the Commonwealth's approach to supporting the formation and operation of partnerships between schools, businesses, parents and community groups. This shift was driven by the view that strategic, regionally owned and driven partnerships would provide greater impact and more sustainable change than the approach taken by preceding programs, which provided services for, and on behalf of, schools and were seen to displace effort and create dependence. Providers of those programs had reported that their rigid scope did not meet the specific needs of communities such as early intervention and addressing entrenched social issues, where flexibility and building the capacity of stakeholders to enter into partnerships are required.

Since commencement of the program, Partnership Brokers have actively responded to their contract requirements and more than 1,400 partnerships outside Victoria are now supported by the Partnership Broker network. There would also appear to have been some expansion in the types of partnership activities compared to earlier programs, particularly in areas such as increased support for primary schools and Indigenous young people.

Partnership Brokers report against Key Performance Measures (KPMs) that are linked to program outcomes. On those measures, and based on stakeholder feedback, there is evidence of achievement and progress toward targeted outcomes. For example:

- The number of active and self-sustaining partnerships is increasing
- Partnership Brokers appear to be successful in forming new partnerships
- Brokered partnership activities and benefits are starting to gain momentum
- Partners see the program as important and valuable.

All stakeholders acknowledged that the remit of PB providers is a very ambitious one and that they face some significant challenges and issues that may limit the success of the program if they are not addressed. The nature and extent of these issues warrants attention in a more detailed evaluation of the program. Key issues that emerged from consultations with DEEWR contract managers and education and training stakeholders include:

- The role and value of Partnership Brokers is not well understood or appreciated
- Jurisdictional support for the Partnership Broker model is critical to success, but is lacking
- Establishing sustainable partnerships takes time and success may not be realised within the term of provider contracts or the term of this NP
- There is some overlap between Partnership Broker activity and other initiatives being implemented in some jurisdictions
- Some providers may not have the capacity to succeed
- Service delivery is costly and difficult to support in larger service regions and remote locations.





In addition, a number of interviewed partners and education and training stakeholders are concerned that linkages made by Partnership Brokers will not convert into sustainable partnerships without ongoing and “hands on” support from service providers to facilitate partnership activities early and provide ongoing support. While DEEWR has advised that the Partnership Brokers role includes “hands-on” support, particularly early in a partnership’s development, interviewed education and training stakeholders relayed a concern that Partnership Brokers may see this as outside their brief.

The importance and value of partnerships between schools, business and the community was universally recognised by interviewed stakeholders. There is also evidence that steps are being taken to tailor partnerships to address regional needs and providers report that they are effective in addressing those needs.

Governance of the Partnership Broker program has involved the establishment of jurisdictional and national networks of service providers. Those networks are now well established and service providers are keen to increase the focus of network activities on program improvements and knowledge sharing. Partnership Brokers value the support extended by DEEWR to help them in their role.











dandolopartners worked with DEEWR and the NP YAT Multilateral Working Group to develop the questions that needed to be asked to understand how this element is working toward NP outcomes (NB this is not an evaluation of the Partnership Broker program)¹¹⁹. Table A4.4 provides a summary of the answers to those questions and a rating of how well this element is progressing at this point. These high level observations are elaborated upon in the text that follows. Recommendations and areas to explore in year two of the evaluation are then documented.

Legend:

-  Denotes substantial progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Denotes some progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Denotes minimal progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Not clear, based on available information

¹¹⁹ Questions and sub-questions guided quantitative and qualitative research underpinning this evaluation. In some cases, sub-questions were not able to be addressed at this stage of the NP because information wasn't available. The evaluation framework will be refined for the next iteration of the evaluation in 2012.

TABLE A4.4: SUMMARY ASSESSMENT AGAINST EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation Question	Assessment	
What is happening?		
Has the NP changed the activity and focus of partnerships?		<p>The Partnership Broker model reflects a significant shift in strategy for Commonwealth support for partnerships</p> <p>The focus of supported partnerships appears to have expanded</p> <p>Partnership Brokers have actively responded to contract requirements</p>
Is it working?		
Has the Partnership Brokers element facilitated the establishment of high quality School Business Community Partnerships that link key stakeholders?		<p>Partnership activity has escalated, with Brokers and partners reporting increased success</p> <p>Implementation challenges, including a lack of jurisdictional support - may be limiting program success</p> <p>Ongoing and “hands on” support is needed to ensure sustainability of partnerships</p>
Are School Business Community Partnerships tailored to address the needs of young people in the service regions?		<p>Partnerships are seen as important models to build local capacity to support young people and improve transition outcomes</p> <p>There is evidence that steps are being taken to tailor partnerships to address regional needs</p>
Is it appropriate?		
Is this element consistent with overarching policy objectives?		Partnerships are consistent with overarching policy objectives, aiming to provide sustainable support for local needs
Does this element address areas of need?		The program has been structured to ensure that Partnership Brokers identify and address specific needs in their area
Does this element complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?		<p>There is some overlap with other programs and opportunities exist to increase collaboration to improve support to young people in service regions</p> <p>Collaboration with Youth Connections appears to be happening</p>
Is it well governed and implemented?		
How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the element?		Jurisdictions were engaged in program design and targeting, but commitment to the model is not universal across States and Territories
Is governance of the element working effectively?		<p>Provider networks are functioning and there is a strong interest in greater collaboration to share knowledge and improve performance</p> <p>DEEWR's support is positively viewed by providers</p>
How well is performance reporting working?		<p>A broad ranging Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework has been implemented to assess provider and program performance</p> <p>Some opportunities to improve performance reporting were identified</p>
How effective is communication?		The role and value of Partnership Brokers is not well understood and needs to be improved

Elaboration of findings

What is happening?

Has the NP changed the activity and focus of partnerships?



The Partnership Broker model reflects a significant shift in strategy for Commonwealth support for partnerships

The focus of supported partnerships appears to have expanded

Partnership Brokers have actively responded to contract requirements

The Partnership Broker model reflects a significant shift in strategy for Commonwealth support for partnerships

The Partnership Broker model reflects a fundamental shift in the way the Commonwealth supports the establishment and operation of school partnerships with parents, business and community organisations. At the broadest level, it seeks to address a lack of engagement between important stakeholders to help understand and address barriers that stop young people from engaging in education and training. This includes engagement between schools and employers, which international studies show to be one of the key features of successful transition systems.¹²⁰

There is a need for Partnership Brokers to take on a culture-changing role, requiring independence, credibility, high-level influence and capacity to generate linkages and commitment across a broad range of stakeholders. The role is also about 'handing back' responsibility to school, business and community partners for ensuring young people remain connected, reducing the reliance upon government to address issues surrounding youth attainment and transitions.¹²¹

The Partnership Broker model needs to shift the focus of the Commonwealth's support for partnership activities from operational to strategic, based on detailed independent evaluation and program data from previous programs. The model is consistent with international partnership experience (including that in the UK) that highlights the importance of interpreting the challenges and complexities that partners and their brokers face in establishing successful partnerships. Strategic partnerships are described as owned and driven by regional and national stakeholders and strategically focused, with the aim of engaging the creativity of all partners in terms of designing and implementing a long-term vision and lasting change. Operational partnerships are more short-term focused, requiring process support and 'hands on' assistance to implement initiatives. The principle behind this shift in focus is that strategic partnerships deliver better benefits than those with an operational or transactional focus.¹²²

This thinking represents a significant shift from a preceding initiative, Local Community Partnerships (LCPs), which was primarily focused on responding to school needs through the provision of direct, hands-on service delivery, including coordination of structured workplace learning placements for students in VET. An evaluation of the LCP program recommended¹²³ broadening the LCP role across the youth career and transition area. By focusing on building partnerships, facilitating, brokering and influencing at the local and regional levels across systems and operations, it was anticipated that systemic and cultural changes could occur, resulting in young people receiving increased contact and support.

¹²⁰ See OECD (2000) *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making the Transition Work*, Paris.

¹²¹ Atelier Learning Solutions Pty Ltd (2010) *Evaluation of Career Advice Australia*, Final Summary Report, The Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training: Canberra.

¹²² Turner, D (2010) *Strategic – What does it mean?: Exploring the meaning of strategic partnerships and the role of a strategic Partnership Broker*, DEEWR: Canberra, p5.

¹²³ Atelier Learning Solutions (2010) *Evaluation of Career Advice Australia Final Summary Report*, Department of Education, Science and Training: Canberra.

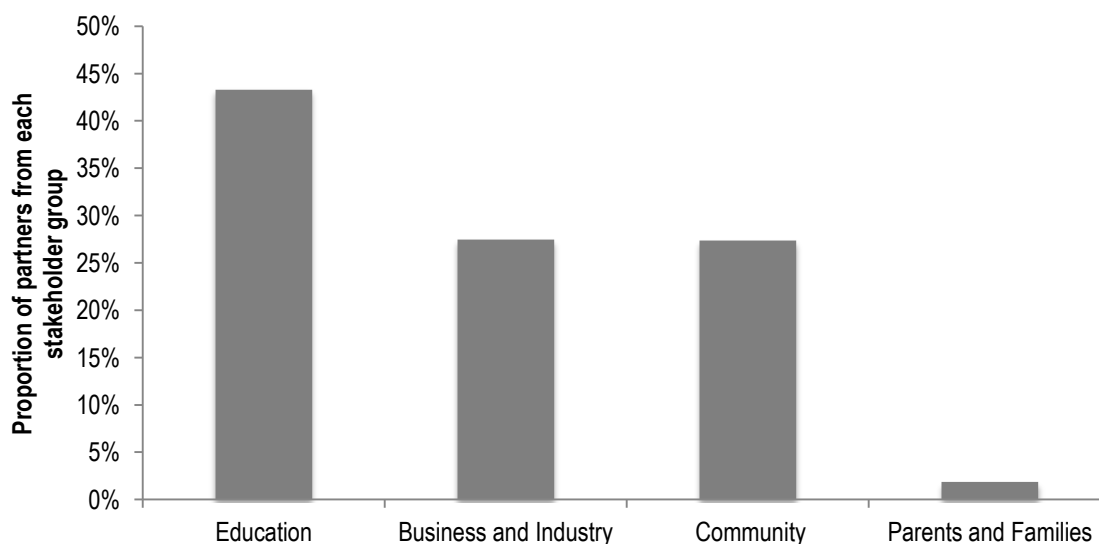
The shift from the LCP model was seen as a negative by many schools and some partners, particularly in those jurisdictions where education and training authorities did not pick up or expand work placement activities through MEAST or State and Territory funding. Without assistance, schools and businesses have limited 'in-house' resources to pursue work placements.

The focus of supported partnerships appears to have expanded

While there is no baseline data around the number and nature of partnerships that existed prior to the Partnership Broker program, interviewed Commonwealth stakeholders and Partnership Brokers indicated that under the Partnership Brokers program, the focus of partnerships has expanded to include new areas, such as building and maintaining relationships with primary schools and alternative education program providers, and engaging with relevant stakeholders to ensure that culturally appropriate strategies are developed to address the specific needs of Indigenous young people. The type of stakeholder groups targeted for partnerships has also widened to include parents and families and community groups.

Expanding the focus of partnerships included broadening the types of partners engaged. As outlined in Figure A4.1 below, community groups are well represented in partnerships established under the Partnership Broker program, along with business and industry and education and training stakeholders. However, representation of parents and families is lowest, which reflects the feedback from Partnership Brokers in the most recent national survey of providers that they find parents and families to be the most difficult stakeholders to engage with.¹²⁴ Despite the lower representation of parents as partners, program data indicates that approximately one third of all partnerships are seeking to address parent and family KPMs in some way.¹²⁵ This requires further analysis to understand why that's the case, as building relationships among all stakeholder groups and securing shared commitment towards shared goals is an important part of the Partnership Broker role.

FIGURE A4.1: PROPORTION OF ORGANISATIONS IN PARTNERSHIPS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP



Source: Australian Government (2011) School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program Report – National, DEEWR: Canberra.

Partnership Brokers have actively responded to contract requirements

Partnership Brokers have reported positive progress toward contract requirements set in relation to establishing and supporting partnerships. From program commencement to September 2011, a total of 11,112 partner organisations were involved in 2,014

¹²⁴ 2011 Annual PB Provider Survey, February 2012, DEEWR: Canberra.

¹²⁵ 2011 YATMIS data, DEEWR

partnerships that have been supported by Partnership Brokers across Australia (excluding Victoria).¹²⁶ Further detail about the number and nature of partnerships established and perspectives on Partnership Broker performance are presented under the “Is it working” sub-section below.

Is it working?

<p>Has the Partnership Brokers element facilitated the establishment of high quality School Business Community Partnerships that link key stakeholders?</p>		<p>Partnership activity has escalated, with Brokers and partners reporting increased success</p> <p>Implementation challenges, including a lack of jurisdictional support, may be limiting program success</p> <p>Ongoing and “hands on” support is needed to ensure sustainability of partnerships</p>
---	--	--

Partnership activity has escalated, with Brokers and partners reporting increased success

There is evidence of achievement and progress toward targeted program outcomes, captured in Partnership Broker and partner assessments of the success of partnership activities and in feedback from interviewed stakeholders. For example:

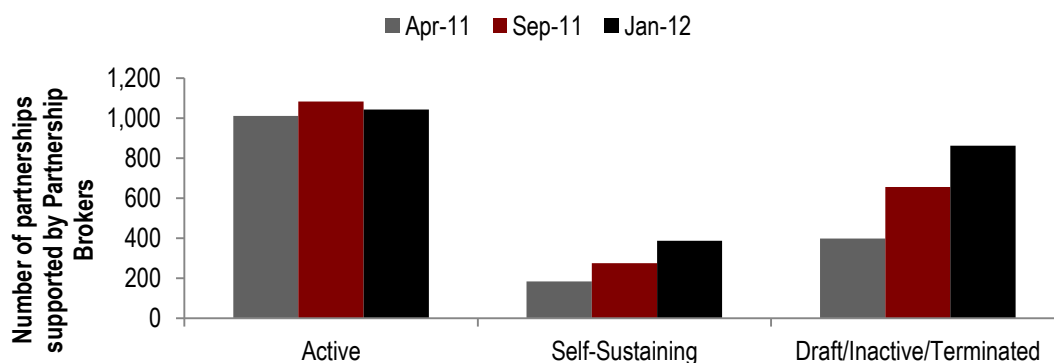
- The number of active and self-sustaining partnerships appears to be increasing
- Partnership Brokers appear to be successful in forming new partnerships
- Brokered partnerships, activities and associated benefits are gaining momentum, but will take time to be realised
- Partners see the program as important and valuable.

These findings are presented in more detail below.

The number of active and self-sustaining partnerships appears to be increasing

Comparing national data between April 2011 and January 2012, there has been a 7 % increase in the number of active partnerships supported by Partnership Brokers¹²⁷, and a 49 % increase in the number of self-sustaining partnerships over this period.¹²⁸ (Figure A4.3).

FIGURE A4.3: NUMBER OF PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORTED BY PARTNERSHIP BROKERS (NATIONAL)



Source: Australian Government (2011) School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program Report – National, DEEWR

¹²⁶ 2011 YATMIS data, DEEWR

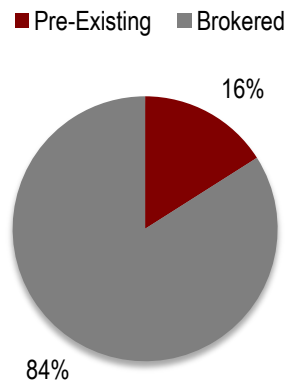
¹²⁷ For the purposes of reporting, active partnerships are defined as two or more members (organisations) and the Partnership Broker playing an active role in assisting partners to achieve improved education and transition outcomes for young people. an

¹²⁸ For the purposes of reporting, self-sustaining partnerships are defined as those that have reached a point in its development where it no longer requires direct support from the Partnership Broker.

Partnership Brokers appear to be successful in forming new partnerships

During consultations, some education and training stakeholders expressed a view that Partnership Brokers might be claiming credit for pre-existing partnerships. However, the program data presents a different view. Figure A4.2 shows that only 17 % (n=336) of partnerships recorded were pre-existing, leaving the majority of partnerships (83% or n=1,678) brokered by Partnership Brokers.¹²⁹ This highlights a potential need to review reported data and/or improve program reporting to education and training stakeholders to address that perception.

FIGURE A4.2: PROPORTION OF BROKERED AND PRE-EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

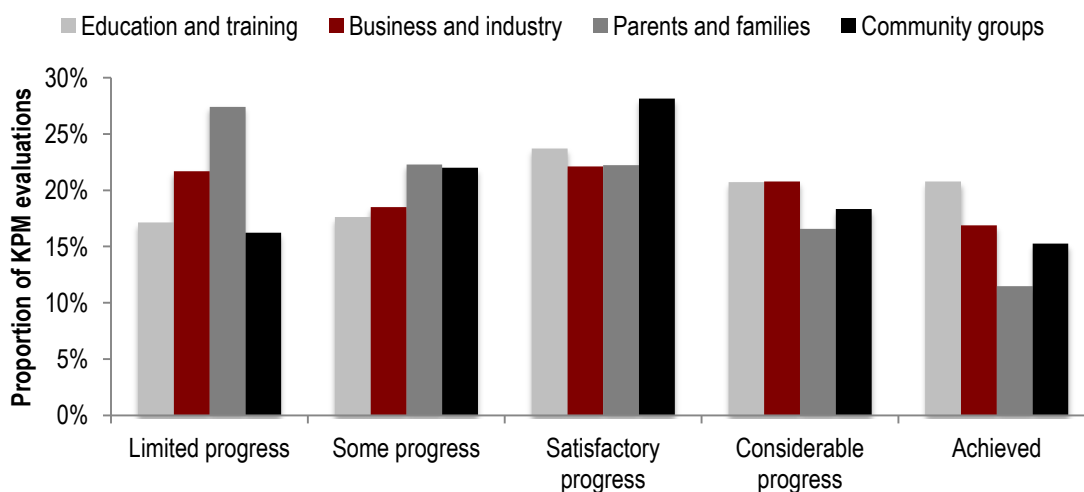


Source: Australian Government (2011) School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program Report – National, DEEWR: Canberra.

Brokered partnership activities and benefits are gaining momentum, but will take time to be realised

From program commencement to January 2012, Partnership Brokers recorded approximately 7,800 KPM evaluations. About 33 % or approximately 2,500 of these evaluations ranked partnerships' progress as either 'considerable' or 'achieved' (Figure A4.4). This level of progress accords with expectations, given that the experience with LLENs demonstrates that it can take 4-5 years to build relationships and sustain partnerships.

FIGURE A4.4 TOTAL NUMBER OF KPM EVALUATIONS PER STAKEHOLDER GROUP



¹²⁹ Australian Government (2011) School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program Report – National, DEEWR: Canberra.

Interviewed Partnership Brokers and partners gave examples of effective partnerships and benefits that are starting to gain momentum. Cited examples of benefits of the partnerships and the Partnership Broker model included:

- Partnership Brokers have been able to influence organisations to become involved in partnerships
- Collaboration across a broad range of service providers has helped to expand the breadth and depth of support for young people
- Gaining the commitment of partners to partnerships helps increase the collective understanding of young peoples' needs and increase accountability of service providers to address them.

Partners see the program as important and valuable

The majority of partners surveyed have positive views of the Partnership Broker program and the role of providers. Results from the 2011 Partner Survey indicated that¹³⁰:

- 92 % (n=311) of stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that their partnership is addressing a real need in the community
- 87 % (n=295) agreed or strongly agreed that their partnership is contributing to improved educational outcomes for young people
- 67 % (n=228) agreed or strongly agreed that their Partnership Broker was instrumental in establishing the partnership.

Partnership Brokers face significant challenges, including a lack of jurisdictional support , that may be limiting program success

All stakeholders acknowledged that the remit of the Partnership Broker is a very ambitious one, and that they have faced some significant challenges that may limit the success of the program if they are not addressed. Key challenges that were identified included:

- The role and value of Partnership Brokers is not well understood or appreciated
- Jurisdictional support for the Partnership Broker model is critical to success, but is lacking
- Establishing sustainable partnerships takes time and success may not be realised within the term of provider contracts – or the term of this NP
- Some providers may not have the capacity to succeed
- Service delivery is costly and difficult to support in larger service regions and remote locations.

These issues are expanded and do not represent a comprehensive assessment of the program. Rather, they are presented as examples of issues that arose in consultations that warrant further, more detailed investigation. Some critical success factors for Partnership Brokers that were identified in consultations with Partnership Brokers, partners and education and training sector stakeholders are listed at the end of this attachment.

The role and value of Partnership Brokers is not well understood or appreciated

Consultations indicated that many education and training stakeholders did not understand the rationale for the introduction of the Partnerships Broker model, the role of the Partnership Broker or the impact that the Partnership Broker model is having.

¹³⁰ Partnership Brokers distributed the survey to organisations that were members of partnerships that had been subject of a case study submitted to DEEWR.

Interviewed education and training stakeholders also indicated that some schools saw the withdrawal of work placement services (previously delivered under the Local Community Partnerships program) as a negative consequence of this program's introduction. DEEWR also reported that the changes in the model have created tensions, resulting in an unwillingness by some schools to consider how a partnership approach, supported by a Partnership Broker, can assist them to achieve the outcomes required under the Government's broad education reform agenda.¹³¹

Many Partnership Brokers felt that they struggle to engage stakeholders in schools because dealing with them is at the school's discretion and schools are already overwhelmed by what they see as higher priority initiatives. When asked to identify strategies to improve Partnerships Brokers' positioning with schools, there were contradictory views amongst contract managers and education and training stakeholders:

- On the one hand, there was a view that Partnership Brokers should be a funded role in schools if they are to get traction
- On the other hand, there was a view that Partnership Brokers shouldn't be institutionalised within schools because they need to be able to work across boundaries, identify players, develop shared goals and act as a facilitator.

Jurisdictional support for the Partnership Broker model is critical, but lacking

Most jurisdictional stakeholders were sceptical about the value and impact of the Partnership Broker model. The reasons for this varied and included concerns about service provider capacity, size and scope of their task, resistance of schools to engage in the model, etc. These stakeholders were also concerned about the veracity of reported outcomes, indicating that Partnership Brokers may have initially focused on "low hanging fruit", or existing partnerships, to meet contractual obligations.

Irrespective of whether jurisdictional concerns are well founded, their support for the model is essential if it is to get traction. Efforts should be made to improve communication of the value and achievements of partnership and Partnership Brokers.

Success takes time and may not be realised within the term of provider contracts – or the term of this NP

Partnership Brokers and partners indicated that it takes time to support the establishment and operation of new successful and sustainable partnerships. This view was supported by stakeholders from Victoria's LLENs, who have been running activities similar to Partnership Brokers for around 10 years. They indicated that it could take 4-5 years for the benefits of this program to become evident. They also indicated that the types of issues Partnership Brokers are currently facing are similar to the challenges they faced at the same stage of the program's implementation.

Some Partnership Brokers may not have the capacity to succeed

The Partnership Brokers' remit is deliberately broad to allow flexibility to respond to regional needs. However, a number of education and training stakeholders (at Commonwealth and jurisdictional levels) and contract managers raised concerns that not all Partnership Brokers had the capacity needed to succeed in their role. In particular, they indicated that:

- Partnership Brokers have often interpreted the full remit as what they are expected to do and could benefit from a sharper focus on activities and locations where there may be better return on invested time and resources
- Establishing partnerships across different stakeholder groups and locations is resource intensive, particularly at the front-end, and funding/resource constraints limit what can be achieved

¹³¹ Australian Government (2011) *School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program Report – National*, DEEWR: Canberra.

