
REALISING POTENTIAL:

BUSINESSES HELPING SCHOOLS
TO DEVELOP AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE

Business-School Connections Roundtable

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

I was honoured to accept an invitation to chair the Business-School Connections Roundtable and to undertake this important initiative in support of the development and wellbeing of young Australians.

I was joined on the Roundtable by Carey Badcoe (Australian Business and Community Network), Craig Foster (Microsoft Australia), Sandra Francis (IBM Australia), Liz Furler (Principals Australia), Michelle Gibson / Damien Woods (Rio Tinto Australia), Adam Smith / Jan Owen (Foundation for Young Australians), Kim Schmidt (Woolworths Limited) and Julie White (Macquarie Group Foundation). I would like to acknowledge the commitment of all Roundtable members to the task of developing a practical strategy to ensure all schools have an opportunity to benefit from a business connection.

To develop this strategy, we have utilised the personal and organisational experience of Roundtable members as well as commissioning baseline research and engaging the broader community through a national consultation process. This included a series of eight workshops across the country and face-to-face meetings involving key stakeholders from education authorities, peak industry bodies, parent peak bodies, principals, teachers and CEOs and senior managers of large and medium businesses. The consultation process also included written submissions in response to the Roundtable's Discussion Paper and separate consultations with young people.

On behalf of the Roundtable, I would like to thank those people and organisations who contributed to the consultation process and who gave generously of their time in meeting with Roundtable members. Consultations revealed some wonderful examples of school-business relationships and also provided us with a greater understanding of the barriers experienced by some. The knowledge shared through the consultation process has helped to enrich our thinking and supported us in the development of this report.

The research and consultations undertaken by the Roundtable provide a compelling case for building and supporting school-business relationships. While the benefits of these relationships include outcomes for business, schools and the broader community, the Roundtable believes that the overarching purpose of school-business relationships should be to contribute to improved educational outcomes for students.

It is our hope that this report will provide strategies that are practical and achievable as well as ideas that challenge current practices and provide a catalyst for change. Our vision is for business to work alongside education authorities, schools and students to support the learning and development of young people and enable all young Australians to reach their potential.

The support of stakeholders will be critical to the implementation of the recommendations we have made. Encouragingly, our final round of key stakeholder meetings found strong support from industry peak bodies such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Industry Group, the Australian National Retailers Association, the Business Council of Australia, and the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia. The education authorities, unions and other stakeholders we were able to talk to were also supportive of the need to harness business as a partner in education, while emphasising the importance of implementation that supports, rather than mandates.

I thank the Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, for the opportunity to be a part of the Roundtable and acknowledge the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the support they have provided. Finally, I thank my fellow Roundtable members for the time and effort they have invested and their contribution to this important initiative.

Michael Ullmer
Deputy Group CEO—National Australia Bank

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business has a powerful opportunity to contribute to shaping and supporting school communities as they face the future.

Our education system has embarked on a bold transformation to ensure that all our young people have access to a high quality 21st century education, regardless of where they live, their gender, cultural background or socio-economic status. In combination with the development of a national curriculum, physical infrastructure, new technology and other reforms, school-based partnerships—with business and the wider community—promise to deliver effective outcomes for our young people.

Such partnerships have flourished over the past two decades. In many cases, business involvement in education has seen marked increases in the quality and extent of engagement of students, parents and whole communities in their schools. Nevertheless, there is much to be done to ensure that all schools can benefit from business connections.

In response to this need, the then Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, established this Business-School Connections Roundtable to oversee the development of a practical strategy to ensure all schools can benefit from a business connection, with the aims of improving educational outcomes, harnessing business as a partner in education, and increasing successful partnerships.

The Roundtable has seen this as a call to business to demonstrate that it is willing and able to be an active partner in ensuring that all young Australians achieve their potential. This is reflected in the strategy and recommendations in this report, many of which focus on how business can take leadership and drive future initiatives.

During the Roundtable's consultations business has responded to this call. From the CEOs of leading companies and executives of industry peak bodies through to managers at all levels and in all kinds of businesses, they gave generously of their time to contribute their ideas, experience and enthusiasm. During the drafting of this report, the Roundtable was also able to test ideas with five industry peak bodies— the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Industry Group, the Australian National Retailers Association, the Business Council of Australia, and the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia. All offered strong support for the themes of the report, and many indicated their willingness to be involved in implementing particular recommendations.

Of course, this process could only succeed in partnership with other stakeholders in school-business relationships. Education authorities, broker organisations, parent groups, teacher unions and young people contributed their thoughtfulness, wisdom and commitment to the work of the Roundtable. The Roundtable was also able to test its ideas with many of these organisations. They expressed broad support and a willingness to be involved in implementation, with the understandable caveat that recommendations support and complement initiatives which they already have underway. Complementarity has been a fundamental principle underlying the Roundtable's approach.

The culmination of this collaborative effort is the strategy set out in this report. It aims to 'harness business as a partner' to contribute to the achievement of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, and the supporting priorities under the current education reform agenda. It fully recognises the specific roles, skills and resources of schools, education authorities, government, principals, teachers, parents and young people themselves. It argues that business also has skills, leadership and resources that can and should be used in relationships that support schooling and provide benefits to all. This leads to a 'virtuous circle' through which both businesses and schools contribute to the development of active and informed citizens, which in turn benefits both the education and industry of the future.

The strategy recognises that schools are already dealing with multiple reforms across all areas of their work. It argues that school-business relationships are not an add-on activity that competes with these priorities, but a key strategy to help schools implement the reforms and achieve their educational goals. Indeed, many of the Roundtable's recommendations build on and link into these reform initiatives.

The Roundtable has also identified areas in which it believes business can and should invest its skills and resources in developing, in collaboration with the other stakeholders, new initiatives to support schools and businesses to work in partnership. Taken together, the recommendations form a practical strategy to ensure that all schools will be able to benefit from a connection with business, built around four priority areas for action:

- *increasing capacity*
- *strengthening the context*
- *engaging business as strategic partners*
- *supporting implementation.*

The themes of the recommendations in each area are discussed below.

Increasing Capacity

For schools and businesses to partner effectively, they need the knowledge, skills and confidence to approach potential partners, articulate the benefits of their involvement, communicate effectively, identify shared needs, develop mutual understanding, negotiate agreements and build institutional engagement. Within schools, teachers often carry out the day-to-day work of relationship management, but principals also play a vital role. Both need skills in relationship management—not just to collaborate with business, but also to be more effective in partnerships with parents and the community.

The current development of professional standards for teachers and school principals, and the Productivity Commission review of the current and future education workforce, create the opportunity to ensure that these skills are clearly recognised and valued, and that school staff are encouraged and supported to develop them. Businesses need similar skills, and opportunities to develop an understanding of schools—a need which both individual businesses and providers of leadership programs can address. This will lead to incremental improvement in the capacity of schools and businesses to engage in effective relationships. (*Recommendations 1 and 2*)

Business can also drive the development of a partnership culture within the next generation of business and school leadership. The Roundtable recommends that business lead a new national program to create partnerships between a cohort of business leaders and aspiring and emerging principals who are committed to sharing their experiences and becoming 'champions' for school-business relationships. The development and implementation of the program would, of course, be through collaboration with principal associations and education authorities. (*Recommendation 3*)

There is a strong and ongoing demand for brokerage services to support schools and businesses in their relationships. Even with the skill development strategies recommended above, the consultations demonstrated that broker services will continue to be needed. The Roundtable therefore believes that a national network of brokers should continue to be funded, and that the organisations that support and have regular communications with businesses and schools—industry peak bodies and education authorities—should use their existing channels to increase awareness of the availability of all brokers (both government-funded and community-driven) among their members and schools.

(*Recommendations 4 and 5*)

Strengthening the Context

The extent and scope of school-business relationships is heavily influenced by the explicit and implicit messages that schools receive about how important such relationships are, and how they relate to their core business. Their quality, impact and sustainability can be influenced positively by guidance about implementation and evaluation.

School-business relationships can be made a key part of achieving core educational outcomes by embedding them in the documents of educational authorities that guide the strategic and day-to-day operations of individual schools. This is not to make school-business relationships mandatory, but to give schools 'permission to partner' and emphasise that such relationships are a normal and expected part of school activity. The Roundtable believes that this should be done over time as the documents are reviewed and updated. *(Recommendation 6)*

Schools should also be provided with guidance to encourage good practice in school-business relationships through the development of voluntary guiding principles. This should be complemented by the development of a guide to evaluating school-business relationships. *(Recommendations 7 and 8)*

Engaging Business as Strategic Partners

Many businesses develop programs to address the same priorities being pursued by education authorities. The time is ripe for business, industry peak bodies and education authorities to work together in the priority areas in education, capitalising on the particular skills and resources that business, and in particular large businesses, can offer. This potential can be realised through a process to develop practical partnership opportunities in priority areas, complemented by an event to formalise these partnerships and encourage the development of more. *(Recommendations 9 and 10)*

Specific opportunities for business to contribute to the education reform agenda exist in many areas, including new pathways into teaching; empowering local schools; supporting schools in disadvantaged communities; supporting curriculum; trade cadetships and trade training centres; and supporting school retention through work experience. Some suggestions for action extend activities which are very familiar to business—such as providing skills and board expertise to organisations in the not-for-profit sector—to address similar needs among schools. Others highlight how business could add value to current initiatives such as Teach for Australia and TeachNext, and the implementation of the national curriculum. *(Section 5.1)*

The Roundtable also argues that it is time for a review that reimagines work experience in response to the changes in the education and business environments, the changing needs of students and employers, and the need to ensure that work experience inspires both students and employers about the role and contributions the next generation will make in the world of work. *(Section 5.1)*

Award schemes can have a powerful effect in motivating and reinspiring people on the ground, and building the commitment of their organisations. Business should support a national awards scheme, implemented in collaboration with education authorities, to recognise the value and contribution of school-business relationships. This would complement existing awards. *(Recommendation 11)*

Supporting Implementation

While personal connections are fundamental to school-business relationships, businesses and schools sometimes struggle to find the right people to connect with. Both also express a strong desire for case studies that tell the stories of school-business relationships that other people have formed. They see these stories as a powerful source of inspiration, ideas and insight. Almost universally, they see the new social media technologies as the way to meet both these needs.

Business has much expertise in this area, as well as skills and resources. It should act on this by partnering with education authorities to develop and support a new social media community for

school-business relationships. This community would also support implementation of other elements of the strategy outlined in this report, including the guiding principles, the evaluation guide, the strategic partnering process and the award scheme. *(Recommendation 12)*

While the Roundtable's work is now at an end, business needs to continue to take an active role as a partner in education at the national level. Business should therefore take leadership in the establishment of an Alliance for School-Business Relationships to champion and assist with implementation of this strategy, and engage in ongoing collaboration on initiatives to support school-business relationships. Membership should also be invited from industry peak bodies, education authorities, principals, teachers, broker organisations, student organisations, parent groups and researchers. This would create a powerful voice to support implementation of the strategy in this report, and to drive school-business relationships more generally. *(Recommendation 13)*

A Call for Action

Business in Australia is committed to ensuring our young people are equipped for the future.

This report outlines the clear benefits that students can gain when businesses partner with their schools, as well as the benefits for the schools and businesses themselves. It describes the factors which underpin sustainability and success, and barriers which still exist and may prevent the schools and businesses from working more closely together. The recommendations suggest solutions to many of these barriers—based on a partnership approach, and building on and complementing initiatives which are already driving reform in education.

The Roundtable believes that business and education must work together, with renewed effort and commitment, to support excellence in education for the coming generations of Australian children and young people. We hope that this report will inspire more businesses and more schools to embrace the possibilities of relationships.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

INCREASING CAPACITY

To encourage, recognise and support teachers and school leaders to develop the skills needed for effective and sustainable school-business relationships, the Roundtable recommends that:

1. AITSL* ensure that:
 - the support material to be developed for the National Professional Standards for Teachers include recognition of the role of teachers in benefiting students by building relationships with business and the broader community
 - the professional learning which is developed to support the National Professional Standards for Teachers include components through which teachers can develop their knowledge of and competency in benefiting students by building relationships with business and the broader community
 - the final National Professional Standard for Principals retain an explicit focus on engaging and working with the community, with specific reference to the potential for relationships with business to enrich the learning experience of students and the broader operations of the school
 - the professional learning and support materials which are developed to support the National Professional Standard for Principals include components through which principals can develop their knowledge of and competency in building relationships with business and the broader community..... (page 22)
2. the Productivity Commission, in undertaking its study of the schooling workforce, take into account the need for teachers and school leaders to be able to build relationships with business and the community that benefit students..... (page 23)

To create a cohort of school and business leaders who are experienced advocates for school-business relationships, the Roundtable recommends that:

3. industry, principal associations and education authorities explore the development of a new national program, led by business, that brings together aspiring and emerging principals and business leaders in structured partnerships with the aims of developing skills, sharing experience, creating networks, showcasing successful examples and spreading good practice. (page 24)

To provide support to schools and businesses and meet the ongoing demand for brokerage services, the Roundtable recommends that:

4. the Australian Government continue to fund and support the provision of a network of brokers that can assist all schools and businesses that need support to form school-business relationships, and has the capacity to broker large-scale strategic partnerships..... (page 27)

To help schools and businesses take advantage of the broker services that are already available to them, the Roundtable recommends that:

5. industry peak bodies and education authorities promote awareness of existing broker organisations through their own networks and communication channels. (page 28)

STRENGTHENING THE CONTEXT

To develop a sustainable culture which sees relationships with business as a key part of achieving core educational outcomes, the Roundtable recommends that:

6. education authorities, over time, embed relationships with business in the policies, programs, planning and reporting processes and operational requirements within which schools operate. (page 30)

* Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

To encourage and guide partners in school-business relationships, the Roundtable recommends that:

7. the Australian Government initiate a stakeholder-driven process to develop guiding principles for school-business relationships that are voluntary and supportive, encourage good practice and emphasise mutual benefit. (page 32)

To encourage a stronger culture of evaluation within school-business relationships, the Roundtable recommends that:

8. the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) develop a 'Guide to Evaluating School-Business Relationships' that assists partners in all forms of school-business relationship to evaluate and improve their relationships. (page 34)

ENGAGING BUSINESS AS STRATEGIC PARTNERS

To harness business as a partner with education at a strategic level, the Roundtable recommends that:

9. business, industry peak bodies and education authorities engage in a process to develop practical partnership opportunities that capitalise on the strategic contributions that large businesses can make to priority areas in education. (page 39)
10. business support an annual or biennial event to formalise partnerships, showcase effective school-business relationships, share insights and case studies, and promote good practice. (page 39)

To recognise and encourage the contribution businesses make through relationships with schools, the Roundtable recommends that:

11. business, in collaboration with education authorities, establish a national awards scheme to recognise the value of school-business relationships and encourage the development of further relationships. (page 48)

SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION

To benefit both schools and businesses wishing to form relationships to improve education outcomes for young people, the Roundtable recommends that:

12. business and industry bodies partner with education authorities to develop and support a social media community, sponsored by business, that facilitates collaboration and connection between schools and businesses. (page 52)

To sustain and build on the momentum created by the Roundtable, the Roundtable recommends that:

13. business create an Alliance for School-Business Relationships, with membership invited from industry peak bodies, education authorities, principals, teachers, broker organisations, student organisations, parent groups and researchers, to:
 - champion and assist with implementation of the strategy outlined in the Roundtable's report, and
 - engage in ongoing collaboration to harness business as a partner in education through school-business relationships which improve education outcomes for young people. (page 52)

1 INTRODUCTION

As the world has become more complex, so have the community's expectations of schooling. Contributing to this is a growing recognition that educating our young people is the responsibility of the entire community, not just schools. This has led to an increasing focus on schools developing partnerships with the broader community—including parents, community organisations, businesses, and other education institutions. This can be seen in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, which acknowledges that '*achieving the educational goals is the collective responsibility of governments, school sectors and individual schools as well as parents and carers, young Australians, families, other education and training providers, business and the broader community*'. The declaration therefore places *developing stronger partnerships* first in its eight areas of commitment:

Partnerships between students, parents, carers and families, the broader community, business, schools and other education and training providers bring mutual benefits and maximise student engagement and achievement. Partnerships engender support for the development and wellbeing of young people and their families and can provide opportunities for young Australians to connect with their communities, participate in civic life and develop a sense of responsible citizenship.

Australian governments commit to working with all school sectors to ensure that schools engage young Australians, parents, carers, families, other education and training providers, business and the broader community to support students' progress through schooling, and to provide them with rich learning, personal development and citizenship opportunities.¹

Some businesses have a history of contributing to education, and it has become more common in recent years, particularly in response to the school-to-work agenda. Motivations for business range from very broad, such as corporate citizenship; improving education standards; and broadening student horizons—to more specific, such as sustaining the future of an industry; addressing issues within the local community—to those more directly related to the business itself, such as improving reputation; exposure to potential recruits; retention of staff; and providing opportunities for staff community engagement.

This was one of many issues discussed within the Productivity Agenda at the Australia 2020 Summit in April 2008. A theme that there was a need to 'create new connections and collaborations across our education, business and innovation systems' coalesced into a specific 'top idea' described as 'business-school connections':

creating a coordinated partnership program between Australia's top 200 public and private organisations and our schools.²

While mindful that there was already much activity supporting connections between schools and businesses, the Australian Government agreed with the underlying message from the Australia 2020 Summit that there would be value in exploring strategic ways to:

foster greater linkages between business and educational institutions, which will supplement existing programs operated by the Commonwealth, states and territories, and community organisations.

