

# NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON YOUTH ATTAINMENT AND TRANSITIONS



**NSW**

**2010**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

(Submitted MAY 2011)





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Annual reporting requirements under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions are contained in paragraphs 69 to 72 (reproduced below). In addition, Schedule B of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions contains Indigenous reporting requirements.

69. Thereafter, States and Territories will provide annual reports to the Commonwealth against the outcomes, performance benchmarks and performance indicators specified in this Agreement as outlined in table 1 at paragraph 16 and in table 3 at paragraph 59.

70. To meet a shared commitment to reporting on efforts to close the gap for Indigenous people, States and Territories also commit to including in their annual reports progress towards halving the gap in Indigenous Year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2020. Progress measures towards halving the gap in Indigenous Year 12 or equivalent attainment are at Schedule B.

71. Reporting will include detail of funding provided to the non-government sector and maintenance of any existing State and Territory funding for careers and transitions support services (see paragraph 52 and 53).

72. The first annual report, for the period 1 July 2009 to 31 December 2010 is due by 31 May 2011. Subsequent annual reports for each calendar year of the Agreement are due by 31 May of the following year. The final report, for the 2013 calendar year, is due by 31 May 2014.

## PART A: NSW, National Partnership on Youth and Transitions – May 2011 report

Outcome	Performance Indicator	Source	May 2011	August addendum	May 2012	August addendum	May 2013	August addendum	May 2014	August addendum
Increased participation of young people in education and training	Enrolment of full-time equivalent students in years 11 and 12 <sup>1</sup>	National Schools Statistics Collection (ABS)	139,969	-	2011 School	-	2012 School	-	2013 School	-
	Enrolment of Indigenous full-time equivalent students in years 11 and 12 <sup>2</sup>		3,471	-	2011 School	-	2012 School	-	2013 School	-
	Enrolment of Indigenous full-time equivalent students in years 9 and 10 <sup>3</sup>		7,481	-	2011 School	-	2012 School	-	2013 School	-
	15-19 year olds without a Year 12 certificate and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a vocational education and training (VET) course at Certificate II level or higher <sup>4</sup>	VOCSTATS (NCVER)	-	2010 VET	-	2011 VET	-	2012 VET	-	2013 VET
	Indigenous 15-19 year olds without a Year 12 certificate and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a vocational education and training (VET) course at Certificate II level or higher <sup>5</sup>		-	2010 VET	-	2011 VET	-	2012 VET	-	2013 VET
	Indigenous 15-19 year olds without a Year 12 certificate and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a vocational education and training (VET) course at Certificate I level <sup>6</sup>		-	2010 VET	-	2011 VET	-	2012 VET	-	2013 VET
Increased attainment of young people aged 15-24, including Indigenous youth	The proportion of young people aged 20-24 who have attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above	Survey of Education and Work (ABS)	86.0%	-	2011 SEW	-	2012 SEW	-	2013 SEW	-
		VET completions (VOCSTATS) <sup>7</sup>	-	2010 VET	-	2011 VET	-	2012 VET	-	2013 VET
	The proportion of young Indigenous people aged 20-24 who have attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above	ABS Census	-	-	-	-	2011 Census	-	-	-
		VET completions (VOCSTATS) <sup>8</sup>	-	2010 VET	-	2011 VET	-	2012 VET	-	2013 VET
Young people make a successful transition from school to further education, training or full-time employment	The proportion of young people aged 15-24 participating in post-school education, training or employment six months after leaving school	Survey of Education and Work (ABS) <sup>9</sup>	74.0%	-	2011 SEW	-	2012 SEW	-	2013 SEW	-
Improved Indigenous attendance	Attendance rates for Indigenous students in years 1-10 in government schools	MCEECDYA National Schools Attendance Collection (NSAC) <sup>10</sup>  Figures awaiting release by ACARA	Year 1 2010 attendance	-	2011 attendance	-	2012 attendance	-	2013 attendance	-
			Year 2	-	-	-	-	-		
			Year 3	-	-	-	-	-		
			Year 4	-	-	-	-	-		
			Year 5	-	-	-	-	-		
			Year 6	-	-	-	-	-		
			Year 7	-	-	-	-	-		
			Year 8	-	-	-	-	-		
			Year 9	-	-	-	-	-		
			Year 10	-	-	-	-	-		
Improved Indigenous retention	Apparent retention years 7/8 to year 10, by Indigenous status <sup>11</sup>	National Schools Statistics Collection (ABS)	98.0%	-	2011 ARR	-	2012 ARR	-	2013 ARR	-
	Apparent retention years 7/8 to year 12, by Indigenous status <sup>12</sup>		38.6%	-	2011 ARR	-	2012 ARR	-	2013 ARR	-
Improved Indigenous participation and engagement	School level strategies <sup>13</sup>	Jurisdiction information								

### Notes on the data

- Attainment measure for 20 to 24 year olds is sourced from the ABS Survey of Education and Work. The survey is undertaken in May each year with results normally reported in December of the same year. The data from the survey relates to measures at that point in time.
- The ABS Survey of Education and Work is a sample survey; results are therefore reported with confidence intervals. For smaller jurisdictions confidence intervals can be substantial. The nature of the survey and the size of the error mean that it may not be possible to accurately identify change over time, even in larger jurisdictions. These data limitations were signalled by the COAG Reform Council (2010).
- Data from NCVER VOCSTATS are normally available in July of the following year. VET statistics reflect a cumulative summary of the year's activity as opposed to a point in time.
- According to MCEECDYA guidelines, "Attendance rates for indigenous students" relates to students who identify as Indigenous. The data are collected for the first semester of the school year, and reported in the first quarter of the following year. There are data quality issues. Significant numbers of students in all jurisdictions have not indicated their Indigenous/non-Indigenous status. Collection methodologies vary across some jurisdictions and sectors. Data should be treated with caution.

<sup>1</sup> As per 2010 Participation target measure

<sup>2</sup> As per Schedule B

<sup>3</sup> As per Schedule B

<sup>4</sup> As per Schedule B

<sup>5</sup> As per 2010 Participation target measure

<sup>6</sup> As per Schedule B

<sup>7</sup> To monitor annual changes – reported for calendar year VET completions, age to be determined.

<sup>8</sup> As per Schedule B. To monitor annual changes – reported for calendar year VET completions, age to be determined.

<sup>9</sup> As per NP YAT Table 3 (p14)

<sup>10</sup> As per Schedule B. This section will be populated by DEEWR pending data availability. This may result in this information being part of the August addendum.

<sup>11</sup> As per Schedule B

<sup>12</sup> As per Schedule B

<sup>13</sup> As per Schedule B- This information is to be provided under Part B – Indigenous Reporting

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## **PART B:**

### **Jurisdictional Context**

Creating the environment to support young people reach their full potential continues to be a central concern and priority of New South Wales.

In New South Wales delivery of education and training to young people is guided by two fundamental principles:

that all young people are entitled to high quality education and training that provides recognised credentials and clear pathways to employment and lifelong learning (NSW Government's reforms for the Higher School Certificate)

that people from all backgrounds and circumstances share access to the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to participate fully and successfully in the community (NSW Charter for Equity in Education and Training).

The following section provides an update of developments in the New South Wales reform context which have occurred since the release of the endorsed implementation Plan in April 2010.

#### **NSW Labour Market**

While the global economic crisis did not impact on Australia, or NSW, as negatively as anticipated, youth unemployment continued to be significantly higher than general unemployment and challenges remain for young people in the transition from school to work.

*How Young People are Faring*, the 2010 report from the Foundation for Young Australians notes the persistent gap in unemployment rates between teenagers and adults. In 2010, this was nearly 12 points with adult unemployment at 5 per cent and the rate for teenagers at 17 per cent (close to 18 per cent for males and 16 per cent for females). It also noted that males are experiencing greater difficulty than females in their transition from school. Australian and international studies recognise that employability depends strongly on the level of qualification received and there is increasing demand for higher level qualifications across all industry sectors.

The NSW unemployment rate for 15-19 year olds remained high at 18.4% at June 2010 compared to 20.2% at June 2009 and substantially higher than the rate of 12.7% at June 2008. Over the year to June 2010 the comparative unemployment rate for the labour force in NSW overall declined from 6.5% to 5.2%.

#### **Education and Training Participation and Attainment**

Young people in New South Wales have access to a wide range of education opportunities and pathways. At May 2010, the most recent data available, 81.4% of New South Wales 15-19 year olds and 45.2% of 20-24 year olds were engaged in education or training, compared to 78.7% and 41.8% respectively in 2008. The percentage of 20-24 year olds having completed Year 12 or a Certificate II or higher increased from 83.4% in 2008 to 86% in 2010.

Almost 180,000 young people aged 24 years and under studied at TAFE NSW in 2010, representing 42% of total students. A further 23,300 NSW students, aged 15 to 24 years, enrolled in a publicly funded course delivered by a contracted private Registered Training Organisation.

*Improving access to more flexible, relevant and engaging learning options*

### **Independent Employment Advisor Program**

The Independent Employment Adviser program is a major new initiative of the NSW government which will provide real-life industry grounded support for young people struggling to stay in school helping them identify a career path, explore the variety of education and training options to acquire relevant skills, and broker employment opportunities aligned to their interests.

The NSW government has allocated \$3.9 million to the Independent Employment Adviser initiative for service provision in 2010 and 2011.

The new service providers are non-government organisations with strong regional industry knowledge and linkages with local employers. They will work with government schools and students to deliver industry grounded school-to-work transition planning and advice, case management, mentoring and employment brokerage services.

Independent Employment Advisers will deliver value adding services to over 1,000 young people in government schools who are in greatest need of support. The new service is being delivered in 10 regions of high youth unemployment and low school retention in NSW. These service regions have been defined to correspond to those of the Partnership Broker and Youth Connections programs in Western and South Western Sydney; Hunter-Central Coast; and the Illawarra so as to facilitate complementarily and efficient interaction of the various youth services.

The program is targeted to:

- i. seriously disengaging students in Years 9 and 10 providing individual or small group mentoring and advice in concert with key school staff and the regional Youth Connections provider; arrangement of tailored alternative education and training programs within the School Certificate or equivalent and brokered extended work experience or work placements; and
- ii. seriously disengaging students in Years 11 and 12 providing individual case management and career transition planning coordinated with school and where appropriate TAFE staff and the regional Youth Connection provider, brokering and monitoring part-time or full-time work opportunities and negotiating continued relevant further education and training where possible.