- Many service providers have struggled to adapt to the new approach, particularly in establishing the capabilities, relationships or capacity needed to succeed
- A number of Partnership Brokers have had (and continue to have) difficulties attracting and retaining staff, which will get worse as the end of the program gets nearer and job security is less certain
- A number of identified critical success factors relating to leadership, governance, skill characteristics, knowledge and experience, relationship management are lacking in many service providers
- Service providers that hold both structured work placement and Partnership Broker contracts may tend focus their efforts on placements and industry-school relationships over community engagement
- Partnership Brokers do not always have a good understanding of schools and their priorities.

Service delivery is more demanding of resources and difficult to support in large service regions and remote locations.

Many of the issues identified above are exacerbated for Partnership Brokers that need to support activities in large service regions and remote locations. This is a perennial issue identified in other programs within and outside this NP, such as MEAST and Youth Connections and one that is difficult to address within existing funding allocations. The cost of servicing remote regions is high. For example, 2011 Annual PB Provider survey indicated that, on average, Partnership Brokers spend 10% of their annual budget on travel; it would be reasonable to expect that figure is much higher for providers in remote locations. Anecdotally, one service provider in a remote region indicated that their annual cost for travel and accommodation was the equivalent of a full time staff member's salary.

Ongoing and “hands on” support is needed to ensure sustainability of partnerships

A number of interviewed partners raised concerns that linkages made by Partnership Brokers will not convert into sustainable partnerships without “hands on” support from service providers to facilitate partnership activities early, and provide ongoing support for partnership activities.

Some interviewed partners went as far as to say that, without facilitation and ongoing support from Partnership Brokers, their partnership was unlikely to survive. This concern was driven primarily by the resource constraints of schools, businesses and community organisations to support partnership activities.

As part of this evaluation, DEEWR advised that:

- Partnership Brokers are encouraged to actively facilitate the formation of partnerships, as distinct from just bringing potential partners together
- Some hands-on involvement is seen as valid Partnership Broker activity, particularly in the initial stages of partnership development, for demonstration effect and/or to build the capacity of partners
- There is a valid place for Partnership Brokers to interact with self-sustaining partnerships in the longer term to:
 - Check on the partnership's performance and progress
 - Mediate partners through some form of conflict or disagreement if required
 - Contribute as an independent advisor on partnership evaluation and/or opportunities to take the partnership to a more strategic level.

Education and training stakeholders relayed a concern that Partnership Brokers may see a hands-on facilitation role as outside their brief, albeit encouraged by DEEWR. This matter warrants review in terms of the desirability of clarifying to Partnership Brokers

and other stakeholders that Partnership Brokers are encouraged to actively facilitate partnerships and what this involves. This would need to be done in a way that makes clear how the Partnership Broker role changes over the lifecycle:

- On formation – to facilitate relationships between important partners, secure their commitment and support early partnership activities
- On establishment and bedding down – to support activities for demonstration effect and to maintain momentum
- Ongoing – to manage an exit from the partnership (formally), while checking in periodically on the ongoing sustainability of the partnership (as outlined above).

The provision of a broader ongoing support role is more complex and could be seen as inconsistent with the objective of establishing self-sustaining partnerships. DEEWR advise that Partnership Brokers are required to consider an ‘exit strategy’ when developing partnership arrangements. This is an important facet of the capacity building role. The concept of ongoing support is seen to be counter to this, particularly if it means some form of service delivery or administrative role performed by the Partnership Broker for the partnership on an ongoing basis.

However, a detailed evaluation of the Partnership Broker model should investigate whether the lack of ongoing and hands on support to partnerships is a critical factor limiting program success, and the type/s of ongoing support that may be required.

<p>Are School Business Community Partnerships tailored to address the needs of young people in the service regions?</p>		<p>Partnerships are seen as important models to build local capacity to support young people and improve transition outcomes</p> <p>There is evidence that steps are being taken to tailor partnerships to address regional needs</p>
---	---	---

Partnerships are seen as important models to build local capacity to support young people and improve transition outcomes

Most interviewed stakeholders view partnerships as an important vehicle to establish links between schools and businesses, to build awareness of local issues and increase capacity to support young people. Partnerships are also valued as a source of new ideas and innovation. In support of this, research and many interviewed education and training stakeholders argue that:

- There is a need to improve the relevance of learning to get long-term reform – this requires industry and education to work together and partnerships can help make this happen
- Partnerships support individualised learning – an approach gaining momentum in education systems and sectors across the country.

Most providers and partners saw the flexibility of the Partnership Broker model as being important

to to address systemic local issues that impede transition outcomes for young people in a way that is not always possible in a direct service delivery approach. Partnerships may result in a commitment from communities to address difficult problems that can be more sustainable than a direct delivery of services.

There is evidence that steps are being taken to tailor partnerships to address regional needs

Partnership Brokers are expected to adopt a flexible approach to service delivery. This enables them to respond to the needs of their service region, while being proactive in their approach to engaging stakeholders to facilitate strategic partnerships that meet identified needs or realise identified opportunities within their service region.

Processes are in place for Partnership Brokers to identify and address regional needs. For example, Partnership Brokers are required to complete:

- An Environmental Scan (reviewed and updated annually) that outlines current and emerging trends, gaps and issues, key stakeholders and existing partnerships within the Service Region education and transition environments
- A Strategic Plan (reviewed and updated annually) that, amongst other things, identifies short and long- term goals for the Service Region and the strategies for achieving these goals.

While partnerships are being established based on this framework, there was some feedback, particularly from DEEWR contract managers that:

- Partnership Brokers can take a process-driven approach to completing environmental scans, rather than a strategic assessment and prioritisation of local needs
- The quality of strategic plans varies and there is some concern about the tendency of some providers to focus on existing networks and services they are familiar with
- Additional support may need to be extended to some Partnership Brokers to help them improve the quality of their planning efforts to ensure that resources and efforts are directed toward priority needs to maximise reward for effort.

In 2011, more than half (52%) of Partnership Brokers indicated that they are very/extremely effective in addressing their regional priorities up from 48% in 2010. The most commonly reported regional priorities identified by Partnership Brokers were, in order of priority:

- Addressing the needs of at-risk young people (mental health and learning difficulties were the primary risk factors targeted)
- Increasing Indigenous engagement and attainment
- Supporting the transition of young people from secondary schooling to further education, training and employment
- Re-engaging young people into education and training pathways
- Enhancing parental and family engagement
- Improving outcomes for young people in regional and remote locations.¹³²

DEEWR also identified supporting Indigenous young people as an area of need for NP elements. On that front, it is important to note that the Partnership Brokers program has actively established partnerships with an Indigenous focus - 20 % of all partnerships in September 2011.

¹³² Australian Government (2012) *School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program Report – National*, DEEWR: Canberra.

Is it appropriate?

Is this element consistent with overarching policy objectives?



Partnerships are consistent with overarching policy objectives – aiming to provide sustainable support for local needs

Partnership Broker program objectives are consistent with overarching objectives for the NP. This program aims to increase support by engaging key stakeholders to help young people to overcome local barriers that stop them from engaging in education and training, in particular, supporting engagement between schools and employers to improve student learning and outcomes. As outlined earlier, international studies show this to be one of the key features of successful transition systems.¹³³

Does this element address areas of need?



The program has been structured to help Partnership Brokers identify and address specific needs in their service regions

As outlined earlier, mechanisms to identify the needs of young people in service regions and plans to address them are in place. Evidence that Partnership Brokers are working towards addressing needs is documented in annual partnership broker surveys.

However, the consultations identified some areas where needs aren't being met that may warrant further investigation. For example:

- There is a perception amongst interviewed jurisdictional stakeholders that Partnership Brokers may focus on the “path of least resistance” in locations and with partners where doors are open or have been opened for them, even if they are not related to their environmental scan of regional priorities and strategic plan. Adding value to existing partnerships was identified by DEEWR, providers and partners as a reasonable strategy for Partnership Brokers, particularly early. For example:
 - It makes sense for providers to work in areas that they are familiar with to maximise impact
 - Leveraging existing partnerships is a way of getting credibility and demonstrating the effectiveness of this model (e.g. can generate ideas for new partnerships, activities or connections), but Partnership Brokers should be adding value to those partnerships to claim them in performance reporting
 - If they support existing partnerships they need to have an exit strategy
- Most interviewed non-government sector stakeholders expressed that their schools are not getting much support. They also expressed a view that many non-government schools already have in place effective partnerships outside the school.

¹³³ See OECD (2000) *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making the Transition Work*, Paris.

Does this element complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?



There is some overlap with other programs and opportunities exist to increase collaboration to improve support to young people in service regions

Collaboration with Youth Connections appears to be happening

There is some overlap with other programs and opportunities exist to increase collaboration to improve support to young people in service regions

There was a view amongst Partnership Brokers and education and training stakeholders that Partnership Broker activities overlap with other initiatives being implemented in some jurisdictions. For example:

- Partnership Brokers are seen in some cases to be doing the work that schools are already doing, both in terms of industry and parental engagement
- There is an overlap with other programs in some jurisdictions. Examples include:
 - Participation managers and CARE schools (WA)
 - Guaranteeing Futures (TAS)
 - Industry Participation and Engagement (NT).

The view was expressed that DEEWR (at the national level), education authorities (at the state and territory level) and Partnership Brokers (at the local level) could work to improve collaboration to ensure that duplication of effort is reduced and that Partnership Brokers are used to complement other related initiatives.

Some Partnership Brokers indicated that benefits are more likely when they are delivering multiple, related programs. This was seen to support greater knowledge and relationships within the regions and access to greater resources that can be used to support partnership activities.

Collaboration with Youth Connections appears to be happening

Under the Partnership Brokers program, service providers are required to work with Youth Connections program providers to identify and address the needs of their region. There should be scope to:

- Identify common issues faced by case managed clients in the Youth Connections program (Individual Support Services)
- Identify cohorts and barriers to engagement in specific locations based on partner input
- Collaborate on solutions to address those issues.

In general, collaboration appears to be working between Youth Connections service providers and Partnership Brokers. For example:

- The majority of Partnership Brokers reported a formal arrangement with their Youth Connections provider (69% or n=52), with communication mostly occurring on a monthly basis (56% or n=36).¹³⁴
- In 2011, 55% of Partnership Brokers indicated they are working closely with Youth Connections providers and supporting new or enhanced partnership arrangements to meet identified needs in their region (up from 47% in 2010). 24% described a close

¹³⁴ Australian Government (2012) *School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program Report Annual Partnership Broker Provider Survey – National*, DEEWR: Canberra.

working relationship with Youth Connections providers, but were yet to implement strategies. A further 21% are starting to work with YC providers and share information.¹³⁵

These results also need to be considered in context; the Partnership Broker and Youth Connections programs have not been running for long. Interviewed Partnership Brokers expressed a view that they would appreciate further opportunities for collaboration amongst Partnership Brokers and with Youth Connections providers and the established state and national networks are vehicles that can be used to do this.

Is it well governed and implemented?

How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the element?



Jurisdictions were engaged in program design and targeting, but commitment to the model is not universal across states and territories

DEEWR engaged jurisdictions in planning the Partnership Broker program's implementation. For example, States and Territories were involved in provider selection, refining the model and Partnership Broker responsibilities and in defining service regions. However, as outlined earlier, initial collaboration with States/Territories did not always translate into ongoing support for the program. For example:

- State and Territory programs exist that overlap with the Partnership Broker's role
- The transfer of responsibility for work placements to jurisdictions on finalisation of the LCP program was not clearly understood by schools and other stakeholders. Jurisdictions have an important role to play in communicating this change and the rationale and role of the Partnership Broker model
- The NP refers to a transfer of responsibility for school business community partnerships to jurisdictions, but it is apparent that States and Territories are not committed to this occurring. States and Territories are unlikely to take on responsibility for this while sustainability of the program is uncertain and without funding for administration of the program.

Is governance of the element working effectively?



Provider networks are functioning and there is a strong interest for greater collaboration to share knowledge and improve performance

DEEWR's support is positively viewed by Partnership Brokers

Provider networks are functioning and there is a strong interest for greater collaboration to share knowledge and improve performance

Provider networks have been established at the State/Territory and national levels and are developing and implementing strategies to support improved program delivery. Each network receives Commonwealth funding to support network activities, which seek to foster collaboration between the service providers and promote the sharing of best practice across the networks. The networks were also set up to engage with state and national level stakeholders to build large-scale, strategic partnerships operating across service provider regional boundaries.

¹³⁵ Australian Government (2012) *School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program Report Annual Partnership Broker Provider Survey – National*, DEEWR: Canberra.

State and national networks have been used to work on strategic initiatives to benefit Partnership Broker operations. Some stakeholders argued that networks struggled at first and needed to lift from an administrative to a strategic focus. There are signs that this is happening. For example:

- The agenda for the recent national conference was directed to strategic issues for service provision. Informal feedback from participants indicated that the event was valued by Partnership Brokers
- A network was established and convened to focus on issues experienced by service providers working in remote locations, where challenges and resource constraints are most acutely experienced.

Most Partnership Brokers who were consulted in interviews and focus groups expressed a strong desire for more opportunities to work together to share practices and develop their Partnership Broker skill-set. Also, there appears to be scope for better coordination at state and national levels to engage national industry stakeholders such as Coles or Qantas.

DEEWR's support is positively viewed by Partnership Brokers

DEEWR support for Partnership Brokers was positively viewed. 83% of providers felt that DEEWR's support in 2011 was good to excellent, compared with 66% in 2010.. DEEWR has supported service providers to deliver the Partnership Broker program in multiple ways, including:

- Induction programs were developed and conducted for providers
- Network coordination at State and Territory and national levels
- Development and distribution of newsletters
- Organisation and hosting of conferences
- Contract management.

When asked how DEEWR could improve support, Partnership Brokers identified the following priorities¹³⁶:

- Improve linkages with other government programs
- Facilitate access to data/stats (e.g. Indigenous populations, enrolments)
- Provide more guidance and clarity around expected outcomes
- Further promotion of the Partnership Brokers program.

DEEWR has had to invest a lot of time in establishing communication flows and there is a need for constant monitoring to ensure that providers are on track and have a shared understanding of what the contract requires. Improving Partnership Broker performance may require:

- Additional support to manage the performance of Partnership Brokers who continue to struggle. This could include:
 - Assessment of provider performance against improved performance measures (see discussion later in this attachment)
 - Assessment of provider capacity and capabilities against identified critical success factors, with a view to sharpening the focus on where remedial action should occur
- Limiting Partnership Brokers to those that are known to be strategic, effective and have capable staff
- Support, at least initially, to help Partnership Brokers more strategically target what they are doing and for whom.

¹³⁶ DEEWR: School Business Community PB Program Report, 2011 Annual PB Provider Survey

How well is performance reporting working?



A broad ranging Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework has been implemented to assess provider and program performance

Some opportunities to improve performance reporting were identified

The Partnership Brokers program has a broad-ranging Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework (MERF), which is used to monitor, evaluate and report on individual Partnership Broker service providers and the program as a whole. The MERF has two main elements: provider monitoring and reporting against key performance measures (see Table A4.2) and an evaluation strategy. It appears that the MERF is being implemented as planned. However, it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to provide a detailed assessment of the MERF.

Some State and Territory government and non-government education sector representatives raised concerns with the provider monitoring and reporting. Stated concerns included:

- Key performance measures are limited because they are not clearly linked to NP outcomes/targets
- They viewed self-reporting as a limited data source, albeit, self reporting is applied in other programs as well
- There is no baseline for the key performance measures to show if the program is adding value
- They perceive there is a reporting focus on the number, rather than quality, of partnerships – and that this may drive “short term” behaviours in Partnership Brokers, such as “claiming” existing partnerships and/or “business as usual” activities of schools as partnership activities. They argued that this behaviour would be counter-productive to the program’s objective of establishing long term and more strategic partnerships, which may require more effort to establish.

As more information becomes available to stakeholders over time, such as partnership case studies, these concerns may be alleviated. However, there would be benefit in incorporating an assessment of the effectiveness of the MERF in overseeing and reporting on provider and program performance in a Partnership Broker program evaluation. Such a program evaluation would need to recognise that improving performance reporting of this program is a complex challenge because:

- Partnerships create an environment for the achievement of targeted outcomes, such as improved participation, attainment and transitions.. Attribution of those outcomes to partnerships is not possible, as they are determined by a wide range of factors, including other institutional activities at the school, State/Territory and Commonwealth levels; the state of the local labour market; the structure of advantage and disadvantage in the region and the personal qualities of the young people themselves
- The role of the Partnership Broker and the capacity of partnerships changes over time, as the partnership moves from formation, to establishment, to maturity
- It is difficult to aggregate a view of Partnership Broker efforts and achievements, given the flexibility inherent in the program and the variety of activities undertaken.

Acknowledging the points outlined above, it may be worth considering if the MERF could be enhanced to:

- Incorporate multiple reporting perspectives, particularly from partners who are broadly, rather than selectively, canvassed
- Adapt key performance measures to reflect the stage of partnership’s maturity. For example:
 - In the early stages of formation, reporting should focus on process and action indicators such as:
 - Plans and progress to address the critical success factors (outlined in the Appendix to this Attachment)
 - Conduct of environmental scans and strategic planning to identify priorities and actions
 - Establishment of partnership governance arrangements
 - How has the Partnership Broker helped?

- As the partnership moves from formation to establishment, reporting should address sustainability indicators such as:
 - The presence of a plan for sustainability – including securing alternative support arrangements
 - Have they established effective networks and stakeholder commitments that otherwise would not have occurred?
 - Have they created an environment for collaboration?
- As the partnership progresses toward maturity, they should report against their contribution toward key targeted outcomes:
 - How are they contributing to improved participation, attainment and transition outcomes? For example, present case studies that articulate activities and achievements for young people and partners.

Some Partnership Brokers raised issues, especially early in the program, about the complexity and time demands of YATMIS data capture. The most recent Annual PB Provider survey indicated that, on average, Partnership Brokers spend around 15% of their time on reporting activities, including YATMIS, Environmental Scans, Strategic Plans, Case Studies and completing provider surveys. This is not necessarily an issue and may have reduced since the program commenced, although there is not a benchmark for the survey data. The time spent and effectiveness of reporting activity should continue to be monitored and addressed as part of contract management and network activities to balance quality and value of reporting with the time imposed for providers.

How effective is communication?



The role and value of Partnership Brokers is not well understood and needs to be improved

As outlined throughout this Attachment:

- The rationale for the introduction of the Partnership Broker model is not universally understood or embraced by the schools sector
- There are a number of perceptions and concerns expressed by stakeholders that reflect a lack of understanding of the role and value of Partnership Brokers.

There is a need to address these concerns. Stakeholder support is critical to program success, particularly amongst education authorities. This will require:

- Improved program performance reporting, as outlined in the sub-section above
- Partnership Brokers to develop a clearer value proposition that helps to raise their profile and stakeholder understanding of their role and value.

Some stakeholders also identified a need for incorporating information about the value of partnerships and partnering in core teacher professional learning.

Summary of recommendations for improvement

Issues	Recommendations
<p>The Partnership Broker strategy and model is not universally embraced</p> <p>There is a need to improve knowledge sharing and communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication of the rationale, role and value of partnerships and the PB model to education authorities and other key stakeholders • Improve communication of partnership and Partnership Broker achievements and impacts – promote case studies • Clarify the Partnership Broker role and responsibilities with stakeholders – and how they may change over time in supporting a partnership • Conduct PB forums of providers to address specific program delivery challenges
<p>The Partnership Broker model is a significant new approach.</p> <p>Consultations have identified a number of potential issues.</p> <p>There should be enough experience now to conduct a program review.</p>	<p>Conduct a review of the Partnership Broker model as a policy response to support the establishment of sustainable and effective partnerships. Matters warranting attention in such a review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement against objectives at a detailed level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – what has worked well – what needs refinement/improvement • The characteristics of successful service providers • Evidence of critical success factors and identifying any necessary remedial actions, including a review of contracts if necessary • The effectiveness of the MERF. Specifically, review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Performance measures to ensure that they reflect appropriate objectives at the different stages of the partnership’s lifecycle – The merit of incorporating multiple reporting perspectives – particularly from partners (broadly canvassed) – Opportunities to adapt YATMIS to simplify data capture and reporting requirements • Whether providers need support in the identification and management of priorities and KPIs to maximise success • Whether any changes are warranted to Partnership Broker’s facilitation and “hands on” support role • Whether stronger guidance to Partnership Brokers is needed to help them set priorities

Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation

Considering findings from this evaluation, the following areas emerged that warrant inclusion in the summative evaluation of the NP in 2012:

- Review actions taken to improve communication of the PB program
- Alignment with other initiatives targeting similar outcomes
- The contribution of the PB program to YAT outcomes
- Determine if there has been a shift in focus of partnerships
- Collaboration between Partnership Broker and Youth Connections service providers.

Appendix 1: Guidance from Stakeholder Feedback on Success Factors

As part of this evaluation feedback on success factors was gathered from a range of stakeholders including Australian and State and Territory Government representatives, non-government education authorities, education and training providers, Partnership Brokers, and partners in partnerships involving Partnership Brokers. Common themes that emerged from these consultations are presented below.

What success would look like for the School Community Business Partnership Brokers program

- Schools could approach Partnership Brokers to ask their assistance in solving a problem
- Partnership Brokers are looking at what the community needs (e.g. teaching parents how to read)
- Young people achieving at higher levels
- Better career transition advice
- Young people testing alternative career pathways
- Support for young people to supplement learning with mentoring, work experience

Characteristics of good partnerships

- Clear, ongoing face-to-face and transparent communication
- Trust and respect between partners
- A common goal based on mutual interests
- Shared values
- Working on a solution that addresses the needs of the local community
- All partners involved in planning and decision making processes
- Long term commitment to the partnership
- All parties accountable and responsible to the other for the success of the partnership
- Professional conduct displayed in all interactions
- Monitoring and review processes to evaluate progress and identify areas for improvement

Critical success factors for Partnership Brokers

- Knowledge
 - A vision about where they want to go, open to opportunities
 - An understanding of how youth programs run so that they can help partners understand the youth context and link pieces together
 - Understanding of how the non-government sectors work and the differences between them
 - Understanding of the partnering process - getting understanding of the purpose, getting the communication processes right, getting to organization partnering (not people-dependent)
- Skills/characteristics
 - Staff with the right skills – natural networkers that look for opportunities, know how to get around barriers to address challenges, have creativity to not be bound by rules, preference to work collaboratively, ability to influence people at senior levels

- Pro-active, innovative, committed
 - Passion for young people to make transitions
 - Ability of brokers (and others involved in the process – senior policy level, departments, contract managers, etc.) to sell the benefits of a partnering proposition
 - Relationships
 - Credibility in staff to educators and with industry – wide representation on the governing board, long association with schools and with industry networks in a local area – LLENs work well because the governance structure ameliorates vested interests
 - Integration with other Commonwealth and State government initiatives operating in the regions
 - Involvement with local government
 - Leverage existing relationships
 - Cut across organisational boundaries by being strategic, creative and imaginative
 - Work practices
 - Getting the right people together to work on initiative or to address an issue (e.g. alternative learning experience providers brought around the table to develop a regional directory)
 - Engaging with industry at the right time
 - Giving Partnership Brokers a problem to solve or a task they can undertake
 - Working with small groups on new initiatives
 - Communication of types of activities and value that Partnership Brokers provide –self-promotion and initiative taking
 - Willingness to find out what the community needs
 - Follow through on initial consultations and connection making
 - Persistence in forming relationships
 - Regular meetings with service providers in the area to leverage off each other's work
 - Development of evidence bases in the regions to determine strategic priorities
 - Targeting niche groups that are hard to work with (e.g. businesses in particular industries, young refugees)
 - Coordinate activities that benefit all involved
-

Attachment 5: Youth Connections

Introduction

The Youth Connections program provides a suite of “safety net” services to support young people at risk¹³⁷ of disengaging from education and training to help them engage, or re-engage and make a successful transition through education and onto further education, training or work.