To take this work forward, the then Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, established the Business-School Connections Roundtable to:

oversee the development of a practical strategy to ensure all schools can benefit from a business connection, with the aims of:

- *improving educational outcomes*
- *harnessing business as a partner in education*
- *increasing successful partnerships.*

This specific focus on school-business relationships complements other government initiatives that have a broader focus on schools partnering with their communities.³

To bring together expertise from the business, education and community sectors, the Deputy Prime Minister appointed representatives of the following organisations to the Roundtable:

- Australian Business and Community Network
- Foundation for Young Australians
- IBM Australia
- Macquarie Group Foundation
- Microsoft Australia
- National Australia Bank
- Principals Australia
- Rio Tinto Australia
- Woolworths Limited.

The Roundtable was chaired by Mr Michael Ullmer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, National Australia Bank. Secretariat services were provided by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

The Roundtable's terms of reference called for a report to the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth by 25 February 2011.

1.1 APPROACH

The Roundtable was very conscious that there was much activity already taking place to develop and support relationships between businesses and schools. It therefore placed a strong emphasis on identifying what was already happening, and seeking the views and ideas of stakeholders.

This began with a baseline study commissioned by DEEWR and undertaken by PhillipsKPA. This study comprised:

- a review of Australian and international literature
- consultations with education authorities and peak bodies to inform sampling and survey design
- an online survey of a representative sample of 511 schools, plus an additional 200 schools known to have formal relationships with businesses
- an online survey of 202 businesses.

The full report of the baseline survey has been published online as a separate document.⁴

The Roundtable drew on this research in its discussion paper⁵, released in June 2010, which:

- summarised the current context in which schools and businesses enter into relationships, the benefits of these relationships, and why they are attracting so much attention
- described the challenges and issues which school-business relationships face
- posed questions on which the Roundtable was specifically seeking input.

In September-October 2011 the Roundtable undertook an extensive consultation process that included:

- six workshops in capital cities, and a further two workshops in regional and remote areas
- five workshops with young people, conducted by the Foundation for Young Australians across a cross-section of school systems, jurisdictions and locations
- individual key stakeholder meetings with national peak industry bodies and government and non-government education authorities.

In total, the consultation workshops involved 94 participants from business; 170 from education, 43 from the community sector, and (separately) 50 students from Years 10 to 12. In addition, 21 written submissions were received from a cross-section of national and regional industry bodies, education authorities, broker organisations and networks, and community organisations. A full list of the participating organisations is included in *Appendix 2: Participants in Consultations*.

The development of this final report also benefited from a number of small consultancies to explore specific areas and develop ideas or supporting materials. Some of these have been incorporated into this report. One led to a standalone update of the existing information on the benefits that school-business relationships can bring, and how the existing evidence base might be strengthened. This report has been published online as a separate document.⁶

1.2 UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Through the course of its work, the Roundtable identified the following key principles to underpin its strategy to increase school-business relationships.

Firstly, the Roundtable believes that the overarching purpose of school-business relationships should be to contribute to enhanced educational outcomes for students. While this is often through direct engagement with students, it can also take the form of activities that support or improve the operations of the school itself. This may even extend into the broader community.

Secondly, the Roundtable believes that all schools and businesses should have the opportunity to form relationships that can contribute to enhanced educational outcomes—no matter what their capacity, where they are located, or what their size. The focus should be on ensuring that the opportunity is available to all, and promoting the benefits to those who are not currently participating.

Thirdly, the Roundtable recognises that there are many forms and levels of school-business relationships that are valid and valuable. Each relationship should be tailored to the specific context in which that relationship takes place. The Roundtable is not suggesting that there should be a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

Fourthly, the Roundtable believes that all schools have students whose educational experience and outcomes will benefit from well-designed school-business relationships. This creates the imperative stated in the Roundtable's terms of reference for '*all schools (to) benefit from a business connection*', and for businesses to actively support schools in this.

Fifthly, the Roundtable believes that most activities which take place within school-business relationships add a unique value to the activities of schools, education authorities, and other members of the community. They embody and demonstrate the widely cited philosophy that 'it takes a village to raise a child'.

Finally, the Roundtable believes that while much is already happening, the full potential for school-business relationships to contribute to enhanced educational outcomes has not yet been realised. This report highlights a number of opportunities for actions that will support more, and more strategic, school-business relationships.

1.3 TERMINOLOGY

This paper uses the overarching term 'school-business relationships', reflecting the Roundtable's belief that schools can benefit both from 'school-business partnerships', which tend to have more formal aspects, and from less formal connections with businesses. The term 'partners' is used to refer to the school and business participants in all forms of relationships.

The terms 'business' and 'industry' are used interchangeably to refer both to individual companies and to the overall sector, depending on the context. 'Industry peak bodies' refers to organisations such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), the Australian Industry Group (Ai Group), the Business Council of Australia (BCA) and the National Farmers Federation (NFF). Similarly, 'education authorities' refers to both government departments of education, and non-government education bodies such as the Independent Schools Council of Australia and the National Catholic Education Council.

2 SCHOOL-BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS IN AUSTRALIA

This section summarises current knowledge about school-business relationships in Australia. It draws in particular on two projects commissioned to support the Roundtable: a baseline study conducted by PhillipsKPA, and an extended literature review on benefits conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Both of these reports are available separately.⁷ The section is also informed by the Roundtable's discussion paper and consultations, which further explored some of these issues.

2.1 NATURE AND EXTENT

The baseline research undertaken for the Roundtable received responses from 203 schools and 66 businesses. From this sample emerges the following picture of school-business relationships in Australia in 2009.

One third of responding schools identified that they were involved in 'significant' school-business relationships, defined as:

...sustained investment of time and resources (human and/or financial or 'in kind') by the school and business to foster a program or range of activities which delivers tangible benefits to both the school and the business involved. The relationship may be governed by a contract, memorandum of understanding or other form of written agreement although this may not necessarily be a feature of all significant relationships.⁸

The other two thirds also had school-business relationships, but did not regard them as meeting the definition of 'significant'. Only one responding school said it had no relationships with business.

Schools' motivations to develop relationships with business fell into five broad categories:

- provision of funding or additional resources
- responding to industry needs and fostering improved pathways for students into employment
- creating opportunities for mutual benefits
- recognising the potential for relationships with business to add value to the school in areas which might otherwise be unfulfilled
- leveraging stronger relationships into the future.

Almost all (98%) secondary schools in the sample were involved in school-business relationships focused on school-to-work transitions and employability skills. In addition, both the secondary and primary schools had activities to provide additional infrastructure, resources and income streams (90%); enhance school leadership and staff development (83%); enhance student engagement with industry/business (79%); and support student aspirations and achievement, including students at risk and students in disadvantaged areas (78%).

Two thirds of the schools had involved business in the professional development of staff. The three most common types of activities targeted at supporting student aspirations and achievement were leadership and life skill development (55%), literacy and numeracy programs (47%), and industry awareness programs (42%). Business involvement in activities targeted at supporting student aspirations and achievement was considerably higher in secondary schools (93%) than in primary schools (60%).

This brief snapshot demonstrates the breadth and variety of school-business relationships among the schools and businesses that responded to the survey. It presents an encouraging picture, with a high proportion of the 203 schools and 66 businesses involved in relationships, and a spread of activity across a range of priorities. However, it cannot be assumed that engagement in school-business

relationships across approximately 9,500 schools in Australia is as high, or as rich. It is possible that schools with little engagement were less likely to respond to the survey. The challenge is to encourage all schools and businesses to see the opportunities and benefits recognised by the survey respondents, and to form their own relationships to benefit educational outcomes for young people.

2.2 BENEFITS

The Roundtable believes that the ultimate beneficiary of all school-business relationships must be students. This may be through direct outcomes for students, or through benefits to a school that indirectly contribute to improved outcomes for the students. The benefits will vary depending on the nature and focus of the specific relationship.

The baseline research identified a wide range of benefits in each category. Direct benefits for students included enhanced career aspirations; work readiness; skills development in areas such as literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and science; improved engagement, attendance, academic results and transition to work or further education; opportunities for casual employment or recruitment following school; and personal benefits such as positive relationships with mentors.

Benefits for schools included enhanced profile and reputation; increased internal resources or access to external resources; improved skills in areas such as leadership, management and marketing; professional development opportunities for teachers; higher staff morale; innovative options for curriculum delivery; improved student engagement and retention; and reductions in behaviour management issues.

The benefit most commonly reported by businesses in the baseline survey was the opportunity to contribute to the development of young people, followed by enhanced reputation. Many other benefits to business have been identified in the literature and through the consultations, including an awareness of challenges facing schools; providing input into education through relationships with schools and the curriculum; increased morale, job satisfaction and loyalty within businesses; enhanced community profile and standing; financial impact (both through stronger support, and by contributing to the economic health of the community); adding value to the growth of local industry; supporting the development of a literate workforce; raising awareness of the industry; opportunity to interact with potential employees; and helping to attract and retain the best employees through a demonstrated commitment to social responsibility.

Schools and businesses that are not involved in 'significant' relationships are often sceptical about the benefits that could be derived. Schools may be concerned that the investment of time and resources required to form a relationship would take staff away from other more valuable, or required, activities. Businesses may also be concerned about investing time and effort but not seeing concrete outcomes.

Significantly, the Roundtable's consultations found that schools and businesses that are not involved in relationships are frequently unclear on what the benefits would be to the other partner. This makes them much less likely to attempt to initiate relationships. Resources and case studies that clearly articulate the benefits for all partners in school-business relationships, in their own language and with 'real life' examples from Australia, would help to increase mutual understanding and confidence. These could be part of the social media community recommended in section 6.1.

There has also been a recurring debate in the community about whether businesses should be permitted into school settings, and whether they should be promoting their companies, products or brands. Critics have sometimes cited international examples of school-business relationships in which direct commercial benefits to the business partner seem to have had a higher priority than educational outcomes—for example, through requiring students to watch advertising of the business partner's

products in order for their schools to access sponsored resources. However, examples of this type are rare.

The baseline research found that in Australia, opportunities for promotion were regarded by both partners as secondary benefits for businesses—in general, product placement or branding was neither a driving force nor an area of tension. Interestingly, in those relationships regarded as highly effective there was limited, if any, exposure to brands and promotional activity. Schools felt that the most common benefit derived by their business partners was the opportunity to interact with potential recruits. The benefits that businesses most commonly cited were even broader—the opportunity to contribute to the development of young people, and to enhance the reputation of the business by engaging in community capacity building.

School-business relationships can also deliver benefits to the broader community, beyond the school itself. In some relationships between schools and mining/energy businesses in remote communities, the businesses were working with a school, training providers and other organisations to achieve outcomes that were not necessarily directly beneficial to either organisation, such as establishing environment projects, or developing pathways to employment in industries not related to the business of the mining company (examples include aged care and wildlife officers). A contributing factor to these outcomes seemed to be the combination of a strong school-to-work focus and a desire to demonstrate corporate social responsibility.

Unexpected benefits can emerge

In regional Western Australia, a school-based Indigenous program developed a partnership with a local car dealership which included site visits, career information, and mentoring to Aboriginal students. Unexpectedly, this resulted in significantly decreased insurance claims for the dealership—whereas some youth had previously damaged vehicles as they walked through the car yard, they now chat to staff.⁹

2.3 SUSTAINABILITY

'Sustainability' is often set out as a desirable feature of school-business relationships. The Roundtable believes that equal importance should be given to sustainability in the relationship culture of organisations.

When the focus is on sustainability of individual school-business relationships, the ending of a relationship can be perceived as a 'failure'. However, there are many circumstances in which the ending of the relationship is seen by the partners as natural and appropriate.¹⁰

A sustainable outcome can be achieved for an individual when a mentor comes in to their life, even for a short period of time, by helping them identify goals, get back on track or overcome barriers in their life at that particular time. That relationship may be short but may have a significant outcome. Relationships do end but have not necessarily failed.¹¹

Another common reason for school-business relationships ending is staff turnover—both among the drivers who are actively involved in a relationship, and those who support or champion it within the broader organisation. When these staff change, the personal relationships are lost, priorities and commitment levels can change and the relationship between the school and business is often threatened—particularly if the relationship is seen by either organisation as an add-on activity. While good relationships do plan for staff turnover, it is impossible to completely avoid the impact of the different personalities, priorities and personal interests that new people bring.

If school-business relationships are regarded as a normal and expected strategy for achieving core outcomes—if there is a *culture of school-business relationships*—then the ending of any particular

relationship is likely to have much less impact. Even if a new school teacher, for example, is not interested in continuing a relationship established by their predecessor, the culture of the school would encourage, expect and assist them to form new relationships.

In the absence of a strong culture of building relationships, one strategy used by some brokers to increase sustainability is to get a photo hung in the front office which shows the principal shaking hands with their business partners. When the principal eventually moves on, the broker points out the photo to the incoming principal and says 'see this partnership is really valued by the school, you need to keep it going, everyone is expecting it...'

Helping schools and businesses to develop this relationship culture supports all aspects of sustainability, including the ongoing commitment from all levels within the hierarchy of schools and businesses. It also increases the long-term impact of brokers by enabling them to work with more organisations over time, as illustrated in the graduation model developed by the Beacon Foundation discussed in section 3.3.

A school or business with a sustainable culture of school-business relationships would exhibit the following characteristics:

- school-business relationships are seen as a strategy for achieving core outcomes
- staff at all levels are expected and supported to engage in school-business relationships to achieve the outcomes for which they are responsible
- the skills needed to establish and maintain relationships are recognised as specific and valuable, and staff are supported to develop them
- both relationships and their outcomes are reviewed, and successes are celebrated and promoted
- relationship management is recognised as core activity, and time and resources are provided to support this
- relationships are managed in accordance with a clearly articulated set of guiding principles
- the portfolio of relationships across the organisation is seen as dynamic, to be added to and subtracted from as needed.

2.4 SUCCESS FACTORS

Through the course of the Roundtable's work, many factors that contribute to successful school-business relationships were identified, including:

- a clear vision of what the relationship wants to achieve, and how to achieve it
- good communication between the partners
- specific and achievable goals that all stakeholders understand and support
- a strong relationship culture among the stakeholders
- a shared sense of ownership of the relationship
- strong leadership and management
- a clear understanding of partner roles
- a school that is well connected to the community, other educators and business
- strong promotion of the relationship in the school and business.
- flexibility to evolve, and to respond to unanticipated challenges
- well designed projects—adding value, appropriate to available resources and organisational size
- inclusiveness
- compatibility of the values and approaches of the partners
- capacity and capability—including time commitment, and appropriate professional development
- identity and recognition management

- accountability and risk management
- monitoring and evaluation.

Interestingly, while schools that were *not* involved in significant school-business relationships often identified access to funding as a barrier to their involvement, only four in ten of those that *were* involved in successful significant relationships identified 'sufficient funding' as an important factor in their success.

Being aware of these success factors helps schools and businesses to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of their relationships. Condensing them into guiding principles, as discussed in section 4.2, would make it easier for schools and businesses to incorporate them into their relationships. The case studies discussed in section 6.1 would bring the success factors alive, showing how they have contributed to effective relationships, and perhaps how not incorporating them has undermined others.

2.5 BARRIERS

This section provides an overview of the major barriers experienced by schools and businesses that wish to form relationships, and identifies sections of the report containing recommendations that will help to address them.

For schools, barriers to forming relationships with business include:

- issues within the school, such as staff turnover (especially in remote schools); staff feeling they already have too many demands; difficulty of fitting more activities into an already crowded timetable
- perceptions that it is difficult to find willing business partners
- perceptions that the school is not attractive to business—for example, small rural schools reporting that 'businesses regard our school as too small and the community not wealthy enough to provide much scope for advancing their business goals within such a relationship'
- competition between schools for a limited pool of local businesses
- in rural and regional communities, the majority of businesses are small or home-based and often lack capacity to participate
- difficulty arranging and/or funding transport and accommodation for activities requiring travel
- perceived or actual restrictions from education authorities
- lack of awareness of the potential for school-business relationships in areas beyond school-to-work transitions
- scepticism about the potential benefits to schools in relation to their investment of time and resources
- lack of skills or confidence about where to start, how to develop ideas, how to identify benefits to business and so on.

In communities where there are few or no major businesses, schools face particular challenges in finding partners. While this most often occurs in rural and remote schools, metropolitan schools in 'dormitory suburbs' can also face the same challenge:

schools located in dormitory suburbs ... have very little local industry to connect with and compete with other schools in the same area for what little industry that does exist.¹²

Paradoxically, schools in some remote communities are better placed due to their proximity to major companies in the mining, energy and related sectors such as construction. Such companies are often active in developing relationships with local schools, motivated both by local skill shortages and corporate social responsibility—particularly in relation to addressing Indigenous disadvantage.

The Pilbara Pathways Partnership was established to tackle emerging educational challenges within the Pilbara community of Western Australia. Tom Price Senior High School was facing high levels of truancy, low student retention and poor academic performance, while Rio Tinto was receiving a low level of apprentice applications. A partnership was formed between Rio Tinto, Tom Price Senior High School, Apprenticeships Western Australia and Pilbara TAFE.

Through introducing vocational elements to the curriculum, the program has resulted in a 50 per cent reduction in truancy and behavioural problems, and has achieved a 100 per cent graduation rate for its final year students. By treating the students as 'virtual employees' the program has created a more mature learning environment and has improved the transition from education to employment.¹³

Many of the barriers reported by businesses are similar:

- staff turnover
- availability of time and resources
- conflict with other responsibilities
- concern about the impact on the productivity of the business
- ineffective coordination at the school level
- policy directives from education authorities that appear to be unsupportive of school-business relationships
- administrative burdens associated with obtaining clearance of volunteers, particularly across multiple jurisdictions.

A business that approaches a school with a firm view of what the school needs, and what the business can offer, may find it difficult to establish a relationship with that school. Businesses that spend time engaging with the school and community first, to understand the local needs and priorities, are likely to be more successful. Similarly, schools that develop an understanding of business needs and priorities are likely to be more successful in establishing relationships.