Wrap-around community services, including for example housing and health support, will be arranged where appropriate.

Though in the early stages, the following case study shows the flexible and alternative pathway models being pursued, with strong school, industry and community support, which augur well for positive engagement and attainment outcomes for the severely at-risk youth concerned.

*The Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury & Penrith Schools Industry Partnership Inc.* commenced the IEA program at Cranebrook High School in March 2011. The school is in a Low SES part of Western Sydney, high indigenous enrolments, high youth unemployment and with only 40% of families

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reporting having qualifications higher than Year 10.

The school enthusiastically embraced the IEA program with 15 students, nearly all male and in Year 11, joining the program through a nomination process arranged by the Careers Advisor. The school recommended that the IEA program be delivered off the school grounds and be as “non school” as possible. Barnardo’s operate a community centre across the road from the school and kindly offered the use of their facilities for meetings with the students.

During the initial assessment of student needs and development of Individual Transition Plans it quickly emerged that all the students had an interest in various construction trades, but were not “work ready” or likely to be competitive in the job market without further personal development. JobQuest, who are assisting *Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury & Penrith Schools Industry Partnership Inc.*, have advised that this cohort respond better to practical projects with embedded learning, rather than a traditional classroom approach. To this end a search was undertaken for a project that could engage the students and advance their learning, skills and job readiness.

The community centre the students were meeting at is unfinished. Barnardo’s ran out of money to complete the kitchen, the courtyard and the landscaping. The undertaking of these works under appropriate industry guidance provided the hands on project appropriate for the Cranebrook IEA students.

The construction company Laing O’Rourke, who like to support the communities they work in has willingly embraced the project pledging to provide staff to guide the project and mentor students. Laing O’Rourke sees opportunities for work placement and the possibility of students becoming future apprentices.

Currently the management of Laing O’Rourke and Barnardos are meeting to design a courtyard and landscaping plan for lodgement with council. Laing O’Rourke will source materials necessary for the work through its supplier networks. Where further resources are necessary the region Partnership Broker will endeavour to find other partners to support the project.

This project highlights the benefits of aligning the efforts of schools, youth connections, partnership brokers, business and the community to provide a more engaging and relevant transition pathway for at risk students.

The project does not claim to be a finished work, or a template for all that will follow. Community assets and opportunities vary from school to school, but the inspiration provided from this initial pilot will empower us all as we expand the IEA program more widely across Western Sydney.

### **School Certificate and Higher School Certificate VET Programs**

Over the past year the NSW Board of Studies continued to enhance curriculum provisions enabling access to VET pathways leading to Certificate III and IV AQF VET qualifications for students in Years 11 and 12.

A new Human Services Curriculum Framework has been developed based on the CHC08 and HLT07 Training Packages for implementation from 2011 providing access to Certificate III qualifications in Aged Care, Allied Health Assistance and Health Services Assistance. The Board has also commenced the development of a Financial Services Curriculum Framework, based in the FNS10 Training Package for implementation from 2012.

Over the past year the NSW Board of Studies has also:

- designed and endorsed a new VET Content Endorsed Course (CEC) in Beauty for implementation from 2011
- updated VET CECs in Community Services, Hairdressing and Screen and Media to align with the most recent version of their associated Training Packages for implementation from 2011
- endorsed 104 VET (Board Endorsed Courses ) BECs for 2011
  - 7 VET CECs and 17 TAFE NSW VET CECs
  - 71 locally designed HSC VET Board Endorsed Courses (BECs)
    - 36 available for delivery by TAFE NSW
    - 16 available for delivery by school/private provider
    - 19 available for delivery by both TAFE NSW and school/private provider
  - 9 School Certificate VET BECs

### **Access to VET courses by students in Years 9 and 10**

The Board of Studies continued to enhance the recognition of training pathways within the School Certificate (SC) and Higher School Certificate (HSC) and the expansion of access to training pathways commencing in Years 9 or 10.

The number of students in Years 9 and 10 accessing VET courses continues to grow following the decision in 2008 to open up access to all schools. The number of entries in School Certificate VET courses/qualifications grew from 120 students in 2008 to 161 students in 2009. Years 9 and 10 students undertaking early commencement of HSC VET courses totalled more than 1,200 students in 2009. Final figures for 2010 will not be available until July 2011, however, preliminary figures for 2010 indicate continuing growth in these pathways.

### **New HSC English Course for students pursuing employment or vocational studies after completing their HSC**

A new English Studies Content Endorsed Course was introduced as a pilot in 2010 for Year 11 to meet the needs of students who are planning to pursue employment or vocational training at the completion of their HSC, rather than going directly to university. The course does not count towards university entrance. The pilot was extended to all secondary schools for students in Year 11 in 2011.

### **Equivalent/alternative courses of study**

From 1 January 2010, children must remain at school until age 17 or alternatively, undertake other approved education or training, or undertake a combination of approved education, training and work.

A number TAFE NSW (AQF Certificate II) courses and apprenticeship/traineeship arrangements have been approved to satisfy these alternative provisions.

The Board of Studies has recently developed a framework of requirements and delegations for other equivalent or alternative courses of study.

The Board has also developed criteria for approval of alternative education program content and providers.

A cross-sectoral endorsement panel will consider applications for alternative education programs based on these criteria. This will ensure that alternative programs endorsed for delivery to young people are of a consistently high quality.



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## **Review of the NSW School Certificate**

The Board of Studies began a review of the School Certificate in 2010, with a view to enhancing and modernising the credential.

During the second half of consultations were undertaken with key NSW education stakeholder organisations.

Options are being prepared for consideration by the NSW Board of Studies and the NSW Government, based on the first phase of the review.

## **Work Education courses in NSW schools**

Government and Catholic secondary schools currently deliver the NSW Board of Studies *Work Education* Years 7-10 Syllabus (2003) as either 100 or 200 hour courses. Senior students can opt to study the NSW Board of Studies Content Endorsed Course *Work Studies* course for the Higher School Certificate.

While enrolment numbers are relatively small, (over 8,000 and over 1,800 respectively in Government schools in 2009) there has been increased interest in both these courses. Government schools have reported increases of up to 24 per cent on 2008 figures and this is expected to rise further with the impact of the New School Leaving Age in NSW.

All Year 7-10 syllabuses include NSW Board of Studies cross curriculum content on "Work, Employment and Enterprise" and this is supported by the series of eight *Vocational Learning in Key Learning Area* booklets (2005), available to all government schools.

The availability of more flexible, relevant learning options has been strengthened by the new English Studies Board of Studies Content Endorsed Course (Non-ATAR course) which includes a mandatory unit, *Achieving through English: English and the worlds of education, careers and community*.

## **Curriculum Integration in Trade Training Centres (TTC's)**

Many government and Catholic schools with TTCs are integrating general HSC courses delivery (e.g. English and mathematics) with trade training, adapting content and learning processes to trade perspectives. HSC study options are also being packaged to support specific trade pathways in TTC's.

### **Trade Schools**

26 trade schools are being established across NSW. Trade schools provide young people with the opportunity of a rewarding and challenging future with strong job and career prospects in skill shortage areas, especially those in the trades.

Trade schools offer school based apprenticeships, traineeships and other vocational courses for students in NSW government schools as part of their Higher School Certificate. They are located in either a school or a TAFE.

Government schools will work with TAFE NSW and employers to provide leading-edge training in industry areas where there is demand for skilled workers.

Industry areas include Automotive, Child care, Construction, Electrotechnology, Health Care, Hospitality, Metal and Engineering, Nursing.

The latest trade schools include eight opened in 2010 and the final five are due to open in Semester 1 2011, bringing the total to 26 Trade Schools operating in NSW.

#### *Pre vocational training*

Pre Vocational Training provides a pathway into an apprenticeship or traineeship. It aims to increase apprenticeship and traineeship participation by providing preliminary skills and foundation training for potential apprentices and trainees in trade and non-trade skill shortage areas, while also helping to meet employers' skill needs.

In 2010 two new prevocational training programs commenced targeting young people, aged 15 – 19 years, who wish to enter into apprenticeships or traineeships and are not at school.

#### **Kickstart**

This Commonwealth-funded program is open to young people aged 19 years or under, who are not at school, and targets Aboriginal people and people with a disability. Training can give participants credit of up to 1 year from an apprenticeship

NSW successfully tendered for four projects which cover six regions in NSW - New England, North Coast, Hunter, Central Coast, Illawarra/South Coast, and Western Sydney.

Funding of \$4.3 million was provided for 881 commencements under the Kickstart Program in NSW for 2010-11. In 2010 there were 400 commencements at a cost of approximately \$3 million. Pre-apprenticeships were offered in 6 regions in 11 trade areas where there are shortages of qualified workers: industry areas:

- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Carpentry
- Automotive
- Commercial Cookery
- Butchery
- Baking
- Bricklaying/Blocklaying
- Hairdressing
- Engineering
- Horticulture

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## **'Employment Ready' - Pre-Apprenticeship Program**

The program is a 2010-11 NSW Budget initiative which aims to assist up to 2000 young people into apprenticeships. The program will complement the federally funded Kickstart program. The Government is partnering with registered Group Training Organisations (GTOs) in NSW in this venture.

In 2010, 1,311 training places were committed at a cost of \$3.5 million to assist young people to enter into apprenticeships. 55 applications for funding were received from 23 Group Training Organisations. Funding agreements have been exchanged for 39 projects.

At this stage, 3 of the projects have been completed:

- All 45 students who undertook Stage 1 of the Certificate III in electro-technology Electrician are now registered apprentices. 43 were employed by NECA Group Training and 2 were employed by other electrical contracting companies.
- Of the 15 students who commenced the pre apprenticeship course in the Metals Trade, 10 completed the course. 5 are now employed with 1300apprentice and 1 has gained employment elsewhere in the metals trade.
- Of the 15 students who commenced the pre apprenticeship course in the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Trade, 11 completed the course. 5 are now employed with 1300apprentice and 1 had gained employment elsewhere in the plumbing trade.

## **Review of School Based Apprenticeships**

School Based Apprenticeships (SBAs) were introduced in NSW in 2007.

An independent review was commissioned in mid 2010 to assess and report on the experience with the NSW SBA model over its first three years of operation.

The review found that SBAs are a highly relevant and effective option for students. SBAs expressed a high level of satisfaction with their experience and employers see SBAs as a valid alternative to full-time apprenticeships.