The Youth Connections service delivery model is flexible and allows for States and Territories and service providers to be responsive to the needs of young people in their service regions. This allows for Youth Connections services to complement existing local initiatives to support young people at risk of long term disengagement from education, training and work.

Services

All Youth Connections providers are responsible for delivering the following services:

Service delivery component	Description of the component
Individual Support Services	Case management support to those young people at risk, including those most at risk of disengaging from school through to those who are severely disengaged from education, family and community. Service delivery is flexible and tailored to the young person’s personal situation and circumstances. Activities include mentoring, advocacy and referral.
Outreach and Re-engagement Activities	Youth focused activities that aim to find, connect and engage with severely disengaged young people. These activities may provide an avenue for maintaining participation and engagement for participants in Individual Support Services.
Strengthening Services in the Region Activities	Services focused on building the capacity of education providers and other stakeholders, together with Partnership Brokers, where appropriate, and strengthening services in the region to develop whole-of-community strategies that identify and respond more effectively to provide appropriate support for young people to prevent disengagement.

Targeted outcomes

Table A5.1 shows the three defined Youth Connections program outcomes:

TABLE A5.1: YOUTH CONNECTIONS OUTCOMES

Outcome	How this will contribute to improving education and transition outcomes
Outcome 1: Personal Development Development of personal skills and attributes that promote wellbeing and support positive life choices	Young people will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop resilience and self-efficacy • Develop strategies to overcome barriers to participation and engagement • Make positive life choices • Develop social skills • Improve their health and wellbeing

¹³⁷ For the purposes of the Youth Connections program, a young person who is ‘at risk’ is defined as (a) at risk of disconnecting from education and therefore at risk of not attaining Year 12 or equivalent and, (b) at risk of not making a successful transition through school and to further education, training or employment.

<p>Outcome 2: Connection and Progression</p> <p>Young people at risk connect to education, family and community and have successful education and transition outcomes.</p>	<p>It will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain engagement or re-engage with education • Successfully transition through education • Prepare for participation in further education, training or employment pathways • Engage with specialist services and activities as needed • Connect and engage successfully with family and/or personal support networks • Connect and engage positively and actively with the wider community • Develop employability and life skills
<p>Outcome 3: Relationships</p> <p>There are strong, collaborative relationships in the region that strengthen service delivery outcomes for at risk young people</p>	<p>It will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harness and leverage community resources • Facilitate early identification and intervention for at risk young people • Support access to education, specialist referral services and support networks • Facilitate family and community support networks • Provide opportunities for young people to participate in their community • Provide flexible service delivery to overcome geographical and structural barriers

Youth Connections participants

For a young person to be eligible to participate in the Youth Connections program, they must be: identified as being at risk; an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen who has been residing in Australia continuously for more than three months, a permanent resident of Australia including those on a humanitarian visa; and within the specified age range¹³⁸ for their jurisdiction.

At risk young people are likely to have barriers that limit their opportunities to participate in education or training. These barriers are often complex and may include:

- Educational factors, such as poor literacy or numeracy, low academic performance, bullying
- Personal factors, such as mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues, disabilities, low self esteem, lack of self-discipline or an inability to conform to acceptable community standards
- Social, cultural and community factors such as low aspirations for young people, community violence, or lack of specialist services.¹³⁹

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are considered to be at higher risk of disengaging than other young people and may require mainstream programs to be tailored to address their specific needs. Based on the characteristics of young people who have received Youth Connections services, the program has been successful in targeting the most disadvantaged young Australians. The characteristics of participants are explored later in this attachment.

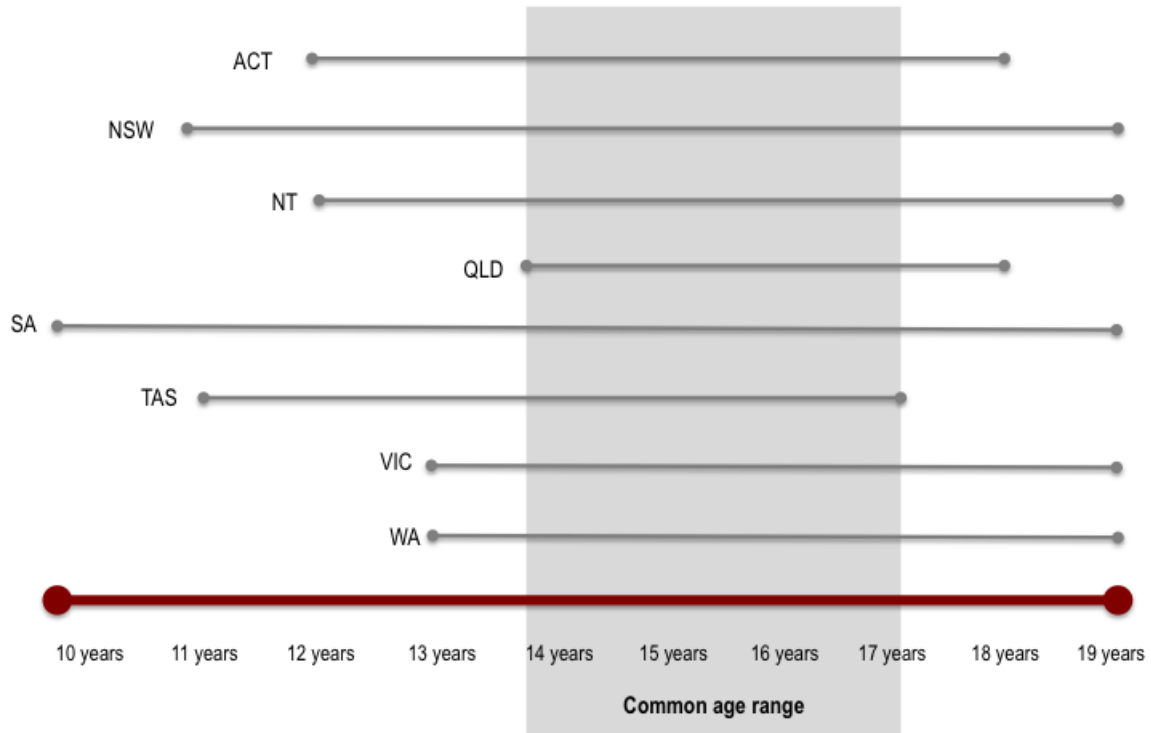
The target age range varies across States and Territories to take into account other support available to young people and the policy priorities in each State and Territory. Figure A5.1 shows that young people supported by Youth Connections generally range between 10 and 19 years of age. Age ranges do vary across jurisdictions (as illustrated) and there are some people younger than 10 and older than 19 who are engaged by Youth Connections. All States and Territories target young people between the ages of

¹³⁸ The program is targeted at 13-19 year olds, however each jurisdiction has a different target age range.

¹³⁹ Australian Government (2011) *Youth Connections Program Guidelines*, DEEWR: Canberra.

14-17 years. DEEWR collects from service providers information about the characteristics of young people involved in individual support services. 45% (n=18,585) of individual support services participants were between 15 and 16 years of age¹⁴⁰

FIGURE A5.1: AGE RANGE FOR YOUTH CONNECTIONS PROGRAMS ACROSS STATES AND TERRITORIES



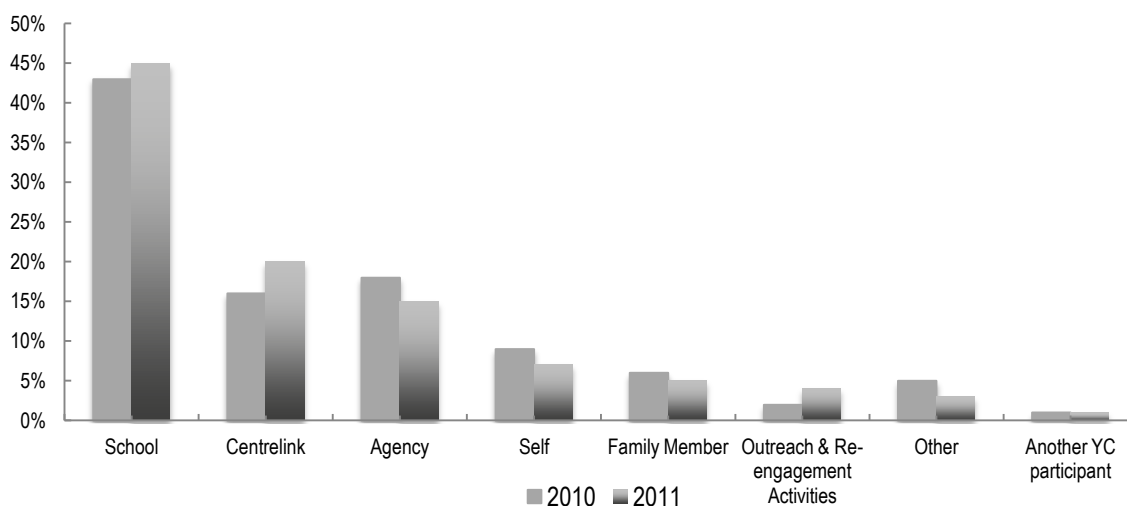
Source: DEEWR, Youth Connections Program Guidelines, September 2011.

Referral sources

Youth Connections participants enter individual support services through a variety of referral pathways. The proportion of participant enrolments by referral source has remained fairly consistent since program inception. Figure A5.2 shows the predominant referral source is schools (45% in 2011), followed by Centrelink (20%) and other agencies (15%).

¹⁴⁰ DEEWR (2012) *Youth Connections Program Report (As at 31 December 2011)*.

FIGURE A5.2: PROPORTION OF ENROLMENTS BY REFERRAL SOURCE PER YEAR



Source: DEEWR Youth Connections program data

Service providers and service regions

Sixty-nine service providers deliver the Youth Connections program across 113 service regions in Australia. The service providers are mostly not for profit or community service organisations, together with some TAFEs. Some regions are 'flagged' as Indigenous and/or humanitarian refugee regions, requiring the service providers in these regions to achieve a proportion of outcomes for young people identified as either Indigenous or humanitarian refugees. Seventy-six regions have been flagged as Indigenous regions (66% of all regions) and 36 regions were originally flagged for humanitarian refugee regions (32% of regions); this has been amended to 37 in 2012 (33% of regions).¹⁴¹ In flagged regions, service providers are selected on the basis of their competency and experience working with the relevant communities.¹⁴²

Funding and delivery responsibilities

Under the NP, the Commonwealth allocated approximately \$287 million over four years to the Youth Connections program. Funding is paid to contracted service providers responsible for delivering services in the regions within each State and Territory – summarised in table A5.2 below.

TABLE A5.2: FUNDING ALLOCATION PER JURISDICTION PER FINANCIAL YEAR

	2009-10 \$'000	2010-11 \$'000	2011-12 \$'000	2012-13 \$'000	2013-14 \$'000	Total \$'000
ACT	544	1,088	1,088	1,088	544	4,352
NSW	11,206	22,412	22,412	22,412	11,206	89,648
NT	1,022	2,044	2,044	2,044	1,022	8,176
QLD	7,383	14,766	14,766	14,766	7,383	59,064
SA	2,556	5,112	5,112	5,112	2,556	20,448
TAS	831	1,663	1,663	1,663	831	6,651

¹⁴¹ Data from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) was used to identify the regions with a high number of young humanitarian refugees. Following feedback from service providers, DEEWR and DIAC reviewed the flagged regions for 2012 to ensure that all flagged regions were current and reflective of any changes to the young humanitarian refugee population. This has resulted in some regions being flagged in 2012 when they were not previously or vice versa.

¹⁴² In service regions flagged for Indigenous Australians, service providers are encouraged to employ at least one Indigenous case worker.

VIC	8,400	16,800	16,800	16,800	8,400	67,200
WA	3,710	7,419	7,419	7,419	3,710	29,677
National ¹⁴³	200	400	400	400	200	1,600
TOTAL	35,850	71,700	71,700	35,850	35,850	286,800

Source: DEEWR documentation

A similar methodology was used in all States and Territories to allocate funding across regions, with a base-funding amount allocated per region. Remaining funds were then distributed across regions based on the following weighted factors: the number of young people in the region; the number of young people at risk in the region (using Centrelink information as measures); the socio-economic status (SES) of the region; and the geographical nature of the region (i.e. remote loading). Other factors were included in some States and Territories. For example, the NT allocated \$100,000 based on the proportional number of Territory Growth towns in each region as this was a particular focus for Youth Connections service providers in the NT.

Summary level findings

In comparison with previous Commonwealth safety net programs to improve outcomes for at risk young people, Youth Connections is a more flexible service delivery model, provides greater regional coverage and a more holistic suite of services across a broader continuum of disengagement. Youth Connections supports young people who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education, training and work. These are typically young people (45% are 15-16 years old) who face many significant barriers to engagement in education, training and work. This represents a complex service delivery challenge for service providers who are facing demands for service delivery that exceed their capacity to deliver.

Youth Connections service model has three components: Individual Support Services, Outreach and Re-engagement and Strengthening Services in the Region. Individual Support Services are helping young people to re-engage in education and training by addressing barriers to engagement and reconnecting young people to education and training. Outreach and Re-engagement activities had a slow start, but activities are starting to build resilience and self-esteem in young people and connect them to a range of support services. Service providers do not consistently understand the objectives of the Strengthening Services in the Region component and this funding element (albeit a small percentage of overall funding) is being directed toward a wide range of activities.

Youth Connections is consistent with the NP objectives and funding is being directed towards areas of need. A significant proportion of young people being supported by Youth Connections service providers live in low SES locations and reflect disadvantaged cohorts. The governance of the program is working well, however, administration and reporting was seen by service providers to be complex and time consuming, especially early in the program's establishment.

dandolopartners worked with DEEWR and the NP YAT Multilateral Working Group to develop the questions that needed to be asked to understand how this element is working toward NP outcomes (NB this is not an evaluation of the Youth Connections program). Table A5.3 provides a summary of the answers to those questions and a rating of how well this element is progressing at this point. These high level observations are elaborated upon in the text that follows.

¹⁴³ Funding to be used for program evaluation, change management and network activities.

Legend:
















-  Denotes substantial progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Denotes some progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Denotes minimal progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Not clear, based on available information


TABLE A5.3: ASSESSMENT AGAINST EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation Question	Assessment
What is happening?	
Has Youth Connections helped to improve the quality of support for young people to remain engaged or re-engage in education and training?	 <p>Youth Connections provides more holistic support across a broader continuum of disengagement in more service regions</p> <p>Compared to previous support programs, YC offers greater flexibility to meet individual and regional demands</p>
Is it working?	
Are Individual Support Services working?	 <p>Individual support services appear to be helping young people to re-engage in education and training</p>
Are Outreach and Reengagement services working?	 <p>Outreach and re-engagement services began slowly, but are making inroads toward targeted outcomes</p>
Have Strengthening Services in the Regions been strengthened?	 <p>Objectives and accountabilities for Strengthening Services in the Regions don't appear to be consistently understood by providers</p>
Is it appropriate?	
Is the element consistent with overarching policy objectives?	 <p>YC is consistent with NP objectives, particularly in its focus on addressing barriers to engagement in education and training</p>
Does this element address areas of need?	 <p>YC services are directed toward areas of disadvantage, focusing on supporting longer term disengaged</p> <p>Supporting the needs of YC participants is a complex and resource-intensive challenge and demand outstrips provider capacity</p>
Does the partnership approach complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	 <p>YC services complement other jurisdictional and Commonwealth programs and initiatives</p>
Is it well governed and implemented?	
How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the element?	 <p>DEEWR engaged with States and Territories and service providers to determine regional priorities and case management targets</p>
Is governance of the element working effectively?	 <p>Governance has progressed from administration and implementation to tackle issues associated with program improvement</p>

How well is performance reporting working?		Performance reporting could be improved to better reflect outcomes across YC services
How effective is communication?		YC services and their value are not well understood outside existing service networks

Elaboration of the findings

What is happening?

Has Youth Connections helped to improve the quality of support for young people to remain engaged or re-engage in education and training?		<p>Youth Connections provides more holistic support across a broader continuum of disengagement in more service regions</p> <p>Compared to previous support programs, YC offers greater flexibility to meet individual and regional demands</p>
---	---	---

The Youth Connections service delivery model has effectively expanded the support available to young people. The program builds on previous models, such as Youth Pathways, through:

- A flexible and individualised case management approach to address individual needs and barriers to engagement
- The inclusion of outreach and re-engagement activities for young people disengaged from education or training;
- Working with stakeholders and education providers to strengthen their capacity to support young people in the regions.

The flexibility of the Youth Connections model allows service providers to adapt to individual and regional demands. Consistent with the program guidelines, service providers provide support that reflects the young person's situation and circumstances, while aiming to build their resilience and improve their personal skills and wellbeing.¹⁴⁴ Re-engagement plans for young people respond to individual needs and the young person's level of disengagement, while incorporating strategies that are appropriate in their local area. Service providers also have the flexibility of determining the appropriate duration of support for the young person, with no restrictions around length of service period.

The inclusion of outreach and re-engagement activities for young people as part of the service delivery model has allowed providers to target, connect with and re-engage severely disengaged young people with learning, family and community. Connecting and engaging with this group was identified as a shortfall of the Youth Pathways initiative, with that program's evaluation highlighting its inability to engage with and support those participants, who were more likely to face higher and more complex barriers than other young people.¹⁴⁵

The Youth Connections model also allows States and Territories to work with service providers to determine priorities and targets for types of services to be delivered in service regions. This represents a shift from previous initiatives, which have generally adopted a site-based focus. Under this program, service providers have the flexibility to choose the types of activities they deliver and the emphasis placed on different elements of the program, with a view to complementing existing initiatives that are operating in the region. DEEWR suggests that this approach to target setting has helped to align service regions between providers and education and authorities, while also increasing young people's access to support as a result of targeting coverage across all regions.

¹⁴⁴ DEEWR (2011) *Youth Connections Program Guidelines*.

¹⁴⁵ Erebus International (2009) *Evaluation of the Youth Pathways Initiative*, DEEWR: Canberra.

The flexibility of the Youth Connections model and its focus on disadvantaged cohorts has led to Youth Connections service providers being approached to support the delivery of other Government programs such as:

- Youth Connections – Specialised Services: program linked to the SA Juvenile Justice system and provides services to young people across SA who are in or exiting the system, or who are at imminent risk of entering the system
- Support for Teenage Parents Projects: Youth Connections is providing strengthened support to 10 disadvantaged locations to provide teenage parents with more intensive support to assist them to finish school and support their children
- Reducing Substance Abuse Pilot Projects: three Youth Connections providers are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth who are at risk from, or engaged with, petrol sniffing or other volatile substance misuse.¹⁴⁶

Flexibility in support arrangements appears to be key in helping to re-engage young people who have dropped out of education and training, as summarised in the case study below which outlines safety net programs operating in Nordic countries.

Case Study - Nordic safety nets

Since at least the mid 1990s Denmark, Norway and Sweden have had tight safety net arrangements in place to ensure that those who drop out of school without completing upper secondary education do not fall through the cracks. These arrangements have a number of common features: a legal requirement for local authorities to contact all early school leavers very quickly after they drop out of school to identify those who are at risk; personal advisers or mentors who develop highly flexible individual action plans for all participants; an overarching goal of ensuring that young people return to education and training in order to obtain an upper secondary qualification; and restriction of income support to those who agree to participate in the safety net programs. The arrangements have been successful in keeping the proportion of young people under the age of 20 who are not in education, employment or training low, and are affordable in large part because they are complemented by in-school strategies to keep the number of early school leavers low.

Source: OECD (2000) *From Initial Education to working Life: Making the Transition Work*, Paris, pp. 107-115.

Is it working?

Are Individual Support Services working?



Individual support services appear to be helping young people to re-engage in education and training

To evaluate the extent to which individual support services are working toward Youth Connections and NP outcomes, program performance data was reviewed and stakeholders consulted to assess whether:

- Participation is occurring across the continuum of disengagement and in line with targets negotiated in the States and Territories
- Young people that receive individual support services are re-engaging and showing improved engagement in education and training
- The subjective wellbeing of young people receiving individual support services has improved
- Young people value the support they receive through individual support services.

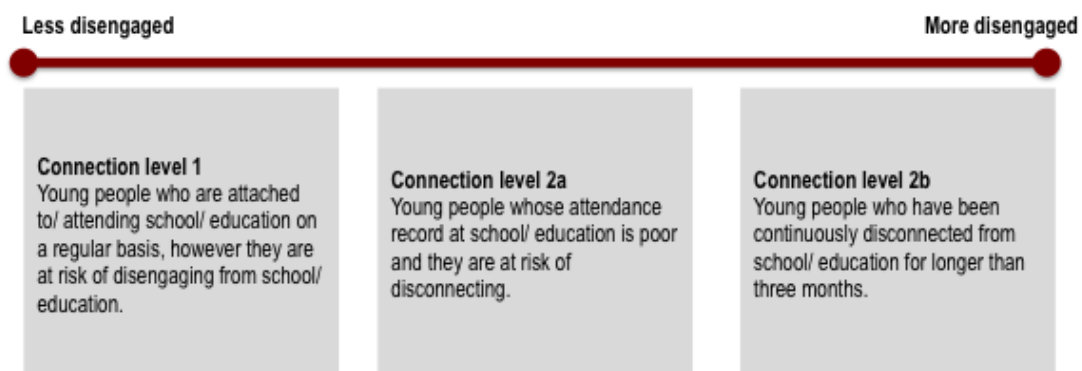
¹⁴⁶ DEEWR (2011) *Youth Connections Program Guidelines*.

A summary of findings from this assessment is presented below.

Participation is occurring across the continuum of disengagement and in line with targets negotiated in the States and Territories

Between January 2010 and December 2011, Youth Connections service providers have enrolled 43,141 young people into individualised support services. Young people enrolled are classified into one of three categories called ‘connection levels’ which represent the extent to which the young person is connected to education and training (see Figure A5.3). Targets for participation across connection levels were negotiated with State and Territory governments in each jurisdiction, reflecting local needs and to complement existing, related initiatives.

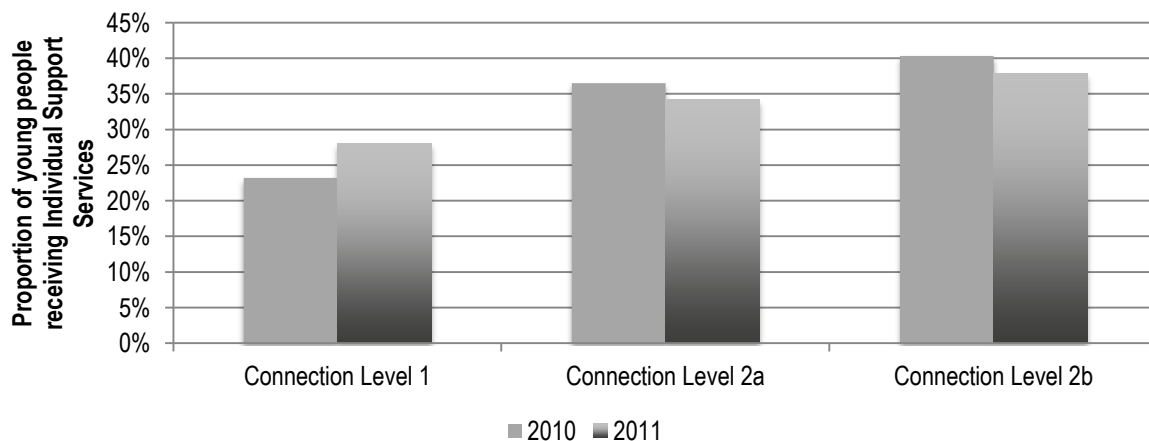
Figure A5.3: Youth Connections Connection levels for Individual Support services participants



From January 2010 to December 2011, 39 % of young people (16,855 in total) enrolled in individual support services were categorised at Connection Level 2b, with fewer categorised at Connection Level 2a (35 %; 15,260) and the least categorised at Connection Level 1 (26 %; 11,026). This profile of participation is consistent with targets negotiated with Youth Connections service providers across the States and Territories. Total participation was fairly consistent between 2010 and 2011 (22,000 and 21,100 respectively).