The support of specialised brokers (discussed in section 3.3) helps both schools and partners to overcome many of their issues related to skills, knowledge and confidence, and develop mutual understanding, shared vision and clear objectives. Brokers can also encourage schools to work together in clusters, be more strategic in their approaches to business, and support schools to build relationships with businesses outside their geographic area. Other strategies to develop the skills of school and business partners are discussed in section 3.1.

Case studies and stories can also inspire people to overcome barriers by illustrating how other school-business relationships have been formed, the original motivations of the participants, the benefits they have derived, the challenges they have addressed, and so on. These are discussed further as part of the social media community in section 6.1.

Large businesses that want to build relationships across multiple schools and jurisdictions report that the variation in the policy and operational contexts makes this much more complex and costly. This can be a significant barrier to 'scaling up' successful local school-business relationships, and to developing larger-scale initiatives.

Variation Across Jurisdictions

A practical example of the variation across jurisdictions was described by the Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN), which offers member companies a number of programs in which business staff

volunteer in schools. While most of the volunteers work under the supervision of teachers and (in some jurisdictions) do not formally require clearance, ABCN chooses to require all staff and volunteers to be cleared to work with children.

The processes required to achieve this clearance are different in each of the six jurisdictions in which ABCN offers programs. For example, the ACT requires a 'police check and self-declaration of no relevant history of charges or convictions'. NSW requires a 'self-declaration that a person understands what would make them ineligible to work with children and a confirmation that the person is not ineligible'. Western Australia requires a Working with Children card, which entails 'prescribed information to verify identification, national police checks (including photo taken upon lodging application), consent to checks, and verification of identity confirmed by the volunteer organisation'. Victoria also requires a Working with Children Card, but the requirements and processes are slightly different.

This variation creates a significant administrative burden for businesses and brokers who have staff in multiple jurisdictions, particularly if staff want to volunteer in two jurisdictions—for example, in cross-border communities such as Albury-Wodonga.

Not surprisingly, ABCN argues that it would be more efficient if there was a national standard for volunteers working with children, covering both when clearance is needed, and the requirements for it to be obtained.¹⁴

In the absence of a uniform approach, the next best thing is to make it easy for businesses to find the policies and processes that apply to school-business relationships in each education system. Brokers that operate across jurisdictions have to build up this information as they expand, but this is not available to all businesses. The social media platform discussed in section 6.1 provides another location through which such information could be easily accessed.

The high prevalence of school-business relationships focused on school-to-work transitions might be taken to imply that such relationships are relatively easy to establish and maintain. However, the consultations identified a number of challenges specific to them.

For schools, a particular concern was the sense that they were caught in the middle of conflicting expectations from business and the community. Businesses wanted education to focus on producing students who were 'work-ready', while the community wanted a broader education focused on maximising student potential. This created a conflict over the balance between vocational and non-vocational activities.

A major concern for industry representative bodies was the variable quality and assessment in Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) programs, which was partly related to whether schools saw VETiS as core provision or an add-on activity. In the latter case, there was also more difficulty in arranging timetables so that work placements were at times convenient to both industry and schools.

The range of vocational programs offered by a particular school may also be driven more by internal school factors, such as cost effectiveness or teacher skills or interests, rather than by local skill shortages, industry needs, and post-school employment opportunities. This could reduce the opportunities for local school-business relationships, as the areas the school is interested in might be perceived as not relevant by local businesses.

The specific provision of VETiS, the delivery and assessment of nationally recognised training, and associated quality assurance processes are outside the scope of the Roundtable's work and have been the subject of many other reports.¹⁵ The broader issue of work experience is discussed in section 5.1.6.

2.6 MYTHS ABOUT FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In the Roundtable's consultations there seemed to be a widespread perception that non-government schools are able to receive tax-deductible donations that government schools cannot. These views echoed statements from media reports¹⁶ that the laws on tax deductibility apply differently to government and non-government schools.

However, this appears to be a misconception. With respect to tax deductible donations, Commonwealth tax legislation treats government and non-government schools equally.¹⁷ In both government and non-government schools, the only donations that are tax deductible to the donor are those made to school building funds, educational scholarships funds and school libraries which are open to the public. Schools (or parent bodies) in both sectors can establish such funds, provided that they meet specific criteria set out in the legislation.¹⁸

In addition, gifts made to public funds established for religious education in government schools; the acquisition, construction or maintenance of rural school hostel buildings; and government schools that provide special education for students all of whom have disabilities are also tax-deductible.

In some jurisdictions, schools may also need to meet specific jurisdictional requirements before they can establish these funds. While some state trust legislation may impede government schools in that state from setting up charitable trusts, flexibility in the Commonwealth tax-deductibility laws enables these schools to collect tax deductible donations through public funds or trusts set up by parents and citizens associations. In all cases, participants in consultations noted that funds or trusts are administratively onerous, and rely on schools being able to access specific skills and capacity from within their school communities. They argued that this can be a barrier to schools receiving donations.

Initiatives such as the Business Working with Education Foundation, established by the Victorian Government to '*make it easier for businesses to support and make donations to Victorian Government schools*'¹⁹, are likely to increase the number and importance of philanthropic donations. It may also help to reduce the administrative burden for school communities.

In 2010 the Colman Foundation announced a partnership with the Victorian Government under which it will donate \$1.8 million towards the construction of a new Prep to Year 9 school on the current Doveton Heights Primary School site in the south-east of Melbourne. In what the Victorian Minister for Education described as '*the first long-term investment by a philanthropic organisation in a single Victorian Government school*', the Colman Foundation has also committed to contributing an additional \$500,000 each year to the school, over at least 8 years, targeted mainly at early childhood need.

Notwithstanding the Victorian Government's initiative, a donor can make tax-deductible donations to a school in any state or territory that has established the appropriate funds (as defined in the legislation).

During the Roundtable's consultations, some participants commented that the main categories of donations which are tax deductible— school building funds, educational scholarships funds and school libraries which are open to the public—reflect the main purposes for which schools needed to raise funds at the time the tax deductibility arrangements were developed. They argued that contemporary school requirements are much broader than those recognised in the legislation, and this can be a barrier to business making donations to support these needs.

Some participants in the Roundtable's consultations also suggested that in some jurisdictions there are barriers to businesses 'writing cheques' to government schools. This may relate to the level of centralisation or autonomy which surrounds management of school budgets in different jurisdictions.

The Roundtable has not explored this issue in detail, as it falls within the terms of reference for the current Review of Funding for Schooling, which is exploring, among other issues, the '*roles of families, parents, communities and other institutions in providing or supporting educational partnerships with schools*' and the '*place of voluntary and private contributions and other income sources in school funding arrangements for government and non-government schools*'.²⁰ The review panel has recently released a *Review of Funding for Schooling Emerging Issues Paper, December 2010* summarising the views and opinions expressed during a preliminary stakeholder listening tour with key educational groups in each state and territory.

The Roundtable has provided a separate submission to the Review of Funding for Schooling drawing attention to the issues raised in the Roundtable's consultations around actual and perceived barriers to businesses making appropriate financial contributions to schools, and encouraging direct engagement with business on these issues. Submissions to the Review remain open until 31 March 2011, and the Roundtable encourages interested parties to take advantage of this opportunity.²¹

2.7 A CONTINUUM OF RELATIONSHIPS

A model developed for community-business partnerships at Harvard Business School, known as the Cross Sector Collaboration Continuum, provides a useful framework for analysing school-business relationships and their development (or not) through the following three stages:

- Philanthropic—a traditional donor/recipient relationship, with the benefits for the partners limited to the receipt of funds by the school, and enhanced reputation for the business
- Transactional—partnerships characterised by two way, active engagement and collaboration, leading to enhanced benefits
- Integrated—highly collaborative, joint ventures where the partnership is core business.²²

Highly integrated partnerships are more complex and layered in terms of engagement, mission match between the parties, resources employed, activities undertaken, and interaction, which increases their sustainability and strategic value. Typically, they start out as donor/recipient or transactional relationships, and evolve over time—often with the encouragement of broker organisations.

*The first rule of facilitation is to start where the participants are at. The real question is 'how can we advance operation level or donor/recipient relationships to strategic ones'. To achieve this we all must first recognise the value of operational relationships. Secondly we must promote and encourage growth towards the strategic end of the partnership spectrum.*²³

The Roundtable believes it is vital that all schools are able to engage in effective relationships with businesses, and to develop a sustainable relationships culture. While philanthropic relationships have their place, it would seem that schools, business and young people benefit most when partnerships have become highly integrated joint ventures. Strategies to encourage this, such as support from skilled brokers (discussed in section 3.3), and the development of guiding principles focused on good practice (discussed in section 4.2), form an important part of supporting effective school-business relationships.

The remainder of this report discusses four priority areas for action:

- *increasing capacity*
- *strengthening the context*
- *engaging business as strategic partners*

- *supporting implementation.*

Taken together, the recommendations made in these areas form a practical strategy to ensure that all schools will be able to benefit from a connection with business.

3 INCREASING CAPACITY

As discussed earlier, there are many examples of effective school-business relationships in Australia. Factors which contribute to the success of these relationships are discussed in section 2.4.

This section discusses three strategies to increase the capacity for schools and businesses to form relationships:

- recognising and developing the specific skills that school-business relationships require
- providing easy-to-find information and inspiration about school-business relationships
- ensuring access to brokerage services.

The recommendations in this section address some of the most commonly cited barriers to school-business relationships—lack of skills, knowledge, confidence and easy ways to find potential partners. In the Roundtable's consultations, for example, people who wanted to create relationships often reported that they were unsure about where to start, how to go about developing ideas, how to identify the benefits to the other partner, how to approach them, and even whether there were any policy frameworks or guidelines that applied:

I am not sure whether in the public system this is actually allowed in primary schools.²⁴

The recommendations in this section seek to build on existing infrastructure and opportunities, and propose new strategies to further develop the capacity of schools and businesses to collaborate and work together more effectively.

3.1 SKILLS

Participants in the Roundtable's consultations emphasised that building and maintaining effective and sustainable relationships requires skills which may be new—such as negotiating agreements, building institutional engagement, and reviewing both the impact of the relationship and the operation of the relationship itself. This applies to both school and business partners:

... teachers and principals rarely have experience in managing partnerships with businesses, and indeed businesses are only developing their skills as well...²⁵

3.1.1 DEVELOPING SKILLS WITHIN SCHOOLS

The current development of National Professional Standards for Teachers provides an opportunity to recognise the importance of these relationship management skills and encourage their development. Such skills are important not only for relationships with businesses, but also for relationships with parents and the broader community.

The standards are currently being developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), in collaboration with jurisdictions, to set out '*what teachers across Australia should know and be able to do across the domains of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement*'.²⁶ These standards will be used to guide ongoing professional learning and the accreditation of pre-service teacher education courses and teacher registration. Incorporating a focus on the role of teachers in building relationships with business and the broader community would have a powerful incremental impact on the skills and confidence of teachers across Australia to develop such relationships.

The Roundtable's consultations also found support for including school-business relationships as part of teacher training. This could be done, for example, by giving student teachers the opportunity to

undertake a placement with a business that is actively involved in schools, or with a broker organisation that assists schools and businesses to form partnerships.

The capacity of principals to build and support school-business relationships is vital. Another AITSL project provides the opportunity to foster this capacity, with the current development of the National Professional Standard for Principals to set out *'what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work'*.²⁷ One of the five key professional practices identified in the exposure draft (released December 2010)—'Engaging and working with the community'—already recognises the principal's role in school-business relationships within statements such as:

... Seek opportunities to engage with families and carers, and partner, where appropriate, with community groups, agencies and individuals, businesses or other organisations to enhance and enrich the school and its value to the wider community.

*... Make sure learning experiences for students are linked to the wider community and invite and facilitate the community's participation in student learning.*²⁸

AITSL will be piloting the exposure draft in February to May 2011, with the aim of finalising the standard by mid 2011. The standard will provide a framework for professional learning, and therefore it is expected that finalisation will be followed by development (by AITSL or third parties) of professional learning and other materials to support the implementation of the standard. This provides a timely opportunity to ensure that principals are encouraged and supported to develop the skills needed to engage in school-business relationships.

The Productivity Commission study into the education and training workforce presents another opportunity to embed the skills needed for school-business relationships within the schooling workforce in the longer term. The Commission is currently working on the Vocational Education and Training and Early Childhood Development sectors, and is scheduled to move on to the schooling workforce in April 2011, with a final report due in April 2012. Within each of these sectors, the Commission has been asked to provide advice on a range of issues, including *'the current and future demand for the workforces, and the mix of knowledge and skills required to meet service need'*. As argued above, the required knowledge and skills must include those needed for teachers and school leaders to build and maintain relationships with business and the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To encourage, recognise and support teachers and school leaders to develop the skills needed for effective and sustainable school-business relationships, the Roundtable recommends that:

1. AITSL ensure that:

- the support material to be developed for the National Professional Standards for Teachers include recognition of the role of teachers in benefiting students by building relationships with business and the broader community
- the professional learning which is developed to support the National Professional Standards for Teachers include components through which teachers can develop their knowledge of and competency in benefiting students by building relationships with business and the broader community
- the final National Professional Standard for Principals retain an explicit focus on engaging and working with the community, with specific reference to the potential for relationships with business to enrich the learning experience of students and the broader operations of the school
- the professional learning and support materials which are developed to support the National Professional Standard for Principals include components through which principals can develop their knowledge of and competency in building relationships with business and the broader community.

2. the Productivity Commission, in undertaking its study of the schooling workforce, take into account the need for teachers and school leaders to be able to build relationships with business and the community that benefit students.

3.1.2 CREATING A CATALYST

The preceding recommendations aim to embed the development of the skills needed for school-business relationships into mechanisms that already exist or are under development, and will lead to incremental improvement in the general level of skills across schools.

The Roundtable believes there is also an opportunity to create a catalyst for change through a program which brings a cohort of aspiring and emerging principals and business leaders together in mutual learning partnerships. Existing programs such as Partners in Learning (Australian Business and Community Network) and Principal for a Day (delivered by ACER in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland) have demonstrated that pairing school leaders with business leaders in this way leads to a range of benefits for both partners, including:

- for business participants: a deeper understanding of the issues facing schools and how businesses can support change; expanded understanding of leadership challenges in different contexts; new techniques for conflict resolution; and increased self awareness, empathy, and personal satisfaction
- for school leaders: new ways of approaching old problems; networks with professionals from other industries; expanded understanding of the corporate sector (benefiting their school leavers); and exploration of opportunities for staff and students through business engagement.

The structure of these programs varies from a single day of activity (which can lead to participants maintaining relationships informally) through to a twelve-month commitment with at least two meetings during each school term.

These programs are valuable and should be built on to make them more widely available. The Roundtable believes that significant impact could be generated through a new national program that creates partnerships between a cohort of business leaders and aspiring and emerging principals who are committed to sharing their experiences and becoming 'champions' for school-business relationships beyond the initial group. The program would focus on building a partnership culture within the next generation of business and school leadership.

To ensure that it complements the programs already in existence, the new program should be designed to target those schools which do not have ready access to similar programs currently, and are dealing with significant challenges in priority areas under the education reform agenda. It should also build on the learnings from other programs which partner school and business leaders, particularly in relation to the matching of partners; initial briefing and ongoing support; time and other support required from the school and business; and the objectives of the partnership. Insights from other innovative partnerships based on shared understandings and collaboration to address entrenched educational disadvantage are also likely to be relevant.

Reviews of other partnering programs of this kind show that the initial partnership between a principal and a business leader sometimes leads to activities involving other staff in the business, and the staff, students and community of the school. The Roundtable believes that the new program should explicitly aim for this by incorporating a project-based element within each partnership. Projects could be developed by individual partnerships, or could involve several principals and business leaders working together, for example to develop a regional school-business relationship, or to engage business in developing a curriculum resource.

To achieve significant impact, the Roundtable believes the program should aim to create at least 50 new partnerships each year. The program should also provide opportunities for the participants to build a community of practice and to promote school-business relationships beyond the program

itself—for example by sharing their experiences, developing case studies, and networking with other schools and businesses. This will help to persuade other school principals and business leaders to place a higher priority on school-business relationships, as the anecdotal evidence on the benefits of such relationships, and how they are key to learning outcomes, will be coming from their peers.

The projects, case studies and networking elements of the program could support, and be supported by, the national network of School Business Community Partnership Brokers, and the social media community discussed in section 6.1.

The initiative would be particularly timely in supporting the reforms to promote increased principal and school autonomy, discussed in section 5.1.2, as it will help principals to develop the business skills and networks they will need to operate effectively in an autonomous environment. It would also support the School Leadership Development Strategies Project, a national project under the Smarter Schools national partnerships to '*develop a national approach to enhancing the leadership capacity of current and aspiring school leaders*'.²⁹ This project is being developed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria.

The interest generated by the creation of the Roundtable, and the consultations it has conducted, have created the momentum for a strategic program of this nature to be established. Initial discussions of this concept during the consultations suggest that businesses may well be interested in sponsoring the program.

Over time, the network of 'graduates' from this program would have significant impact on driving cultural change across school and business leadership.

RECOMMENDATION

To create a cohort of school and business leaders who are experienced advocates for school-business relationships, the Roundtable recommends that:

3. industry, principal associations and education authorities explore the development of a new national program, led by business, that brings together aspiring and emerging principals and business leaders in structured partnerships with the aims of developing skills, sharing experience, creating networks, showcasing successful examples and spreading good practice.

3.1.3 DEVELOPING SKILLS WITHIN BUSINESS

As with school teachers and principals, there are specific skills and knowledge that help business staff and leaders to build and maintain effective relationships with schools.

While the Roundtable is not aware of any current opportunities that parallel the professional standards for teachers and principals, exposure to school-business relationships could be incorporated within the business leadership development programs run internally by many large companies, and by private providers. Many of these programs already contain community experience components that could be expanded to include schools as well as community organisations.