The review also noted the importance of the School Based Traineeship (SBT) pathway. A cross-sectoral Action Plan is being developed to promote and facilitate further growth in participation in both SBA and SBT pathways.

## ***Increasing the provision of quality mentoring opportunities for youth at risk***

### **Corporate Partners for Change**

Corporate Partners for Change has operated in Western Sydney over the last 10 years. The Program aims to assist young and disadvantaged jobseekers to gaining the necessary skills to obtain a job. It involves partnerships between employers and training providers. Employers make an up-front commitment to take

an active role in all aspects of the Program, including the selection of candidates, work experience, advice on how to get a job in the industry and the provision of mentoring in the workplace for participants. Funding of \$985,000 from the Board of Vocational Education and Training allowed for the extension of the program to regional areas (Hunter, Central Coast, Illawarra, New England, Riverina, North West and North Coast) in the period 2008 - 2010.

Under the Corporate Partners for Change Regional Program 82% of participants completed the training and 80% of participants were successful in gaining employment after training.

### **Kickstart Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program**

An important component of the Kickstart Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program is the provision of mentoring in the workplace for participants. The contract with State Training Services for delivery of training by registered training organisations specifies that 100 hours be devoted to work placement (60 hours), work-based support including mentoring and post course advice on course outcomes, career options and support services.

### **Independent Employment Advisor Program**

A key element of the Independent Employment Advisor program is the provision of industry grounded case management and mentoring of the young people struggling to remain in school who are selected for the program.

### ***Creating opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom***

The *School to Work Program* in government schools is highly valued and recognised for its impact on young people's life decisions in a world where the workplace is changing rapidly. The core aim of the program is to provide students with the necessary skills to make a successful transition from school to post-school employment, further education and training. In government schools, these skills include career and transition planning skills, employment related skills and enterprising attributes.

A key emphasis of the School to Work Program in government schools is to encourage schools to extend learning beyond the classroom through the incorporation of vocational learning perspectives in all teaching areas, work experience and volunteering. Around 90% of government schools report providing workplace learning opportunities for students every year and an increasing number are providing opportunities for volunteering.

Many catholic schools offer extended learning beyond the classroom. One example is the, The Lighthouse program in the Diocese of Parramatta supporting indigenous and disengaged students. 65 students in Years 9 and 10 in 2010 undertook one day per week for up to 18 weeks placement with trained mentors in the workplace. The program has had significant success in raising retention for students at risk. The program involved On-the-job training was provided by workplace supervisors, work readiness training and TAFE taster courses.

### ***Offering universal high quality individualised career development and pathways planning***

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## **Career Advisers**

Every NSW government school with a secondary enrolment continues to have either a full time, or proportional part time, Careers Adviser appointed.

Teachers retrained by the Department as Careers Advisers must complete a postgraduate qualification in career education, for example, from RMIT, Edith Cowan University or the Australian Catholic University.

Teachers appointed permanently to the position either have a postgraduate qualification in career development or if not will be trained by the department to achieve such a qualification as a condition of employment. Currently RMIT holds the contract to deliver this training for the Department.

Each year the Department provides orientation training for new careers advisers being trained by the Department in partnership with RMIT. Continuing career adviser professional development programs are conducted by Department regional offices.

Careers Advisers who are 'new scheme' teachers are required to achieve accreditation at Professional Competence level and to maintain their accreditation.

These trained educators organise and oversee career education programs and activities and work experience placements to inform student career decision making, and are integral to a school's career and transition team.

All Catholic school students are able to access career advice, either through advisors employed within the school or an outside agency. Dioceses continue to support the professional development of Careers Advisers through networks, support to go to conferences and subsidising the graduate certificate in Careers.

## **Transition Adviser Training Program**

Transition Advisers in government schools work closely with the Careers Adviser to support the transition needs of targeted students in a school, particularly those most likely to disengage early from education and training.

A comprehensive training program is undertaken in Term 4 each year by keen teachers nominated by their school to undertake this role. In June 2010, a Reflection Day for Transition Advisers in government schools trained the previous year supported valuable professional discussions around their developing practice and initiatives such as DEEWR's Youth Connections and Youth Mentoring Network that foster collaborative community engagement to support young people in their transition planning. The Day informed the training of a further 63 teachers in October 2010 to undertake this role. 135 teachers are actively working in the Transition Adviser role in government schools in 2011.

## **Pathway planning**

The School to Work (STW) Program continues to support the full range of government school students in Years 9-12 to individually plan their transition pathway through and from school.

The Department's Logbook Online supports, among other things, students' individual school to work transition planning. Schools are currently transitioning from a hardcopy resource to the more powerful online version. Data from 2009 indicated that 174 schools were already using the online version and that overall:

- 86,417 students used the logbook for career planning.
- 68,911 students used the logbook for résumé development.
- More than 125,000 students were reported as being able to articulate a career and transition plan and more than 95,000 students reported as having a written plan.

In addition, government schools can access the Student Pathways Survey developed by the Department, which is a unique self-efficacy on-line survey to provide students (Years 9-12) with an opportunity to express their confidence in, and ideas on, career planning and transition. It generates an on-line individual feedback report, which can be retained by each student for reflection and future career and transition planning.

Schools also have access to their individual student data, enabling them to monitor student access to the Survey and to provide a more individualised career service.

The *Student Pathways Survey: School Report* is an aggregation of selected data from students' responses to the survey. This report has the capacity to influence whole school planning by providing evidence of students' levels of self-confidence in key areas that impact on their career and transition planning.

In 2010, 391 government schools and 17,730 students accessed the Student Pathways Survey and 429 government schools accessed the School Report with 901 visits.

The Student Pathways Survey comprises 24 questions and asks students to report on a range of matters including their *Career intentions; Career and transition confidence; Career influencers*; and what is important to them in their career planning, for example, income, hours and travel. Their responses generate an individualised Student Feedback Report that students can use to stimulate their career thinking, planning and next actions.

The Survey provides careers advisers and other significant school personnel with an invaluable insight into the student's stage of career development. It provides an excellent basis for individual career counselling, and can be used with existing tools, practices and programs to better support students career planning, increase student motivation and student engagement with education and training.

The student can also use the Feedback Report to start a conversation with their parents and family about the student's plans for the future.

### ***Improving the industry relevance of career advice***

Careers expos are one of the main vehicles for ensuring that students have up-to-date industry based careers advice tailored to the needs of students and their families. The Directorate's annual compilation of careers expos across the ten school regions is completed each March. Over 50 careers expos are scheduled for 2011 and a number of these have substantial input from the local School Business Community Partnership Broker.

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Government schools reported in December 2009 that over 74,000 students had attended careers expos in the last year; an increasing number of schools (65 per cent, up from 58 per cent) were using industry-specific websites and 440 schools reported they were using *myfuture*.

All ten government school regions and most Catholic dioceses have *myfuture* master trainers, an initiative unique to NSW which is now being introduced in other states and territories.

### **Year 12 attainment rates**

While Commonwealth and jurisdiction officials have agreed that Year 12 attainment data cannot be compared across States and Territories and cannot and will not be used to measure change against the agreed indicator for Year 12 or equivalent attainment, they have agreed to report it as a partial progress indicator within jurisdictions.

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
The total number of HSC Awards issued	63561	65200
The number of HSC Awards issued to Indigenous students.	1036	1089

## **Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions**

### ***Supporting coordinated state-wide and regional engagement with Partnership Broker and Youth Connection networks to maximise benefit to NSW youth.***

Project funding of (\$0.15M) for *Maximising Engagement Attainment and Successful Transitions* has been allocated to appoint a Senior Coordinator to support state-wide and operational regional engagement with Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections networks and manage the state-wide coordination of mandatory work placements including supporting work placement service providers. The position supports engagement of Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections providers with government and non government schools.

Activity to date includes collaborating with DEEWR and other directorates within NSW Department Of Education And Communities to produce an In Principal memo to Principals of secondary schools and primary schools to promote School Business and Community Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections programs; attending the PB State Network in March 2011, and relationship management with DEEWR officers in NSW.

Plans for 2011 include:

- regional engagement with Work Placement Service Providers, the majority of which are Partnership Brokers
- participation in DEEWR's 2011 evaluation of PBs and YC programs
- fostering and promoting the partnership opportunities between PBs, YCs and WPSPs, for example, in the YAT NP funded vocational project to support refugees and recently arrived students
- engagement with the state networks of PBs and YCs
- providing professional development materials to support school Principals and schools to work effectively with Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections providers
- developing effective regional communication channels
- supporting YAT NP projects targeting at risk students.

### ***Structured Work Place Learning***

Students taking NSW Higher School Certificate vocational education and training Industry Curriculum Framework courses are required to undertake a minimum of 35 hours work placement in a relevant industry setting in each of their Year 11 and Year 12 programs as part of each course.

In 2009, program arrangements were coordinated by Work Placement Service Providers (WPSPs) in association with local employers. WPSPs are non-profit, incorporated organisations comprising representatives of, for example, businesses, local government agencies, and education and training providers.

In 2010-2012, under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, \$21.6 million was allocated over the 3 years (\$7.2 million per annum) to support the coordination of mandatory work placements for HSC VET students in NSW.

77 per cent of the funding has been used to supported work placement coordination for students in government schools (including those directly enrolled in TAFE); 18 per cent to support work placement coordination for students in Catholic schools, and 5 per cent to support students in Independent schools in NSW.

In 2010 following a tender process managed by the Department's Procurement Directorate on behalf of the Department, Catholic Education Commission NSW and the Association of Independent Schools NSW, 25 WPSPs across 30 service regions were awarded funding for work placement coordination.

DET has offered funding agreements with successful WPSPs for a period of up to three years (2011-2014) dependent on annual performance.

In 2011 it is anticipated that Work Placement Service Providers will:

- service 700 NSW schools and TAFE NSW colleges
- coordinate over 50,000 work placements for HSC vocational course students from the government and non-government school sectors and TAFE NSW
- provide 1400 placements were for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students
- provide 1350 placements were provided for students with a disability; and
- engage around 5000 new employers to host work placements under the program.

All providers attended a one day orientation day in Sydney on 8 March 2011 hosted by the Department of Education and Training in collaboration with the Catholic Education Commission NSW and the Association of Independent Schools NSW. Feedback indicates this was very well received by providers including the new providers for two of the service regions.