Figure A5.4 presents a summary of the proportion of individual support service participants across connection categories. Proportions have been fairly consistent, with a slight decline in the proportion of young people at Connection Levels 2a and 2b, offset by an increase in participation by young people at Connection Level 1 (from 23-28 %, 5106-5920 young people).

FIGURE A5.4: PROPORTION OF INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES PARTICIPANTS BY CONNECTION LEVEL FOR 2010 AND 2011



Source: DEEWR documentation

Young people that receive individual support services are re-engaging and showing improved engagement in education and training

Service providers record final and progressive outcomes that are achieved for young people receiving individual support services:

- Final outcomes represent re-engagement or sustained improvement in engagement with education, training or employment
- Progressive outcomes represent significant progress in addressing barriers to engagement (e.g. alcohol and/or drug misuse, low self-esteem).

Between January 2010 and December 2011, 53% of young people (22,900) who had received individual support services achieved a final outcome. This indicates that Youth Connections had been successful in re-engaging or achieving sustained improvement in engagement for the majority of young people that received individual support services. Outcomes are being achieved across the connection levels – with 64% of young people at Connection Level 1 achieving final outcomes, compared to 55% at Connection Level 2a and 49% at Connection. This distribution is to be expected given the more complex barriers and needs experienced by more disengaged young people and the time and effort needed to address them. Outcomes (final and progressive) were consistently being achieved by young people with different characteristics (ranging from 67% for Indigenous Australians participants to 79% for CALD participants).

The subjective wellbeing of young people receiving individual support services has improved

The subjective wellbeing of young people receiving individual support services is lower than the general population and has improved under this program. Youth Connections service providers apply the Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children¹⁴⁷ to assess the subjective wellbeing (SWB) of individual support service recipients. Early indications based on captured PWI data suggest that YC is targeting a group of young people whose wellbeing is significantly lower than the general population and that their experience of YC has improved their sense of wellbeing. Young people's wellbeing improved during the time they have received YC support. Participation in YC appears to be associated with an increase in subjective wellbeing for a significant proportion of young people, at least in the short term¹⁴⁸. For the 168 young people that completed the PWI-SC on two occasions between April and July 2011:

- There was a significant increase in subjective wellbeing between the initial meeting with their case manager and completion of their time in the YC program
- The number of young people who meet the criteria for very low subjective wellbeing halved across this period.

¹⁴⁷ Tomy, A and Jacolyn Norrish, *The subjective wellbeing of young people participating in the Youth Connections Program*, 2011.

¹⁴⁸ Tomy, Adriand and Jacolyn Norrish, *The subjective wellbeing of young people participating in the Youth Connections program*, DEEWR and RMIT University, 2011.

Young people value the support they receive through individual support services

This evaluation involved around 20 young people that had received individual support services from two different Youth Connections service providers. Based on feedback from young people and case workers, it was apparent that young people highly value the support they receive through individual support services, as shown in the reflections in the speech bubbles below. In particular, they value:

Regular contact and support with case-worker checking in to ensure that they are attending education and training courses, or simply to make sure they were 'doing ok'.

"Having another adult to talk to, someone to phone if there are things that are bad."

"She helped a lot. Got us a house full of furniture, bus tickets, train tickets, food vouchers."

Holistic approach to addressing personal issues (such as family relationships, finding accommodation, sorting out debt, finding employment and accessing other welfare or mental health services); working as an advocate for the young person opens doors, increases young people's aspirations and helps them to negotiate and navigate other support.

"Case workers have a good idea about what else I can do other than being in school. Good options and ideas I hadn't thought about."

Presenting multiple options for education and training choices and working with them to evaluate these options to decide which would be best for them to pursue, in some cases lifting aspirations about the future.

"Sarah understands, she gives options and talks about the things I could change, about what I can do, the good and the bad."

"It's a bit like a jigsaw – making new friends, talking to your worker, coming here, getting into courses. It all fits."

Having a place to go, not just to speak with their case worker but also to meet other people like themselves and access facilities such as computers.

Young people consulted also reported that they had encouraged their friends that were disengaged or at risk of disengaging to participate in individual support services. Young people receiving individual support services referring other young people to Youth Connections, albeit a low proportion of all referrals, is a further indicator of the value recipients place on the service provided.

Are Outreach and Re-engagement services working?



Outreach and re-engagement services began slowly, but are making inroads toward targeted outcomes

Outreach and re-engagement services are a new service type for many of the Youth Connections service providers. Providers took time to establish the capabilities and processes to deliver these services. As a result, providers have been slower to begin delivering outreach and re-engagement activities than individual case support services. That said, activity has increased since the commencement of the Youth Connections program. Between January 2011 and December 2011, service providers ran 7,426 outreach and re-engagement activities across Australia involving 156,581 young people. This number of events averages out at 5.4 events per region per month. The size of these activities varied as outlined in Table A5.4. The majority of activities involved groups of 20 people or less (81% or n=5,992) and engaged with 39,016 young people. These smaller events are conceivably more effective at engaging individual young people who might benefit from Youth Connections services.

TABLE A5.4: NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING OUTREACH AND RE-ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES BY SIZE OF ACTIVITIES, 2010 AND 2011

Size of Activity	Number of Activities	Number of Participants
1-10 People	4,730	20,421
11-20 People	1,262	18,595
21-30 People	543	13,659
31-40 People	255	9,121
41-50 People	178	8,186
51-100 People	238	16,406
101-200 People	115	17,165
201-500 People	74	23,144
501-1000 People	23	15,314
1001-3000 People	8	14,570
TOTAL	7,426	156,581

Source: DEEWR documentation. Note: The number of participants does not reflect the total number of young people that have been involved in outreach and reengagement activities as some young people may have been counted on multiple occasions.

Outreach and Re-engagement Activities were predominantly focused on increasing young people's resilience, social skills and self-esteem (48% of activities) and identifying and connecting with young people who are severely disengaged from education, family or community (47%).

Service providers rated themselves as most successful in achieving the outcomes of increasing young people's resilience, social skills and self-esteem (average rating of 4.1 out of 5.0) and in conducting activities linked with and supported by regional services and key community stakeholders (4.1 rating). Activities aimed at engaging the families of severely disengaged young people (16% of activities) and activities targeted at reconnecting with severely disengaged young people who were identified in previous activities (26%) were the least common and received lower ratings of outcome achievement than most other indicators. They are also some of the most complex engagement activities – reflected also in feedback from Partnership Brokers.

29% of activities were focused on providing an avenue for referral of young people to Individual Support Services. This outcome received the lowest average evaluation of all the indicators (average rating of 3.2 out of 5.0). In 2011, approximately 8.5% of ISS enrolments came from young people who had attended Outreach and Re-engagement activities. Service providers consulted indicated outreach and re-engagement activities were a useful avenue for maintaining contact with young people when Individual

Support Services places were filled. There may be benefit in DEEWR surveying or engaging young people who participate in Outreach and Re-engagement activities to validate service providers' evaluations of the outcomes from those activities and to interrogate factors that influence targeted outcomes from those activities, including the successful movement of young people from outreach and re-engagement to Individual Support Services.

Have Strengthening Services in the Regions been strengthened?



Objectives and roles for Strengthening Services in the Regions don't appear to be consistently understood by providers

Like Outreach and Re-engagement Activities, Strengthening Services in the Region Activities was a less familiar service delivery component for service providers than Individual Support Services. To facilitate a tailored approach to address regional needs, DEEWR gave flexibility to service providers to determine how funding for this component would be spent.

However, without clear direction, it would appear that the objectives of this component of the Youth Connections service model were not consistently understood by service providers or contract managers. Providers have applied Strengthening Services in the Region funding to undertake a range of activities, such as research to understand local issues, management and reporting processes and promotion of Youth Connections services. It is not always clear how these activities contribute toward objectives of this element of the NP. DEEWR has taken steps to address this issue in its revised program guidelines issued in 2011 and service provider newsletters.

Some service providers consulted highlighted that funding for this component is insufficient to affect real change and sustain engagement with local partners. In particular, their concerns were that there are insufficient funding to hire staff with the skills and capacity to work effectively on this activity, and that responsibility therefore falls on case managers who do not necessarily have the right skills and/or capacity for the role.

Interviewed Youth Connections service providers and Partnership Brokers suggested that there is the potential for duplication of activities between programs when it comes to Strengthening Services in the Regions. They also suggested that this is best addressed at the regional level to ensure efficiency and complementarity of activities between providers from both programs. This appears to be occurring in many regions. For example, in the 2011 Annual Partnership Broker survey, 55% of the Partnership Broker providers reported that in relation to the Youth Connections provider they were 'working closely together and supporting new or enhanced partnership arrangements to meet identified needs in [the] region' (up from 47% in 2010), with a further 24% 'working closely together, exploring partnership opportunity and sharing information, but yet to implement strategies'. However, Youth Connections service providers' views on the effectiveness of the relationship with Partnership Brokers (expressed in the 2010 Youth Connections evaluative report) varied across regions. This feedback suggests merit in clarifying expectations regarding activities, roles and responsibilities of Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections service providers to maximise productivity and impact in this area.

Critical Success Factors

During the course of this evaluation, stakeholders consulted (including representatives from State and Territory education department regional offices, school principals and Youth Connections service providers) were asked to identify factors they saw as critical to the success of Youth Connections service provision. Most feedback came from service providers. In broad terms, stakeholders indicated that successful Youth Connections service provisions required:

- **Effective leadership** and governance arrangements to position service providers with partners, schools and referrers
- **Proactive management of contracts and operations** to manage resources
- **Productive relationships** with related service providers that are based on mutual understanding of capabilities, expectations and trust
- **Innovation** in services and delivery to engage young people at risk.

These critical success factors are summarised below and should be considered in addition to guidelines already defined and promoted for this program. They may provide a basis for engagement with service providers to promote characteristics of good service provision and possibly as a framework for discussion about practices, performance and ideas to improve both.

Critical success factor	What this means for service providers
Effective leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ senior management and/or Board members who bring extensive knowledge of issues, providers, referrers, schools and training providers in your region – credibility with those players is essential • Where possible, establish regional “Youth Commitments” – they are a good vehicle to establish roles, accountability and action from organisations to address issues • Participate in governance of brokered/established regional partnerships wherever possible • Engage the education and training authorities in your State or Territory – they need to help lead the promotion of YC services and YC activity needs to complement state-funded initiatives to manage cost and maximise the effectiveness of support extended to young people
Proactive management of contracts and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance carefully the need to maintain a confidential and advocacy role with young people and the need to maintain productive relationships with their school or training provider • Be aware of school policies and procedures and recognise and respect school culture so that good relationships can be established with principals, teachers and career counsellors • Case workers need to bring a holistic understanding of youth issues and barriers to re/engagement in education and training • Recognise that progress takes time and long term relationships and support is needed with disengaged young people to get results • Anticipate and budget for support that must be acquired – e.g. tutors or courses to help develop literacy and numeracy skills • Work with other service providers in remote locations to share costs for transport and, where possible, responsibilities for service delivery activities • Work with DEEWR to manage contracts against as long a timeframe as possible, with early notification of changes/continuation of contracts to retain resources needed
Productive relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target, develop, leverage and nurture personal relationships with service providers who work in related disciplines to bolster capacity to find and support young people who are at risk

- Recognise skill and capacity limitations - establish alliances, consortia or sub-contractor arrangements to expand capacity across large regions and service types
- Clarify expectations and interests with partners up front; it is important that partners understand the YC model and that YC providers have confidence in partner's capabilities and that they are in a position to provide continuity of service
- Relationships with Partnership Brokers are important and work best when the Partnership Broker is used to identify safety net gaps and the YC provider is engaged to help address them
- Perseverance is needed to establish productive relationships with new schools and training providers

Innovation

- Recognise that doing old things won't lead to new outcomes, explore new ideas to engage young people at risk
- Collaborate wherever possible on service delivery which helps reduce costs, increase capacity and can generate new ideas

Is it appropriate?

Is the element consistent with overarching policy objectives?



YC is consistent with NP objectives, particularly in its focus on addressing barriers to engagement in education and training

The objectives of the Youth Connections program and focus of services and service providers is consistent with the NP objectives to improve overall participation, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians. Improving overall outcomes means addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged or disengaged. In that respect, Youth Connections plays an important role in addressing barriers for our most disengaged young people.

However, some jurisdictional education and training stakeholders raised concerns that some Youth Connections service providers had referred young people to education and training programs that did not lead to them attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications. Separately, some Youth Connections service providers highlighted the need to take a long-term view of the process to re-engage these young people in education and training – potentially starting with lower qualifications. Looking ahead, it would be good to understand the pathways taken by young people who receive Youth Connections' support – with a view to determining whether they do progress toward Year 12 or equivalent qualifications, as intended.

Does this element address areas of need?



YC services are directed toward areas of disadvantage, focusing on supporting longer term disengaged

Supporting the needs of YC participants is a complex and resource-intensive challenge and demand outstrips provider capacity

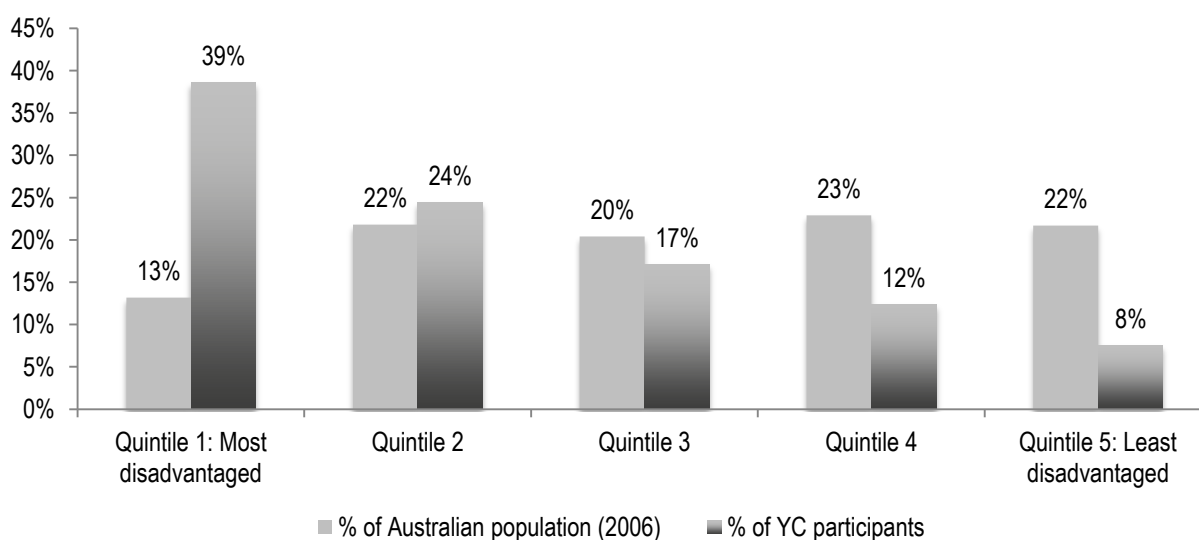
Youth Connections services are directed toward areas of disadvantage – focusing on supporting longer term disengaged

Young people from disadvantaged, Indigenous and humanitarian refugee backgrounds are considered to be at higher risk of disengaging than other young people and may require mainstream programs to be tailored to address their specific needs. Based on the characteristics of young people who have received Youth Connections' services, the program has been successful in targeting the most disadvantaged young Australians. For example:

- 18% of Individual Support Service participants are Indigenous, whereas approximately 4.3% of young people of high school age are Indigenous¹⁴⁹. In addition, 17% of outreach activities had an Indigenous focus
- 7% of Individual Support Service participants were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 4% had a disability
- 20% were suspected or diagnosed as having a mental health issue.¹⁵⁰

A comparison of the distribution of the Australian population and Youth Connections' participants by Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)¹⁵¹ quintiles shows that Individual Support Services are disproportionately weighted toward disadvantaged locations: 13% of the population is in the most disadvantaged quintile compared to 39% of Individual Support Services participants (see Figure A5.5).¹⁵²

FIGURE A5.5 PROPORTIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN POPULATION AND YOUTH CONNECTIONS PARTICIPANTS BY SEIFA QUINTILE



With respect to potential areas of potential unmet needs, the following observations emerged from stakeholder engagement and data analysis (these observations also need to be taken in context – service providers are already working at capacity):

- Across 2010 and 2011, 1% of Individual Support Service participants were humanitarian refugees, whereas approximately 1.3% of young people of high school age are humanitarian refugees (the target pool). While providers have reported successful outcomes for the humanitarian refugees that they have engaged with, they are less familiar with working with humanitarian refugees. DEEWR has provided information to service providers to assist them to increase the number of humanitarian refugees receiving Individual Support Services, for example, through the service provider newsletter. If service providers are expected to do more with humanitarian refugees, there may be merit in DEEWR coordinating an examination of specific barriers that service providers need to understand and strategies to support this cohort
- There was a view amongst service providers that some young people that do not meet current Youth Connections' eligibility criteria would benefit from Individual Support Services. For example, some service providers expressed a view that there is a need to intervene earlier (i.e. around Year 5) to prevent disengagement (for example, address literacy and numeracy

¹⁴⁹ DEEWR reported data

¹⁵⁰ DEEWR (2012) *Youth Connections Program Report (As at 31 December 2011)*.

¹⁵¹ The ABS Socioeconomic Index for Areas

¹⁵² These figures reflect those Youth Connections participants where data was available to categorise them against SEIFA indices. Approximately 26% of participants weren't able to be categorised – and may include a high proportion of participants living in remote (and therefore disadvantaged) locations.

problems that result in disengagement). Some providers from States and Territories that set lower contract targets for Level 1 services expressed the view that there might be a better return on investment from an increased (from current levels) emphasis on services at that level. This could be explored in more detail with States and Territories.

Supporting the needs of YC participants is a complex and resource-intensive challenge and demand outstrips provider capacity

There was a common view amongst service providers that there are still significant numbers of young people that are not receiving Youth Connections' services, but would benefit from doing so. However, provider capacity is effectively "capped", based on funding available and most are operating at capacity.

Providers indicated that the number of disengaged young people is increasing. This is a view supported by data that shows that the proportion of young people that are not engaged in education, training or work has increased 2008-2009 (refer section 4 of this report, Figure 4.14). Of the estimated 130,700 disengaged young people in Australia¹⁵³, Youth Connections provided Individual Support Services to over 30,000 young people 2011, and supported a further 150,000 through outreach and re-engagement activities.

This represents a significant service delivery challenge for service providers who are facing demand for services that exceeds their capacity to deliver. In September 2011, 61% of YC providers¹⁵⁴ indicated they had been operating at capacity at some stage during the preceding three months, 67% had a waiting list, and 82% had advised referring organisations when they were at capacity. There was also a view expressed by stakeholders that these figures downplay the extent of this problem, as operating "at capacity" does not capture the extent of unmet demand for services.

Service providers expressed a number of challenges that impact their capacity to support young people in need of safety net services.

For example, a perennial problem with national programs is the capacity of providers to deliver services to people living in remote areas. Youth Connections' services are provided across 113 regions of varying geographical size. In large regions covering remote areas, service providers face significant challenges associated with high travel and accommodation costs and difficulty in attracting and retaining suitably qualified staff. This impacts on the frequency and intensity of support that can be provided to young people in remote areas, and in some areas means that it is not possible to provide Individual Support Services. The YAT National Network has established a remote provider network and a remote area research project to improve flexibility and integration of remote servicing. There would be benefit in DEEWR assessing outcomes from those activities that could point to ways in which the service delivery model could be adapted to better service young people in remote areas.

Another factor in the operating environment that constrains the effectiveness of services provided, including Youth Connections, is the lack of access to some important support services in some areas. Service providers identified the following support services as typically needed, but difficult to access:

- Accommodation, including emergency housing
- Mental health services

¹⁵³ 15-19 year-olds unemployed and not in education or not in the labour force and not in education. Source : ABS 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Table 03b.

¹⁵⁴ Refers to the 94 of 113 regions where a provider responded to the DEEWR survey.

- Alternative learning facilities for young people under 15 years of age who struggle to engage in a traditional school environment
- Resources, courses or services that address literacy and numeracy skill barriers.

Addressing these challenges is difficult, particularly in the short to medium term and within existing funding allocations; they are expensive to address or the support needed simply isn't always available. Longer term, these needs should be considered as part of a broader policy response to improve outcomes for our most disadvantaged young people. In the interim, to help providers address the implications of this challenge, service providers expressed interest in meeting with other service providers to share knowledge about different case mix and case worker management practices to try and improve capacity. This could include improving ways of working with education authorities to determine which young people are most at risk of disengaging.

Does the partnership approach complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?



YC services complement other jurisdictional and Commonwealth programs and initiatives

The partnership approach to the Youth Connections program (see next section) has encouraged better integration between it and State and Territory programs targeting similar outcomes, when compared to previous programs. Youth Connections is generally well integrated with existing programs in States and Territories. In South Australia, for example, there is a high degree of congruence between the aims and operations of Innovative Community Action Networks (ICANs) and Youth Connections. In the ACT, Youth Connections providers are working with the ACT's own Youth Connection program to expand capacity to support young people at each end of the disengagement continuum.

The inclusion of Youth Connections in the NP has legitimised the role of the service providers with schools and education authorities. Current Youth Connections service providers that had previously delivered case management services through other programs reported that under Youth Connections it is less difficult to engage in schools, making it possible for providers to engage with young people before they disengage completely.

The Youth Connections service provider network has proven useful for delivering 'add on' support to targeted areas and populations of young people. Related Commonwealth and state programs have elected to extend the service delivery offer of service providers in some regions to deliver services to teenage parents in 10 disadvantaged locations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people at risk of petrol sniffing or other volatile substance abuse and young people who are in or exiting out of home care arrangements in Victoria. This can be seen as a testament to the program's ability to engage disadvantaged young people and to the broad capabilities of Youth Connections service providers to support these cohorts of young people.

Is it well governed and implemented?

How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the element?



DEEWR engaged with States and Territories and service providers to determine regional priorities and case management targets

Jurisdictional stakeholders and providers indicated that one of the most positive features of the implementation of the Youth Connections program was the involvement of States and Territories in the design and implementation of the program in each State and Territory with the aim of complementing existing local initiatives, aligning service regions and targets for young people at risk of long term disengagement from education, training and work.

At the commencement of the program, DEEWR engaged with State and Territory governments to negotiate the service region boundaries, proportion of funding to be allocated to each service type (e.g. Individual Support Services – Connection Level 1), and the number and type of young people that would receive services. This approach minimised the risk that Youth Connections would duplicate existing programs and helped to align the Youth Connections service delivery approach with State and Territory policy priorities. It is important to note that DEEWR works with providers to review targets and case mixes as part of the annual service planning process in consultation with State and Territory governments where appropriate.

Is governance of the element working effectively?