This would help to increase the exposure of business leaders to the school environment of the 21st century, and help to build their familiarity, understanding, and willingness to be involved in school-business relationships. It could be as simple as inviting a school principal to speak on educational leadership, or encouraging participants to undertake their volunteer or community projects within schools. It could also include practical guidance on how to identify potential links with schools, and how to give schools practical support.

To raise awareness among business leaders of the opportunities and value of school-business relationships, the Roundtable encourages companies and private providers of business leadership

development programs to look for opportunities to expose staff to schools, and school-business relationships, within these programs.

Taken together, the recommendations in this section will go a long way to increasing the skills and capacity of teachers, principals and business staff to engage in effective relationships. To put these skills into practice, they also need 'permission to partner' from their schools, education authorities and businesses. Strategies to embed this 'permission' are discussed in section 4.1.

3.2 ACCESS

One of the strongest themes from the Roundtable's consultations was the desire for a way for interested schools and business to list and search for partnering opportunities, supported by case studies and more general information about school-business relationships. Almost universally, participants saw the new social media technologies as providing the solution, describing it variously as 'a partnership marketplace', 'education e-bay', and 'facebook for school-business relationships'.

While they were well aware that there are websites relevant to some areas of school-business relationships (particularly career information), they felt strongly that there is an unmet need for a way for interested schools and businesses to connect. As one workshop participant put it:

Schools often know what we need, and businesses know what skills and resources they can provide, but we don't know how to find each other.

Addressing this need would be one of the main functions of the social media community discussed in detail in section 6.1. It would not take away the importance of developing personal relationships, but would make it easier to find the right people with whom to begin building a relationship. This would be particularly useful to enable schools in regional and remote communities to find city-based businesses that are willing to develop distance relationships supported by technology.

3.3 BROKERAGE

Many successful school-business relationships are driven by school and business staff who see the benefits, and have the confidence, skills, networks and capacity to find partner organisations and develop and maintain relationships themselves. However, many school and business staff are not in this position. The online marketplace discussed above may help them to find connections and information, but they are still likely to want assistance and support from an organisation which specialises in brokering school-business relationships.

The Roundtable's consultations confirmed that there is strong demand for brokers. Schools and businesses that were unaware of their existence called for them to be established; those who had worked with them affirmed the value of their support in making connections, building networks, developing partnering skills, and providing tailored support as partners move through the various stages of partnership development.

Brokers that are independent of schools and businesses, but know the different cultures and needs of each, can improve understanding between the sectors. Independence is particularly important:

Schools and businesses are anecdotally known to respond to 'trusted' independent brokers who act for the mutual benefit of all partners and receive no added financial benefit in relation to the outcomes of their engagement. Honest brokerage has been identified as a vital component of Transitions programs.³⁰

Brokers can be particularly valuable in communities that lack the networks, connections and/or infrastructure needed to support their young people—including Indigenous, disadvantaged, rural,

remote and low SES communities. They can also take a 'big picture' view of the needs of communities, and foster partnerships across clusters of schools.

At a larger scale, an intermediary (ie broker) can deploy the resources of businesses across schools in a planned and holistic way, by identifying areas of greatest need and brokering school-business connections that will provide mutual benefit. At a local level, intermediaries can contribute their understanding of what might work for a particular school and seek out or broker a business partnership for one school or a cluster of schools.³¹

In all contexts, brokers build the capacity of schools and businesses to enter into, and maintain, effective partnership arrangements, thereby reducing ongoing reliance on the broker. This supports the development of a sustainable culture of relationships within both schools and businesses.

The Beacon Foundation is an example of a broker organisation which aims to develop capacity and a sustainable relationships culture within schools so that they no longer need direct support. Under their 'graduation model', Beacon initially provides intense support and involvement to the school until the core principles of the Beacon model are successfully embedded into the school and community—a process which, Beacon estimates, requires three years. Following this, Beacon no longer provides direct school support, but schools remain engaged through Beacon's network of schools and shared learning opportunities. The school also continues to follow the Beacon program model to leverage business and community support for the school and its students. In contrast, Beacon maintains a constant and strong relationship with business partners as it brings in new schools.³²

Governments have long recognised the value of brokerage organisations, initially to support school-business relationships focused on school-to-work transitions, but increasingly with a much broader scope. In Victoria, for example, a network of Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN) has been operating since 2002 to '*connect employers, education and training providers, government groups, agencies and individuals to help turn business and community needs and ideas into new and innovative programs for young people*'.³³

Under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (2009-10 to 2013-14), the Australian Government funds a national network of School Business Community Partnership Brokers to foster a whole-of-community approach to supporting young people as they learn and develop. The 107 Partnership Brokers³⁴, in operation since early 2010, have a broad mandate to look at how to improve educational outcomes for young people in their region; to engage with a wide cross-section of stakeholders, including primary schools; and to deliver innovative partnership approaches that extend beyond the type of activity already taking place.

Partnership Brokers have been given latitude to address specific regional challenges that require flexible, tailored partnership arrangements based on shared community narratives with the capacity to respond to local circumstances. Feedback through the consultations suggests that some brokers have embraced the opportunity to create strategic partnerships addressing regional priorities, while others have only been able to focus on tactical and operational approaches to more immediate issues.

The coordination potential of the network has recently been strengthened by the creation of state and national network representative bodies. As well as supporting a community of practice, this is intended to increase the capacity of the network to develop relationships that extend beyond regional and state boundaries; to provide a conduit for large businesses and strategic, large-scale partnerships; and to scope up and propagate successful partnership models.

While the program has a strong emphasis on building capacity and a sustainable relationships culture within schools and businesses, the Roundtable's research and consultations have highlighted the need

for long-term investment in supporting school-business relationships, as expressed in the following comment by The Smith Family:

Changing culture and creating systemic change through encouraging partnerships is a long term proposition that needs to be nurtured and encourage over time—a minimum of 5 years. Short term funding arrangements lead to increased cynicism amongst community, business and school representatives and also lead to short term thinking.³⁵

The Roundtable believes that a network of brokers should continue to be funded beyond the life of the current partnership arrangements. The form and structure of the program may change in response to research and evaluation findings, but the following features should be preserved:

- national coverage of all schools in all jurisdictions
- specialist brokers who are independent of business and education
- broad mandate to build partnerships that improve educational outcomes for young people
- embedded in and supporting achievement of the broader educational reform agenda
- capacity to broker strategic partnerships that cross jurisdictional and corporate boundaries
- focusing on:
 - building the capacity of schools and businesses in order to develop sustainable relationship cultures
 - supporting disadvantaged communities
 - supporting schools and businesses to develop more highly integrated partnerships.

This is critical to ensuring that all schools and businesses have the opportunity to form relationships, no matter what their capacity, where they are located, or what their size.

RECOMMENDATION

To provide support to schools and businesses and meet the ongoing demand for brokerage services, the Roundtable recommends that:

4. the Australian Government continue to fund and support the provision of a network of brokers that can assist all schools and businesses that need support to form school-business relationships, and has the capacity to broker large-scale strategic partnerships.

Some brokers have developed program models which have been trialled and tested over time in a range of settings. These can provide an easy starting point for new partners, who may then go on to develop other activities tailored to their specific context. As the NSW Partnership Brokers Network comments:

There are NGOs delivering opportunities for partnerships ranging from Australian Business Week to the World of Work program. In many cases these 'canned' partnerships provide a template for local stakeholders to follow and resource. The proven nature of these partnerships makes them attractive to school systems in need of similar solutions.³⁶

The Beacon Foundation highlights the benefits for business, and the ability for models to be adapted:

the established framework of No Dole activities allows business to contribute to program development without having to manage or run the program themselves ... While it is important to have a strong foundation and framework, one size does not fit all ... as such, the No Dole program has a degree of flexibility for localised purposes across Australia.³⁷

Having program models also enables a broker organisation to develop a standard approach to evaluation, so that potential partners can be shown the impact that a proposed program is already having in other areas. This is discussed further in section 4.3.

The Roundtable believes that the two types of brokers—those that build tailored partnerships from the ground up, and those that offer program models—are complementary, and that both are needed.

What is required to support both is greater awareness of their existence. While there seems to be universal demand for brokers, many schools and businesses are often not aware of what services already exist. The functionality of the social media community recommended in section 6.1 would assist by enabling broker organisations to register their services and coverage areas, so that schools and businesses can easily search for brokers in their region (or be presented with such information when they log in).

In addition to this, organisations that support and have regular communications with businesses and schools—industry peak bodies and education authorities—could use their newsletters, websites and so on to draw attention to the existence of brokers, and to share stories of how broker organisations have assisted member businesses or local schools to achieve their objectives.

The workshops conducted by the Roundtable also demonstrated the value of simply bringing people from schools and businesses together. This can range from informal networking events, through to structured and agenda-driven events such as the previous School Industry Leadership Forums. Local industry bodies and brokers such as the School Business Community Partnership Brokers are ideally placed to facilitate events that bring people from schools and businesses together.

RECOMMENDATION

To help schools and businesses take advantage of the broker services that are already available to them, the Roundtable recommends that:

5. industry peak bodies and education authorities promote awareness of existing broker organisations through their own networks and communication channels.
-

4 STRENGTHENING THE CONTEXT

The context in which school-business relationships take place has a significant influence on their scope, quality, impact and sustainability. This section discusses three areas where the Roundtable believes that changes would encourage and support schools and businesses to form more new relationships and improve those that exist:

- policy guidelines
- practical guidance
- evaluation.

4.1 POLICY GUIDELINES

At both the school level and within the broader educational policy context, school-business relationships have historically focused on contributing to students making successful school-to-work transitions. This is the most natural area within which schools and businesses establish relationships, and the area that is most recognised and supported by government policies and programs.

Overarching policy documents such as the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, and the national partnerships on youth attainment and transitions, low SES school communities, literacy and numeracy, and improving teacher quality often have broad statements about building stronger partnerships with various members of the community, including business. At the action level, however, business is typically only referred to in the context of school-business transitions. The potential for partnerships with business to contribute to other areas of priority is rarely referred to.³⁸

The Roundtable believes that the absence of business from policy documents in broader areas does not imply a view that businesses cannot contribute to these other areas. Rather, it illustrates how businesses are recognised as natural (and necessary) partners in school-to-work transitions, but often not considered in relation to other areas.

The impact of this absence is that, when education authorities and schools are implementing the reforms to improve literacy and numeracy, teacher quality, student achievement in disadvantaged communities and other priority areas, they are not prompted to consider how relationships with business could contribute. At a local level this could mean that a school in need of more volunteers to read to children in class is likely to focus on trying to attract parents and community volunteers—even if they have had difficulty attracting them in the past. They are much less likely to try to find a corporate partner whose staff could come and read to students on a regular basis—even though this kind of activity is likely to be attractive to many businesses, and there are many examples of successful relationships of this kind.

Beginning with a small number of staff visiting an inner-city school in Sydney and reading to students during their lunch hour, the Macquarie Group Big Buddy Reading Program has grown to include schools in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, London, Toronto, New York and Hong Kong, with over 300 Macquarie staff each week participating in the program globally.

The 'Little Buddies' (students) who take part are identified as requiring extra assistance with their reading and comprehension and are matched with two Macquarie 'Big Buddies'. Each week one of these Big Buddies attends the reading session at the school. The program not only assists students with their reading skills, but also fosters in them a love of books

and reading. Other benefits include the exposure that the 'Little Buddies' have to male and female role models, and development of their communication and socialisation skills.

To develop a sustainable culture in which schools take advantage of the full potential of school-business relationships, the Roundtable believes that school-business relationships need to be clearly and consistently built in as a strategy for achieving the core outcomes of education, and embedded in the documents of education authorities that guide school operations. Embedding them in the general school operations documents recognises the value of partnerships with business, gives schools 'permission to partner' and emphasises that they are a normal and expected part of school activities, not an add-on. For example, including relationships with business (and the community) in templates for school strategic and management plans challenges school leaders to consider how these partners can contribute to the achievement of the school's objectives.

The embedding of school-business relationships could be done progressively as the key documents are reviewed and updated. As the Australian Industry Group argued in their submission,

This should help to ensure that school authorities and the individual schools see school-business relationships as a core activity and not something competing with educational activities. It should also help to ensure that businesses are approached in a planned manner—not by a range of people from the one school all seeking different forms of support.³⁹

To support this, education authorities may also wish to consider the following suggestion from a broker organisation:

A key element to overcoming school barriers is training Education Department staff firstly, followed by school leadership staff, about the true nature, value and potential of school-business partnerships. It is only when they understand that you will be able to overcome the systemic barriers. I believe that only a small few really understand what school-business partnerships could deliver to the entire school community if managed, resourced and valued properly.⁴⁰

RECOMMENDATION

To develop a sustainable culture which sees relationships with business as a key part of achieving core educational outcomes, the Roundtable recommends that:

6. education authorities, over time, embed relationships with business in the policies, programs, planning and reporting processes and operational requirements within which schools operate.

4.2 PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

The consultations conducted by the Roundtable explored several mechanisms for providing overarching guidance for school-business relationships. There was clear support for such guidance, provided that the structure and approach is one that promotes and encourages good practice—not one that makes school-business relationships mandatory, or stifles local creativity and innovation.

[School-business relationships] work most effectively when the parameters are clearly understood by the stakeholders. ... Our suggestion is that guiding principles be developed and that they be based on mutual respect between businesses and schools and that they are aspirational and provide guidance on best practice, and are not a new layer of compliance.⁴¹

[They should] be developed to assist businesses and schools in identifying appropriate partnering opportunities and to guide them through the process of creating, implementing, sustaining and evaluating partnerships.⁴²

For this reason, the Roundtable does not support the development of a national framework for school-business relationships. 'Frameworks' are usually formal documents, endorsed by national ministers,

associated with compliance regimes, with common reporting requirements, common accountability, and attempts to achieve national uniformity and consistency. Examples include frameworks for the issuing of formal qualifications, occupational licensing, and admission to tertiary education. They are appropriate where activities or programmes are mandated, but would be contrary to the emphasis on voluntary cooperation, mutual trust, shared visions and common goals which necessarily underpins school-business relationships.

Similarly, the Roundtable does not support the development of national guidelines for school-business relationships. While guidelines are typically less rigid than frameworks, they still tend to be prescriptive, with the intention of achieving a degree of uniformity and consistency in the delivery of programs. They are more appropriately developed at the system level, rather than nationally, so that they can reflect the variations in the contexts, needs and operations of each system. Most education authorities already have their own guidelines for school-business relationships⁴³, complemented in some cases by a more proactive approach. While the variation in these guidelines across jurisdictions can sometimes be a source of frustration for businesses and broker organisations, the Roundtable does not believe that it would be appropriate, or feasible, to attempt to develop nationally consistent guidelines.

In 2010 the Victorian Government moved beyond guidelines to implement a proactive approach to encouraging school-business relationships. Its publication *Business Working with Education: A Statement of Priorities for Partnerships between Business and Victorian Government Schools* sets out five priority areas for business and education to connect: opportunity, excellence, leadership, community, and economy and society. Within the department, an Education Partnerships Division has been established to provide support and advice about effective education partnerships. This is complemented by the new Business Working with Education Foundation, established by the Victorian Government to 'facilitate the active engagement of business and the community to enrich the learning and development of students attending government schools in Victoria'.⁴⁴

Rather than a national framework or guidelines, the Roundtable believes that a process should be undertaken to develop guiding principles for school-business relationships that are voluntary and supportive, encourage good practice and emphasise mutual benefit. To ensure that the guiding principles have a positive and lasting impact, they should be developed through a three-stage process which delivers:

- content which reflect and is built upon appropriate expertise and knowledge
- support and ownership of key organisational and institutional stakeholders who can promote, advocate, resource and support them
- endorsement of an appropriate set of key stakeholders in business, schools and government.

In the first stage, the Roundtable recommends that draft guiding principles be developed and tested with groups of 'on-the-ground' experts in school-business relationships—especially people from business and school communities who have had direct involvement in school-business relationships, including school councils, principals, teachers, young people, parents, and brokers. This process should also involve researchers familiar with national and international evidence on good practice, and be undertaken in mixed groups led by an experienced group facilitator. To help get this process underway, the Roundtable has developed an early draft set of principles in *Appendix 3: Guiding Principles—Discussion Starter*.

The second stage would take the draft principles developed by the on-the-ground experts and build the support and ownership of national organisations that represent businesses, schools, principals, teachers, young people, parents and brokers. The endorsement of these organisations is vital to ensure that the guiding principles are distributed, accepted and used. In particular, these organisations will

play a key role in communicating the existence and benefits of the guiding principles to their members, and providing their members with (or them referring to) support.

The third stage, and in some ways the most challenging one, is to seek endorsement. As school-business relationships are by definition a voluntary arrangement between schools and businesses—often with the additional involvement of brokers, young people themselves, and their parents—the Roundtable believes that the primary endorsement should come from organisations that represent these five sectors, and the different groups within them, noting that in many cases there is not a single ‘peak’ body.

The Roundtable believes that ministers of education, through the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, be invited to provide support for the guiding principles, but this should not be seen as a precondition for endorsement by businesses and schools. The impact of the guiding principles would also be increased by the endorsement of large businesses who are willing to act as champions or exemplars.

RECOMMENDATION

To encourage and guide partners in school-business relationships, the Roundtable recommends that:

7. the Australian Government initiate a stakeholder-driven process to develop guiding principles for school-business relationships that are voluntary and supportive, encourage good practice and emphasise mutual benefit.

During the Roundtable’s consultations, a small number of stakeholders suggested that an accreditation approach could be used to give an endorsement to programs which are *‘deemed to be effective and capable of delivering high quality outcomes for schools and businesses’*. It argued that this could make schools and businesses more willing to become involved and to share good practice, and potentially reduce duplication and program development costs, and provide assurance to funding bodies about the integrity of organisations.