### ***Extending Vocational Options for students in Years 9 and 10***

Following a pilot funded by the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training and undertaken by the NSW Office of the Board of Studies, VET for Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10) students is now offered across New South Wales. This development provides a new pathway for students who might otherwise have left school but are now required to remain until they complete Year 10 and/or be in education or employment until they reach the age of 17.



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Students are now able to begin studying towards an apprenticeship, traineeship or other qualification in Year 9 with significant numbers of students enrolling in courses such as hospitality, construction, primary industries and automotive.

In mid -2010, the NP YAT through *Maximising Engagement Attainment and Successful Transitions* provided \$550K to the education sectors in NSW to support externally delivered VET for Stage 5 for a further 340 students in 2010.

This additional funding was allocated to the sectors as follows:

DET	\$417,565 (76%)
CEC NSW	\$97,563 (18%)
AIS NSW	\$34,872 (6%)

Regional management teams oversaw the allocation of funding to government schools in their region. Stage 5 students can only undertake one externally delivered VET course so as to ensure access for as many students as possible.

Mandatory work placements for Stage 5 students undertaking Industry Curriculum Framework (ICF) Courses externally delivered were coordinated by Work Placement Service Providers.

### ***Targeted Support for Youth at Risk of Disengagement from Education and Training.***

The NSW Youth Attainment and Transitions NP Implementation Plan identified targeted support for youth at risk of disengagement from education and training as a key strategy supporting higher levels of youth education participation and attainment.

A total of \$1.2 million was allocated from the Youth Attainment and Transitions NP funding to targeted support programs for youth at risk to be run over 2010 and 2011. Project proposals were sought from all school sectors and from TAFE NSW focusing on initiatives to support young people at risk to continue their studies to attain the HSC or AQF Certificate II and smooth their transitions to further education and training and employment.

In 2010 a total of 27 proposals were received from the Government and Catholic school sectors and TAFE NSW. The following twelve projects received funding in 2010:

1. NSW Department Of Education And Communities, *YourTutor*
2. NSW Department Of Education And Communities, Dubbo Senior Campus & Mt Austin Wagga Wagga, *Get Real*
3. NSW Department Of Education And Communities, Narrandera High School, Riverina, *Growing Engagements*
4. NSW Department Of Education And Communities, Western Sydney Region, *RAW*
5. St Edwards College, Gosford, *Stepping Up*
6. MacKillop Catholic College, Warnervale, *Youth Engagement Challenge*
7. Catholic Education Office, Sydney, *Careers Development Camp*
8. TAFE Western Sydney Institute, *Migrant Youth Access*
9. TAFE Western Sydney Institute, Hawkesbury High Schools
10. TAFE Riverina Institute, Coomealla Campus, *Where Am I Headin*
11. TAFE South Western Sydney Institute, *Hands On*

## 12. TAFE Western and NSW Department Of Education And Communities Western Sydney Region, Mt Druitt High School

NSW government schools received 42% of funding for successful project proposals, Catholic schools received 14% and TAFE NSW 44%.

The 2010 funded projects were highly successful in increasing the engagement, attainment and successful transitions to further study and employment of at risk students. Highlights of the 2010 program of targeted support projects for at risk students are presented below.

### ***Get Real* - NSW Department of Education and Communities, Dubbo Senior College Campus**

The Dubbo *Get Real* project is recognised for outstanding work and has a proven success record of raising Indigenous student engagement, retention and attainment. As a result of this success and subsequent high profile, the program is being replicated in other regions. Whilst the *Get Real* program has been running, there has been a significant increase in Indigenous student participation and engagement with their education.

*Get Real* is heavily supported by local industry and community sectors partnerships. The Dubbo Business Partnership Program Committee is responsible for ensuring resources from the community are available to the school. This includes employment, work experiences places, work place tours, access to trades people and professionals as career coaches and mentors, guest appearances and visits to school to speak to class groups, becoming involved in participating in career activities both in and out of school. The committee is composed of a number of agencies that have a very strategic relationship to the career activities of the College and include: Fletcher International Exports; Dubbo City Council; The Daily Liberal; Dubbo City Development Corporation, Dubbo Chamber of Commerce, the University of Sydney – Dubbo Campus and representatives from local businesses. Other organisations including Central West Group Apprentices, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Orana Employment Centre offer transition to work support.

*Get Real* has assisted Aboriginal students at Dubbo Senior College to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes to complete the structured work place learning requirements of their vocational courses, progress toward or complete the HSC, pursue further studies and compete for employment. The *Get Real* program has seen Year 10 to 12 apparent retention rates for Aboriginal students at Dubbo Senior College increase from 44% in 2009 to 50% in 2010.

The *Get Real* program comprises of comprehensive learning support plans for each student, an Indigenous support person providing mentoring and acting as a liaison person with the parents/caregivers, previous Indigenous students as mentor role models, Individual career planning sessions leading to the development and monitoring of Individual Career and Transition Plans, assistance with job applications, university entry applications and scholarships and the provision of transport when necessary, and appropriate workplace uniform/clothing requirements. Students are encouraged to participate in work experience programs to increase indigenous involvement and improve career and transition outcomes including the development of resumes and employability skills leading to part time employment.

During 2010, the *Get Real* Program coordinator has taken the current project to a new level. In addition to providing support and encouragement that was the core of the project, the current project also moved into providing Indigenous students with insight into varied pathways and career opportunities to which they might aspire. These opportunities were not just a one off investigation into a particular industry or pathway but provided Indigenous students with Indigenous industry mentors. The Program has not only

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supported and reengaged Indigenous students but is now in the early stages of building unique and meaningful industry links and mentors to support students.

Prior to introducing the *Get Real* program, over 10% of Year 10 students either dropped out of school or were at risk of dropping out as a result of the inability to offer specialised support students required. At the end of 2010 Dubbo College Senior Campus saw an increased number of Year 12 Indigenous students applying to University and TAFE, and a higher number of Indigenous students either in fulltime employment or seeking full time employment. For Year 12 student's, transition from school and entry to the workforce or further studies has been made less overwhelming through the support of the *Get Real* program.

### **Student Profile:**

Aaron is 17 years of age and is a proud Wiradjuri/Wailwan man originally from Wilcannia but for the past 10 years has resided in a small cotton and farming town called Warren, here he lived with his grandmother and siblings until recently moving to Dubbo after realising that Warren did not offer the education and future career opportunities he needed.

Life at first for Aaron at Dubbo College Senior Campus was a struggle, compared to Warren Central School where Aaron had a sense of belonging he'd now lost since relocating to Dubbo. Sadly Aaron was on the verge of dropping out of school due personal barriers, poor attendance and lack of support in school.

*Get Real* has had an overwhelming positive impact on Aaron. Aaron's attitude towards his studies and future ambitions have become within arm's reach after attending a two day excursion to Dubbo TAFE with fellow students. The excursion allowed Dubbo College Senior Campus Indigenous students involved in the *Get Real* program to meet and spend time with Indigenous Police Recruitment Out West Delivery (IPROWD) students that were undertaking a 6 month Certificate III course, giving them the academic qualifications required to apply for entry into the NSW Police Force.

Over the two days students took part in leadership and confidence building activities, group discussions and listened to guest speakers sharing their life journeys. It was a life changing event for Aaron when partnered with 2010 IPROWD student Warren Wilson, who is 40 years of age and a proud Ngemba man from Bourke who now lives in Dubbo. Aaron and Warren developed a strong bond, through friendship and respect inspired Aaron to re-evaluate the path he was venturing down. At the recent 2010 IPROWD graduation Aaron was presented with an IPROWD shirt after a conversation stating 'I want to wear one of those IPROWD shirts one day'.

Aaron's confidence and desire to excel is evident in his achievements over the past year, he is a successful recipient of the Indigenous Youth Leadership Scholarship for Year 12 2011, was awarded the Bub Towney Memorial Award for demonstrated commitment to his senior studies, averaging and maintaining an overall examination mark of 50% in core subjects English, Business Services, Metals and Engineering and excelling in Sport, Lifestyle and Recreation Studies and Construction with 60%. Aaron's attendance over a period of three months increased from 40% to 100%. These positive outcomes were achieved through the *Get Real* program.

### **Ready, Arrive, Work (RAW) Program - NSW Department of Education and Communities- Western Sydney Region**

In 2010, the program assisted 131 refugee students from 13 Western Sydney schools and one school in each of the Hunter-Central Coast, North Coast and Riverina regions to more effectively engage in education, training and employment.

The number of refugee and newly arrival students settling in Western and South Western Sydney continues to grow. Refugee and recently arrived students have varying degrees of awareness of employment, workplaces and workplace requirements, employer/employee relationships, industrial arrangements, transport issues, and appropriate dress codes and behaviour. This lack of knowledge often leads to students being unable to either engage or engage at the correct level in both education and employment spheres. The *RAW* program has been successful in responding to the needs of refugee students in Western Sydney to better prepare them for workplace learning. *RAW* ensures students are prepared for workplace learning and assists employers to better support them during their workplace experience. The program assists students to explore vocational learning pathways in a supportive and positive environment.

*RAW* provides significant mentoring support to students and active involvement by local industry, community, education and training sectors and previous participants to establish support networks, career planning support and workshops involving resume construction, interview skills, online job search, cover letter construction, team building and employability skills, industry visits and workplace learning tailored to their particular requirements. *RAW* includes two innovative events during the program the FRUIT day (Fun, Realistic, Unbiased, Industry, Teaching DAY) and SALAD (Services and Local Agencies Day).

The FRUIT day, usually held towards the conclusion of the *RAW* program, aims to connect *RAW* students with providers of various forms of tertiary and further education as well as provide details on School Based Traineeships and Apprenticeships, cadetships and other pathways. Students are introduced to representatives from local TAFEs, Universities, Apprenticeship centres, Councils and other employers. Each organisation prepares and delivers a short presentation and is then available for small group and one to one discussions. Students also participate in activities which allow them to gain further information about the various pathways and gather pieces of fruit (vouchers) to show how much they have learnt. Organisations participating have included the University of Western Sydney, Woolworths, various local councils, Australian Business Centre Limited Apprenticeships Centre, The Good Guys-Penrith, Karitane, Sothern Cross University, CentaCare, GTES Apprentice & Employment Specialists, MEGT Apprenticeships & traineeships, along with Partnership Brokers and Youth Connection providers.

SALAD is an excursion day organised for students in order for them to become familiar with the various services that are available to them in their local community. Students travel to local agencies where they listen to a presentation, take a guided tour and ask questions regarding the services provided.