Governance has progressed from administration and implementation to tackle issues associated with program improvement

National and state networks of Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers service providers have been established to assist with the delivery of the programs. The networks are active, meeting two to four times per year. In the first 18 months of operation the networks were largely focused on establishing administrative processes and protocols, including induction and bedding down the YATMIS database and reporting processes, and some providers indicated that discussion tended to be dominated by Partnership Broker matters.

However, more recently, the networks have progressed to tackle issues and strategies to improve the program and provider performance. For example, a forum for remote service providers was established to share good practice on tackling challenges associated with service delivery in remote locations. The national forum was well attended and included a wide range of topics and presenters to help providers consider issues and options for improved service delivery.

The relationship between DEEWR contract managers and service providers is generally positive. Some service providers that had previously delivered services through grant programs were initially concerned about the extent of monitoring and contract management undertaken by DEEWR, however, these initial concerns have largely subsided. Early in the program, the lack of continuity in DEEWR contract managers was identified as an issue for some service providers, requiring them to rebuild relationships and knowledge of services, achievements and issues.

Service providers spoke positively of the amount and quality of the support they have received from DEEWR's Youth Connections program team.

How well is performance reporting working?



Performance reporting could be improved to better reflect outcomes across YC services

DEEWR requires service providers to use the Youth Attainment and Transitions Management Information System (YATMIS) to record information about the services delivered, including the personal wellbeing (PWI) results. DEEWR uses YATMIS to monitor service provider activity and to produce program performance reporting. YATMIS has been used to produce reports that provide information on the characteristics of young people engaged with Youth Connections, the outcomes they have achieved, the Outreach and Re-engagement activities that have been delivered by service providers and the activities they have undertaken to strengthen services in the region.

Service providers were critical of the time impost associated with using YATMIS to report on activities and outcomes – especially early in the program's implementation. Some options were raised that could be explored in more detail with service providers to ameliorate concerns about YATMIS and the usefulness of data for their own purposes:

- Provide regular communication about actions that are being taken to address concerns about YATMIS data capture processes
- Review opportunities to use YATMIS data more strategically – e.g. to help providers to better manage case workers and caseloads
- Expand reported participant destinations to include referrals to other services to address barriers, as this is seen by providers as a significant achievement in its own right.

Some jurisdictional stakeholders were critical of the lack of information about whether the program is contributing to all targeted outcomes. For example, as highlighted previously, there is limited reporting on the outcomes of strengthening services in the region activities. For service providers to fulfil the requirements of the program it is important that their performance across the three components is considered.

Interviewed service providers and jurisdictional education and training stakeholders saw value in PWI results as an indicator of whether support services are working to address the more intangible barriers of wellbeing, self-esteem and resiliency. Some service providers indicated they weren't sure the data collection effort was warranted because of a concern about the test-retest validity of PWI results, as young peoples' responses can vary greatly in a short timeframe. This may warrant further investigation or communication with service providers to ensure that they understand the purpose and value of this indicator and data capture effort.

Youth Connections service providers capture valuable information about the barriers that young people face in engaging with education, training and employment. This information is collected and shared by DEEWR with the States and Territories. This should continue, potentially the information could be distributed more broadly amongst organisations that develop policy or provide services to support disengaged and disadvantaged young people. The YAT National and State Networks are a good forum to communicate this information and explore gaps in services with the relevant States and Territories.

How effective is communication?



YC services and their value are not well understood outside existing service networks

Youth Connections service providers are responsible for communicating about the services they deliver in their regions. This model is appropriate given the diversity of focus and approaches in different regions. Service providers have communicated about the services they deliver through a range of pre-existing channels, such as meetings with school principals and education sector representatives. Some non-government education sector representatives expressed a view that Youth Connections was not well known within schools in their sectors and believed service providers had the perception that young people in non-government schools did not need the services offered by Youth Connections. Young people consulted thought more young people could benefit from Youth Connections but “*not many kids know about it*”. There may be opportunities in some regions to increase the channels of communication to non-government sectors and young people that may benefit from Youth Connections’ services. However, given capacity constraints, targeted communication should be prioritised to avoid over-stimulating demand.

Issues and recommendations for improvement

Outlined in table A5.5 below is a summary of key issues that emerged from evaluation findings, along with recommendations for how they can be addressed. Other, less substantive, recommendations for further research or analysis to improve the Youth Connections program are presented in the body of this Attachment.

TABLE A5.5: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUTH CONNECTIONS

Issues	Recommendations
<p>Capacity does not meet demand for YC support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a difficult issue to address without adequate resourcing. A comprehensive response is needed to help stop young people disengaging and provide an adequate safety net for those that do – as part of future policy responses. • In the interim, options may be explored to help service providers address the implications of this issue. For example, service providers expressed interest in meeting with other service providers to share knowledge about different case mix and case worker management practices to try and improve capacity. This could include improving understanding of the way of working with education authorities to determine which young people are most at risk of disengaging.
<p>Performance reporting could be improved to better reflect outcomes achieved and help manage service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen performance reporting outside of Individual Support Services • Provide regular communication about actions that are being taken to address concerns about YATMIS data capture processes • Review opportunities to improve reporting to help providers to better manage case workers and caseloads • Expand reported participant destinations to include referrals to other service providers to address barriers, as this is seen by providers as a significant achievement in its own right
<p>Objectives and accountabilities for Strengthening Services in the Regions don't appear to be consistently understood by providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify expectations with providers • Explore strategies to integrate (or remove overlaps) with PB activity

Outreach and Reengagement services are relatively new responsibilities for service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There may be benefit in DEEWR surveying or engaging young people who participate in Outreach and Reengagement activities to validate service providers' evaluations of the outcomes of from those activities and to interrogate factors that influence targeted outcomes from those activities, including the successful movement of young people from outreach and re-engagement to Individual Support Services.
---	---

Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation

Considering findings from this evaluation, the following areas emerged that warrant inclusion in the next summative evaluation of the NP in 2012:

- Investigate service providers' understanding of Strengthening Services in the Region objectives and how they are interacting with Partnership Brokers to deliver this component of the program
- Understand progress on issues identified as priorities by the national network – such as strategies to improve remote service delivery and strengthening the relationship between YC and JSA providers.

Attachment 6: National Career Development

Introduction

Objectives and Focus

The Commonwealth has committed \$47 million to the National Career Development (NCD) element of the NP, through a Commonwealth Own Purpose Expense. This funding supports the continued development and maintenance of resources and projects to benefit education and training providers, career practitioners and young people across all States and Territories.

In addition, DEEWR has embarked on the development of a National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) that will provide guidance on how best to support young people to gain the skills to effectively manage their learning and career directions across their lifespan. Developed in collaboration with States and Territories, the NCDS will clarify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, reduce duplication and overlap, define the Commonwealth's leadership role and confirm State and Territory government responsibility for career development programs in education and training institutions.

Development and support for national career development activities and resources

Since 2010, the Commonwealth has funded the development and provision of a range of career development resources and activities for the States and Territories. Funding for selected resources and activities has been extended under the NCD element of the NP, pending outcomes of the NCDS development process that will inform future commitments to Commonwealth-funded resources and activities. Table A6.1, below, summarises current Commonwealth commitments to the provision of career development resources and activities.

TABLE A6.1: COMMONWEALTH COMMITMENT TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES FUNDED UNDER THE NP

Resource / Activity	Provider	Funded to...
Job Guide	Hobsons Australia and Blue Star Print Group	30 March 2013
<i>myfuture</i> Video Competition		31 May 2012
Australian Career Services Judith Leeson Award for Excellence	Education Services Australia	31 May 2012
<i>myfuture</i> maintenance		30 June 2012
Scholarships for Career Advisers		30 January 2013
National Career Development Week		30 June 2012
Career Industry Council of Australia operating funds	Career Industry Council of Australia	31 July 2012
Australian Youth Mentoring Network	Youth Mentoring Network – Smith Family	31 July 2012
Hosting of Certificate IV in Career Development website	Miles Morgan	25 June 2013
Australian Vocational Student Prize	Awards provided to students	June 2012
Career Information Products	Various through Blue Star Print Group and Miles Morgan	N/A

Development of the National Career Development Strategy

DEEWR is coordinating the development of the National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) with input from States and Territories through their participation on the National Career Development Working Group and engagement in research projects. To develop the evidence base needed for the NCDS, four research projects were conducted:

- A review of national and international literature relating to career development practices and services and an analysis of the range and effectiveness of existing Commonwealth and State and Territory career development programs
- Identification and analysis of the career development needs of young people aged 15-24 years, and of what parents, career practitioners, teachers and employers require in order to support these needs
- Recommendations to improve career development services and options to be considered in a national strategy
- Cost-benefit analysis of adopting the recommended those recommendations.

In addition, DEEWR engaged Professor Martin Westwell to research neuro-cognitive development and its impact on decision-making processes of young Australians and implications for career development activities and resources proposed in the NCDS.

Summary findings

Under the NP, the Commonwealth provides a range of career development activities and resources to support young people, education and training providers and career practitioners across the country. There was a universal view across interviewed education, training and careers industry stakeholders that those career development activities and resources are valued. Those stakeholders want to see the Commonwealth commit to the continued provision of those resources and are keen to see that commitment reflected in the new National Career Development Strategy.

Within the term of this NP, DEEWR has committed to the development a National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) in collaboration with the States and Territories and engaging education, training and career industry stakeholders. The NCDS will provide guidance on how best to support young people to gain the skills to effectively manage their learning and career directions across their lifespan.

Delays in the completion of research projects have meant that the NCDS was not completed in time to be considered in this evaluation. The completion date for the NCDS has been rescheduled from November 2011 to March/April 2012.


The research process underpinning development of the NCDS has been extensive and consultation has involved more than 5,000 stakeholders representing the school, VET and ACE sectors, the careers industry and academics. States, Territories and non-government sectors have participated in research activities and are represented on the National Career Development Working Group (NCDWG) that was formed to advise on this element of the NP and career development issues more broadly.


Reports from two of the five research projects were published on the DEEWR website in December 2011. Summaries of research reports have been presented to the NCDWG and CICA. Other research papers have not been released more widely because of delays in completing research projects and a concern that findings and recommendations could contain commercially sensitive information (e.g. relating to current resource providers) and should not be released before obtaining Ministerial approval.


This has meant that interviewed education, training and career industry stakeholders who were involved in research activities or had an interest in research outcomes were largely unaware of research outcomes and the direction that will be taken by the NCDS. This poses a risk for the success of the NCDS and its implementation and needs to be addressed.

dandolopartners worked with DEEWR and the Multilateral Working Group to develop the questions that needed to be asked to understand how this element is working toward NP outcomes. Table A6.2 provides a summary the answers to those questions and a rating of how well this element is progressing at this point. These high level observations are elaborated upon in the text that follows.

Legend:

 Denotes substantial progress toward NP objectives and outcomes

 Denotes some progress toward NP objectives and outcomes

 Denotes minimal progress toward NP objectives and outcomes






 Not clear, based on available information

TABLE A6.2: ASSESSMENT AGAINST EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation Question	Assessment
Is it working?	
<p>Has the NP facilitated a more strategic approach to career development for young Australians?</p>	<p> States and Territories and practitioners value existing Commonwealth-funded career development activities and resources and want to understand whether the Commonwealth will continue that commitment</p> <p>Research projects were implemented to support extensive stakeholder engagement and the development of an evidence-based National Career Development Strategy</p> <p>However, research projects have taken longer than planned, delaying the development of the National Career Development Strategy</p>
Is it appropriate?	
<p>Is this element consistent with NP objectives?</p>	<p> Objectives for the NCD element appear to be aligned with NP objectives</p> <p>It isn't clear yet how the NCDS will align with related Commonwealth and jurisdictional policies and responsibilities</p>
Is it well governed and implemented?	
<p>Has there been collaboration and buy-in to the National Career Development Strategy?</p>	<p> Stakeholders don't understand what the NCDS will encompass – engagement has been largely restricted to consultation on research projects, but research outcomes weren't always made available</p>
<p>Is governance of the element working well?</p>	<p> National Career Development Working Group was established to secure jurisdictional and non-government sector input, however, participants weren't clear on project progress and outcomes</p>

Elaboration of findings

Is it working?

<p>Has the NP facilitated a more strategic approach to career development for young Australians?</p>	○	<p>States and Territories and practitioners value existing Commonwealth-funded career development activities and resources and want to understand whether the Commonwealth will continue that commitment</p> <p>Research projects were implemented to support extensive stakeholder engagement and the development of an evidence-based National Career Development Strategy</p> <p>However, research projects have taken longer than planned, delaying the development of the National Career Development Strategy</p>
--	---	--

States and Territories and practitioners value existing Commonwealth-funded career development activities and resources and want to understand whether the Commonwealth will continue that commitment

Under the NP, the Commonwealth provides a range of career development activities and resources to support education and training providers and career practitioners across the country – such as *myfuture*, the Job Guide and resources developed to support National Career Development Week. There was a universal view across interviewed education, training and careers industry stakeholders that the provision of those career development activities and resources is valued. This evaluation did not seek to understand which individual resources and activities were most or least valued by those stakeholders – an exercise that may be explored by DEEWR in conjunction with with NCDWG members in finalising the NCDS.

Interviewed career development practitioners also identified the development of Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Professionals as valuable in strengthening career development services.

Looking ahead, the States, Territories and career practitioners are keen to understand whether the Commonwealth intends to continue its commitment to these activities and resources. If not, there was a concern raised about the potential cost to States and Territories to develop and maintain those resources and the potential for duplication of activities, resources and investment.

The same stakeholders also highlighted the need to leverage online channels such as that adopted for *myfuture* to provide of information and resources. This was seen as an effective channel to ensure currency of information and resources and maximise accessibility.

Research projects were implemented to support extensive stakeholder engagement and the development of an evidence-based National Career Development Strategy

A four-staged research process was designed to build the evidence base to inform development of the NCDS:

- A review of national and international literature relating to career development practices and services, and an analysis of the range and effectiveness of existing Commonwealth and state and territory career development programs. Miles Morgan undertook this research. Outcomes from this research included the definition of a range of criteria for effective practice – profiling the characteristics of effective career development systems, delivery mechanisms and content. It also put forward goals for the NCDS and highlighted the need to ensure that citizens of all ages have access to career development services regardless of their age or attachment to an education or training institution

- Identification and analysis of the career development needs of young people aged 5 to 24 years, and of what parents, career practitioners, teachers and employers require in order to support these needs. Urbis undertook this research. This research described of how career development services need to adapt to the needs of young people, which vary as they move through education and training – and for those young people who are not in education and training. It also identified the career development needs and wants of disadvantaged young people, parents, teachers and employers
- Recommendations to improve career development and options to be considered in a national strategy. The Nous Group undertook this work. This research identified the core elements that should be included in the NCDS and the need for it to set benchmark standards and provide better and more widely accessible career development information and services through enhanced online delivery
- Cost-benefit analysis of adopting the recommended approach/s to career development services for young Australians and modelling of the economic and social impacts that could flow from that strategy. Deloitte Access Economics undertook this element. This research recognises that while literature highlights positive returns to individuals from investment in career development, the magnitude of those returns to the individual and wider economy are difficult to quantify and demonstrate. It recommends the NCDS should include further research to assess the economic value of career development and, given cost differentials in recommended options (from research element 3), a staged investment in NCDS recommendations.

In the course of conducting these research projects, DEEWR identified that a better understanding about the cognitive development of young people, particularly in relation to career decision making processes and appropriate interventions, would be important to inform the development of the NCDS. DEEWR engaged Professor Martin Westwell from Flinders University to explore ideas from cognitive neuroscience on the skills that underpin decision-making and a typical timeline of their development. Research findings included the identification of characteristics of strategies proven to be effective in developing these skills, as well as some pitfalls for their implementation.

Stakeholder engagement in the research projects appears to have been representative and extensive. For example, research element 2 engaged approximately 1,800 young people via online surveys and more than 400 stakeholders via interviews and focus groups. Research element 3 consulted more than 5,000 stakeholders through interviews and online surveys. Across the four projects, researchers consulted with stakeholders who represented:

- The government and non-government education sector at Commonwealth and State/Territory levels
- VET, ACE and Higher Education organisations
- DEEWR representatives with responsibility for Commonwealth-funded activities and resources
- Peak career industry bodies
- Institutions and agencies that provide career development services to young people
- An expert panel of academic and public policy experts.

Research projects have taken longer than planned, delaying the development of the National Career Development Strategy


The NCDS was originally planned to be completed by November 2011. However, most research projects have not met their planned completion dates, as illustrated in Table A6.3, below. Reasons for the delays vary across the research projects, with at least two of the research projects requiring re-work to ensure that they addressed intended objectives.

TABLE A6.3: PLANNED AND ACTUAL COMPLETION DATES FOR NCDS

Research project	Planned Completion	Actual completion
Element 1 - Review of national and international literature and analysis existing Commonwealth and State and Territory career development programs	March 2011	May 2011
Element 2 - Identification and analysis of the career development wants and needs of young people, parents, career practitioners, teachers and employers	May 2011	May 2011
Element 3 - Recommendations to improve career development and options to be considered in a national strategy	June 2011	September 2011
Element 4 - Cost-benefit analysis of adopting the recommended approach/s and modelling of the economic and social impacts that could flow from NCDS	September 2011	October 2011

These delays mean that the NCDS will not be completed until March/April 2012 and was not available to be reviewed as part of this evaluation to understand how it addresses research project findings and recommendations, or to gauge stakeholders' views on the extent to which the NCDS has facilitated a more strategic approach to career development for young Australians. This will be a focus of the next formative evaluation of the NP in 2012.

Is it appropriate?

Is this element consistent with NP objectives?		<p>Objectives for the NCD element appear to be aligned with NP objectives</p> <p>It isn't clear yet how the NCDS will align with related Commonwealth and jurisdictional policies and responsibilities</p>
--	---	--

Objectives for the NCD element appear to be aligned with NP objectives

Objectives for the NCD element appear to be aligned with overall NP objectives in that it is focused on the provision of valuable resources and activities and, through the development of the NCDS, better understand career development needs and identify strategies to improve the effectiveness of career development services to improve transition outcomes for young Australians.

Interviewed stakeholders saw DEEWR's role in coordinating the development of a National Career Development Strategy as needed and timely. They argued that there needed to be a stronger evidence base and a more strategic approach to prioritising and funding career development activities and resources.

In developing the NCDS, DEEWR is working with a wide range of stakeholders from the government and non-government education and training sectors, as well as career development and industry bodies. This is also consistent with an overarching objective for the NP. Collaboration involved stakeholder engagement in research activities and participation on the NCD Working

Group. However, the effectiveness of this collaboration was undermined by a lack of communication about research outcomes and what the NCDS would cover (addressed in more detail later in this report). That said, interviewed stakeholders outlined a range of objectives that they want to see addressed by the NCDS. Those objectives are outlined below and support many of the broad goals identified for the NCDS as a result of research conducted by Miles Morgan (element 1):

- The NCDS should present a clear definition of goals and objectives, including:
 - Clear vision, principles, standards and regulation to achieve more effective service provision
 - Explanation of why career development is important, including the benefits for young people, parents, teachers, industry – as well as society and the economy
 - The rationale for a national strategy
 - Articulation of the Commonwealth’s objectives and targets
 - Commitment to universal access to information and services
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities:
 - Presents a summary of Commonwealth and jurisdictional roles and responsibilities
 - Provides a basis for engagement with States, Territories and careers industry stakeholders to determine strategies for how objectives can be met
- Adapt to existing policies and priorities. For example:
 - Takes into account existing policies, initiatives and needs of the States and Territories
 - Flexible enough to meet the needs of different school communities (e.g. school size, year levels, culture, location)
 - Supports a whole school approach – not just dependent on the role of careers counsellor/teacher
 - Aligned with the National Curriculum
 - Aligned with Commonwealth and state career development standards
- Commit to strengthening the evidence base. For example the NCDS should:
 - Set priorities for research and trials to generate an evidence base for what works
 - Emphasise the importance of evaluation of activities and resources – and sharing findings
- Provide increased focus on younger people. For example:
 - Target age group expanded to include people younger than the NP target group
 - Caters to the needs of young people not engaged in education and training
- Set direction for the future of Commonwealth-funded activities and resources:
 - Provide a central repository of resources and career-related information
 - Make it available online.

In addition, interviewed career practitioners indicated that they would like to see the NCDS play a role in helping to strengthen their profession. In particular, they would like to see the NCDS include principles and strategies to:

- Raise awareness of the career practitioner profession – including strategies to encourage people into the profession
- Raise professionalism of practitioners, including strategies to;

- Build aspirations about where the profession could take them
 - Help them to be more self-sufficient as practitioners
 - Address gaps in leadership development for practitioners (which currently tends to stop at practitioner level). This could include programs to identify and develop future leaders, grants to help practitioners engage in leadership development courses or communication about career options at leadership level
 - Accredit practitioners to ensure quality. Setting a minimum professional qualification gives credibility, legitimacy and a professional profile for career practitioners. CICA standards were recognised by many interviewed stakeholders as effective
 - Introduce a system for practitioners to record their professional development – in line with membership requirements. This is currently difficult for associations to afford and implement
- Raise awareness of available resources and importance of career planning
 - Promote available resources and activities at Commonwealth and State and Territory levels
 - Follow up release of new resources and activities with professional learning to get people to use them
 - Encourage all teachers to have some knowledge of career development so that they can identify opportunities and refer on to careers professionals in and outside of the school.

Some interviewed education training and career industry stakeholders were concerned that inclusion of the NCDS in this NP might limit its focus on the career development needs of people in their early years (up to 24). They argued that a national career development strategy should help equip people to manage their careers throughout their life, recognising that career management skills and access to resources and information are an ongoing need. One example of a government's response to this challenge exists in Singapore, where the Ministry of Manpower and the Singapore Workforce Development Agency are planning to introduce Continuing Education and Training campuses¹⁵⁵ to support career and skills development of all citizens. These campuses would provide career information and resources as well as a range of services to help citizens develop skills and explore career opportunities. The NCDS may benefit from acknowledging the ongoing career development needs of people and potential avenues for support.

It isn't clear how the NCDS will align with related Commonwealth and State/Territory career development objectives and policies

In line with the point made above, interviewed education, training and careers industry stakeholders were keen to understand how the NCDS will complement and support related policies and initiatives being implemented at State and Territory and Commonwealth levels. This is driven by a desire to avoid overlaps or gaps in career development services for young people. Stakeholders are looking for greater clarity about how the NCDS will outline the roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and States and Territories for career development services for young people, how any principles that it contains will be applied and how these will relate to other national policy initiatives such as the National Curriculum.

At the time of this evaluation, it wasn't clear how DEEWR and/or the National Career Development Working Group intend to manage this communication. This is an area of communication that should be addressed by the NCDWG as part of the socialisation and implementation of the NCDS.

¹⁵⁵ More information about this initiative is available at <http://app2.wda.gov.sg/web/Contents/Contents.aspx?Yr=2009&ContId=872>

Is it well governed and implemented?

Has there been collaboration and buy-in to the National Career Development Strategy?



Stakeholders don't understand what the NCDS will encompass – engagement has been largely restricted to consultation on research projects, but research outcomes weren't always made available

Stakeholders from the States, Territories and careers industry have been engaged in the development of the NCDS through involvement on the NCDWG or participation in research projects. However, interviewed stakeholders from education and training authorities across all jurisdictions were looking for increased access to research reports and the opportunity to provide input into the draft NCDS.

For most jurisdictional and careers industry stakeholders, engagement in the development of the NCDS has been limited to their participation in research projects. However, most stakeholders are unaware of outcomes from most research projects. This appears to be attributable to two factors:

- Research projects have been delayed and outcomes aren't ready to be communicated – the status of research projects is not widely understood by stakeholders
- DEEWR is concerned that project findings and recommendations could contain commercially sensitive information and do not want to release that information before obtaining Ministerial approval.