While acknowledging that such approaches have worked in some related (but more specific) areas such as career development and enterprise education, the Roundtable does not believe that that an accreditation or quality assurance approach would be appropriate or receive acceptance across the wide spectrum of school-business relationships and stakeholders. It may also have the unintended consequence of restricting local innovation and creativity.

4.3 EVALUATION

Evaluating the outcomes of a school-business relationship can make it easier to gain support for continuing the relationship, both from stakeholders within the school and business partners, and the broader community. It can also help to identify areas where existing activities could be improved, or new activities could be developed.

The research conducted for the Roundtable found that around 45 per cent of the schools and 35 per cent of the businesses in the study had evaluated their relationship in some way. The methods used depended on the nature of the relationship, and included surveys of stakeholders; monitoring of participation rates, expenditure, or hours of activity; and tracking of student destination outcomes. The process and outcomes of the evaluation were not always documented, but when they were, this seemed to be associated with a greater longevity of the relationship. This seemed not to be causal, but to reflect a greater commitment to the relationship.

This is consistent with the a review of international case studies conducted for the Roundtable, which showed that while evaluation was being carried out in some partnerships, the majority of the examples identified had not been evaluated. If they have, it was generally not a recent assessment of the impact of the program.⁴⁵

In the Roundtable's consultations, there was a diverse range of views about the importance of evaluation. Some emphasised the impact that evaluation data can have on engaging and retaining the interest of businesses:

*if we have strong quantitative data to demonstrate the impact, businesses will be more likely to buy into relationships with schools.*⁴⁶

*business enthusiasm for programs or involvement in school based relationships is bolstered by hard and fast results, delivered in 'business speak'.*⁴⁷

Others endorsed the need to be realistic about performance measures, warning against focusing too much on 'outcomes'.

*Often the real outcomes may not be known for many years, whether it be a long term and successful employment outcome for a business, or a life changing experience for a student who discovers their lifelong ambition.*⁴⁸

Many factors affect the educational outcomes of students, and it is difficult to measure changes in these outcomes that are directly attributable to a particular school-business relationship. Measures that focus on more immediate impacts, such as the numbers of students who report greater interest in science subjects as a result of science-focused relationship, are likely to be more realistic, and more useful.

In some cases success was inferred from a simple measure of continuity:

*If all parties are happy for the relationship to continue then this is all that is required.*⁴⁹

At least some of the variation in views and approach can be attributed to the widespread variation in the objectives and forms of school-business relationships themselves. Evaluation tends to be both better established in and more important to those that are more formal in nature and are based on a specific model or 'program' which has evolved over time. It is particularly important for broker organisations that need to demonstrate impact when they are seeking to engage new partners. Over time, such relationships tend to have evolved success measures that are specific to the objectives of that partnership, not too onerous to collect, yet meaningful for the partners.

The No Dole program of the Beacon Foundation connects businesses with schools in order to improve school retention and positive transitions from school to work. Beacon has been evaluating the program for several years, benchmarking against national statistics on youth unemployment, school retention and successful transition from school to further education, training or employment. The data for 2009 showed that:

- 95% of students from Beacon schools continued from Year 10 to 11, compared to 88% nationally
- 12% of students from Beacon schools who left school at Year 10 to look for full-time work were unemployed, compared to the national unemployment figure for 15-19 year olds not in full-time education of 23%.

Beacon are particularly proud of these achievements given that Beacon schools often operate in low socioeconomic communities.⁵⁰

The consultations found general support for the development of a 'Guide to Evaluating School-Business Relationships' that encourages partners in both existing and new school-business relationships to regularly review their progress. Given the diversity of objectives and measures, this is likely to be more useful if it provides guidance on *how* to go about evaluating, rather than prescribing particular models for evaluating school-business relationships.

To increase more project-based relationships to evolve into deeper partnerships, the guide should encourage the partners to not only evaluate the outcomes of the relationships, but also reflect on the process and benefits of the relationship itself, and to consider the potential for collaboration in other areas.

Specific elements that consultation participants would find useful in a guide included:

- what it means to monitor and evaluate, and why monitoring and evaluation are important
- what constitutes sound evidence and how it can be used to improve outcomes and contribute to a robust evidence base
- what kind of data can be collected, with suggestions of how to use data sources that are already available, and how to collect data from groups that are less likely to respond to surveys (particularly students and parents)
- examples of realistic, straightforward success measures that have been used in different types of school-business relationships
- general templates and/or checklists to help get started
- 'case studies' of how evaluation has supported school-business relationships.

In each section, there should be examples illustrating how the ideas and tools have been applied in different types of school-business relationships.

RECOMMENDATION

To encourage a stronger culture of evaluation within school-business relationships, the Roundtable recommends that:

8. the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) develop a 'Guide to Evaluating School-Business Relationships' that assists partners in all forms of school-business relationships to evaluate and improve their relationships.

The Roundtable believes that the most important evaluation of school-business relationships is the review by individual schools and businesses of their own partnerships. This is the type of evaluation which has immediate impact on relationships which are already in existence, enabling them to adjust and improve in response to the findings. These are the evaluations which will be assisted by the proposed guide.

There is also a role for evaluating the impact of different school-business relationships across a category of activity, such as mentoring, literacy support, or work readiness. This would enable organisations that promote and support particular models of school-business relationships—and schools and businesses that are considering adopting a model—to compare the outcomes, success factors and barriers for different approaches to the same general objective. Participating organisations might also want to evaluate the system-wide benefits of participation across several schools, work sites, businesses or programs.

At the broadest level, it is difficult with current data and evaluation tools to assess the overall impact of school-business relationships in general. While tools such as social accounting and social return on investment have sometimes been used to estimate the value of the social impact of individual projects,

the methodologies and body of practice are still in their early stages of development, and some years away from being able to make comparisons between different types of initiatives.⁵¹

What can and should be done is to monitor the overall level of school-business relationships and patterns of participation by businesses, schools and students. The research undertaken for the Roundtable was designed to establish a baseline against which future trends can be mapped through the use of a similar methodology. This should be undertaken by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and could also be used to monitor the uptake and usefulness of some of the tools recommended in this report.

It would also be useful after one or two years to revisit and update some of the many case studies created in the past twelve months through the work of the Roundtable, the NAB Schools First program, the School Business Community Partnership Broker program and others. Documenting how these relationships have evolved is likely to identify lessons and critical success factors which will deepen the base of knowledge about school-business relationships.

The general body of knowledge about school-business relationships will be continually enhanced by these activities, and the contributions made by schools, businesses, brokers, education authorities and researchers. All should be encouraged to share the outcomes of their evaluations through the social media community discussed in section 6.1, which should foster a community of practice around research and evaluation.

The alliance discussed in section 6.2 could also take a role in bringing stakeholders together to discuss priorities for further research and explore ways to address them.

5 ENGAGING BUSINESS AS STRATEGIC PARTNERS

There is, in many ways, a natural affinity between the corporate social responsibility priorities and interests of many large businesses, and the priorities of education authorities and schools. This creates a fertile environment for engaging big business as a strategic partner to assist in the achievement of educational goals.

Current education reform priorities include literacy and numeracy, teacher quality and school leadership, addressing disadvantage (including schools in low SES areas, regional and remote areas, Indigenous students), Year 12 attainment, supporting successful transitions, and school autonomy. In many of these areas there are examples of school-business relationships which could be adopted or built on to achieve the goals. Other areas lend themselves to contributions from business, even though they have not been a historical focus of school-business relationships.

This broad scope for business involvement in schools is demonstrated by the research undertaken for the Roundtable. While school-to-work transitions was the most common area of focus for the school-business relationships in the survey, over three quarters of the schools reported involvement with business in areas related to other priorities under the education reform agenda, including school leadership and staff development; and supporting student aspirations and achievement—including students at risk of disengaging from education and students in disadvantaged areas.

In the main these school-business relationships have developed locally. The Roundtable believes the opportunity is there to engage businesses on a broader scale. This section therefore recommends ways to build on this natural affinity between the priorities of education and the interests of business, in order to strategically engage business on a larger scale as partners in the education reform agenda.

5.1 A ROLE FOR STRATEGIC APPROACHES

The interest of business leaders in working with education authorities to develop relationships in areas prioritised under the education reform agenda was apparent during the Roundtable's consultations. While many businesses have similar priorities within their corporate social responsibility plans, their activities have generally developed in isolation from the initiatives being implemented through school systems. Business leaders in the Roundtable's workshops were excited about the scope for achieving greater reach and impact through coordination with school systems, and through bringing together the efforts of a number of large businesses. While some had begun to explore the possibility of collaborating on a large scale with other businesses, this was still at the very early stages.

Some education authorities are also beginning to focus more proactively on a strategic approach to developing relationships with business—such as the recent initiatives of the Victorian Government arising from its *Business Working with Education: A Statement of Priorities for Partnerships between Business and Victorian Government Schools* (see page 31). Similarly, some of the Roundtable's meetings with education authorities discussed the potential for business to become strategic partners in areas of mutual interest.

NSW provides two examples where education has established mechanisms for strategic partnerships in specific areas:

- the School Sport Foundation, established in 1997 as a joint initiative of the Department of Education and Training in association with the NSW Teachers Federation and the Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of NSW. The Foundation aims to encourage, support and promote sport and healthy lifestyle initiatives for young people, and

provides a mechanism through which corporate partners can direct their support for school sport.

- the Arts Education Foundation, established to develop support for young performers and artists via donations and corporate partnerships. These include a broad range of activities including the Schools Spectacular and the ARTEXPRESS exhibition of outstanding artworks from the HSC exam in Visual Arts.

The Roundtable believes the time is ripe for education authorities, industry peak bodies and business to develop practical partnership ways in which businesses can contribute to priority areas in education through school-business relationships. This could be done through a staged process, beginning by identifying a small number of priorities for which there are a number of large businesses and education authorities who are interested and ready to commit time and people to developing partnership models. These priorities would generally be derived from the education reform agenda, but could have a more specific focus, such as addressing the needs of Indigenous students in a particular geographic area, or supporting reading programs in regional and remote communities. Some may come from interests of business, such as supporting gifted and talented students, or of arts and music in schools.

The second stage would involve, in each priority area, detailed collaborative work by the businesses and education authorities to develop specific partnership opportunities which fit the priorities, needs and capacities of both groups, and which they are willing to implement. In some priority areas this may lead to the development of several partnership opportunities; in others, there may be only one. The aim of the process is not to develop a single partnership model, but rather for the organisations to develop practical partnership opportunities which reflect their needs, cultures and resources, and to which at least one education authority and one business is prepared to commit. This stage in particular would benefit from the involvement of highly skilled brokers.

To maximise impact, this stage should culminate in an event at which the business leaders and education authorities formally commit to implementing their preferred partnerships. Other businesses and education authorities should be invited, and provided with the details of the partnership opportunities that have been developed, so that they too can become involved. As one broker organisation in the consultations commented:

many regional brokers find it difficult to gain the support of national businesses at the local level... It is often more effective when a leading business extends the invitation for other businesses and education leaders to engage in the conversation.⁵²

The Roundtable envisages that this would be an ongoing process. Once the first set of practical partnership opportunities have been developed, a new set of priorities should be established, based on the interest and commitment of education authorities, industry peak bodies and businesses at that time.

The event to commit to and showcase partnerships could be held annually or biennially, helping to maintain the momentum, celebrate achievements, and encourage participation by new partners. It could be expanded to showcase effective school-business relationships, share insights, research and case studies, and promote good practice.

The approach suggested is not radical, and builds on the principles underpinning the work of broker organisations and initiatives such as the Business Working with Education Foundation. It complements and extends their work by bringing a specific focus on large businesses, direct engagement of education authorities, and the development of partnerships at a systems level (including across jurisdictions). It enables strategic engagement with large businesses with national coverage, while also allowing for jurisdictions—and indeed, individual schools—to tailor partnerships to their own needs.

Strategic partnerships can be both global and local

One example of a large-scale strategic partnership approach is Microsoft's Partners in Learning (PiL), a 10-year initiative to help teachers and school leaders more effectively use technology as a tool for teaching and learning.

PiL is global in scope (reaching over 100 countries), but has a strong emphasis on local implementation. In Australia, the core offering is the Innovative Schools program—a collaborative partnership between Microsoft Australia, state/territory governments and schools using 'grassroots, classroom-tested experience to develop models any school can use to integrate technology into their classrooms and make student learning more accessible, relevant and engaging'.

Jurisdiction-specific PiL programs have been developed to support local priorities, and these have been evaluated and revised over time. Some include projects involving multiple jurisdictions.⁵³

The process also creates the opportunity for central areas of education authorities—national, state/territory and non-government—to explore how business could complement their existing initiatives and infrastructure to address the priorities they are currently working on. It also helps business to understand and overcome differences between school and business planning processes and cycles. It is likely that this process will identify, and reduce or remove, some of the current (and generally unintended) barriers to school-business relationships.

While the process is initially targeted at big business, it does not ignore the significant involvement that small and medium enterprises already have in relationships with schools. Indeed, the process would ultimately make it easier for them to become involved in school-business relationships through the partnership models that are developed—similar to the advantages of the 'canned' partnerships discussed in section 3.3.

Strategic partnerships with big business can help local relationships

Many large businesses have an extensive 'footprint' across Australia through chains of retail outlets, networks of franchises or agencies, or chains of supply companies. Imagine that one or two of these develop a partnership with education authorities through which the business' middle managers offer their skills to school boards. This might involve some encouragement and guidelines from the business, and some support material from the education authorities on how schools operate, the roles and responsibilities of school boards, the role of external members, and where to get support and advice.

The education authorities might suggest that the business focus initially on disadvantaged schools, which are more likely to struggle to access these sorts of skills within their local community. Together, the businesses and education authorities might work out ways to reach communities where the business does not have local staff—perhaps agreeing that the business board member could join most board meetings by video or teleconference, with the business funding an annual visit to the school to strengthen the relationship.

As the businesses encourage their local operations and suppliers to take up the program, this gives local managers 'permission to partner', and some will be motivated to approach their local schools. If the education authorities also promote the program to their schools and broker organisations, principals and brokers are also likely to approach the local

outlet of the business, encouraged by the knowledge that the business has already committed to the program. In the end, many schools will benefit from skills they may not otherwise have access to ... and many managers will benefit from exposure to the school environment, and experience on an external board. Research also suggests that these initial relationships will often lead to deeper engagement between the businesses and schools.

Over time, the process of education authorities, industry peak bodies and businesses working collaboratively on particular priorities is likely to increase mutual understanding and trust, and potentially lead to a more collaborative approach to policy issues more generally.

RECOMMENDATION

To harness business as a partner with education at a strategic level, the Roundtable recommends that:

9. business, industry peak bodies and education authorities engage in a process to develop practical partnership opportunities that capitalise on the strategic contributions that large businesses can make to priority areas in education.
10. business support an annual or biennial event to formalise partnerships, showcase effective school-business relationships, share insights and case studies, and promote good practice.

There are a number of specific opportunities at the moment for businesses to contribute to the education reform agenda, through the partnership process outlined above, or in other ways. These are described below.

5.1.1 NEW PATHWAYS INTO TEACHING

In response to ongoing skills shortages in teaching, two new programs are being introduced to create employment-based pathways into teaching. More broadly, the programs also aim to cultivate leaders across the community who have a commitment to addressing educational disadvantage.

The first program—Teach For Australia—aims to attract the ‘best and brightest’ university graduates into classrooms, providing a pathway for professionals from non-teaching fields such as law, commerce and science to work as teachers for two years while studying towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching. Similar models internationally have found that 50-60 per cent of participants choose to remain in teaching, while 40-50 per cent enter other fields such as law, business, engineering and public policy. In the US and UK, the latter group have gone on to have impact on the issue of educational disadvantage from fields as diverse as policy, social enterprise, law and consulting.

While we hope and expect that a proportion of our Associates will stay in the classroom beyond their two-year commitment, we actually believe that the issue of educational disadvantage is so complex that it requires cross-sector involvement. By giving exceptional graduates the opportunity to make a difference in disadvantaged schools, and then supporting alumni beyond the two years, we aim to equip tomorrow's leaders in all fields to affect educational equity.⁵⁴

Employers also see this broad background as a benefit to their own organisations:

This is a program that prepares top graduates to succeed whilst doing something that matters. Our support of Teach For Australia will give us access to proven leaders, thinkers and communicators.⁵⁵

We search for graduates who are passionate about their work and feel their ideas have the potential to change the world. These are the exact qualities that Teach For Australia Associates exhibit.⁵⁶

A second and complementary program—Teach Next—was an election commitment announced in August 2010. This program will provide a new pathway into teaching for experienced professionals with specialist qualifications who can now gain their teaching qualification while earning a salary—removing a key barrier that has discouraged career-changers from transitioning into teaching. It particularly targets those with in-demand skills such as maths and science expertise, including accountants, bankers, engineers and lab technicians, as up to 10 per cent of secondary schools report major difficulties in filling teaching vacancies in these subjects.⁵⁷ Like Teach For Australia, it will offer participants specialised intensive training, followed by a two-year placement in a school while studying towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching.

The Roundtable believes that both Teach For Australia and Teach Next have the potential to foster and contribute to a culture of school-business relationships. For example, businesses that employ graduates from Teach For Australia could involve these new staff in creating or enhancing the businesses relationships with schools. Similarly, businesses whose staff take up a Teach Next opportunity could maintain links with their former employee, and build on this connection to develop or strengthen their school-business relationships. In both cases, there will be benefits to both businesses and schools, and the program participants.

The Roundtable believes there would also be value in developing sabbatical type arrangements to enable staff from business to spend a specified period working within schools (in a non-teaching role), using a similar model to programs that place teachers in industry. The business person would be able to use their skills and experience in a different way from their normal employment, giving schools access to skills they may not have. It would also give the business people skills and understanding which they could take back to their businesses and contribute to school-business relationships.