Organisations involved included Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre, Centacare- Wagga, Compact-Wagga , SydWest Multicultural Organisation-Blacktown.

### **Student Profiles:**

#### **Rashid**

Rashid was an extremely focused student throughout the Ready, Arrive, Work Program. He had arrived in Australia in early 2007 from Sierra Leone, unfortunately losing his father during the journey. Through developing an understanding of employability skills and the application process he began to seriously contemplate part-time work. On the Services and Local Agencies Day (SALAD) excursion he displayed leadership and also tremendous initiative in regards to his future. His group visited a local McDonalds for a tour of the workplace and the chance to speak with the store manager to gain concrete understanding of employer expectations. Rashid showed a great deal of enthusiasm in asking questions and showed a desire to work and train at McDonalds. The store manager was so impressed with Rashid that he requested his details in order for him to be fast tracked through the employment process and begin a traineeship at McDonalds.

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## **Nyimak**

Nyimak lacked confidence in his abilities and made this his primary goal to overcome. He arrived in Australia in 2005 from Libya and was enrolled in Year 11 at school. During his time on the program he worked hard to understand employability skills and the application process. Nyimak confided that he had been attempting to apply for part-time work at his local KFC, but had been unsuccessful. He indicated that he had applied 11 times and had never received an interview; as a result Nyimak lacked confidence to apply again. His youth consultant spent time with him and examined the online application process with him, assisting him to complete the form and subsequent quiz as required by the organisation. The following week he was called for an interview and worked with youth consultants to improve his interview skills. Nyimak obtained a casual position at KFC and is now working some evenings after school.

### ***Hands On Program - TAFE NSW South Western Sydney Institute***

South Western Sydney is a major growth area in Sydney. It has a significant youth population and within that it has large numbers of young people from language backgrounds other than English and from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. Retention and engagement of these young people in education and training is a challenge, particularly with the introduction of the raised school leaving age. *Hands On* is structured to address basic literacy and numeracy issues by exposing young learners to practical vocational exercises using industry terminology and mathematical problem solving techniques, with instant visual outcomes.

*Hands On* provides young people at risk of disengagement from school with vocational and employability skills, individual case management and education plans, and the experience of an adult learning environment, encouraging and better equipping them to stay at school and complete their School Certificate and progress to further study and/or employment.

In Term 4 2010, 122 at risk students successfully participated in eight pre vocational courses. Of the 122 students, 110 completed the courses and attained units of competency. Of these, 99% remained at school until the end of the year. *Hands On* was highly successful in increasing student retention with 95% of the 83 students in Years 10 and 11 indicating they would continue schooling and complete Year 12. Through the program students were also exposed to employment and training opportunities with, one student successful in attaining an apprenticeship in Bricklaying after completing the Carpentry/Stonemasonry course, three students who undertook the hospitality courses gaining part-time employment in the Hospitality field and five students enrolled in TAFE in 2011.

### ***Youth Engagement Challenge - MacKillop Catholic College, Warnervale***

MacKillop Catholic College has a significant proportion of students who have various learning difficulties but do not qualify for Strategic Assistance for Improving Student Outcomes (SAISO) funding. Academically these students sit at the bottom of the mainstream cohort. They do not receive additional learning support and struggle to attain appropriate educational outcomes. In addition the college has a significant number of Indigenous students, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The project, for such students, aimed to enhance their educational experience and link them with appropriate personnel and agencies for their post school life, creating a more seamless transition to vocational pathways.

The project primarily involved engaging students by making some of the opportunities that already exist within the College, community and industry more accessible, achievable and desirable. The project involved mapping, unifying and co-ordinating services that already exist. In addition to building on existing services,

funding received allowed enabled the introduction of three new projects; an Indigenous Storybook, Opening Doors Program and Money Management aimed at increasing engagement, retention and attainment of students.

This Indigenous Storybook was researched and composed by 22 Indigenous students. It documents stories of individual success, heritage information and stories of cultural significance. This project linked well with two existing programs: the Diocesan Secondary Indigenous Residential and Sista Speak. Sista Speak targets girls in Years 9-12 and aims to enhance identity, cultural identity and self esteem. Both existing programs utilise the services and skills of indigenous students, Koori Konnect, Dave Ella, Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Bungaree (Indigenous support centre) and elders from local communities. The Indigenous Storybook aimed to develop the Indigenous student's awareness of their heritage. It involved team work, bringing Indigenous students together on a group task with a common goal.

The Opening Doors program involved 20 students, including 6 Indigenous, who encounter multiple barriers but not identified as Special Needs. The Opening Doors program involved planning meetings with the student, parent(s), Indigenous liaison officer where applicable, Careers Advisor or pastoral representative, a workplace representative /industry mentor and, when necessary, a representative from the local LCP Youth Connections. These meetings brought stakeholders together to identify and review external barriers as well as the academic and emotional well being of the student, as part of the process of assessing individual needs. Setting achievable goals for the student and planning for the accession of support and implementation of strategies as part of their transition through school to post school life was crucial. Various organisations and businesses have been supportive in offering advice to students, discussing education/career pathways and hosting work experience students. Local training organisations, including TAFE and the University of Newcastle, have provided additional support with allowing students to tour the facilities and discuss possibilities with staff.

The Money Management program aimed to develop basic skills in financial management through the development of a 'resource kit' contained user-friendly resources. The information and skills relating to financial literacy was integrated into course programs (eg Work Education) and Pastoral Programs. As part of the program, basic equipment and clothing for students who come without books, stationary or a clean uniform were provided.

The program, to be completed in July 2011, has already been successful in increasing student participation in VET, increasing work placements and industry based learning activities, developing student's sense of self and self esteem, and increasing student participation in College and community activities.

### ***Where Am I Headin*, TAFE Riverina Institute, Coomealla Campus**

The Wentworth Shire faces numerous youth issues including a large population of Aboriginal young people who have disengaged, a significant number of young people spending time in Wagga's Shepherd's Park Juvenile Justice school and approximately 38% of 17-24 year olds who have neither completed the HSC/VCE and who are not in further schooling, education or training. In 2010, *Where Am I Headin* was successful in providing an innovative education and training setting designed to re-engage a particularly disengaged cohort of young people with education, the community and to develop employability skills leading to future employment or further training.

*Where Am I Headin* consisted of a combination of Literacy and Numeracy, learner support, case management, and employability skills combined with the technical units required for work at Coomealla Health Aboriginal Co-op or Mallee Family Care and the opportunity of work experience. Basic but crucial

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elements of the program are seen to have contributed to its success including the provision of transport, breakfast and lunch, intensive program coordination and the use of text messages as a form of communication with students.

*Where Am I Headin* draws upon support and resources from sustainable working relationships with a number of industry, community and government organisations. These include Dareton Primary Industries, Greater Western Area Health Service, the Wiradjuri Aboriginal Home Care services, MADEC, Coomealla High School, Summit, Wentworth Shire Council, Mallee Family Care, Coomealla Health Aboriginal Co-op, Aboriginal elders, Latrobe University, the Chamber of Commerce, Sunraysia Regional Consulting, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE and Parks & Wildlife.

In total 11 students were selected for the *Where Am I Headin* program. Five of these, including 3 Indigenous students, graduated with a Certificate II Skills for Work and Training. All five have continued their studies either with TAFE or Coomealla High School in 2011. Three students reengaged in study at Coomealla High School and completed their School Certificate as a result of the program. The remaining three students had outstanding court issues prior to commencing the course which saw them leave the program. Two of these students have since been released and are keen to return to the program in 2011.

### ***Migrant Youth Access, TAFE Western Sydney Institute***

The Blacktown Local Government Area has the second largest number of 16-24 year old refugee and humanitarian entrants in NSW, with 519 young people. The majority were born in the Middle East, and South West Asia, followed by Africa (predominantly Sudan, Sierra Leone and Liberia). In 2010, *Migrant Youth Access* (MYA) engaged a group of twenty young refugees previously from schools in the Blacktown area who had disengaged from education. The program sought to improve their vocational education and training pathways by placing them in an adult learning environment. MYA highlighted the value of providing information, experiences and skills to help students make better-informed career choice. MYA emphasised employability skills of communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organisation, self management, learning, technology, whilst providing students with intensive case management, career preparation and planning, and English language support.

The highly successful program saw 19 of the 20 participants successfully complete a Statement of Attainment in Preparation for Work and Study (Stage 2), with one participant transferring to another TAFE College midway through the course. Two graduates obtained full-time work and the remainder continued to be engaged in education and training by enrolling in further study at TAFE in 2011. The major achievement of the 2010 pilot was the huge improvement the students made during the eighteen week program. This has been demonstrated in the way students:

- learnt to participate constructively in an adult learning environment
- increased their understanding of Australian society and culture
- developed sufficient confidence to be able to take their first steps towards becoming an independent learner and participating in Australian workplaces and society

This achievement has been highlighted in the following quote by the course co-ordinator, Kristie Overs, who closely monitored the students attendance and progress throughout the course and said *'what a joy it has been to teach these young people, to see this disparate group of often insecure and problematic students transform itself over the semester into a cohesive group, supporting each other, excited about their plans and ambitions and, most importantly, hopeful of achieving them'*.

## Indigenous Reporting

### From Schedule B:

States and Territories will monitor and report on Indigenous participation annually, noting that this will not be taken into account for reward payments but as a progress measure toward achieving the halving the gap target.

Annual monitoring and reporting of participation of Indigenous students will be the total enrolment of full-time students in Years 11 and 12, and 15-19 year olds without a Year 12 Certificate and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a VET course (full-time or part time) at Certificate II level or higher.

Annual monitoring and reporting of Indigenous students will also include a separate category of the total enrolment of full-time students in Years 9 and 10, and 15-19 year olds without a Year 12 Certificate and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a VET course (full-time or part time) at Certificate I level.

States and Territories will monitor and report annually on a range of leading indicators in addition to participation, such as attendance, retention and trends in administrative data. This information will also be used to determine the 20-24 year old Indigenous attainment rate in non-Census years, including 2015 and 2020.

States and Territories will also monitor and report on: school level strategies; leading indicators (participation, attendance and retention); and Year 12 attainment; initially for schools with 30 or more Indigenous students where this equates to 10 per cent or more of total enrolments, to be expanded over time as agreed through State and Territory implementation plans, to schools with 10 per cent or more Indigenous enrolments or more than 30 Indigenous students.

### State-wide Indigenous strategies and cross sectoral initiatives

The NSW Government is committed to bridging the education gap between Aboriginal and all students in NSW. In education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population.