In either case, DEEWR should communicate the intended timing for completion of research projects and release of findings and recommendations to key stakeholders outside of the NCDWG, including members of the MWG and also key stakeholders who have participated in research activities. Research outcomes should be released to key stakeholders in the States and Territories to confirm their alignment with what will be covered in the NCDS.

Is governance of the element working well?



National Career Development Working Group was established to secure jurisdictional and non-government sector input – however, participants weren't clear on project progress and outcomes

The National Career Development Working Group was established to ensure representation from the Commonwealth, States and Territories in the development of the NCDS.

Stakeholders interviewed in this evaluation included members of the National Career Development Working Group. In general, there was a view that the Working Group has not met frequently enough to be effective and most members did not have a good appreciation of the outcomes of research projects or what the NCDS will cover. DEEWR reported that, subsequent to the conduct of stakeholder interviews, communication had taken place to update the NCDWG and CICA on the status and progress of research and NCDS activities.

Interviewed members of the NP's Multilateral Working Group raised similar concerns, indicating a need to improve communication about this element of the NP at the MWG. They highlighted the importance of working in partnership with the States and Territories to ensure their understanding and buy in to the NCDS if it is to be successfully implemented as a national strategy. States and Territories are keen to understand and have the opportunity to comment on recommendations made in the NCDS before it is submitted to the Minister for approval.

Issues and recommendations for improvement

Outlined in the table below is a summary of key issues that emerged from evaluation findings, along with recommendations for how they can be addressed.

TABLE A6.4: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Issues	Recommendations
States and Territories value existing national career development resources and are concerned about whether the Commonwealth will continue to support their development and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm plans regarding continuation of support for Commonwealth-funded career development resources and activities as part of the NCDS
Most interviewed education, training and careers industry stakeholders did not understand the timing or focus for the new NCDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm and communicate timeline and objectives for the National Career Development Strategy with key stakeholders Update MWG on progress, timeline, expected content for the NCDS and plans for its implementation Release summaries of research findings Early release of preliminary NCDS for debate and discussion
It isn't clear how the NCDS will align with related Commonwealth and State/Territory career development objectives and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signals need to be given that the NCDS will clarify the roles of the Commonwealth and the States and Territories in career development services for young people; that it will indicate how any principles that it contains will be applied; and how these relate to other national policy initiatives such as the National Curriculum

Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation

Considering findings from this evaluation, the following areas emerged that warrant inclusion in the next formative evaluation of the NP in 2012:

- How the NCDS addresses research project findings and recommendations
- Stakeholders' views of NCDS principles and implications for the States and Territories; does it facilitate a more strategic approach to career development for young Australians?
- Actions planned to engage Commonwealth and jurisdictional stakeholders on implementation of the NCDS

Attachment 7: Compact with Young Australians

Introduction

In April 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a Compact with Young Australians to increase young people's participation in education and training, providing protection from the anticipated tighter labour market and ensuring they would have the qualifications needed to take up the jobs as the economy recovered from the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). The Compact with Young Australians has three elements:

- A National Youth Participation Requirement for young people to complete Year 10 in school (or an approved equivalent), then participate full-time (at least 25 hours per week) in education, training or employment or a combination of these activities, until age 17
- An entitlement to an education or training place for all 15-24 year olds to complete government-subsidised qualifications, subject to admission requirements and course availability.¹⁵⁶ This entitlement ceased on 31 December 2011, as all States and Territories have now embedded the place entitlement into their skills development policies and programs
- Strengthened participation requirements for some types of income support. Young people under the age of 21 who do not have a Year 12 or equivalent qualification who seek income support through Youth Allowance (Other/Jobseeker) are now required to participate in education or training full time, or participate in part-time education or training in combination with other approved activities, for at least 25 hours per week, until they attain Year 12 or equivalent or an AQF Certificate II qualification or above. A similar requirement for full-time education or training applies to young people aged 16-20 years whose parents seek the Family Tax Benefit Part A

These elements underpin an agreement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories to accelerate the achievement of a 90 per cent national Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate target by 2015. State and Territory governments were responsible for implementation of the National Youth Participation Requirement and the entitlement to education and training places. The new Participation Requirement took effect in all States and Territories on 1 January, 2010. The Australian Government was responsible for introducing the strengthened participation requirements for income support recipients (see Figure A7.1).

¹⁵⁶ For 20-24 year olds who already have a Year 12 or equivalent qualification, the entitlement is to a place that would result in them attaining a higher qualification than they currently hold.

FIGURE A7.1 COMPACT WITH YOUNG AUSTRALIANS TIMELINE



Summary findings

The Compact was introduced to encourage young people to participate in education and training at a time of labour market contraction. Its introduction resulted in a more consistent national approach to requirements for young people to participate in compulsory education and training and it appears to be associated with some increase in participation among targeted cohorts. However, it is difficult to separate this increase in participation from the impact of the GFC.

A sizeable proportion of the target cohort has remained neither in education and nor in the labour market since the introduction of the Compact and the GFC. Increases in the number of young people now required to participate in education and training who previously might not have stayed in school have created capacity and capability pressures for some schools that warrant further investigation.

State and Territory government representatives said the Compact was a catalyst for closer collaboration across the education and training systems and sectors and, in some cases, for collaboration between schools, VET and support services for young people. One outcome of this collaboration in different States and Territories has been clearer processes for helping early school leavers transition into further education, training and employment. Despite these positive outcomes, there is some room for improvement in the reporting of the Compact's impact, particularly in accessing data that might help understand the take up of education and training places as a result of changes in income support.

dandolopartners worked with DEEWR and the Multilateral Working Group to develop the questions that needed to be asked to understand how this element is working toward NP outcomes. Table A7.1 provides a summary the answers to those questions and a rating of how well this element is progressing at this point. These high level observations are elaborated upon in the text that follows.

Legend:












-  Denotes substantial progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Denotes some progress toward NP objectives and outcomes
-  Denotes minimal progress toward NP objectives and outcomes

TABLE A7.1: ASSESSMENT AGAINST EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation Question	Assessment
What is happening?	
What has changed?	 The introduction of the Compact has established a more consistent approach to requirements for young people to participate in compulsory education and training
Is it working?	
Does participation data show that the Compact has had an impact?	 The introduction of the Compact appears to be associated with some increase in participation of targeted cohorts (16-17 year olds), but this is difficult to disentangle from the impact of the GFC
Is it appropriate?	
Is this element consistent with NP objectives?	 Consistent with NP objectives, the Compact aimed to increase young people's participation in education and training in response to a tighter labour market
Does this element address areas of need?	 Young people appear to be extending participation and re-engaging, but it is a challenge for some schools to meet their needs
Does this element complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	 The Compact is seen as a catalyst to collaboration of education and training sectors to understand and address the needs of young people remaining in or returning to education and training
Is it well governed and implemented?	
Is governance of the element working effectively?	 The requirements and entitlement have been implemented States and Territories are developing mechanisms to enforce and monitor Compact requirements
How well is performance reporting working?	 Performance reporting of the impact of the Compact is limited and Centrelink data is difficult to access
How effective is communication about the element?	 Compact requirements have been well defined and communicated through State and Commonwealth channels

Elaboration of findings

What has changed?

What has changed?



The introduction of the Compact has established a more consistent approach to requirements for young people to participate in compulsory education and training

By January, 2010 all States and Territories had legislation in place that reflected the National Youth Participation Requirement. This is the first time that all States and Territories have required young people to complete Year 10 and then remain engaged full-time in education, training and/or employment until 17 years of age. Some States' and Territories' legislation already reflected the requirement, so no changes were needed. Other States and Territories increased the compulsory participation age from 15 or 16 years to 17 years.

The entitlement to an education and training place continued existing efforts of a number of States and Territories that already had place guarantees prior to the Compact. All States and Territories have now embedded the place entitlement into their skills development policies and programs.

The changes to the income support requirements were designed to encourage young people to improve their qualifications through participation in education or training.

Is it working?

Does participation data show that the Compact has had an impact?



The introduction of the Compact appears to be associated with some increase in participation of targeted cohorts (16-17 year olds), but this is difficult to disentangle from the impact of the GFC

Given that the National Youth Participation Requirement extended the mandatory participation age to 17 years, the Compact could be expected to have had the most immediate impact on school participation of 16 and 17 year olds. However, the Compact is only one factor that impacts on school participation (see Chapter 4). Table A7.2 shows movements in key indicators of the impact of the Compact. Overall, they indicate that the Compact has had some potential impact, particularly in the full-time school participation of 16 and 17 year olds and progressions from Year 9-10, 10-11 and 11-12. However, it is difficult to separate it from the impact of the GFC. For example, while the rate of progression from Year 10 to Year 11 increased by 1.4 percentage points between 2009 and 2010, it increased by almost the same amount (1.3 percentage points) between 2008 and 2009.

TABLE A7.2: KEY INDICATORS OF THE IMPACT OF THE COMPACT

Indicator	Trend	Assessment
Full-time school participation, age 16 and 17 (see Figure 4.1)	Some increase, 2008-10	Possible impact, but hard to separate from GFC's impact
Year 9-10 progression (see Figure 4.4)	Small increase, 2009-10	Some impact likely
Year 10-11 progression (see Figure 4.4)	Increase, 2008-10	Some impact likely, but hard to separate from GFC's impact
Year 11-12 progression (see Figure 4.4)	Increase, 2008-10	Some impact likely, but hard to separate from GFC's impact
Non-school VET participation, age 16-17 (see Figure 4.5)	Decline	No impact. (Decline in VET participation needs to be considered with the rise in school participation of this cohort)
Year 10 completions	Decline 2008-09, increase 2009-10, decline 2010-11	No impact
Not in education and unemployed, age 17-19 (see Figure 4.14)	Decline 2007-08, increase 2008-09, decline 2009-11	Some impact likely
Not in education and not in the labour market, age 17-19 (see Figure 4.14)	Continued increase 2007-2011	No impact
Income support	A greater proportion of early school leavers receiving Youth Allowance (Other) benefits are undertaking education and training in 2009 compared to 2008.	Some impact likely

Is it appropriate?

Is this element consistent with NP objectives?		Consistent with NP objectives, the Compact aimed to increase young people's participation in education and training in response to a tighter labour market
--	---	---

The Compact is consistent with the NP objectives, by aiming to increase participation in education and training and, as a result, improve the qualifications and skill level of Australians. The legislated State and Territory participation requirements and the income support requirements are the 'sticks' of the Compact to the 'carrots' of the education and training place entitlement and other elements of the NP. The Compact requires young people to participate, which should in turn influence attainment and transition outcomes targeted by the NP.

Does this element address areas of need?		Young people appear to be extending participation and re-engaging, but it is a challenge for schools to meet their needs
--	---	---

Increasing participation requirements means that some schools have become responsible for a larger number of young people that historically would have left or are seeing young people re-engage in education and training. Some of these schools are either not used to dealing with this cohort, or not used to dealing with it in such large numbers. Stakeholders indicated many of these students have characteristics and needs that differ from those of other students. For example many of those who have been out of school for extended periods have lower literacy and numeracy levels, or require different education or training options to keep them

engaged. Stakeholders reported that some schools do not have the resources or appropriate staff to support this cohort of young people.

Areas of need identified by stakeholders to assist this cohort to effectively participate in school include programs that:

- Help prepare long-term disengaged young people to return to school, particularly in remote areas
- Provide intensive literacy and numeracy support alongside school classes
- Better prepare young people for employment
- Support young people who leave school early and return to complete school in their early 20s.

Some States and Territories have used funding provided under the Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST) element of the NP to work towards addressing these needs. In NSW, for example, a project was funded to address basic literacy and numeracy issues by exposing young people to practical vocational exercises using industry terminology and mathematical problem solving techniques.

To sustain the impact of the Compact and other elements of the NP in re-engaging students, it is important to understand their individual needs and the wider implications for the school. This means providing additional support both to individual students and to schools as a whole to better address those needs. Over and above additional support and assistance for individual students such as mentoring, counselling, welfare services, remedial teaching and individualised instruction, schools need support to address issues such as the need for curriculum reform, more applied and experiential teaching methods, professional development for teachers and school-community links. For example, outlined below is a case study that profiles the breadth of initiatives being pursued in the Netherlands to address early school leaving and to support those that do leave early.

Case Study - Recent Dutch initiatives to address early school leaving and assist dropouts

Since the mid-2000s the Netherlands has taken a number of initiatives to reduce early school leaving and to assist dropouts. These include: a formal requirement since 2009 for all 18-27 year olds who have not completed upper secondary education to take part in education, employment or training; for those who are not employed, a requirement to take part in a program leading to an upper secondary qualification as a condition of receiving income support; the establishment of early school leaver regional reporting and coordination centres in each municipality; extensive cooperation among governments, parents, schools, the business community and welfare and juvenile justice authorities to assist dropouts; and significant additional investments in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Source: OECD (2008) Jobs for Youth: Netherlands, Paris, pp. 81-85 and 119-142.

Does this element complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?



The Compact is seen as a catalyst to collaboration of education and training sectors to understand and address the needs of young people remaining in or returning to education and training

To meet the 2015 target, closer collaboration between schools and VET is required to respond to the needs of young people who have extended participation or re-engaged in education and training. The Compact has acted as a “circuit breaker” for that collaboration to occur, prompting discussions across schools and VET sectors to understand the needs of these young people and about options to increase participation. For example, TAFE South Australia developed a protocol for working with school-aged

young people and for information sharing between schools and TAFEs to pro-actively assist agencies to get the best outcome for young people. In the Northern Territory the Compact led to a stronger focus on aligning funding for VET in school offerings to industries with skills shortages.

In the ACT, collaboration has extended beyond schools and VET. The Compact led to the ACT Youth Commitment, which has provided a framework for engaging non-government education and external support services with a stake in achieving youth attainment and transition outcomes. This has created a shared sense of responsibility and focused attention on not losing young people 'through the cracks'. It has resulted in a disparate group of organisations working together to determine how they can best meet young people's needs. This is similar to the Regional Youth Commitment approach in Victoria.

Is it well governed and implemented?

Is governance of the element working effectively?



The requirements and entitlement have been implemented
States and Territories are developing mechanisms to enforce and monitor Compact requirements

As indicated previously, every State and Territory has introduced legislation requiring young people to complete Year 10 and then remain engaged full-time in education, training and/or employment until 17 years of age. Alongside these requirements some States and Territories have introduced or expanded more formalised processes for managing early school leavers. In Victoria, the Compact enabled a more formalised school exit process to ensure that young people wishing to leave school prior to the end of Year 10 are not exited until a pathway to another provider or service has been established. Similarly, the ACT is continuing to develop a student transfer register as a mechanism to track young people as they transfer across schools and sectors so that they can be contacted if they do not make a successful transition. In the NT, the introduction of the Compact legislation was followed by the introduction of truancy legislation that introduced greater powers to track young people and compel them to engage in conferences to establish an attendance plan that is monitored by a truancy team.

In some States and Territories, initiatives to monitor and enforce participation requirements are minimal and/or are being scaled back. In the absence of monitoring and enforcement of the participation requirement there is a risk that the potential impact of the Compact is compromised. Notwithstanding differences in local circumstances, there would be benefit in investigating the relative merits of different approaches to monitoring and enforcing participation requirements.

Such a review would need to acknowledge that monitoring and enforcing participation requirements can be resource-intensive (for example, finding and transporting non-attenders to school. A requirement to participate, either through State and Territory education legislation or income support legislation, is only one lever to increase participation. A focus on the other components – ability to participate and willingness to participate – is also needed to ensure that once young people are required to return to school they can and want to remain engaged.

How well is performance reporting working?



Performance reporting of the impact of the Compact is limited and Centrelink data is difficult to access

The only information States and Territories were required to report on the Compact was when the education and training place entitlement had been implemented and the participation requirement legislation was introduced. No reporting on the impact of the Compact was required and therefore has not been reported. It is therefore not possible to determine whether young people who

undertake education or training in a school, TAFE or other education institution have done so as a result of the Compact place entitlement.

The evaluation sought to assess the impact of the strengthened participation requirements for some types of income support. The evaluation team has been unable to access sufficient income support data or reports to make this assessment.

How effective is communication about the element?



Compact requirements have been well defined and communicated through State and Commonwealth channels

States and Territories were responsible for communicating the place entitlement and participation requirement changes within their States and Territories. They used existing channels to communicate the changes in line with the communications strategy included in the NP. To support the introduction of strengthened participation requirements for income support recipients, the Australian Government developed fact sheets for parents and young people that were appropriately distributed online and through Centrelink.

Stakeholders consulted were familiar with the 'learn or earn' message associated with the Compact, however, an 'earn then learn' message would more accurately reflect the intentions of the NP. A consistent view among stakeholders was that parents now have a better understanding of the requirement for young people to stay at school and saw the Compact as a hook for discussion about what can be done to keep young people at school. However, some interviewed stakeholders misunderstood participation exemption provisions and procedures. This could be an area to further explore in year two of the evaluation

Issues and recommendations for improvement

Outlined in the table below is a summary of key issues that emerged from evaluation findings, along with recommendations for how they can be addressed.

Issues	Draft Recommendations
Some schools do not have sufficient capacity and capability to support young people who have returned after long periods of disengagement	Review implications for schools and feasibility of developing or adopting existing program responses in areas of need (e.g. pre-education literacy and numeracy programs, work readiness and re-engagement support for older students)
Reporting on the impact of the Compact is limited	Work within DEEWR to improve access to information to help better understand the impact of changes to income support

Areas to explore in year two of the evaluation

Considering findings from this evaluation, the following areas emerged that warrant inclusion in the formative evaluation of the NP in 2012:

- Enforcement and monitoring arrangements for Compact participation requirements in different States and Territories
- Education and training place entitlement models used in different jurisdictions
- The contribution of the Compact components to YAT outcomes
- Impact of changes in income support entitlements on participation in education and training

Attachment 8: Stakeholder engagement

Throughout the evaluation, dandolo gained invaluable insight into the NP through engagement with a large number and broad range of stakeholders across the Australian and State and Territory governments, including education regional offices, schools and public VET providers, non-government education authorities, Youth Connection and Partnership Broker service providers, community and youth organisations, business and industry representatives and young people. Multilateral working group members were responsible for arranging consultations in their jurisdiction with government and non-government education sector representatives. We are appreciative of their efforts and of all those that participated in interviews and focus groups.

Table A8.1 presents the approximate number of stakeholders engaged from each stakeholder group and the method of engagement.

TABLE A8.1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (YEAR 1)

Stakeholder group	Engagement method	Approx. number
Australian Government	One-on-one and group interviews	40
State and Territory government – education and training sectors	One-on-one and group interviews	80
Non-government education sector	One-on-one and group interviews	20
Education and training providers (including schools)	One-on-one and group interviews	25
Partnership Brokers	Focus groups and interviews	20
Youth Connections providers	Focus groups and interviews	15
Partners and youth sector stakeholders (businesses, community organisations, youth organisations, parents groups)	One-on-one interviews	15
Career industry representatives	One-on-one interviews	5
Young people and case workers	Small group discussions	20
Total		240

Attachment 9: Evaluation Framework

Introduction

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness (impact), appropriateness, governance and implementation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (the NP). The overarching question for this evaluation is:

“Have the National Partnership elements, as a package, contributed to young people’s engagement with education and training to improve participation, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians?”

This overarching question is underpinned by a number of questions and sub-questions that will be applied to evaluate the NP.

This document outlines:

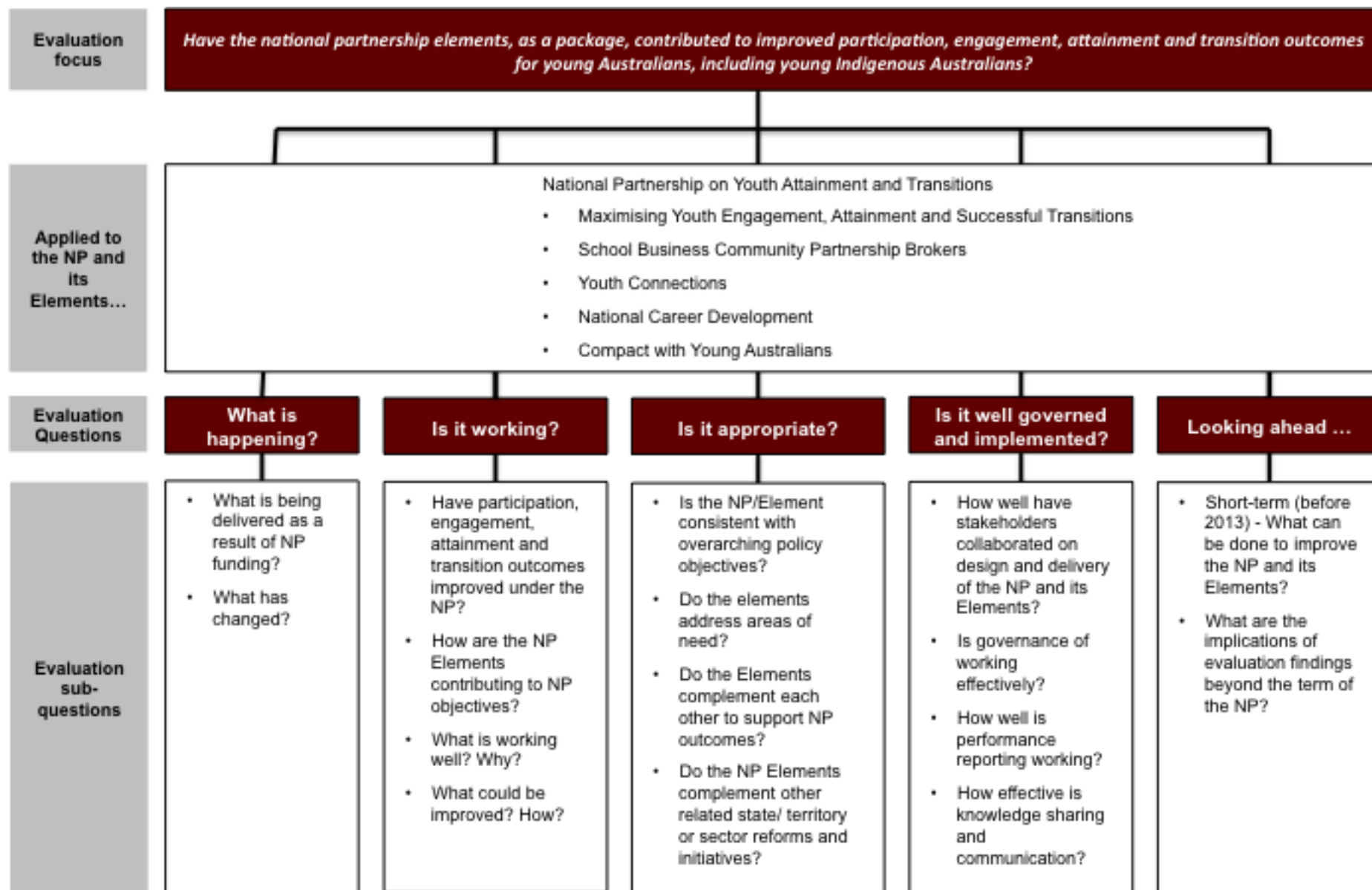
- the questions and sub-questions that will be applied to evaluate the partnership at the NP and Element level
- sources of data and research methods that will be used to generate the evidence needed to complete this evaluation, including:
 - **Literature review** – of relevant Commonwealth and State/Territory policy statements, program plans and performance reports, State and Territory implementation plans and annual reports, relevant evaluation reports and survey results and research reports from around the world relating to programs targeting youth participation, attainment and transitions
 - **Data analysis** – of national data sets, including those already applied in partnership performance reporting and additional data sets that can extend our understanding of participation, attainment and transition outcomes. Note:
 - a. Referenced data tables to be used in the evaluation are being separately developed. They will outline data that will be presented to support evaluation questions, data sets used to collect that data, views/segmentation of the data that will be explored, as well as key assumptions and possible limitations
 - b. If additional data is identified by States and Territories or sectors that adds value to the evaluation, it may be incorporated, but the evaluation team will rely on States, Territories and school systems to synthesise and present that data in line with templates/formats provided by the project team
 - **Stakeholder engagement** via interviews, focus groups, field visits and online surveys. Stakeholders will include representatives from DEEWR, school systems (States, Territories, Independent and Catholic schools), school leaders (e.g. regional directors), training providers, contracted service providers (Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections service providers), partners (businesses, community/youth organisations, parents) and young people (focus group). MWG representatives and DEEWR program leaders will be instrumental in coordinating access to stakeholders.