5.1.2 EMPOWERING LOCAL SCHOOLS

The Australian Government is currently implementing an election commitment known as *Empowering Local Schools*, which aims to improve student performance and outcomes by giving principals, parents and each school community greater power to determine how their local school is run. A national rollout will commence with 1,000 schools over 2012 and 2013, with schools gaining responsibility for the following core elements, tailored to the needs of each school:

- enhanced school governance arrangements, giving school councils or boards responsibility for strategic planning, and oversight of the school's operations and finances
- responsibility for finance and the school budget
- management of the school staffing profile—determining the right mix of staff, and managing recruitment and staff selection
- a greater role for principals in staff performance management, within existing enterprise bargaining arrangements.

This is an area in which school-business relationships are a natural fit. Many businesses already encourage their staff to sit on the boards of not-for-profit organisations as part of their contribution to the community, and are likely to see school boards as a natural extension. It is also likely to appeal to individual business people, particularly if the possibility is effectively promoted to them. As one middle manager of a major financial institution commented during one of the Roundtable's workshops,

I have board and management skills and would be very interested in serving as a school board member, but I never realised that this was a possibility, I have no personal connection with a school, and I would have no idea how to start.

The social media community recommended in section 6.1 would provide one way to promote the general concept, and for schools to 'advertise' specific needs for business people to serve on their school boards.

Empowering Local Schools may lead to more significant school-business relationships

The baseline research undertaken for the Roundtable found that independent schools had a proportionally higher level of involvement in significant relationships with business. Stakeholders from the sector attributed this to three factors:

- independent schools are businesses in their own right, and therefore have an empathy with business
- by their nature, independent schools are well connected into their local communities
- the governance structures of many independent schools extend beyond interested and committed parents to incorporate expertise from beyond the immediate school community. Indeed, independent schools will often target such expertise in the business community for roles within governance when no actual relationship exists between a given school and the individuals concerned.

This suggests that the move to empower local schools may help other schools to tap into business expertise beyond membership of boards.

Another way in which businesses can contribute to schools is to enable their own skilled staff to assist schools to improve their business operations in areas such as administration, financial management, marketing. Again, some businesses already do this in the community sector, for example by sending a highly skilled executive assistant into a not-for-profit organisation to help the office set up efficient systems.

An interesting model in the community sector is provided by the Woodside Better Business program of the Australia Business Arts Foundation, sponsored by a major company in the energy sector. The program includes an 'adviceBank' to connect arts organisations with business people with skills needed for specific projects, a 'boardBank' to bring business experience to their boards, an award scheme for business volunteers or board members, and seminars on business essentials for arts and cultural organisations.⁵⁸

Contribution of professional skills also happens in some school-business relationships. It would be likely to happen more if schools and education authorities saw this as a useful way for businesses to support schools, and promoted the idea.

A relationship between Cadbury Schweppes and Newport Lakes Primary School (in a disadvantaged area of Melbourne) brought the strength of Cadbury's planning and marketing to bear on declining enrolments, which was a major issue for the school. Through a series of meetings between the school principal and the finance director and subsequent school council meetings, an agreement was forged to use the relationship to promote the school to its local community, build its profile and increase enrolments.

A team of marketing and promotions staff from the company worked with students and staff to develop a communications plan and produce a school promotion kit, which was distributed at an information evening for local parents and to local kindergartens. The school subsequently received 40 new enrolments for the following year's intake and has significantly raised

its community profile. The school and company have continued their partnership and a range of other projects have evolved as a result.⁵⁹

Engaging business to support school governance and operations could be a priority area in the strategic planning process recommended in section 5.1. The social media community discussed in section 6.1 could also be used to create awareness of this type of school-business relationship.

5.1.3 SUPPORTING SCHOOLS IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

While there is sometimes a perception that low socio-economic status (SES) school communities have historically had less access to school-business relationships, business is increasingly concerned about addressing social issues. Many companies are actively engaged in projects that aim to address disadvantage.

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN), a partnership of national business leaders and companies, delivers mentoring and coaching programs to improve opportunities for students and schools that are most in need.

Since its creation in 2005, ABCN programs have reached over 100 schools in areas of high need, involving over 18,000 students, 280 teachers, 28 companies and over 2,200 company volunteers. It has developed specific programs to address principal leadership, reading support, mentoring, career aspirations, transition from primary to high school, and students in Intensive English Centres.

A recent national project—100 Faces, 100 Stories—helped high school students to explore and express their cultural origins, with company volunteers mentoring them to tell their life story and create an artistic project. The stories were showcased at the end of the program, and have now been collected in a website.⁶⁰

Some of these explore ways to use technology to overcome disadvantage.

In a major school-business partnership, Cisco and Telstra have committed substantial technical, financial and human resources to an independent college with a significant number of students coming from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage. Many of these students have below average levels of literacy and numeracy and experience difficulty maintaining engagement with school.

The investment by Cisco and Telstra includes deploying a wireless broadband network throughout the college and enhancing the existing network capacity through the installation of optic fibre. High-speed broadband will provide the students with a wealth of information, multimedia and rich video content.

This provides a virtual learning environment that enables collaboration and the sharing of information by the school community, supports better educational outcomes for students, and prepares them for the world of work.

According to the school, the technology and infrastructure will 'help the students become employable, enterprising citizens who will be ready to step up and embrace all of the knowledge and skills needed to lead the way in the 21st century. It will expand their vision and thinking so they

become people who can live and work anywhere and who are able to interact with any culture in any location.'

For Cisco, this is an opportunity 'to prove that the network as a platform can enable students to fulfil their maximum potential'.

The applications for the NAB Schools First awards also show how keen disadvantaged schools are to partner with business and their communities. In 2009 and 2010, just over one third of applications came from schools in areas that are among the most disadvantaged.⁶¹

The Australian, state, territory and non-government education authorities are also collaborating to address the needs of disadvantaged schools through a seven-year national partnership for low SES school communities. This national partnership is supporting education reform activities to enhance learning opportunities in approximately 1700 low SES schools, covering almost 13 per cent of all students (including 40 per cent of all Indigenous students) in Australia. It aims to improve student engagement, educational outcomes and wellbeing in participating schools and make inroads into entrenched disadvantage.

One of the strategies which schools may choose to employ is to develop external partnerships with parents, schools, businesses and local communities. The Roundtable believes that there is an opportunity for business to work with education authorities at a strategic level to explore what role business could play in supporting the plans of the schools identified under the national partnership, and in non-partnership schools that face similar issues.

5.1.4 SUPPORTING CURRICULUM

Many school-business relationships are designed to enrich students' learning experiences. They are often directly connected to the implementation of curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has recently completed the development of the new Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history, and is now working on Years 11 and 12. Geography, languages and the arts are also currently under development for all year levels. Health and physical education; information and communications technology; design and technology; economics and business; and civics and citizenship will be developed in the third phase.

Industry peak bodies and business are likely to be particularly interested in the curriculum for languages; information and communications technology; design and technology, and economics and business, and more broadly in how the 'general capabilities' are applied across all areas of the curriculum, especially for Years 11 and 12. The Roundtable encourages all interested parties to participate actively in ACARA's extensive consultation processes, and encourages ACARA to explore ways to maximise engagement with business in all remaining areas of curriculum development.

The Scientists in Schools program creates partnerships between teachers and scientists to promote science education in primary and secondary schools, help engage and motivate students in their learning of science, and broaden awareness of the types and variety of exciting careers available in the sciences. The program is open to research scientists and engineers, post-graduate science and engineering students and people involved in applied sciences. The partnerships are flexible, with the activities designed by the individual teachers and scientists.

An evaluation of the program found, among other benefits, that activities that promoted the curriculum theme of working scientifically were a major focus, particularly in primary schools. According to both scientists and

teachers, students increased their ability to recognise and ask questions about science-related issues and awareness of the nature of scientific investigation. The success of the program has led to the development of the sub-program Mathematicians in Schools.

The suggestion was also made during consultations that a curriculum mapping tool for school-business relationships should be developed. The Roundtable believes that detailed mapping against curriculum is neither practical nor useful. However, the new Australian Curriculum Connect project will make it possible for digital learning resources held in the National Digital Learning Resource Network (formerly The Learning Federation) and state and territory repositories to be linked to the Australian Curriculum.⁶²

This project will be integrated with participating jurisdiction portals in 2011. When fully operational, it will enable teachers and students to select a section of the Australian Curriculum and see related digital resources which are available both nationally and locally. Education Services Australia, which is implementing the project, is also exploring ways for teachers to share materials, successful practice and teaching ideas. This may become a useful mechanism for teachers to share ways that they have used relationships with business in their teaching programs, encouraging further creativity and innovation.

As well as these specific initiatives, the Roundtable believes strongly that school-business relationships can add significant value to the delivery of curriculum in individual schools and classrooms, linking it to the world outside school and making learning relevant and meaningful. This enriches student experience and contributes to student engagement, employability skills, and broadened career horizons. It is at this level that much innovation takes place in response to local circumstances, needs and interests—and sometimes in response to the ideas of students themselves:

Students imagine learning about physics from a pilot, an engineer, or a surf champion. How does an aeroplane fly? How are surfboards designed, and can you track the angle of the water as a surfer rides a wave? Science students could learn to build an engine, or take part in young inventor programs. Staff of a major supermarket chain could teach students how to eat well and budget carefully. Journalists from local or national newspapers could visit English classes to teach students about creative writing and media studies; students could learn to write a feature article. A stockbroker or analyst from one of the big four banks could demonstrate how they put complex maths equations into practice every day. A representative from a major department store could talk students through profit and loss; how businesses make money during sales; how products are sourced and sold.⁶³

The National Network of Partnership Brokers has also suggested that:

There are opportunities for national organisations to develop programs that support classroom teachers to deliver the national curriculum. If managed by ACARA or Education Services Australia, such an initiative could attract some extremely creative ideas from industry at a national level that would be very engaging for young people and support implementation of the national curriculum.⁶⁴

A report funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation highlights one group who would benefit from a different type of business involvement—students whose desired career is to run their own business. The report estimated that 4% of 15 to 19 year olds (up to 53,000 students) are already running their own business, and only 28% of them would want to swap their business for a good job. These students are interested in developing their business skills, and generally want very practical, hands-on training that gives them quick returns on their investments of time and money—similar to adult business operators.⁶⁵

The Roundtable encourages individual businesses and schools to look for opportunities for business to support the local implementation of all areas of the curriculum, and to engage students themselves in developing ideas of where and how this could be done.

5.1.5 TRADE CADETSIPS AND TRADE TRAINING CENTRES

The Australian Curriculum will also include new National Trade Cadetships to provide '*clearly defined, robust nationally recognised and consistent pathways for school students who want to pursue a career in the trades or vocational industries, or for students who want to keep that option open*'.⁶⁶

Trade Training Centres and Registered Training Organisations⁶⁷ will offer two levels of trade cadetships. Foundation cadetships are designed for students who are not sure what they want to do when they leave school, and will focus on work readiness skills such as teamwork, workplace health and safety, self confidence and personal responsibility, as well as high quality literacy and numeracy. Pre-Apprenticeship cadetships are designed for students who are interested in a specific occupational area and already have basic foundation skills. These will provide specific vocational skills and competencies within a 'family' of trade occupations such as construction, mechanics, hospitality or IT.

The Trade Cadetships will be developed through a consultation process led by ACARA, in partnership with Skills Australia and Industry Skill Councils. As with the Australian Curriculum, the Roundtable encourages industry peak bodies and businesses to participate in the consultation processes, and to look for opportunities for school-business relationships to contribute to the local delivery of the trade cadetships.

The Trade Training Centres themselves also create significant potential for school-business relationships that help to increase the proportion of students achieving Year 12 or an equivalent qualification, and to address skill shortages in traditional trades and emerging industries.

The Catholic Regional College, Sydenham (Melbourne) illustrates how the school-business relationships can enhance the Trade Training Centres being established by the Australian Government.

When developing its Trade Training Centre, the school identified four skill areas in which there were successful local businesses seeking to employ school leavers: (hospitality, bakery, picture framing, sign writing). It invited these businesses to assist with the planning for the new centre in order to increase the correlation between the physical environments of the training facility and the workplaces. The nationally accredited certificate course has been nuanced to reflect local needs, and some businesses have committed to delivering components at the school.

The partners also felt strongly that each of the skill areas should operate as a financially viable business. Each area has a shop front at the school, and business and industry representatives provide close mentoring of the students.

In addition, the partners donated over \$1 million of equipment and technology to complement the government grant of \$6 million. Overall, the Trade Training Centre creates an environment that will greatly enhance the possibility of successful school-to-work transitions, both for the students and the local employers.⁶⁸

5.1.6 SUPPORTING SCHOOL RETENTION THROUGH WORK EXPERIENCE

In secondary schools, work experience is one of the most common areas of school-business relationships. While it probably dates back to the 1960s, the main impetus for work experience came

in the 1980s as one of a range of responses to a weakening youth employment market, and school completion rates of around 35 per cent. Retention rates have increased significantly over the intervening period, but the current education reform agenda again has a strong focus on improving school retention, with the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions aiming to increase the rate of Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment from 83.5 per cent to 90 per cent by 2015.⁶⁹

Over the same period, policy effort in relation to school-to-work transitions has tended to focus on employability skills, enterprise education, and new programs such as Structured Work Placements, VET in Schools, and School-Based Apprenticeships. Nevertheless, work experience remains one of the main ways in which schools seek to give students exposure to a workplace in order to learn about an occupation or industry, observe others at work or complete entry-level tasks, develop skills and networks, and develop ideas about what they would like to do.⁷⁰

Unlike the newer initiatives, work experience is generally a fairly unstructured opportunity, typically in the form of a placement such as a two-week block, or a set number of days per week over a given period. While it certainly exposes students to a workplace, this may be less important than in the past, given that many students in their final years of schooling now participate in paid work, and that this trend is increasing.⁷¹

The Roundtable's consultations highlighted a number of challenges to providing quality work experience for all students, including:

- there is competition for employers between different programs requiring a work-based component, including work experience, structured workplace learning, apprenticeships and traineeships
- there is a limited range and number of potential placements in regional and remote communities
- employers are becoming more risk averse
- businesses that are the main or largest employer in a town, especially in rural and regional areas, struggle to provide quality work experience for large groups of students at the same time
- some students are not work ready, and/or have inadequate literacy or numeracy for the workplace
- finding work experience placements is resource intensive, and students are often required to find their own placements—meaning that students who are the most disconnected and at risk are least likely to benefit from work experience
- workforce exposure in the final years of schooling may be too late for students from families that have not had a history of workforce participation—and may need to begin in primary schools to address cultural barriers created by family circumstances
- schools find it difficult to create time and space to integrate work experience and the associated learning into the curriculum
- placements can be disruptive to the routine of a business, particularly those that do not operate in a traditional hierarchical structure
- both students and employers are often poorly prepared and have unclear (or different) expectations about the work experience placement
- students gain familiarity with the workplace, but not necessarily the skills needed in the 21st century, such as enterprising skills and attitudes
- quality of placements is variable—and when students find placements 'mundane', they are likely to come across poorly to employers, who are then less willing to offer placements in the future.

In response to these and other issues, new models have emerged in Australia and overseas which take a project-based, and often student-led, approach to work exposure. For example, Worlds of Work (run by the Foundation for Young Australians) offers Year 10 students a five-day sequence of activities and workshops through which they seek to answer the question 'What does it take to succeed in life and work?' Changemakers (run by Anglicare WA) offers a structured program of community-based learning that enables young people to develop their key competencies and enterprise skills, sense of personal and social responsibility and understanding of the world of work. Participants create real

work projects that are based upon their aspirations and that meet the needs of others. It is an endorsed program of the WA Curriculum Council.

Other models focus on a single day, such as the Beacon Foundation's Polish program to help students prepare for careers through personal presentation and communication training, and the Try A Trade program, which enables students in Years 8 to 12 to participate in a series of hands-on trade activities, talk to apprentices and tradespeople, and learn more about the world of trades and the pathways to them.

In the United Kingdom, concern that placements were not 'turning on' students led to the development of Work Inspiration, a national employer-led campaign which aims to make work experience more meaningful, relevant and inspiring for young people. This initiative of Business in the Community encourages employers to hold 'Big Conversations' through which they reflect on why they have a work experience program, what their employees get out of it, and why it matters to the young people who participate. The campaign also gives employers ideas on how to improve their work experience programs by:

- giving young people time to talk about themselves, their passions and interests
- encouraging young people to think broadly about the roles available to them by understanding the variety and scope of roles in the organisation
- demonstrating the different and varied ways in which careers happen, and dispelling the myth of linear careers.

The Roundtable believes that businesses, schools and education authorities should aim to ensure that work experience is a rich learning opportunity for all students, particularly those who are less likely to get exposure to the workplace on their own, and a positive experience for business. To support this, industry peak organisations and businesses should work with education stakeholders to ensure that the work experience opportunities they provide are quality experiences which inspire young people about their future in the world of work. Education authorities and schools should work to provide adequate resources so that work experience can be made available to all students, and to remove any barriers which make it difficult for schools and/or businesses to provide quality work experience opportunities.

Further, the Roundtable believes that it is time for a review that 'reimagines' work experience in response to the changes in the education and business environments, the changing needs of students and employers, and the need to ensure that work experience inspires both students and employers about the role and contributions the next generation will make in the world of work. This review should reconsider and clarify the aims of work experience, explore local and international experience and identify practices or alternative models that address current challenges. It should also explore how to meet the needs of those who are least likely to be work-ready, such as young people from families that have not had a history of workforce participation.

In the United Kingdom, business has driven many developments in the field of work experience, including the Work Inspirations campaign developed by Business in the Community (described previously). In Australia, the alliance discussed in section 6.2 would be well placed to build support among business and education authorities for a comprehensive review of current work experience arrangements and practices to ensure that they meet the needs of Australian students, employers and schools in the 21st century.