In order to achieve this goal, the Department is implementing a number of school-based, state-wide, targeted Aboriginal education programs across government schools which aim to improve education outcomes for Aboriginal students and improve the way we work with Aboriginal families and communities. Key programs include the *Norta Norta* Program, the Schools in Partnership initiative and Scholarships for Aboriginal Students.

- *Norta Norta* funds schools to provide learning support for Aboriginal students in Years 4, 6, 8 & 10; tutorial assistance for senior Aboriginal students; independent Learning Hubs for Aboriginal students from K-10; and, tutoring/mentoring/leadership programs for Aboriginal students in the middle and senior years of schooling. In 2010, 71 schools and 2,211 Aboriginal students in Years 4, 6, 8 & 10 were identified to receive *Norta Norta* funding as they were either at or below the national minimum standards in all 5 of the 2009 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) domains in Years 3, 5, 7 & 9. In 2010, around 2,050 Year 11 & 12 students received *Norta Norta* funding. This funding provides up to 75 hours of tutorial assistance to Aboriginal students to help them complete assignments, undertake exams and successfully meet all the requirements for the award of a Higher School Certificate.



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- The *Schools in Partnership* initiative aids schools with large Aboriginal student enrolments to improve student outcomes by implementing strategies developed in partnership with local school communities. In 2010, Phase 3 of the initiative was implemented in 89 schools (69 individual schools and 20 schools in 5 Communities of Schools). Each Partnership school receives tailored funding yearly to implement strategies to improve teaching and learning outcomes and strengthen Aboriginal community engagement.
  
  - The *Scholarships for Aboriginal Students* program offers 160 scholarships of \$1,000 to students in Years 9-12 to support their engagement and learning. The Department also works with corporate organisations to create scholarships for Aboriginal students in schools and TAFE.

Another key state-wide strategy for increasing the engagement of Aboriginal students in school education is the promotion of quality teaching practice and the provision of quality professional development opportunities for all staff. The Department seeks to ensure that teachers across all regions and year levels have access to professional development opportunities that improve their teaching practices and approaches for engaging Aboriginal students in the classroom and school environment and have a greater understanding of the cultural diversity of students. In 2010 professional learning opportunities provided by the Department included training on:

- Personalised Learning Plans
- Literacy pedagogies such as Accelerated Literacy
- Numeracy pedagogies such as Count Me In Too (Indigenous)
- Aboriginal Education and Training Policy
- Otitis Media awareness
- Aboriginal cultural awareness
- Aboriginal cultural competencies
- Incorporation of Aboriginal cultural perspectives into teaching and learning
- Engaging with Aboriginal communities
- Analysis of NAPLAN data
- 8 ways of learning program.

As far as state-wide TAFE focused initiatives are concerned, Building Competencies in Aboriginal Cultures is a priority for the Department as the *Aboriginal Education and Training Policy* mandates Aboriginal cultural education for all staff through professional learning and career development experiences.

The Department's Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate in partnership with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. and the Department's Human Resources Directorate is working toward developing and implementing a flexible and ongoing learning environment through multiple pathways to *building competencies in Aboriginal Cultures* for all Departmental staff.

As at December 2010, a total of 6017 staff across the Public Sector have engaged in a pathway or learning, through accredited delivery, to build their competencies in Aboriginal Cultures, with an additional 222 newly placed teachers and principals undertaking the *Being Culturally Aware Becoming Culturally Inclusive: A Pathway to Cultural Competence* training program.

TAFE NSW Institutes design and deliver, in partnership with their communities, locally based initiatives which address the specific needs of local communities.

## A sample of school level strategies:

### ***Implemented by NSW schools and regions:***

- South West Sydney Region's *Steps2Success (Steps)* program was developed in response to requests for support in meeting the needs of Aboriginal students in schools for specific purposes. The program has evolved through a partnership between the region's Aboriginal Education and Student Services portfolios to re-connect Aboriginal students with education and strengthen student, teacher and community relationships. The program has been successfully trialled in schools for specific purposes and mainstream schools.

In 2008, a small working party of representatives from both portfolios began to develop an Aboriginal cultural education program for Aboriginal students at risk of disengaging from school. They identified the need for these students to establish a sense of belonging to their school environment and to their Aboriginal heritage.

The Steps program aims to increase: engagement in learning, cultural understanding and community involvement.

Through participation in the six focus modules and implementation of the community action plan, students explore important aspects of their history and culture and develop a growing understanding of the ten core Aboriginal Values. The importance of learning, cultural connection and respect for Elders and community members are values that underpin all areas of the Steps program.

Involving classroom teachers in the planning and delivery of content strengthens relationships with students and develops a deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture. Each school is presented with a community action plan to maintain the links established.

- James Fallon High School in the Riverina Region, as part of its Retail Services program, established a "Bush Tukka Café" which gives the school's Aboriginal students opportunity to develop their retail industry related work skills and their employment confidence by learning about traditional foods in a retail café setting.

The students learn about what is required to operate a café, including the development of a café uniform, marketing plans and product lines. Students also learn how to prepare coffee and food lines for sale throughout the school.

The café has become cemented as a tremendous source of school pride and the café program has become a key factor in improving Aboriginal student engagement.

The program has provided previously disengaged students with a reason to stay at school and to set employment goals as they acquire the knowledge of how to operate a food and beverage retail business. Of equal importance in the process is the deepening of cultural knowledge and understandings as the students learn about traditional bush foods, culture and lore.

Parents and community members are wholly supportive of the school's "Bush Tukka Café" program and the opportunities it offers their children. They are proud of what their children learn and achieve by participating in the program.

The teacher largely responsible for the "Bush Tukka Café" program at James Fallon High School, Jennifer Saunders, was acknowledged for her initiative and her commitment to Aboriginal education by being awarded with the *NSW Schools Nanga Mai Award for Outstanding Contribution*

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to *Educational Achievement by a non-Aboriginal Staff Member*. Jennifer was presented with this award at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Nanga Mai Awards held in April 2011.

- The Hunter/Central Coast Region implemented the *SistaSpeak* and *BroSpeak* initiatives.

*SistaSpeak* targets Aboriginal girls in Years 6-11. The program involves volunteer mentors that include Aboriginal Community members, Elders, and workers from other agencies such as Youth Connections and Aboriginal Medical Services. These mentors work with the girls on various activities that address issues such as culture and identity, peer relationships, drug and alcohol use, career and finances.

*SistaSpeak* was originally developed and piloted by the NSW Office for Women in Dubbo in 2006 and carriage of the program is now the responsibility of the NSW Department of Education and Training's Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate.

The *SistaSpeak* Program has been implemented in Kincumber, Gorokan, Henry Kendall, and Rutherford Technology High Schools.

There has been a recognised improvement in Aboriginal student attendance across these schools, which has been attributed in part to *SistaSpeak*.

*BroSpeak* is a fortification of identity program which presents opportunities to develop cultural knowledge for Aboriginal boys in Years 7 to 11.

The program provides the opportunity to invite volunteer Aboriginal male guest speakers to act as mentors leading to the development of a strong sense of belonging in students and the development of student respect and responsibility for each other within the school and their community. The program aims to foster positive relationships between mentors and the students and the development of male leaders of the future.

*BroSpeak* was initially implemented at Callaghan College Wallsend and Waratah Campuses towards the end of Term 2, 2010. Both schools had 10 to 15 boys participating from Years 7-11 and the feedback was very positive with the schools indicating at the time how they were looking forward to working more with the community to develop positive relationships and connections.

At Irrawang High School, the boys developed Aboriginal Cultural artwork that was incorporated onto totem poles at the school's entrance. The totem poles represent the home Nations of each boy, to engender a connection to Country.

The boys are all progressing well in this program.

Maitland and Lake Macquarie High Schools began implementing the program in Term 4, 2010.

To date, six high schools in the Hunter/Central Coast region have successfully implemented the *BroSpeak* program.

- The Clarence Valley Industry Education Forum in the North Coast Region is an excellent example of a how schools can innovatively and successfully work together with their school communities to support improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. In recognition of the great work being undertaken by the Education Forum, it was awarded the *Outstanding Regional Innovation Award* at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual *NSW Schools Nanga Mai Awards* which were held in April 2011.

The Clarence Valley Industry Education Forum's initiative, *Fresh Start*, is essentially a community collaboration which aspires to a future where all Aboriginal students of the Clarence are equipped

to make meaningful life choices, to become active participants in their communities and in the broader community.

*Fresh Start* is a joint initiative between the North Coast Region of the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Clarence Valley Council, North Coast Institute of TAFE NSW, Grafton High School, McAuley Catholic College, Maclean High School, South Grafton High School and Southern Cross University.

The initiative commenced in October 2009 and aims to increase engagement and retention rates for young Aboriginal people in the Clarence Valley. Some of the project themes include the significance of culture to learning and transitions from school to further education and/or employment.

The initiative specifically aims to:

- improve vocational education and training opportunities and employment outcomes for all young people;
- contribute to a skilled labour force to support existing business and assist to attract new industry;
- enhance retention to 90% of students completing Year 12 or a vocational equivalent;
- enhance employer and graduate satisfaction with vocational education and training that address skill shortages and improve employment opportunities;
- improve transition to work and further study for Aboriginal students;
- integrate education, training and skills development through school-based apprenticeships and traineeships;
- maximise use of resources (physical and virtual infrastructure); and
- build cross curriculum initiatives between schools and TAFE.

These aims complement Clarence Valley Council's economic development planning process which identified areas of likely skills shortages in the Clarence Valley. These areas include aged care and community support services, electro-technology, marine services, hospitality and tourism, timber and related services, retail, business services and construction and have been adopted as priority targets by the Education Forum.

*Fresh Start* is based on partnerships between students, parents, educators, training providers, businesses and the wider community which pioneer programs and activities that work towards 'closing the gap' for Aboriginal students. It is about designing new ways in which schools and businesses can work together to improve student education, training and employment outcomes.

- The *Mooki Murris Indigenous Boys' Strategy* being implemented by New England Region's Quirindi High School in partnership with the Mooki Murris is an outstanding example of an effective, productive school/community partnership.

In recognition of their joint collaboration, Quirindi High School and the Mooki Murris were awarded the *School/Community Partnership Award* at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual *NSW Schools Nanga Mai Awards* which were held in April 2011.