The following table summarises the focus for each conduct of the evaluation over the next 3 years:

Year 1 (conducted July 2011 - March 2012)	Year 2 (conducted April - October 2012)	Year 3 (conducted April - October 2013)
Understand the effectiveness (impact), appropriateness, governance and implementation of the National Partnership		
<p>Understand what is currently happening across States and Territories and sectors</p> <p>Inform improvements in the NP and its elements</p>	<p>Present findings and options to inform a decision about the future of the NP and its elements</p>	<p>Summative evaluation of the NP</p> <p>Present options for the future of the NP in the context of government policy priorities</p>

A conceptual overview of what this evaluation will cover is presented on page 5. It is important to note that this is an evaluation of the partnership, not a detailed evaluation of individual elements or programs. What this means is:

The evaluation will cover...	This evaluation will not cover...
<p>Measurement of movement in participation, attainment and transition outcomes using reliable national data sources</p> <p>Acknowledgement of other factors and initiatives that contribute to or impact targeted outcomes (e.g. impact of the GFC, issues faced in regional and remote areas)</p> <p>Investigation of the value of a national, collaborative approach to initiatives aimed at improving those outcomes (predominantly through qualitative research and supported by literature review)</p> <p>High level evaluation of elements in terms of their contribution to the NP goals</p> <p>Examination of whether and how the separate elements of the NP work together</p> <p>Summary of findings and options for the future</p>	<p>A detailed evaluation of individual programs and activities that would require acquisition and analysis of new primary data. Where possible, findings from evaluations being conducted of elements/programs at Commonwealth, jurisdiction or sector level will be incorporated.</p> <p>A comparative assessment of performance and contributions made by school sectors, States, Territories or service providers</p> <p>A quantification of elements' contribution toward targeted outcomes as attribution is not possible</p> <p>Reward funding decisions – this evaluation will not contribute toward reward funding decisions</p>



National Partnership

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	Aggregation of input from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national and regional managers and staff • States and Territories education and training departments • Catholic and Independent school sectors • Schools – via regional directors, principals and career counselors • VET sector providers • Partnership Brokers • Partners – inc schools, businesses, community organisations, parents • Youth Connections service providers • Young people (focus groups) • Career industry representatives • Centrelink/JSA representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSSC (ABS) • AVETMISS • HEIMS • LSAY • SEW/LFS • Board of Studies • ATAC • Census <p><u>Note: data tables are identified below that reflect our early position on data that can be collected for this evaluation – these will be refined and may change based on more detailed assessment of available datasets</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Partnership Agreement • National Education Agreement • National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development • Research reports regarding YAT outcomes, measurement and influencing factors • Commonwealth, State/Territory initiatives and programs in the youth attainment and transition areas • National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) • NP Annual Reports • Previous program Evaluations and Reviews • See Appendix 1

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
1.1	Has the NP led to changes in activities directed toward participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have education and training systems done as a result of the NP's introduction? • How have activities changed since the introduction of the NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At Commonwealth level? ○ At State/Territory level? ○ In non-government sector? ○ For Indigenous young people? ○ For young people at risk of not attaining a Year 12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggregation of Element-level evaluation (see sections 1.2-1.6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stakeholder interviews (see above) ○ Literature review (see above) ○ Data Analysis (see above)

		<p>qualification?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Did the NP enable more to be done with less? (e.g. are we supporting more young people, a greater % of Indigenous and at risk young people, providing more initiatives - with the same or less budget?) NB: Need to confirm availability of comparable data</i> 	
Is it working?			
1.4	Has young people's participation in education and training increased?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the proportion of 15-24 year olds participating in secondary school including VET in Schools, VET sector, Apprenticeships and higher education increased? • Explore changes across years by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ States and Territories ○ Indigenous young people ○ Age ○ <i>Locations (if possible)</i> 	<p>Data analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSSC(ABS) – school education and training • AVETMISS – VET • HEIMS • ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0 • Table 1.4a Number of persons aged 15 to 24 years enrolled in secondary school 2000-2012, (Source: National Schools Statistics Collection) • Table 1.4b Number of persons aged 15 to 24 years enrolled in VET in Schools 2005-2012, (Source: VET in Schools Collection - NCVER). - Separate tables for those still at school and those not at school • Table 1.4c Number of persons aged 15 to 24 years enrolled in VET 2002-2012, (Source: VET Provider Collection NCVER) - Separate tables for those still at school and those not at school • Table 1.4d Number of persons aged 15 to 24 years enrolled in an Apprenticeship 2000-2012, (Source: VET Apprenticeship Collection NCVER) - Separate tables for those who have completed an Apprenticeship • Table 1.4e Number of persons aged 15-24 years enrolled in Higher Education 2005-2012 (Source HEIMS Collection) • Table 1.4f Number of persons aged 15-24 years in the Australian Population, (Source: ABS Estimated population by age & sex) - This table will allow the three tables above to also be expressed as a % of the population • Table 1.4g Education and labour force status of persons aged 15-24 in single years of age, May 2000-2012 <p>Supplementary Tables can address among which groups of young people as each table above can be further subdivided (e.g. by States/Territories, disadvantage/marginality/SES indicators, Indigenous)</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has there been any change in the proportion of young people aged 15-24 not engaged in employment, education or training? • To what extent are any such changes observable in unemployment, in 	<p>Data analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABS 6227.0, special tabulations, education and labour force status by single years

		marginal labour force status, and in non-participation in the labour force?	of age and State and Territory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABS Labour Force Survey Cat. No. 6291.0.55.001 and equivalent tables for other years, States and Territories and Australia, 12 monthly averages
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other factors may have influenced participation outcomes? 	Literature review (see Appendix 1) Stakeholder interviews
1.5	Has young people's attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications increased?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are more young people attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications? Assess across time and by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ States and Territories ○ Locations (if possible) 	Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 1.5A Proportion of persons aged 15 to 24 who have completed year 12 (or equivalent) or attained a formal qualification at Certificate II/III level or above (SEW) • Year 12 Certificate data (BoS), • Cert II [and above] data (VETiS and AVETMISS)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does Year 12 attainment improve transition outcomes for individuals? • Among which group[s] of young people can any changes be observed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ States and Territories ○ Locations (if possible) 	Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using SEW – Table 1.5b Education and labour force status of school leavers by level of schooling • Using ATAC – Table 1.5ci Applications to study in Tertiary Education by 15-24 year olds (Separate Table for each year 2008-2012) Table 1.5cii Admission to Tertiary Education by 15-24 year olds (Separate Table for each year 2008-2012) Table 1.5ciii Enrolled in Tertiary Education by 15-24 year olds (Separate Table for each year 2008-2012)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other factors may have influenced attainment outcomes? 	Literature review (see Appendix 1) Stakeholder interviews
1.6	Are more young people making successful transitions from school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are more young people aged 15-24 participating in post-school education, training or employment after leaving school? Areas to explore could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How does the immediate school leaver group compare with the entire age cohort? ○ Have there been changes in patterns of participation by level of qualification (at different points in time post-school)? 	Data analysis See row reference 1.5b <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABS 6227.0: special tabulations, education and labour force status by single years of age and State and Territory; Tables 16-19; Tables 62270DO007_201005 and 62270DO012_201005 for 2010 and equivalent tables for other years (2000-2009 and 2011-2012), States and Territories and Australia;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABS Labour Force Survey Cat. No. 6291.0.55.001 and equivalent tables for other years, states and territories and Australia, 12 monthly averages.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have patterns of labour force participation changed since the introduction of the NP among 15-24 year olds? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have there been changes to the number and proportion of young people not in employment, education or training? ○ Have patterns of post-school employment changed? 	Refer to row reference 1.5b – best expressed as a percentage of the total pool size
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other factors may have influenced transition outcomes? 	Literature review (see Appendix 1) Stakeholder interviews
1.7	What's working well? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the most beneficial aspects of the NP? • Were there unintended outcomes or other benefits? • What are the critical success factors? 	Aggregate findings from Element-level evaluation
1.8	What could work better? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major barriers to achieving desired outcomes? • What can be done to address the barriers? 	As above
Is it appropriate?			
1.9	Is the NP consistent with overarching policy objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are Commonwealth and state/territory policy objectives translated to NP objectives and priorities? • Are there any inconsistencies or gaps? • How could alignment be improved? 	Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth policy statements – National Education Agreement, National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development • State/territory implementation plans and annual reports Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR Program management • Education and training system representatives
1.10	Does the NP address areas of need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What criteria (formal/in practice) were used to determine priorities? Did they vary across elements and States and Territories? • Are there any unmet needs that should be considered? • Given the same resources, what other things might have been done to try to improve targeted outcomes? 	Aggregate findings from Element-level evaluation
1.11	How do the NP and its elements complement other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this NP and its elements align with other NPs and state/territory/sector reforms and initiatives? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? 	As above

	programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would be the consequence of removing the NP or elements? 	
Is it well governed and implemented?			
1.12	How well have stakeholders collaborated on design and delivery of the NP and its elements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the Commonwealth, States/Territories and sectors (education and training, government and non-government) collaborate on NP/Element design, and on the development of objectives and targets? • What collaboration is occurring across States and Territories and sectors to support program delivery/implementation? • Is knowledge sharing occurring across elements and stakeholders? • Do stakeholders believe that a collaborative approach enhanced outcomes (when compared to previous approaches to Commonwealth-funded programs)? 	Aggregate findings from Element-level evaluation
1.13	Is NP governance working effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What governance arrangements are prescribed and in place? • What's working well? • What could be improved? 	As above
1.14	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are identified measures, targets and reporting mechanisms appropriate? • What are the limitations? • What could be improved? 	As above
1.15	How effective is communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do key stakeholders understand the NP's objectives, elements and benefits/achievements? • What's working well? • What could be improved? 	As above
1.16	What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be done to improve the NP and its elements in the short term (before 2013)? 	Synthesis and analysis of findings
1.17	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the implications of findings beyond the term of the NP? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there a continued need for government policy and investment in this area? E.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would progress towards targets continue to be made if NP funding ceases in 2013? (e.g. due to existing State/Territory reforms, cohort effect of Smarter Schools NP, etc.) 	As above

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Is ongoing or more targeted reform/intervention required to support young people's engagement and improved participation, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians?○ Is a national, collaborative approach needed?○ What should be the role of the Commonwealth/State governments and sectors?	
--	--	--	--

Maximising Youth Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national and regional office staff • Education and training system representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jurisdictional leadership – in government, Independent and Catholic sectors – schools and training ○ School leadership – e.g. through regional directors, principals and career counsellors in government, Independent and Catholic sectors • MEAST service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSAY • Board of Studies • VET in Schools • See data tables referred to under NP-level evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State/Territory implementation plans • Annual reports • State/Territory commissioned evaluations where available • See Appendix 1

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
2.1	What is being delivered as a result of NP funding?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What MEAST initiatives are occurring and how is funding allocated? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Across States and Territories ○ By area/type (i.e. vocational education in schools, career development, multiple learning pathways, mentoring) ○ Across government and non-government sectors (<i>if possible</i>) • Who is receiving support under MEAST initiatives? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Characteristics of young people – i.e. focus on Indigenous and at risk young people? • What are the model(s) for service delivery? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extent to which States fund vs. provide services? ○ How are services delivered to non-government schools and across school / VET sectors? 	<p>Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR • Education and training system representatives – States/Territories, non-government (led by MWG reps) • Schools, Education & Training providers • MEAST providers <p>Literature review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table of MEAST activity across States and Territories • State/Territory implementation plans • Annual reports • State/Territory commissioned evaluations where available

2.2	Has the NP changed the activity and focus of career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring initiatives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did MEAST change career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring initiatives? (e.g. more options, different/expanded programs?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Across States/Territories/regions? ○ Across sectors? ○ For Indigenous young people? ○ For young people at risk? • How do MEAST-funded initiatives integrate with and complement other related reforms and initiatives in place in States and Territories and non-government sectors? • <i>If possible</i> - Did MEAST enable more to be done with less? (e.g. supporting more young people, a greater % of Indigenous and at risk young people, with more programs and resources, with the same or less budget?) 	As above
Is the element working?			
2.3	If Career Development was a focus of MEAST funding, did it help improve access to quality career development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have MEAST initiatives helped more young people aged 15-19 years access career development? • Have MEAST initiatives led to improved equity of access to career development? i.e. greater proportion of services accessed by Indigenous and at risk young people • Is there evidence in the States and Territories and sectors (including case studies) that Career Development initiatives are improving participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes? 	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSAY (if feasible, not year one)
2.4	If Multiple Learning Pathways were a focus of MEAST funding, did it help improve access to a broader range of multiple learning pathways for young people?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have MEAST initiatives increased the range of options and support available to help more young people aged 15-19 years engage in training and education? • Have MEAST initiatives led to improved equity of access to multiple learning pathways, workplace/transition support and expanded subject choice? i.e. greater proportion accessed by indigenous and at risk young people • Is there evidence in the States and Territories and sectors (including case studies) that Multiple Learning Pathways initiatives are improving participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes? 	As above, plus: Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boards of Study data
2.5	If Mentoring was a focus of MEAST funding, did it improve access to a variety of quality mentoring opportunities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have MEAST initiatives increased the range of mentoring options available? • Have MEAST initiatives led to more young people aged 15-19 years accessing mentoring opportunities? • Have MEAST initiatives led to improved equity of access to mentoring opportunities? i.e. greater proportion accessed by indigenous and at risk young people • Is there evidence (including case studies) that Mentoring initiatives improved participation, engagement, 	As above

		attainment and transition outcomes?	
2.6	What's working well? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the most significant benefits? • Were there unintended outcomes or other benefits? • What are the critical success factors for effective MEAST initiatives? 	As above
2.7	What could work better? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major barriers to initiatives achieving desired outcomes? • What can be done to address those barriers? 	As above
Is it appropriate?			
2.8	Is MEAST consistent with NP objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are NP objectives translated to MEAST objectives? • Are there any inconsistencies or gaps? • How could alignment be improved? 	As above – focus is on DEEWR interviews and literature review
2.9	Does MEAST address areas of need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What criteria (formal/in practice) were used to determine priorities for allocation of MEAST funding? • What were the priorities? Did they vary across States and Territories? • Are there any unmet needs that should be considered? • Given the same resources, what other things might have been done to try to improve targeted outcomes? 	As above
2.10	Does MEAST complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does MEAST align with other NP elements? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? • How do MEAST activities align with other initiatives across the Commonwealth, States and Territories and sectors? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? • What would be the consequence of removing a national partnership approach to supporting MEAST initiatives? • Has the use of a 'menu of options' approach been effective? What have been the shortcomings (if any) of this approach? 	As above
Is the element well governed and implemented?			
2.11	How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of this element?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the Commonwealth, States/Territories and sectors collaborate on design and objectives for MEAST initiatives? • What collaboration is occurring across States and Territories to support program delivery? • Is knowledge sharing occurring across States and Territories? • Do the stakeholders believe that a collaborative approach enhanced outcomes (when compared to previous approaches to Commonwealth-funded programs)? 	As above
2.12	Is governance of the element working effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What governance arrangements are prescribed and in place? • What's working well? – e.g. do governance arrangements support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ effective management of service providers/provision? ○ timely identification and management of issues and risks? ○ flexible implementation of services across States and Territories? 	As above

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a forum for policy discussion and engagement of providers at a strategic level? ● What should be improved? 	
2.13	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do States and Territories/sectors measure the performance of MEAST initiatives? ● What could be improved? 	As above
2.14	How effective is communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do key stakeholders understand the MEAST objectives, activities and benefits? ● How is the program being promoted? Does promotion align with program objectives? ● What's working well? ● What could be improved? 	As above, plus review of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication plans ● Communication materials
Looking ahead...			
2.15	What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What can be done to improve this element in the short term (before 2013)? 	Synthesis and analysis of findings
2.16	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the implications of findings beyond the term of the NP? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there a continued need for government policy and investment in this area? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What would be the consequences if MEAST funding was removed? ▪ Is ongoing or more targeted reform/intervention required to support young people's engagement and improved participation, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians? ○ Is a national, collaborative approach needed? ○ What should be the role of the Commonwealth/State governments and sectors? 	Synthesis of research findings

School Business Community Partnership Brokers

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national and regional office staff • Education and training system representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jurisdictional leadership – in government, Independent and Catholic sectors ○ School leadership – e.g. through regional directors, principals and career development staff in government, Independent and Catholic sectors • Partnership Brokers • Partners - Schools, Education & Training providers, business, community organisations, parents associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YATMIS • PB & Partner Surveys • Partnership Quality Matrix • LLEN data (Vic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State implementation plans • Annual reports • Partnership Brokers Guidelines, Toolkit • PB Outcomes Report • PB Environmental Scans • PB Strategic Plans • Business-School Connections Roundtable report (including supporting documents) • CAA evaluation reports • Partnership case studies • (Ref Appendix 1)

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
3.1	<p>What is being delivered as a result of NP funding?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the profile of partnership brokers and partnerships? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expenditure on PBs – across regions? ○ Number (and type) of providers? ○ Number (and type) of partners (e.g. community groups, businesses)? ○ Number of partnerships – by type and region? 	DEEWR interviews Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PB national and state reports • PB/partner survey • LLEN data
3.2	<p>Has the NP changed the activity and focus of partnerships?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have partnerships changed since the introduction of Partnership Brokers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More partnerships and partners? ○ New partners participating in partnerships? ○ Differences in the priorities of partnerships? ○ Increased emphasis on addressing the needs of Indigenous young people? 	Literature review Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national and regional office staff • Education and training system representatives –

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Differences in the way that partners are working together? (e.g. Has there been a shift from a donor-recipient relationship to a more integrated partnership approach?) 	<p>States/Territories, non-government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnership Brokers – in focus groups and survey data ● Partners
Is it working?			
3.3	Has the Partnership Brokers element facilitated the establishment of high quality School Business Community Partnerships that link key stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have appropriate quality criteria for partnerships been established? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are the criteria being applied, monitored and acted on? ○ Are the partnerships demonstrating progress towards the quality criteria? ● Have Partnership Brokers contributed to more effective partnerships? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the KPMs for partnerships? Are they being achieved? ● How effectively have the Partnership Brokers engaged education and training providers, business and industry, community groups and parents and families in partnerships? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the extent to which the KPMs of these key stakeholder groups are being achieved? ○ Did partners become involved in partnerships due to the work of Partnership Brokers? 	<p>Literature review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Program guidelines (including MERF) ● PB Outcomes Report (YATMIS) ● KPM Evaluation Ratings ● Partnership Quality Matrix ● PB/Partner Survey ● Partnership Characteristics KPMs <p>Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As above
3.4	Are School Business Community Partnerships tailored to address the needs of young people in the service regions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How are partnerships designed to address regional priorities for improved education and transition outcomes? ● Are partnerships working towards addressing regional priorities? 	<p>Literature review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● YATMIS (purpose of partnerships) ● Random sample of PB Environmental Scans and Strategic Plans ● Partner survey (2012) ● Case studies <p>Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As above
3.5	What's working well? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What do partners see as the primary benefits of partnering? ● Were there unintended outcomes or other benefits? ● What are the critical success factors for effective partnerships? ● What can be learnt from Victoria's involvement in this field, given the length of involvement? 	<p>Interviews - as above</p>

3.6	What could work better? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major barriers to partnerships achieving desired outcomes? (e.g. capacity and capability of Brokers) • What can be done to address the barriers to achieving desired outcomes? 	Interviews - as above
Is it appropriate?			
3.7	Is this element consistent with overarching policy objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are NP objectives and goals translated to PB objectives? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How does the PB element align with the policy objectives of the NP? ○ Are the PB activities helping to establish long term reform? (e.g. institutional, attitudinal, cultural changes e.g. memorandums of understanding in place to operate beyond the term of the NP) • Are there any inconsistencies or gaps? • How could alignment be improved? 	Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program guidelines • Monitoring and evaluation frameworks and reporting • Service provider agreements • State and territory implementation plans and annual reports Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
3.8	Does this element address areas of need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are priorities identified for partnerships? What are they? • Are there any unmet needs that should be considered? • Given the same resources, what other things might have been done to try to improve outcomes? 	Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PB Environmental Scans • PB Strategic Plans • Business-School Connections Roundtable report Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
3.9	Does this element complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this program align with other NP elements? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? • How does this program align with other initiatives at Commonwealth, State and regional levels? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? 	As above, plus Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business-Schools Connections report and supporting documentation • Victorian LLEN reviews and State schools-business connections material

Is the element well governed and implemented?			
3.10	How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the element?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the Commonwealth, States/Territories and sectors collaborate on program design and development? • Is that cooperation continuing to support program delivery? • Is knowledge sharing occurring across partnership brokers, partnerships and States and Territories? • How do national and state networks of Partnership Brokers add value to partnerships? (What would be the consequences of removing state and national networks?) 	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national and regional office staff • Education and training system representatives • Partnership Brokers
3.11	Is governance of the element working effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What governance arrangements are prescribed and in place for the element? • What's working well? • What should be improved? 	As above
3.12	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the monitoring and reporting framework enable effective evaluation of the program's performance? • What could be improved? 	As above
3.13	How effective is communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do Partnership Brokers and partners understand the element's objectives, activities and benefits? • How is the program being promoted? Does promotion align with program objectives? • What's working well? • What could be improved? 	As above - plus review of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plans • Communication materials
Looking ahead...			
3.14	What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be done to improve this element in the short term (before 2013)? 	Synthesis and analysis of findings
3.15	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the implications of findings beyond the term of the NP? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there a continued need for government policy and investment in this area? • What would be the consequences if PB support/funding were removed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is a national, collaborative approach needed? ○ What is the role of the Commonwealth, States/Territories, non-government sector, PBs? 	Synthesis of research findings

Youth Connections

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national and regional office staff • Education and training system representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jurisdictional leadership – in government, Independent and Catholic sectors ○ School leadership – e.g. through regional directors, principals and counsellors in government, Independent and Catholic sectors • YC service providers • Young people who are or have been engaged in YC • Centrelink/JSA representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YATMIS • Board of Studies • See data tables referred to under NP-level evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State implementation plans • Annual reports • Business-School Connections Roundtable report • DEEWR summary of program activity and survey results • Case studies • See Appendix 1

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
4.1	What is being delivered as a result of NP funding?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What services are being delivered? Investment and types of services under: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual Support, 2. Outreach and Re-engagement, and 3. Strengthening Services in the Region • Who to? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Numbers of participants in YC services ○ Characteristics of participants - % indigenous, humanitarian refugees ○ Connection level of participants • Where? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regions/locations – inc. flagged regions • Delivered by whom? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of providers ○ Type of providers • Referred by whom? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number and type of referrer ○ Number of participants referred (if possible) 	DEEWR interviews and summary of program activity