5.2 A ROLE FOR RECOGNITION

Many participants in the consultations emphasised the importance of celebration and recognition of school-business relationships, both locally and beyond. Awards, and the associated media profile that

they generate, contribute to sustainability by reinspiring the people who are actively driving relationships, and affirming their importance to stakeholders and managers.

This can be seen in the response to the NAB Schools First program, which gives schools the chance to win Impact Awards for effective school-community partnerships, Seed Funding Awards to build stronger school-community partnerships and (from 2011) Student Awards to empower students to build and implement their own school-community partnership. While all awards carry a financial reward, some winners have commented that the recognition attached to the award is almost as important. The fact that the award scheme is sponsored and driven by a large business says clearly to schools, and to the individual staff within them, that what they are doing is important and valued by the broader community.

The Roundtable believes that it would be appropriate, and powerful, to complement the business-sponsored award program for schools with a national award scheme which recognises businesses that are partnering with schools. This would send a powerful message to business that their contribution to education is recognised and valued. To encourage the development of both new and highly integrated relationships, awards could be offered for demonstrated impact, significant potential, and deep integration. Categories could be created for different priorities under the education reform agenda, for different types of activity, for businesses of different sizes, and for relationships fostered by broker organisations.

As has happened with NAB Schools First, the award process would also generate a body of information on the extent and nature of business involvement in school-business relationships. This could be used for further research into how and why businesses become involved, and to provide content for the social media community recommended in section 6.1.

The new awards scheme could be driven by business, in collaboration with education authorities. For maximum prestige, the Prime Minister or the Minister for School Education should be invited to auspice the key award categories. Both industry peak bodies and education authorities should be involved in the judging process, which would have the additional benefit of enhancing awareness among their staff of the broad potential of school-business relationships. This could be further enhanced by inviting state, territory and non-government education authorities to auspice and be involved in local awards which feed into the national award scheme.

Industry peak bodies may also like to consider the following suggestion from National Network of Partnership Brokers:

Most industry associations have membership awards. A relatively small investment could sponsor a Business-School partnerships category. The awareness of these awards could in turn drive interest in syndicated 'canned articles' for industry newsletters.⁷²

RECOMMENDATION

To recognise and encourage the contribution businesses make through relationships with schools, the Roundtable recommends that:

11. business, in collaboration with education authorities, establish a national awards scheme to recognise the value of school-business relationships and encourage the development of further relationships.

5.3 A ROLE FOR ADVOCACY

Peak industry bodies have long been passionate and committed advocates for quality education. Most have specific education taskforces, committees and/or policy officers, and influence education policy development including through submissions and reports such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce

and Industry's submission to the Productivity Commission on Vocational and Education Training; the Australian Industry Group's recent submission to Skills Australia: *Creating a future direction for Australian vocational education and training*⁷³, and the Business Council of Australia's report *Teaching Talent: The Best Teachers for Australia's Classrooms*.⁷⁴

The primary focus of this advocacy has generally been on the 'outcomes' of education—the skills and experience that young people gain from their education, their awareness of career options, and their readiness for the workplace—and therefore on issues such as vocational education and training, structured workplace learning, school-based apprenticeships, work experience and employability skills. Some industry bodies have also been involved in delivering government programs and initiatives in this area, such as career information resources, structured workplace learning and the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program.

The Roundtable's research and consultations have highlighted that businesses are interested, and often engaged, in relationships in all areas of schooling, from the traditional school-to-work area through to literacy and numeracy, school leadership, and all other aspects of education. However, as discussed earlier, the significant contribution that business could be making in these areas is often not recognised or incorporated into policy and program design.

Peak industry bodies could support their member businesses who wish to be active in this way by looking for opportunities within education policy to advocate for the broad contribution that school-business relationships can make. Current examples of such opportunities are discussed throughout this report, including section 5.1. They could also work with education authorities to facilitate the growth of school-business relationships by:

- building understanding within education authorities of the business experience of relationships with schools
- helping to identify and remove any systemic barriers
- promoting information about school-business relationships to their members.

In some countries, direct business involvement in the policy agenda around school-business relationships seems to have benefited from the existence of business-led coalitions with an overarching focus on corporate responsibility. In the United Kingdom, for example, Business in the Community (BITC) took the lead in developing Work Inspiration, '*a national call to action to businesses to improve the first experience of work for over 500,000 young people every year*'⁷⁵ (discussed further in section 5.1.6). More broadly, BITC seems to have been effective in helping to change business behaviour and influencing ideas about the purpose of business and how business interacts with other parts of society, including (but not limited to) education. This may be an interesting example for peak industry bodies to explore.⁷⁶

6 SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION

The earlier sections of this report address many of the specific barriers and issues facing schools and businesses.

This section recommends the creation of two mechanisms to support the ongoing implementation of the strategy, to build a vibrant community where experiences can be shared and new ideas developed, and to ensure ongoing collaboration between all stakeholders to support school-business relationships beyond this report.

6.1 BUILDING A COMMUNITY

As foreshadowed in section 3.2, there is a strong demand for an internet-based platform to support schools and businesses to form relationships. This should not be 'just another website' built around static content, but a dynamic community based on social media technologies, where the majority of content is driven and developed by schools, businesses, brokers, young people and parents.

Initially, the main focus of the social media community would be to enable schools, businesses and brokers to register profiles and areas of interest, and find others who share their interests. They would follow up contacts through familiar technologies such as email and phone, creating personal connections and building relationships in the normal way.

The social media community would also enable the listing of specific opportunities. Schools could list their needs for skills and resources, and activities businesses can become involved in. Businesses could list skills and resources which they would like to provide, and activities they would like to develop or support. Brokers could promote their services, both in terms of general partnership development, and specific partnership models which they offer. This would be most useful for relationships based around specific, clearly defined needs such as access to equipment, people with specific skills, or guest speakers.

The social media community would also address the very strong demand expressed through the consultations for 'case studies'—stories that provide inspiration, ideas and insight into school-business relationships. Those case studies which have already been developed elsewhere—such as through the School Business Community Partnership Brokers, NAB Schools First, and research undertaken for the Roundtable, could be housed (or linked) within a dedicated section of the social media community. The Roundtable estimates that at least 300 case studies would be contributed by these sources alone.

Users would be encouraged to add their own case studies, ranging from short vignettes through to detailed stories about their school-business relationships. The community would support both text and multimedia formats for case studies, providing an opportunity to engage students in documenting school-business relationships in their schools. The network of School Business Community Partnership Brokers would be well placed to encourage schools and businesses to develop case studies, and competitions could be held to further encourage this.

The case study section would be organised so that it can be searched by a wide range of variables, including location, partners, need addressed, type of activity, benefits, and challenges. This would make it a much more powerful tool than the simple lists which are often used to present case studies.

These sections would be complemented by other areas which contain resources addressing other needs identified throughout this report, including:

- the policy context for school-business relationships, and how they contribute to the broad education reform agenda

- general guidance about school-business relationships, including the guiding principles recommended in section 4.2
- general information about guidelines for school-business relationships, with links to the specific information on the websites of individual education systems—helping to address the challenge of variation across jurisdictions discussed in section 2.5
- information, examples and case studies of evaluation, including and extending the *Guide to Evaluating School-Business Relationships* recommended in section 4.3
- information about the strategic partnering process and annual event recommended in section 5.1
- promotion of the awards scheme recommended in section 5.2
- a repository for research about school-business relationships, including the two reports developed for the Roundtable, and the facility to develop a community of practice around research
- news about school-business relationships and related developments, including the alliance recommended in section 6.2.

The social media community would be built on smart, Web 2.0 technologies, providing users with easy access to information about opportunities, resources, needs and services in their local area. Additional activities would evolve as the community grows, and the users become more familiar and confident with the potential of social media technologies.

A site with similar features in a related policy area is the Australian Social Innovation Forum OnIMPACT. This website provides registered participants the opportunity to share information, facilitate networks, participate in discussions and engage in ongoing collaborations between government and the social enterprise, philanthropic and corporate sectors.

Some consultation participants suggested that the internet could also be used more directly within school-business relationships, particularly to support mentoring between business people in cities and students in regional and remote locations. While The Smith Family and IBM have already developed an online mentoring program known as iTrack, this type of facility is not generally available to school-business relationships. The Roundtable suggests that it could be developed as a later stage of the social media community, perhaps in collaboration with The Smith Family and IBM.

iTrack is an eMentoring tool hosted by The Smith Family in partnership with IBM, and offered to senior high school students from low socio-economic status areas. It aims to support and inform students who are beginning to formulate their post-school plans by pairing them with active members of the workforce who can offer encouragement and advice and share the benefit of their experiences. Mentors are drawn from The Smith Family's corporate partners and the broader community, and work with students on activities regarding their future career and other personal development topics. The majority of interaction takes place online through specifically designated and monitored chat rooms and message boards, supported by training and assistance from The Smith Family's mentoring team.

The Roundtable believes that this social media community must reflect the collaboration of the relationships it aims to support, and the benefits that it will create for both schools and businesses. The development and ongoing support for the social media community should therefore be driven through a partnership between business and education authorities. It could also be funded and maintained by business — initial conversations during the Roundtable's consultations suggest that industry organisations and businesses in the IT sector, or with large IT departments, may be interested in contributing their skills, expertise and resources in this way, as a practical contribution to supporting school-business relationships on a large scale.

RECOMMENDATION

To benefit both schools and business wishing to form relationships to improve education outcomes for young people, the Roundtable recommends that:

12. business and industry bodies partner with education authorities to develop and support a social media community, sponsored by business, that facilitates collaboration and connection between schools and businesses.

6.2 FOLLOWING THROUGH

The processes of the Business-School Connections Roundtable have revealed a high degree of activity and interest in school-business relationships in Australia. Consultation workshops were attended by an impressive array of people, including CEOs of top 200 ASX companies, principals, public servants, and leaders from industry and community organisations such as peak bodies, brokers and parent groups. Participation in the key stakeholder meetings conducted by Roundtable members was also impressive, with senior staff in education authorities and industry peak bodies giving generously of their time.

Both groups were almost universally passionate about and committed to using school-business relationships to benefit young people. They saw the creation of the Roundtable as a recognition by the Australian Government of the value of harnessing business as a partner across all areas of education, and as an opportunity to both create a more strategic approach to school-business relationships, and address issues for locally developed relationships.

With the submission of this report, the Roundtable's work is now at an end. However, it is important that the momentum built over the last twelve months continues and that, at the national level, business continues to take an active role as a partner in education. While the Roundtable's recommendations have been directed to particular organisations or groups, the Roundtable believes that business should create an ongoing body which champions and assists with implementation of the strategy, and engages in ongoing collaboration on initiatives to support school-business relationships. It could also keep stakeholders informed of the progress being made on implementing the recommendations, and provide feedback to interested bodies such as the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs.

To fulfil this role, the proposed body would need to bring together the full spectrum of stakeholders who engage in or affect school-business relationships—a much broader group than the Roundtable itself. The Roundtable therefore recommends that business lead the establishment of an Alliance for School-Business Relationships, with membership invited from industry peak bodies, education authorities, principals, teachers, broker organisations, student organisations, parent groups and researchers.

Members of the Roundtable, in collaboration with the Australian Government, could initiate the formation of the alliance by inviting the suggested organisations to a preliminary meeting, with the structure, role and activities of the group to be determined by its members. The establishment of the alliance would create a powerful voice to support implementation of the strategy in this report, and to drive school-business relationships more generally.

RECOMMENDATION

To sustain and build on the momentum created by the Roundtable, the Roundtable recommends that:

13. business create an Alliance for School-Business Relationships, with membership invited from industry peak bodies, education authorities, principals, teachers, broker organisations, student organisations, parent groups and researchers, to:

- champion and assist with implementation of the strategy outlined in the Roundtable's report
- engage in ongoing collaboration to harness business as a partner in education through school-business relationships which improve education outcomes for young people.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Terms of Reference and Membership
- Appendix 2: Participants in Consultations
- Appendix 3: Guiding Principles—Discussion Starter

APPENDIX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Business-School Connections Roundtable will oversee the development of a practical strategy to ensure all schools benefit from a business connection, with the aims of:

- *improving educational outcomes*
- *harnessing business as a partner in education*
- *increasing successful partnerships.*

The strategy should aim to add value to existing and future activity in the field, without disrupting it. It should target both schools and businesses that currently do not have partnerships, and those which already have partnerships but might be looking for ways to strengthen them.

The Roundtable will draw on the personal and organisational experience of its members, and on baseline research which has been commissioned by DEEWR. It will also provide opportunities for the broader community to engage with the development of the strategy.

The Roundtable will conclude its work and present the proposed strategy, for consideration by the Minister for Education, by 25 February 2011.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Roundtable was drawn from people in the business, community and education sectors who have already demonstrated their commitment and expertise in supporting school communities.

Australian Business and Community Network

—Carey Badcoe (Chief Executive Officer)

Foundation for Young Australians

—Adam Smith (Chief Executive Officer) til May 2010

—Jan Owen (Chief Executive Officer) from Oct 2010

—proxy: Dr Lucas Walsh (Director of Research)

IBM Australia

—Sandra Francis (Workforce Management Executive)

Macquarie Group

—Julie White (Division Director and Global Head, Macquarie Group Foundation)

Microsoft Australia

—Craig Foster (Education Director)

National Australia Bank

—Michael Ullmer (Deputy Group CEO) – Chair of the Roundtable

Principals Australia

—Liz Furler (Chief Executive Officer)

—proxy: Andrew Blair

Rio Tinto

—Michelle Gibson (Group Advisor, Operational Learning and Development Strategies) til Nov 2010

—Damien Woods (Principal Advisor, Professional Development) from Dec 2010

Woolworths

—Kim Schmidt (Director Human Resources)

Secretariat support and report writing was provided by the following staff from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations:

- Helen McLaren
- David Hardy
- Kelly Corner
- Andrew Ferguson
- Shona Ritchie
- Nathan Middlebrook.

Many other departmental staff assisted with facilitation and note-taking during the consultation workshops.

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANTS IN CONSULTATIONS

To support their work, the Roundtable conducted a national consultation process which included workshops in six capital cities, one rural and one remote community; face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders from education authorities, industry peak bodies and parent peak organisations; written submissions in response to the Roundtable's Discussion Paper; and separate consultations with young people.

The Roundtable thanks all the following organisations for generously participating in the consultation process:

| | |
|---|---|
| Aberfoyle Park High School | Australian National Retailers Association |
| Aboriginal Employment Strategy | Australian Parents Council |
| ACS Foundation | Australian Youth Mentoring Network |
| ACT & Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry | Aviation High School |
| AgForce Queensland | Ballajura Community College |
| Albury Wodonga Community College | Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network |
| Allco Equity Partners | Beacon Foundation |
| Allens Arthur Robinson | Belmont City College |
| American Express Australia Ltd | Bendigo Bank Group |
| Anglicare Australia | Bendigo Senior Secondary College |
| ANZ Bank | Big Brothers Big Sisters of Australia Ltd |
| Ardoch Youth Foundation | Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith Schools Industry Partnership Inc |
| Asia Education Foundation | Brisbane Catholic Education |
| Association of Development and Alumni in Education Professionals | Brophy Family and Youth Services |
| Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia | Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School |
| Association of Independent Schools of South Australia | Business Council of Australia |
| Association of Independent Schools of Tasmania | Business SA |
| Association of Independent Schools of Victoria | Busy Inc |
| Association of Parents & Friends of ACT Schools | Canberra College |
| Australian Business and Community Network | Career Industry Council of Australia |
| Australian Business Week | Catholic Education WA |
| Australian Capital Territory Government Department of Education and Training | Catholic Secondary Principals Australia |
| Australian Catholic University, Faculty of Education | CCI Apprenticeship Solutions |
| Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry | Chamber of Commerce and Industry |
| Australian Council for Educational Leaders | Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland |
| Australian Council of State School Organisations | Chanel College |
| Australian Education Union | Charles La Trobe College |
| Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations | Christian Brothers College |
| Australian Government, The Treasury | Christies Beach High School |
| Australian Industry Group | Churchlands Senior High School |
| Australian Information Industry Association | Clemenger |
| Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership | Clontarf Aboriginal College |
| | COAG Reform Council |
| | Colony 47 |
| | Commonwealth Bank |
| | Community Partnerships @ Work Inc |
| | Concept2Creation |
| | ConocoPhillips |
| | Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council |

| | |
|--|---|
| Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia | Inner North Local Learning and Employment Network |
| Country Education Foundation Australia | Institute for Trade Skills Excellence |
| Cowell Area School | Insurance Australia Group |
| CQUniversity | Investec (Australia) Limited |
| CSIRO | John Allen & Associates |
| Dampier Port Authority | Karratha Primary School |
| Dare to Lead | Kingsford Smith School |
| Deloitte | Kingston SHS |
| Deutsche Bank AG | KPMG |
| Education Services Australia | Le Fevre High School |
| Education.au | Leadership Victoria |
| Energy Education Australia | Linfox |
| Enterprise Adelaide | Lions Australia |
| Ernst & Young | Lower Hunter Vocational Education Partnership Association Inc |
| Exodus Training Centre | Mallesons Stephen Jaques |
| Family, School and Community Partnerships Bureau | Marble Park SHS |
| Financial Services Council | Marist College |
| Flinders University | Mathematical Association of South Australia |
| Fogarty Foundation | McDonald's |
| ForestWorks Learning & Skills Development | Melba Copland Secondary School |
| Foster Wheeler WorleyParsons | Melbourne Girls Grammar |
| Foster's Group Limited | Microsoft Australia |
| Foundation for Young Australians | Mind Matters |
| Frankston Mornington Peninsula Local Learning and Employment Network | Mindarie Senior College |
| Fuji Xerox Australia Pty Limited | Minerals Tertiary Education Council |
| Fulton Law | Minter Ellison Lawyers |
| Future School Design Project | Mission Australia |
| Gateway Learning Community | Mitcham Primary School |
| Gifted and Talented Children's Association of WA | Monash University |
| Gingin District High School | Morely Senior High School |
| Gladstone Engineering Alliance | Mount Barker Community College |
| Goldman Sachs | Murdoch University (Faculty of Arts and Education) |
| Goldman Sachs JBWere | MWLP (formerly known as the Macarthur Workplace Learning Program) |
| Goondiwindi Training and Technology | NAB |
| Goulburn Murray Local Learning and Employment Network | NAMIG (Northern Advanced Manufacturing Industry Group) Inc |
| Graham Farmer Foundation | National Catholic Education Commission |
| Grattan Institute | National Centre of Science, Information Technology and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australians |
| Great Southern Employment Development Committee | New South Wales Government Department of Education and Training |
| Green Building Council Australia | New South Wales Partnership Broker State Network |
| Group Training Northern Territory | Newman Senior High School |
| Hawker College | Nhulundu Wooribah Indigenous Health Organisation Inc |
| Health and Community Services Workforce Council | Northern Adelaide State Secondary Schools Alliance |
| Healthy Futures | Northern Territory Government Department of Education and Training |
| Henley High School | Northland Secondary College |
| Huonville High School | |
| IMIA Graduate School of Leadership | |
| Independent Education Union Australia | |
| Independent Schools Council of Australia | |
| Industry Capability Network—SA | |