The *Mooki Murris Indigenous Boys Strategy* began in early 2009, with 14 ex-students from the school developing, coordinating and delivering high quality mentoring workshops and Kamilaroi cultural experiences for Aboriginal boys at Quirindi High School.

The mentors are all employed in various sectors and bring a wealth of life experiences and high expectations to their roles. The Mooki Murris mentors are passionate about the difference they make in the lives of young men in the Quirindi High School community and have formed a strong partnership with the school.

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The Mooki Murris were initially funded through the Department of Education and Training (now the Department of Education and Communities) and a BHP grant. They have subsequently become a self-funded group, with the mentors accessing various grants from other sources to subsidise their group's operation.

The Mooki Murris were the recipients of the New England Region 'Giyanha Dirrabuu Award' for School Community Partnership in 2009 and the 2010 New England Region 'Excellence in Aboriginal Education Award'. They have also been nominated for BHP Global Community Partnership Awards. The men and boys have been interviewed by ABC Radio and Prime News. They have also been the subject of a recently produced Department of Education and Training DVD.

The *Mooki Murris Indigenous Boys' Strategy* has recently been extensively evaluated by the school and through an independent university study (McShane, University of Queensland 2010). Evidence from this evaluation has indicated that a successful partnership has indeed been developed leading to improved school plans and practices.

Since 2009, the Mooki Murris have facilitated eight whole day mentoring activities for every male Aboriginal student at Quirindi High School and Year 6 male students from partner primary schools. Four more days are planned for 2011. The mentors have also facilitated a 'bring a friend day' for non-Aboriginal students.

Using pre-program data, mentors have developed culturally relevant experiences and specifically targeted student learning in the Kamilaroi language and cultural understanding, relationships, men's health, educational goal setting and the development of a 'sense of self'.

The mentors participate in at least three planning and evaluation days per year with the school and have also provided significant cultural learning workshops for school staff.

Mentors have contributed to school planning for Aboriginal student outcomes and are actively involved in discussions with the local Aboriginal community regarding these plans.

Informally, mentors also have individual contact with their mentees. This has included involvement in external sports and community events and has also led to mediation and advocacy for students where appropriate.

Since beginning implementation of the Strategy, the Mooki Murris have achieved the following outcomes:

- Indigenous boys' suspension rates at Quirindi High School dropped by 6% in 2010 and there were no Aboriginal males suspended in Term 2, 2010.
- Attendance rates for Aboriginal males have improved. No Aboriginal boys were on the Home-School Liaison Officer caseload for non-attendance in 2010.
- 100% of students responded that the program has increased their cultural pride.
- Boys are setting realistic educational goals beyond Year 10 and into tertiary education and trades areas.
- Boys can now articulate long and short term goals which they previously had struggled to achieve consistently.
- Boys know where to access assistance with learning and are doing so more readily.
- Parents are comfortable with the program and are participating in school life.
- Parents and Elders comment that they are finding Mooki Murris' cultural education activities are promoting healthy discussions at home.
- 88% of parents indicate a positive change in children's social behaviour at home.
- 86% of teachers believe that student effort had changed a 'fair bit'.

- 56% of boys have indicated that their understandings of the effects of drugs and alcohol use have increased because of the program.
- 100% of students and teachers either have a 'fair bit' or a 'lot' of trust in their mentors.
- Feedback indicates that most students believe the program has made a positive contribution to understandings of racism in the school.

These outcomes are evidence of what an innovative partnership between Aboriginal communities and schools can accomplish.

- The work being undertaken by Gorokan High School in the Hunter/Central Coast Region has earned the school the *Outstanding School Award* in the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual *NSW Schools Nanga Mai Awards* which were held in April 2011.

Gorokan High School is seen as a beacon for Aboriginal education within the Wyong Shire. It is highly respected by surrounding schools and the local community and it is often the first port of call for Aboriginal staff members within the Central Coast community when advice, guidance, or information, relating to Aboriginal education, are needed. Gorokan has strong ties with many community organisations and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Gorokan High School has an outstanding commitment to improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students and Aboriginal education is a significant focus in all subject areas at Gorokan High School.

Gorokan High School has several Aboriginal workers to support students in literacy, numeracy and cultural programs and is recognised at Regional level for its commitment to Aboriginal education and best practice in relation to implementation of the *Aboriginal Education and Training Policy*.

Professor Tony Vinson, in the Vinson Report, praised Gorokan High School for its implementation of outstanding Aboriginal education programs.

A number of these programs include: a whole school focus group for mentoring Aboriginal students by matching students with teachers for support and guidance; developing and implementing Personalised Learning Plans each year; and, monitoring outcomes and addressing identified needs.

Each curriculum area has incorporated Aboriginal content into its pedagogy, resulting in a number of remarkable teaching innovations at the school. For example:

- the Science faculty investigates food chains with a focus on Australian native animals;
- Special Education delivers a literacy unit based on dreamtime stories, interpreted through art; and
- Year 7 engage in the writing, producing and painting of a book of Dreamtime stories as part of their Aboriginal Studies unit.

Gorokan High School is a leader in developing and maintaining successful partnerships with the community. This is its key to success.

The school holds annual NAIDOC Day celebrations with all faculties contributing to a whole school cultural day showcasing Aboriginal art, dance, didgeridoo playing, bush tucker and Indigenous games.

Implementation of Cultural programs and the continuing provision of resources for the Aboriginal Art Team and Didgeridoo Performance Group and Dance Group illustrate Gorokan High School's passion for Aboriginal education and its intent to ensure the school always works in partnership with the local community.

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The school has become an ambassador for the Healing Time Project and ensures Aboriginal parental involvement is an integral part of Gorokan High School's program development and delivery. The school's P&C committee boasts 40% participation by Aboriginal parents.

Other noteworthy evidence of Gorokan High School's commitment to Aboriginal education can be found in the school:

- being a member of Dare to Lead;
  - being involved in the Dusseldorp Skills Forum;
  - having a close relationship with Wyong Council on many programs within the shire;
  - having a highly successful Aboriginal performance group;
  - establishing a community room where parents and community members are encouraged to drop in, have a chat and connect with staff;
  - hosting the Muru Bulbi Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, which has strong membership and an active committee;
  - encouraging students to form a junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Group; and
  - utilising community participation as integral to both the *SistaSpeak* and *BroSpeak* programs.
- Narara Valley High School in the Hunter/Central Coast Region recorded an 11.3 percentage point increase in its Aboriginal student attendance rate in the period 2008-2010.

Narara Valley High School attributes this very significant improvement to its focus on building its Aboriginal students' cultural awareness and identity. The school has adopted a collegial approach towards Aboriginal education, working closely with both primary and other high schools in the local area to provide Aboriginal students with a range of opportunities.

Narara Valley High School is an integral part of the Valley Schools Local Management Group's Aboriginal Committee (LMG). Regular meetings (monthly) are held to organise activities to enable students to participate in Cultural, Sporting and Creative and Performing Arts days. Peers across the LMG mix and develop connectedness to their culture and each other. Older students have responsibilities to mentor and assist younger students. Activities feature participation by the local university and community members to promote educational direction and belonging.

Narara Valley High School has an Aboriginal teacher and a non-Aboriginal teacher who work closely together to organise the special activities, accompany the students to the various venues involved and to mentor them at school. This two-teacher partnership has built rapport and encouraged the students to participate on all levels to the best of their ability.

Many of the school's strategies aim at increasing student involvement in activities that focus on building each Aboriginal student's self-confidence and cultural pride and identity, and improving student and teacher awareness of Aboriginal culture, diversity and achievements.

A range of cultural activities are available to all Aboriginal students in the school and the students are supported in becoming involved in these activities by a range of staff, including the Learning Support Officer - Aboriginal Students, whose role is specifically designed to ensure Aboriginal students are engaged and involved in activities which ultimately positively impact on their education outcomes.

The type of activities offered by Narara Valley High School in 2010 included:

- Connecting Kooris to Careers Youth Job Expo: The expo provided aspiration information, opportunities and a guide for potential and future subject choices. The expo targeted students in Years 8-12 aiming to engender in them an understanding of the importance of meaningful employment and the importance of correct subject selections.

- Aboriginal Mural Painting: Indigenous artist Wendy Pawley and Ron Smith attended Narara Valley High School to teach students basic cultural painting techniques. Aboriginal students from Narara Valley High School, Wyoming Primary School and North Gosford Learning Centre participated in this activity. The students painted several canvases that were subsequently hung in the Gosford Art Gallery for National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day.
- Gosford Art Gallery: Display of students' own artworks and collaboration in activities with other Central Coast schools including the Friendship Walk and traditional games.
- Vibe 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament: 30 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students participated in a basketball tournament held at Bateau Bay PCYC. Students had the opportunity to play against other Central Coast schools and interact with community members.
- LMG Cultural Awareness day: Students of Narara Valley High joined 150 of their fellow Aboriginal students from the Valley School's Learning Community Group at Ourimbah University for a Cultural Awareness Day. The students participated in a range of activities involving Bush Tucker, making rope, making fire, traditional song and dance.
- LMG Indigenous Sports Day: Aboriginal students from the Valley School's Learning Community Group participated in sports such as AFL, Netball, Rugby, Soccer, Rugby League and Traditional Indigenous Games. Students had the opportunity to learn new and interesting games taught by Aboriginal community members and Aboriginal sporting professionals. They also had the chance to win great prizes supplied by a range of supporters.

The school has noted that its Aboriginal students have become more connected to the school and to the staff as a consequence of the cultural opportunities made available to them.

- Eden Marine High School in the Illawarra and South East Region recorded a 9.3 percentage point increase in its Aboriginal student attendance rate in the period 2008-2010. This is a significant improvement which the school believes is due, in large part, to its appointment of an Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer in Term 1, 2010.

The school has noted the positive impact which this Officer's appointment has had on its Aboriginal students and has also attributed the presence in the school of community members, who had not previously visited the school, to the Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer.

Eden Marine High School has indicated that its Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer has been instrumental in supporting the school to forge new contacts with the community and has facilitated the school's development of new relationships and partnerships with its community.

An emphasis on increasing opportunities for meaningful engagement and working closely with the community is seen by the school as essential to improving Aboriginal student attendance.

Eden Marine High School is also committed to addressing the issue of meaningful post high school employment for its Aboriginal students. In 2010, ten students participated in a school to work program funded through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations aimed at developing their literacy, numeracy and IT skills, with a view to placing them into work placement initially and then a School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship. Of the ten students who participated in the program, three were offered traineeships, beginning in 2011.