4.2	Has Youth Connections helped to improve the quality of support for young people to remain engaged or re-engage in education and training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have services changed since the introduction of Youth Connections? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Did Youth Connections lead to an increased focus on young people most at risk of disengaging from education and training? ○ (if possible) Has the cost of individual support services changed? ○ Did Youth Connections lead to broader service coverage (than provided by previous programs)? ○ How has support changed under the NP? (e.g. more flexibility in the allocation of time to different activities?) 	Literature review DEEWR program reporting and survey analysis Interviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national and regional office staff • Education and training system representatives • Service providers
Is it working?			
4.3	Are Individual Support Services working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are priorities for <i>Individual Support Services</i> set? What are they? How do they vary across States and Territories? • Are targeted outcomes being achieved? (e.g. personal development, connection and progression) – evidenced by Outcome Indicators • What other outcomes are being achieved? • <i>Is engagement in education and/or training sustained? (NB: to be evaluated subject to data availability)</i> 	Interviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national and regional office staff • Education and training system representatives • Service providers • Centrelink / JSA reps • Young people Datasets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YATMIS (including PWISC) Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YC evaluation framework • YC Program reports • Case studies
4.4	Have Are Outreach and Re-Engagement services achieved identified outcomes working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are priorities for <i>Outreach and re-engagement</i> services set? What are they? • Are targeted outcomes being achieved? – evidenced by Outcome Indicators • What other outcomes are being achieved? • How successful have outreach and re-engagement services been in moving young people into individual support services? 	As above
4.5	Have Youth Services in the Regions been strengthened?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are priorities for <i>strengthening services in the regions</i> set? What are they? • Are targeted outcomes being achieved? – evidenced by Outcome Indicators 	As above

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other outcomes are being achieved? • Where relevant, are Youth Connections providers working effectively with Partnership Brokers to deliver these outcomes? 	
4.6	What's working well? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the service model work as an integrated suite of services? (individual support services, outreach/engagement, strengthening services in the region) • What are the major benefits of the Youth Connections program? • Were there unintended outcomes or other benefits? • What are the critical success factors for Youth Connections services? 	As above
4.7	What could work better? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major barriers to Youth Connections providers achieving desired outcomes? • What can be done to address the barriers to achieving desired outcomes? • What factors are deemed as critical to successful YC service provision? 	As above
Is it appropriate?			
4.8	Is the element consistent with overarching policy objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are NP objectives translated to YC objectives? • Are there any inconsistencies or gaps? • How could alignment be improved? 	<p>Literature review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YC guidelines • Monitoring and evaluation frameworks and reporting • Service provider agreements • YC Program reports • State and Territory implementation plans and annual reports <p>Interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national and regional office staff • Education and training system representatives – States/Territories, non-government (through MWG reps)
4.9	Does this element address areas of need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do Youth Connections activities target at risk young people and key barriers to engagement in different regions? What criteria (formal/in practice) were used to determine priorities? E.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flagged areas ○ Juvenile justice issues ○ Reducing substance abuse ○ Teen parents 	As above

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were resources allocated to service regions based on areas of greatest need? • Are there any unmet needs that should be considered? • Given the same resources, what other things might have been done to try to achieve the same outcomes? 	
4.10	Does the partnership approach complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this program align with other NP elements? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? (e.g. to what extent does YC overlap with Partnership Brokers, Job Services Australia?) • How does this program align with other initiatives at Commonwealth, State and regional levels? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? 	As above
Is the element well governed and implemented?			
4.11	How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the element?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the Commonwealth, States/Territories and sectors collaborate on program design and development? • Is that co-operation continuing to support program delivery? • Is knowledge sharing occurring across service providers, States and Territories and sectors? 	As above
4.12	Is governance of the element working effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What governance arrangements are prescribed and in place for the element? • How do national and state networks of YC service providers add value? (What would be the consequences of removing state and national networks?) • What's working well? – e.g. do governance arrangements support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ effective management of service providers/provision? ○ timely identification and management of issues and risks? ○ flexible implementation of services across States and Territories? ○ a forum for policy discussion and engagement of providers at a strategic level? • What should be improved? 	As above
4.13	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the monitoring and reporting framework enable effective evaluation of the performance of different initiatives and the program's effectiveness overall? • What could be improved? 	As above
4.14	How effective is communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do key stakeholders understand YC objectives, activities and benefits? • How is the program being promoted? Does promotion align with program objectives? • What's working well? • What could be improved? 	As above – plus review of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plans • Communication materials
Looking ahead...			
4.15	What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be done to improve this element in the short term (before 2013)? 	Synthesis and analysis of findings

<p>4.16</p>	<p>What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the implications of findings beyond the term of the NP? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there a continued need for government policy and investment in this area? • What would be the consequences if YC support/funding were removed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is a national, collaborative approach needed? ○ What is the role of the Commonwealth, States/Territories, non-government sector, service providers? 	<p>Synthesis of research findings</p> <p>Literature review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequences of young people not making successful transitions (see Appendix 1)
--------------------	---	---	---

National Career Development

The evaluation framework for this element is presented in two parts, given work is still underway to complete the development of the National Careers Development Strategy (NCDS):

1. A framework to support evaluation in 2011, which will focus on the development of the National Careers Development Strategy; and
2. A framework to support evaluation in 2012 and 2013, which will focus on activities implemented as a result of the National Careers Development Strategy. Note: this evaluation framework will be reviewed after completion of the NCDS.

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	Interviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Education and training system representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jurisdictional leadership – in government, Independent and Catholic sectors ○ School leadership – e.g. through regional directors in government, independent and Catholic sectors • Careers industry representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See data tables referred to under NP-level evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Career Development Strategy and progress reporting • NCDS Research Project – objectives and status reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research reports - see Appendix 1

5.1.1 Evaluation in 2011 – development of the NCDS

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
5.1	What is being delivered as a result of NP funding?	Considering progress on development of the NCDS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the planned research activities and timelines? • Is the program on track to deliver the NCDS?
Is it working?		
5.2	Has the NP facilitated a more strategic approach to career development for young Australians?	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Education and training system representatives

		developing the initiatives? (schools, parents, carers, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are objectives/outcomes clearly defined and measurable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers industry representatives Literature review
Is it appropriate?			
5.3	Is this element consistent with NP objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are NP objectives translated to development of the NCDS? How will the NCDS align with other career development strategies at Commonwealth and jurisdictional levels? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEEWR Interviews Literature review
Is it well governed and implemented?			
5.4	Has there been collaboration and buy-in to the NCDS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How were key stakeholders identified and engaged in the development of the NCDS? (Commonwealth, States/Territories, careers industry, other?) Are stakeholders committed to the proposed NCDS? 	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEEWR – national office Education and training system representatives Careers industry representatives
5.5	Is governance of the element working well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What governance arrangements are prescribed and in place for the element? What's working well? What could be improved? Is knowledge sharing occurring across key stakeholders? 	As above
Looking ahead...			
5.6	What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What can be done to improve this element in the short term (before 2013)? 	Synthesis and analysis of findings

Evaluation in 2012 and 2013 – implementation of the NCDS

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
5.6	What is being delivered as a result of NP funding?	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEEWR – national office Education and training system

		supported more young people within the same or less budget)	representatives Literature review
Is it working?			
5.7	Did the NP lead to a more strategic approach to career development for young Australians?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has implementation of the NCDS helped to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarify roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders – e.g. Commonwealth, States/Territories, non-government sector, industry? ○ Reduce duplication of activities/resources? ○ Improve equity of access issues for young people? (e.g. for young Indigenous people, young people living in remote areas, young people out of school and not in education) ○ Establish a more integrated career development focus – across NP Elements and beyond? 	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Education and training system representatives • Careers industry representatives Literature review
5.8	Has the NP assisted the development of initiatives that have been effective in helping young people identify and consider their career options and develop career plans?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are targeted objectives and outcomes being achieved? • Has access to career development initiatives and resources improved as a result of the NCDS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How well-utilised are career development initiatives and resources? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proportion of 15-19 year olds accessing careers advice in schools ▪ Proportion of 15-19 and 20-24 year olds accessing careers advice in post school education ○ What proportion of young people under 15 years access careers advice? • Do career development initiatives and delivery channels address the needs of different cohorts young people (e.g. age groups) and key influencers (e.g. parents, career advisers, teachers)? • Are stakeholders satisfied with the quality of career development initiatives and resources? 	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Education and training system representatives • Careers industry representatives Literature review Datasets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 5.6a Proportion of 15-19 year olds accessing careers advice in schools – fields still need to be defined • Table 5.6b Proportion of 15-19 and 20-24 year olds accessing careers advice in post school education – fields still need to be defined
5.9	What's working well? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the most significant benefits of national career development strategy and activity? • Were there any unintended outcomes or other benefits? • What are the critical success factors for national career development support? 	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Education and training system representatives • Careers industry representatives

5.10	What could work better? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major barriers to achieving desired outcomes? • What can be done to address those barriers? 	As above
Is it appropriate?			
5.11	Is this element consistent with NP objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are NP objectives translated to the NCDS? • Are there any inconsistencies or gaps? • How could alignment be improved? 	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Education and training system representatives
5.12	Does this element address areas of need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What criteria (formal/in practice) were used to determine priorities for allocation of funding? • What were the priorities? Did they vary across States and Territories? • Are there any unmet needs that should be considered? • Given the same resources, what other things might have been done to try to improve targeted outcomes? 	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Education and training system representatives • Careers industry representatives
5.13	Does this element complement other elements or initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is this element integrated with other NP elements? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? Is there potential for greater integration? • How does this element align with other initiatives at Commonwealth, State and regional levels? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? 	As above
Is it well governed and implemented?			
5.4	Has there been collaboration and buy-in to the NCDS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well are the Commonwealth, States/Territories, non-government sector and industry working together on this element? • Are stakeholders committed to the proposed NCDS? Are there any alignment issues that need to be addressed? (e.g. disagreement on initiatives, roles or responsibilities) 	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Education and training system representatives • Careers industry representatives
5.14	Is governance of the element working well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What governance arrangements are prescribed and in place for the element? • What's working well? • What could be improved? 	As above

5.15	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are appropriate measures, targets and reporting mechanisms in place? (aligned to NCDS objectives) • What could be improved? 	As above
5.16	How effective is communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do key stakeholders understand the element's objectives, initiatives, resources and benefits? • How is the element being promoted? • What's working well? • What could be improved? 	As above, plus review of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plans • Communication materials
Looking ahead...			
5.17	What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be done to improve this element in the short term (before 2013)? 	Synthesis and analysis of findings
5.18	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the implications of findings beyond the term of the NP? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there a continued need for government policy and investment in this area? ○ Is a national, collaborative approach needed? ○ What is the role of the Commonwealth, States/Territories, non-government sector, industry? 	As above

Compact with Young Australians

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Centrelink / JSA representatives • Education and training system representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jurisdictional leadership – in government, Independent and Catholic sectors ○ School leadership – e.g. through regional directors and principals in government, Independent and Catholic sectors • Community organisations / youth services agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See data tables referred to under NP-level evaluation • Labour Force Survey • ISIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy/program reports • Summary of states' promotion activity • ESL Evaluation <p>See Appendix 1</p>

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
6.1	<p>What is being delivered? What has changed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What education and training participation requirements and entitlements have been introduced for young people to stay in, or return to, an education or training pathway? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do these differ across States and Territories and from previous requirements and entitlements? • What education and training participation requirements have been introduced for young people seeking to access income support payments? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do these differ from previous requirements? 	<p>Literature review Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Centrelink / JSA representatives • Education and training system representatives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there consistency across States and Territories' arrangements in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School leaving age ○ Training participation requirements ○ Focus on education/training vs. employment ○ Exemption policy • How do States and Territories see the relative responsibilities of schools / TAFEs in addressing the new participation requirements? Have these views changed over time? 	<p>Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national office • Education and training system representatives

Is it working?			
6.2	Does participation data show that the Compact has had an impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there recognition/evidence in States and Territories that participation requirements and entitlements are contributing to improved youth participation and transition outcomes? Based on changes in participation data, what can we say about the influence of the introduction of the Compact? 	Interviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEEWR – national office Education and training system representatives Youth services agencies Centrelink / JSA representatives
6.3	What's working well? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is a nationally consistent approach influencing outcomes? Were there any other benefits or unintended positive outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder interviews
6.4	What could work better? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the major barriers to the element achieving desired outcomes? Were there any unintended negative outcomes? E.g. shift in training places to younger cohorts, increased early school leaving? What can be done to address the barriers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder interviews
Is it appropriate?			
6.5	Is this element consistent with NP objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are NP objectives translated to Compact objectives? Are there any inconsistencies or gaps? How could alignment be improved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature review Stakeholder interviews
6.6	Does this element address areas of need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the requirements and entitlements target at risk young people? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are young people not in receipt of income support payments affected by the participation requirement? Are young people who find it difficult to participate in education and training accommodated? Are there any unmet needs – e.g. Is there unmet demand for training places? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder interviews
6.7	Does this element complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the Compact align with other NP elements – e.g. referral to Youth Connections? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? How does this program align with other initiatives at Commonwealth, jurisdictional/ sector levels? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? What would be the consequence of its removal? What needs would not be met? 	As above

Is it well governed and implemented?			
6.8	Is governance of the element working effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What governance/review arrangements are prescribed and in place for this element? • How are the states and territories enforcing and monitoring Compact requirements? How effective are these mechanisms? • Have school-VET links and co-operation been impacted? Are resources across sectors being used more effectively and efficiently? • What's working well? • What could be improved? 	Stakeholder interviews
6.9	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are appropriate measures, targets and reporting mechanisms in place at the national and state levels? • What are the limitations? • What could be improved? 	Interviews Literature review
6.10	How effective is communication about the element?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do key stakeholders understand requirements, consequences and benefits? (e.g. the 'learn or earn' message) • How is the Compact being promoted? How does promotion target at risk young people? • What's working well? • What could be improved? 	Interviews Literature review, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plans • Communication materials
Looking ahead...			
6.11	What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be done to improve this element in the short term (before 2013)? 	Synthesis and analysis of findings
6.12	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the implications of findings beyond the term of the NP? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there a continued need for government policy and investment in this area? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there any changes that need to be made to participation requirements, education and training entitlements, or eligibility requirements for income support? ▪ Should the requirements and entitlements continue? ○ Is a national, collaborative approach needed? ○ What is the role of the Commonwealth, States/Territories, non government sector, industry? 	As above

Attachment 10: Reference list

In addition to the documents listed below, the evaluation team also considered the implementation plans and annual reports prepared by States and Territories on the NP, State and Territory evaluations of MEAST initiatives and a range of internal DEEWR documents and reports, particularly related to the Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections programs.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery*, 2011.

ABS, *National Schools Statistics Collection, 2000-2010*.

ABS, *Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2005-2010*.

ABS, *Survey of Education and Work, 2001-2010*.

Australian Council of Educational Research (2008) *Schools First: Final Report*, Melbourne.

Australian Youth Mentoring Network, *Australian Mentoring Programs*, <http://www.youthmentoring.org.au/programs.php>, 2012 .

Access Economics, *The Economic Benefit of Increased Participation in Education and Training*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Sydney, 2005.

Anderson, D., Saltet, M. and Vervoon, A. (1980) *Schools to Grow In: An Evaluation of Secondary Colleges*, ANU Press, Canberra.

Atelier Learning Solutions Pty Ltd (2010) *Evaluation of Career Advice Australia, Final Summary Report*, The Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training: Canberra.

Bezanson, L. (2008) *Career Development. From Under-Represented to Inclusive: Opening Doors to Post-Secondary Participation*, The Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation, Montreal.

Black, Rosalyn (2008). *Beyond the classroom: Building new school networks*, ACER Press: Camberwell.

Bonn; Pinquart, M. Juang, L., and Silbereisen, R. (2003) "Self-efficacy and successful school-to-work transition: A longitudinal study", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 63 (3), pp. 329-346.

Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) (2007) *The Public Benefits of Career Development Services: A Position Paper*, CICA, Sydney.

Cassen, R., Feinstein, L. and Graham, P. (2008) "Educational outcomes: Adversity and resilience", *Social Policy and Society*, Vol. 8 (1), pp. 73-85

COAG Reform Council (2011) *Education 2010: Comparing performance across Australia – Statistical Supplement*, available from http://www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/docs/education/2010compare/education_2010_statistical_supplement.pdf

COAG Reform Council (2010) *National Education Agreement: Performance report for 2009 – Volume 2: Performance Data*, available from http://www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/docs/NEA_report_2009_Vol2.pdf

Council of Australian Governments, *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions*, 2009.

Croll, P. (2008) "Occupational choice, socio-economic status and educational attainment: A study of the occupational choices of young people in the British Household Panel Survey", *Research Papers in Education*, Vol. 23 (3), pp. 243-268.

Cumming, J. and Carbines, B. (1997) *Reforming Schools Through Workplace Learning*, National Schools Network, Ryde;
Rosenbaum, J. (1999) "Preconditions for effective school-to-work linkages in the United States", In Stern, D. & Wagner, D. (1999) *International Perspectives on the School-to-Work Transition*, Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ, pp. 503-538.

Danish Ministry of Education (2008) *The Danish Vocational Education and Training System*, 2nd Edn., Copenhagen.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Higher Education Statistics Collection*, 2006-2010.

DEEWR, *National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions Annual Report*, 2011.

Dusseldorp Skills Forum (1998) *Australia's Youth: Reality and Risk*.

Dusseldorp Skills Forum and Australian Industry Group, *It's Crunch Time: Raising youth engagement and attainment*, 2007.

Erebus International (2009) *Evaluation of the Youth Pathways Initiative*, DEEWR: Canberra.

Field, S., Kuczera, M., and Pont, B. (2007) *No More Failures: Ten Steps to Equity in Education*, OECD, Paris.

Gängl, M. (2001) Education and Labour Market Entry Across Europe: The Impact of Institutional Arrangements in Training Systems and Labour Markets, *Working Paper*, Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES), <http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/catewe/papers/PAPER5.pdf>.

Ham, R., Junankar, R. & Wells, R. (2009) Occupational Choice: Personality Matters, *Discussion Paper* No. 4105, IZA (Institute for the Study of Labor)

Lamb, S. and McKenzie, P. (2001) Patterns of Success and Failure in the Transition from School to Work in Australia, *LSAY Research Report* No. 18, ACER, Melbourne.

Lamb, S. and Rice, S. (2008) *Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Melbourne.

Lyche, C. (2010) Taking on the Completion Challenge: A Literature Review on Policies to Prevent Dropout and Early School Leaving, *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 53, Paris.

McKenzie, P. (2002) "Pathways for youth in Australia" In Burke, G. and Reuling, J. (Eds.) *Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning in Australia and Germany*, NCVET, Adelaide.

NCVER (2011) *Young People in Education and Training 2009*, Adelaide.

- Nous Group (2011) *Schooling Challenges and Opportunities: A Report for the Review of Funding for Schooling Panel*, DEEWR, Canberra
- NCVER Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth 1998 Cohort Reports, <http://www.isay.edu.au/cohort/1998/101.html>
- NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection, 2005-10.
- Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2011) *Against the Odds: Disadvantaged Students Who Succeed in School*, Paris.
- OECD, *Education at a Glance* 2010.
- OECD, *Education at a Glance* 2011.
- OECD (2012) *Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools*, Paris.
- OECD (2000) *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making the Transition Work*, Paris.
- OECD (1998) "Getting started, settling in: The transition from education to the labour market", *Employment Outlook*, Paris, pp. 81-122.
- OECD (1996) "Growing into jobs: Youth and the labour market over the 1980s and 1990s", *Employment Outlook*, Paris.
- OECD (2009). *Jobs for Youth: Australia*, Paris.
- OECD (2010) *Off to a Good Start? Jobs for Youth*, Paris.
- OECD (2011) *PISA 2009 Results: Learning to Learn: Student Engagement, Strategies and Practices. Vol. III, Table III.1.1.*
- OECD (2010) *Strong Performers and Successful Reformers: Lessons from PISA for the United States*, Paris
- OECD (1998) Thematic Review of the Transition from Initial Education to Working Life: Country Note: Denmark, Paris.
- PhillipsKPA (2010) *Unfolding Opportunities: A Baseline Study of School-business Relationships in Australia*, DEEWR, Canberra.
- Penman, R. (2004) *What Do we Know About the Experiences of Australian Youth: An Easy Reference Guide to Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth Research Reports, 1996-2003*, ACER, Melbourne.
- Quinn, T. "The influences of school policies and practices on dropout rates", *NASSP Bulletin*, Vol. 75 (No. 538) pp.73-83.
- Quintini, G., Martin, J. and Martin, S. (2007) The Changing Nature of the School-to-work Transition Process in OECD Countries, *Discussion Paper No. 2582*, IZA (Institute for the Study of Labour), Bonn.
- Raffe, D. (2008) "The concept of transition system", *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 21, (4), pp. 277-296.
- Robinson, L. (1999) The Effects of Part-time Work on School Students, *LSAY Research Report No. 9*, Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne.

- Ryan, P. (2003) "Evaluating vocationalism", *European Journal of Education*, Vol. 38 (2), pp. 147-162; Karmel, T. and Liu, S. (2011) *Which Paths Work for Which Young People?*.
- Ryan, P. (1998) "Is apprenticeship better? A review of the economic evidence," *Vocational Education and Training*, Vol. 50 (2) pp. 289-325.
- Ryan, P. (2001) "The school-to-work transition: A cross-national perspective", *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 39 (March), pp. 34-92,
- Scarpetta, S., Sonnet, A. and Manfredi, T. (2010) Rising youth unemployment during the crisis: How to prevent negative long-term consequences on a generation? *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Papers*, No. 106, Paris.
- Schuller, T. and Desjardins, R. (2007) *Understanding the Social Outcomes of Learning*, OECD/CERI, Paris.
- Shavit, Y. And Müller, W. (1998) *From School to Work: A Comparative Study of Educational Qualifications and Occupational Destinations*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Sweet, R. (2009) Factors Influencing Youth Transitions: A Review of the Evidence, Victorian Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development and Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Melbourne.
- Sweet, R. (2009) "Apprenticeship, pathways and career guidance: A cautionary tale", In Rauner, F., Smith, E., Hauschildt, U. and Zelloth, H. (Eds) *Innovative Apprenticeships: Promoting Successful School-to-Work Transitions*, Lit Verlag, Berlin, 2009.
- Sweet, R. (1987) Australian trends in skill requirements: A critique of the current orthodoxy, In Burke, G. and Rumberger, R. (Eds) *The Future Impact of Technology on Work and Education*, London: The Falmer Press, 1987.
- Sweet, R. (2009) *State as Nation State? A Comparative Perspective on Victorian Transition Indicators*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Melbourne.
- Sweet, R. (2010) Upper Secondary Curriculum Structures in OECD Countries, Victorian Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development and Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Melbourne.
- Thomson, S. and Hillman, K. (2010) *Against the Odds: Influences on Post-school Success of Low Performers*, NCVET, Adelaide.
- Tomyn, A and Jacolyn Norrish, *The subjective wellbeing of young people participating in the Youth Connections Program*, 2011.
- Turner, D (2010) *Strategic – What does it mean?: Exploring the meaning of strategic partnerships and the role of a strategic Partnership Broker*, DEEWR, Canberra.
- Vickers, M. and Lamb, S. (2002) "Why state policies matter: The influence of curriculum policy on participation in post-compulsory education and training", *Australian Journal of Education*, Vol. 46 (2), pp. 172-188.
- Wyn, J. and Dwyer, P. (2000) "New patterns of youth transition in education", *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 52 (164), pp. 147-163; Evans, K. (2002) "Taking control of their lives? Agency in young adult transitions in England and the new Germany" *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 5 (3), pp. 245-269.