NRMA
NSW Business Chamber
NSW Parents Council
Optus
Para Hills High School
Partnership Broker National Network
Perth Modern School
Philanthropy Australia
PhillipsKPA
Pilbara Development Commission
Pilbara TAFE
Pindon College
PPB Advisory
Principals Australia
Qantas Foundation
Queensland Catholic Education Commission
Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Queensland Government Department of Education and Training
Queensland Independent Schools Parents Council Inc
Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee
Queensland Partnership Brokers State Network
Queensland Rail
Queensland Tourism Industry Council
Queensland University of Technology
Queensland Youth Connections State Network
Re-engineering Australia Foundation
Residential Development Industry Alliance
Rio Tinto
Rockhampton Grammar School
Rockhampton Regional Council
Roxy Downs Area School
Rural Health Education Foundation
Rural Skills Australia
SA Commission for Catholic Schools
Sacred Heart College
Schools Volunteer Program
Scots College
Seaview High School
Service Skills Australia
Service to Youth Council
Sevenoaks Senior College
Seymour College
SGIO
Sheldon College
Shire of Roebourne
Skilling Solutions Queensland
SkillsDMC (Resources & Infrastructure)
Social Ventures Australia
Sothertons
South Australia Government Department of Education and Children's Services
South Australia Partnership Brokers State Network
South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs Inc
South Australian Secondary Principals Association
St Jerome's Primary School
St Luke's College
St Mary's College (Broome)
St Mary's Erskinville
St Paul's College
Stockland
Tasmania Government Department of Education
Tasmania Partnership Brokers State Network
Telstra
The Grange College
The Smith Family
The University of Sydney
Thornbury Primary School
Thornlie Senior High School
Trade Training Centres
UnitingCare Australia
University of Southern Queensland
University of Tasmania
University of Western Australia (Graduate School of Education)
Urrbrae Agricultural High School
Valley View Secondary College
VETnetwork Australia
Victor Harbor High School
Victoria Government Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Victorian Parents Council
Victorian Principals Association
Victorian Women's Trust
Village Roadshow
Virtual Enterprise Australia
WA Secondary School Education Administrators Association
WA Youth Connections State Network
West Pilbara Community and Youth Justice
Western Australia Government Department of Education
Western Australia Government Department of Training and Workforce Development
Western Australian Network of School Business Community Partnership Brokers
Western Futures
Willetton Senior High School
Windsor Gardens Vocational College
Woodside Energy Ltd
Woodville High School (partnership with Western Futures & AV Jennings)
Yaandina
York District High School

Young people from Aspley State High School,
Brisbane; Bialik College, Melbourne; Mary
Mackillop Catholic Regional College,

Leongatha; Pinjarra State High School,
Pinjarra; and Sylvania High School, Sydney
Youth Education Centre

APPENDIX 3: GUIDING PRINCIPLES—DISCUSSION STARTER

As discussed in section 4.2, the Roundtable has developed the following to help get the process to develop a set of guiding principles for school-business relationships underway. These should be regarded as a discussion starter.

Purpose, scope and benefits

- The fundamental purpose of all school-business relationships is to improve students' learning.
- School-business relationships take diverse forms, and potentially can span the whole school curriculum.
- All school-business relationships work best when both businesses and schools can see benefits from participation. Those planning relationships should ensure that benefits for each party are understood and agreed from the outset.
- Quality relationships are rarely those in which businesses participate for direct commercial motives.

Participation

- School-business relationships are suitable for and able to be accommodated by the full range of Australian businesses, regardless of industry sector, size or geographical location.
- School-business relationships are able to encompass all students, regardless of school year, school sector, or school location.
- For school-business relationships which are based on places, criteria for participation based upon student need should be developed.
- Fair and rational participation by both businesses and students will be assisted by regional cooperation that brings businesses and schools together.

Initiating school-business relationships

- Local initiative by individual businesses and individual schools is a key factor in initiating school-business relationships.
- School-business relationships should be undertaken voluntarily by businesses and by schools, rather than being mandated or required.
- The involvement of brokers with special expertise in school-business relationships can assist both businesses and schools wishing to take part.
- Encouragement from the senior leadership of business organisations and school systems can encourage local businesses and schools to participate in school-business relationships as part of their normal day-to-day operations.

Quality and sustainability

- The longer-term sustainability of school-business relationships is a direct function of their quality: sustainability will not be achieved without quality being given the highest priority by planners and managers.
- The keys to quality include: shared goals and visions; resources that are adequate to deliver these goals; appropriate monitoring and evaluation; leadership and commitment by both businesses and schools; and embedding connections in the normal operations of both businesses and schools.

Resourcing school-business relationships

- Both businesses and schools should contribute to the overall resources needed for effective programs, but the level and type of resources will vary from program to program.

- All programs should ensure that resource issues are met if student needs are to be addressed and quality is to be assured. Common issues include designated mentors for students, insurance cover, and adequate time for coordination, liaison, and student preparation and debriefing.
- Where adequate resources cannot be made available to cover such requirements, serious consideration should be given to deciding whether or not to proceed.
- Regional cooperation in the use of resources and local flexibility in school financing arrangements will help to improve the quality of school-business relationships.

Evaluation and monitoring

- Evaluation and monitoring should be built into all school-business relationship programs as an essential feature of program quality.
- The most important monitoring and evaluation of school-business relationships occurs at the level of the individual program. It should be related to the goals of the individual program and include all key parties.
- Due to the diversity of school-business relationships, a single outcome measure for all programs is not appropriate.
- In addition to the local level, monitoring and evaluation can also take place across several schools, several work sites, several businesses, or several programs. There is also a national responsibility for periodic national monitoring of patterns and levels of participation and of progress in improving quality.

NOTES

¹ Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *Melbourne Declaration on educational goals for young Australians*, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne, 2008.

² Australia 2020 Summit, *Australia 2020 Summit: Final report*, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, 2008, p. 12, viewed 10 February 2011, <http://www.australia2020.gov.au/final_report/index.cfm>.

³ For example, activities under the various national partnerships, the Family-Schools and Community Partnerships Bureau, and the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program, established around the same time as the Roundtable.

⁴ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Unfolding opportunities: a baseline study of school-business relationships in Australia*, report prepared by PhillipsKPA, DEEWR, Canberra, 2010. This report is available from the Department's web site <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/Roundtable.aspx>>.

⁵ Business-School Connections Roundtable, *Supporting business-school connections: discussion paper of the Business-School Connections Roundtable*, 2010. This report is available from the Department's web site <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/Roundtable.aspx>>.

⁶ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Strengthening school-business relationships*, report prepared by Australian Council for Educational Research, DEEWR, Canberra, 2011. This report is available from the Department's web site <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/Roundtable.aspx>>.

⁷ These reports are available from the Department's web site <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/Roundtable.aspx>>.

⁸ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Unfolding opportunities: a baseline study of school-business relationships in Australia*, (p. 29) report prepared by PhillipsKPA, DEEWR, Canberra, 2010. This report is available from the Department's web site <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/Roundtable.aspx>>.

⁹ Written submission from Western Australian Network of School Business Community Partnership Brokers.

¹⁰ Project-based relationships may naturally end when the project itself is complete. However, the research undertaken for the Roundtable suggests that longer-term relationships often develop from these projects. This may be because it is easier to get support to establish a relationship when it is seen as time-limited and project-focused, rather than an open-ended commitment. Through the course of the project the partners develop a common purpose, shared values, and commitment, and want to develop new areas of collaboration. The research suggests that relationships often broaden from an initial focus on school-to-work transitions and employability skills to other areas, such as professional development for teachers and school leaders.

¹¹ Written submission from Western Australian Network of School Business Community Partnership Brokers.

¹² Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Unfolding opportunities: a baseline study of school-business relationships in Australia*, (p. 64) report prepared by PhillipsKPA, DEEWR, Canberra, 2010. This report is available from the Department's web site

¹³ Rio Tinto, *Social investment: working with Australian communities*, Rio Tinto, Melbourne, 2008.

¹⁴ Written submission from the Australian Business and Community Network.

¹⁵ Other reports include:

Learning to Work: Report on the Inquiry into VET in Schools, House of Representatives Standing Committee, 2004; *Inquiry into combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions*, House of Representatives Standing Committee, Parliamentary paper: 391/2009; and *Early vocational education and training programs for young Aboriginal learners: Perceptions of practitioners and young people*, NCVET 2009.

¹⁶ J Topsfield, 'Business donors can now aid state schools', *The Age*, 28 September 2010, viewed 5 November 2010, <<http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/business-donors-can-now-aid-state-schools-20100927-15u3v.html>>.

¹⁷ The Roundtable gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Department of Treasury for the technical details in this and the following paragraph.

¹⁸ Technically, the funds are endorsed with deductible gift recipient (DGR) status, which means that donations to them become tax deductible. Tax deductible donations made to private ancillary funds can only be passed on to recipients with DGR status.

¹⁹ B Pike (Victorian Minister for Education), *New Foundation to Link Schools and Business*, media release, 28 September 2010, viewed 5 November 2010, <<http://archive.premier.vic.gov.au/component/content/article/12038.html>>.

- ²⁰ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Review of funding for schooling: Terms of reference*, DEEWR, Canberra, 2010. This report is available from the department's web site <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/ReviewofFunding/Documents/ReviewFundToR.pdf>>.
- ²¹ For further information on the submission process see <www.deewr.gov.au/fundingreview>.
- ²² J Austin, *The collaboration challenge: how nonprofits and businesses succeed through strategic alliances*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2000, pp. 19-39.
- ²³ Written submission from NSW Partnership Brokers Network.
- ²⁴ Comment at consultation workshop.
- ²⁵ Written submission from Australian Business and Community Network.
- ²⁶ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, n.d., Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, viewed 13 January 2011, <<http://www.aitsl.edu.au/ta/go/home/pid/713>>.
- ²⁷ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, n.d., Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, viewed 13 January 2011, <<http://www.aitsl.edu.au/ta/go/home/pid/733>>.
- ²⁸ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, *The national professional standard for principals: exposure draft*, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2010, p. 11, viewed 13 January 2011, <<http://www.aitsl.edu.au/ta/webdav/site/tasite/shared/Request%20for%20Proposals/Exposure%20Draft%20National%20Professional%20Standard%20for%20Principals,%20December%202010.pdf>>.
- ²⁹ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, n.d., Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra, viewed 20 February 2011, <<http://smarterschools.gov.au/supplementary/Pages/NationalKeyReformProjects.aspx>>.
- ³⁰ Written submission from Rural Skills Australia.
- ³¹ Written submission from The Smith Family.
- ³² Written submission from Beacon Foundation.
- ³³ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, viewed 15 January 2011, <<http://www.llen.vic.gov.au/>>.
- ³⁴ Incorporating the Local Learning and Employment Networks in Victoria.
- ³⁵ Written submission from The Smith Family.
- ³⁶ Written submission from NSW Partnership Brokers Network.
- ³⁷ Written submission from Beacon Foundation.
- ³⁸ For a detailed analysis of the references to business in the Melbourne Declaration and the national partnerships, see Business-School Connections Roundtable, *Supporting business-school connections: Discussion paper of the Business-School Connections Roundtable*, 2010. This report is available from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations web site <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/Roundtable.aspx>>.
- ³⁹ Written submission from the Australian Industry Group.
- ⁴⁰ Written submission from the Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network (BGK LLEN).
- ⁴¹ Written submission from the Australian Industry Group.
- ⁴² Written submission from Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland.
- ⁴³ See for example, NSW Department of Education and Training, *Schools and businesses working together: a support document to assist principals and teachers to develop school-business relationships*, 2004, at <<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/doingbusiness/schbusiness/schbuspaper.pdf>> and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *Business working with education: a statement of priorities for partnerships between business and Victorian Government schools*, 2010, at <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/businessworking.htm>>.
- ⁴⁴ M Andrew, 2010, *Business Working with Education*, viewed 11 February 2011, <<http://www.bwefoundation.org.au/>>.
- ⁴⁵ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *The Benefits of School-Business Relationships*, report prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), DEEWR, Canberra, 2011. This report is available from the Department's web site
- ⁴⁶ Comment at consultation workshop.
- ⁴⁷ Written submission from Beacon Foundation.
- ⁴⁸ Written submission from Rural Skills Australia.
- ⁴⁹ Comment at consultation workshop.
- ⁵⁰ Written submission from Beacon Foundation.
- ⁵¹ K Robbie, Social Ventures Australia, personal conversation, 7 February 2011.
- ⁵² Written submission from NSW Partnership Brokers Network.
- ⁵³ Based on information from Australian Partners in Learning website, Microsoft Australia, 2011, Microsoft Australia, viewed 22 February 2011, <<http://www.microsoft.com/australia/education/schools/partners-in-learning/default.aspx>>.

- ⁵⁴ Teach For Australia, 2009, Teach For Australia, viewed 11 February 2011, <<http://www.teachforaustralia.org/faq>>.
- ⁵⁵ T Oertzon, 2009, Teach For Australia, viewed 11 February 2011, <<http://www.teachforaustralia.org/apply/deferred-entry-scheme>>.
- ⁵⁶ A Noble, 2009, Teach For Australia, viewed 11 February 2011, <<http://www.teachforaustralia.org/apply/deferred-entry-scheme>>.
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- ⁵⁸ Australia Business Arts Foundation, 2007, Australia Business Arts Foundation, viewed 15 February 2011, <<http://www.abaf.org.au/index.php?sectionID=1350&pageID=1353&staticID=Business-Volunteering>>.
- ⁵⁹ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *New school ties: networks for success*, report prepared by R Black, Office for Policy, Research and Innovation, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Melbourne, 2008. This report is available at <<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/publ/new-school-ties-report.pdf>>.
- ⁶⁰ Australian Business and Community Network, n.d., Australian Business and Community Network, viewed 20 February 2011, <<http://www.abcn.com.au/100faces/>>.
- ⁶¹ NAB Schools First, *Schools First 2009 public report*, 2010, p. 8.
- ⁶² Details on the Australian Curriculum Connect project are available at <<http://esa.edu.au/projects/australian-curriculum-connect>>, viewed 11 February 2011.
- ⁶³ Suggestions made during the Roundtable's consultations with young people, as captured by the Foundation for Young Australians.
- ⁶⁴ Written submission from National Network of Partnership Brokers.
- ⁶⁵ Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, *Business operators still at school: the missing piece of the school to work transition puzzle*, report prepared by Strategic Economic Solutions, RIRDC, Canberra, 2004, p. vi-vii.
- ⁶⁶ Australian Labor, n.d., Australian Labor, Canberra, viewed 11 February 2011, <<http://www.alp.org.au/agenda/national-trade-cadetships/>>.
- ⁶⁷ Registered Training Organisations will deliver the National Trade Cadetships in areas where a Trade Training Centre is not yet available.
- ⁶⁸ Described in written submission from Principals Australia.
- ⁶⁹ Council of Australian Governments, *National partnership agreement on youth attainment and transitions*, COAG, 2009, p. 19.
- ⁷⁰ According to the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), *Work experience, work placements and part-time work among Australian secondary school students*, LSAY Briefing Report, no. 3, 2001, p. 1-6, <http://research.acer.edu.au/lsay_briefs/5>, in 1997, 84 per cent of Year 10 and 11 students were participating in work experience. In the baseline research undertaken for the Roundtable, 93 per cent of school-business relationships in the school-to-work transitions area involved businesses providing work experience, compared to 86 per cent related to career information, and 80 per cent related to structured workplace learning.
- ⁷¹ For example, the proportion of students aged 15 to 19 years in employment for one hour or more per week increased from 25 per cent in 1986 to 37 per cent in 2007. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Submission no. 53*, DEEWR, Canberra, p. 10, cited in House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, *Adolescent overload?: Report of the inquiry into combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions*, HRSCET, Canberra, 2009, p. 10.
- ⁷² Written submission from National Network of Partnership Brokers.
- ⁷³ Australian Industry Group, *Response to Skills Australia discussion paper: creating a future direction for Australian vocational education and training*, 2010, viewed 16 January 2011, <http://www.aigroup.com.au/portal/binary/com.epicentric.contentmanagement.servlet.ContentDeliveryServlet/LIVE_CONTENT/Policy%2520and%2520Representation/Submissions/General/2010/R_Ai_Group_Skills_Australia_Submission_Creating_Future_Direction_for_Aust_VET_November_2010.pdf>.
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- ⁷⁶ For a comprehensive history of BITC, see D Grayson, *Business-led corporate responsibility coalitions: learning from the example of Business in the Community in the UK – An insider's perspective*, Business in the Community, Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility and the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard, 2007.