The school believes its range of attendance programs such as its Attendance Support Program and Attendance Competitions have also contributed to its improved Aboriginal student attendance rate.



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**Implemented by TAFE NSW:**

- The Indigenous Police Recruitment Out West Delivery project –

New England Institute of TAFE NSW delivers the Indigenous Police Recruitment Out West Delivery (IPROWD) project for Aboriginal people interested in joining NSW Police. This project is a partnership between TAFE NSW and NSW Police, resulting in the development of a customised Certificate III qualification to be used as a bridging course for students to enrol in Charles Sturt University's Associate Diploma in Policing Practice.

Continued funding has been committed to this initiative in 2010-11, as it has proven very successful in providing employment and/or further educational opportunities for Aboriginal people in Tamworth and Dubbo.

- The Australian Indigenous Culture Program -

This program, developed collaboratively by Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE NSW and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, involves delivery of the Certificate I in Tourism, combining tourism training with recognition, and targeting national park rangers. It is delivered in the field with culturally relevant assessment rather than in the classroom with many students going on to the Certificate III in Tourism (Guiding) via gap training and flexible delivery.

- The Indigenous Pre-Recruitment Course -

The Indigenous Pre-Recruitment Course represents a partnership between South Western Sydney Institute of TAFE NSW, the Australian Defence Force, Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council and Inspire Community. It develops leadership, team work and self-awareness through military style activities underpinned by literacy and numeracy training needed to pass the ADF entry exam. A highly successful program, it was awarded the 2010 TAFE NSW Gili Industry Partnership Award.

- The Business Services Certificate II Country Rugby League (CRL) TAFE Delivered Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) Program -

This program was run in the North West of NSW out of TAFE NSW's Walgett College. Its delivery won the NSW VET in Schools Excellence Award for 2010. The target group was Aboriginal students.

TAFE Western Business Services and Country Rugby League have formed an innovative community partnership to: leverage off a passion for sport to motivate practical achievement; provide the opportunity for students to learn in an environment where they have a genuine interest; and apply business services skills to rugby league administration.

The initiative aims to: improve student engagement and opportunity; encourage student retention at school; provide Aboriginal students with pathways to further education, training and employment; and help close the gap in the completion of Year 12 or an equivalent Vocational Education and Training.

The Certificate II in Business Services is a HSC Industry Curriculum Framework (ICF) course which may contribute to an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Discussions are underway to expand the program into the Orange region.

- Government Services Certificate II Indigenous Policing Traineeships – Murra Project -

The Certificate II in Government Services is designed to provide Aboriginal students with knowledge about issues that affect Aboriginal people and their communities and with skills to develop and apply personal strategies to identify and deal with racism.

The trainee works with an employer for 1 week per term for 7 terms; attends TAFE one day per week and goes to school 4 days per week for 7 terms.

Students in this program gain: nationally recognised TAFE qualifications; 4 units towards the HSC; the Higher School Certificate; an income while training and learning; work related skills, knowledge and experience.

This course covers workplace competencies that lay a foundation for a career in the NSW Police Force. These competencies are also transferable to employment in other public sector agencies. Location of work placements are in NSW Police Stations.

- *Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Certificate II* (Locally designed TVET Course called Indigenous Primary Health Care) -

In 2009, TAFE NSW Western Institute and TVET acquired endorsement of the Certificate II in Indigenous Primary Health Care course by the Board of Studies to deliver the course to Indigenous students with the aim of engaging and involving them in vocational pathways.

The course was developed to address an identified skills shortage area of health care workers in regional, remote and Indigenous communities and in health and community services (current and future) in both regional and urban areas.

The aim of the course was to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and provide them with greater access to vocational education, training and employment and equitable employment opportunities.

As well as employment skills for health care workers, the course provides generic employment related skills.

The course provides credit for Certificate II in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care and provides transitions to post school VET qualifications: Certificate III in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Care Worker; Certificate III in Health Services Assistance.

Graduates of the course may be offered pathways as trainee health workers to work as assistants in rural or urban communities or to deliver limited health services to clients isolated from mainstream health services.

The course has been delivered via video conference to Goodooga, Collarenebri and Broken Hill, and face to face at Brewarrina, Bathurst and Orange.

- New England Institute of TAFE NSW, through the TVET in Schools Aboriginal Students at the Northern Border Senior Access Program (NBSAP), has enrolments in Certificate II in Information Technology and Certificate II in Tools for New Media. These cover Aboriginal students at Central Schools in Mungindi, Goodooga, Boggabilla and Collarenebri. In addition, a Certificate I in Information Technology is offered to Stage 5 students in Year 10.
- New England Institute of TAFE NSW also provides a range of programs aimed at Aboriginal youth at risk who have left school. These programs include:
  - Kamilaroi Youth Program - Certificate II Skills for Work and Training
  - On Track – Go Kart Program - Certificate II Skills for Work and Training
  - Go Girls Program - Certificate II Skills for Work and Training.

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- North Coast Institute of TAFE NSW was also awarded funding under the *Community Festivals for Education Engagement* program to hold three 'Deadly Days' which encourage school attendance, retention and healthy lifestyles among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, in particular. Events were held at Wollongbar, Coffs Harbour and Taree Campuses in November 2008 and three more were conducted at Kingscliff, Grafton and Port Macquarie in September 2009. Deadly Days were held at Casino, Kempsey and Great Lakes Campuses in September 2010.

### **Implemented by CEC NSW**

- The Sydney Archdiocese provides a fee waiver to all Aboriginal students in all schools, resulting in a sharp increase in enrolments of indigenous students on these scholarships.
- The Parramatta Lighthouse program works closely the Indigenous Support Unit in mentoring aboriginal students in Year 9 and 10 who have been identified as being at risk of leaving school. 13 indigenous students participated in the Lighthouse program in 2010. Parramatta diocese also has indigenous student scholarships and fund.
- Lismore diocese is involved in "Fresh Start" a multi-pronged initiative in partnership with Department of Education and Communities to
  - provide 100 SBAT opportunities
  - Local culture history and individual stories compiled as a teaching resource and
  - Vocational events which develop skills, experience and knowledge of career pathways supported by individual careers pathway planning.

Lismore reports on an indigenous students Traineeships Pharmacy assistant in partnership with the pharmacy guild.

- The Maitland-Newcastle Diocese has strong links with the Aboriginal community for its TTCs. It also runs short course pre vocational programs which lead to SBATS for indigenous students.
- Targeted Support for Youth at Risk of Disengagement from Education and Training Projects included:
  - MacKillop Catholic College, Warnervale *Challenge for Youth Engagement* comprises an indigenous storybook project, and the *Opening Doors* program which focuses on students with multiple disadvantages who are not identified as special needs students to provide structured workplace learning and additional support to enter the Trade Training Centre within the College.
  - The CEO Sydney Careers development camp for Indigenous students, focused on retention to Year 12.

## **The Compact with Young Australians**

### **New South Wales has implemented the Education and Training Entitlement for 15 to 24 year olds in 2010:**

- TAFE NSW Institutes have implemented entitlements for 15-19 year olds and 20-24 year olds
- Under the Productivity Places Program, priority is given to those aged 15 to 19 years for all levels of training and people aged 20 to 24 years who are seeking enrolment in a higher level qualification.
- Short videos to promote education and training options in TAFE NSW for 15-24 year olds have been produced and published on the TAFE NSW internet, for example <https://www.tafensw.edu.au/career/pathways/index.htm>
- TAFE NSW Institutes have identified targets and introduced strategies to attract young students post Year 10 to support their participation and attainment in education and training.

- Enrolments in TAFE NSW by 20-24 year olds increased from 85,379 in 2008 to 94,571 in 2010, an increase of 10.8 per cent.
- Publicly funded training places delivered by private RTOs for 15 to 19 year olds increased by 33% between 2009 and 2010, and for 20-24 year olds by 36%.

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# Youth Connections and School Business Community Partnership Brokers in New South Wales

## NATIONAL SUMMARY

In the early stages of 2010, the network of a 107 Partnership Brokers focused on engaging with stakeholders, and developing environmental scans and strategic plans for their region. As the year progressed, providers' focus shifted to exploring partnership opportunities and creating or enhancing partnerships to meet their region's needs.

### Program Status

By April 2011, there were approximately 1200 active and self-sustaining partnerships associated with Partnership Brokers nationally (excludes Victorian data<sup>14</sup>) involving over 8000 partner organisations. These partnerships are undertaking a range of activity to support the learning and development of young people in their community. Approximately 19 per cent of these partnerships have an Indigenous focus. There have been approximately 5800 Outcomes Framework Key Performance Measure (KPM) evaluations with approximately 1770 (30%) of those evaluations rating the partnership's progress as 'Considerable' or 'Achieved'<sup>15</sup>. Approximately 80 per cent of the partnerships being supported by Partnership Brokers are newly created. The remaining 20 per cent are pre-existing partnerships that are being enhanced with support from the Partnership Brokers.

Providers have submitted their 2010 Case Studies which are currently under review with a number being developed to share good practice as well as for promotional purposes. Case Studies have provided some excellent examples of partnership initiatives across a broad range of focus areas involving a variety of stakeholders. They include examples of providers leveraging off and adding value to local, state and Commonwealth programs/initiatives, as well as examples of innovative partnership models being established to meet the needs of young people. Case Studies have also highlighted the complex, multifaceted nature of the Partnership Broker role.

### Stakeholder engagement

While these national figures and case studies indicate significant progress, individual providers and the program have also faced some challenges. One of these challenges has been connecting with education authorities in a way that enables Partnership Brokers to align their priorities for partnership development with the priorities for schooling at a systemic level.

Providers have also reported that some school leaders don't understand the role of the Partnership Broker as a facilitator, rather than service delivery provider. For historical reasons, confusion about the Partnership Brokers role is often centred around expectations that Partnership Brokers should be involved in coordinating Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) placements. This misunderstanding has resulted in tensions and impacted on some schools' willingness to consider how a partnership approach, supported by a Partnership Broker, can assist them to achieve the outcomes required under the Government's broad education reform agenda. Managing expectations and educating stakeholders about what Partnership Brokers can do, and importantly, what they don't do, has been an ongoing challenge for providers. In order

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<sup>14</sup> In Victoria, the Partnership Brokers program is delivered through the Victorian Government's Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) and is managed by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

<sup>15</sup> Data cited is accurate as at 12 April 2011.

to overcome this challenge, there is a need for education authorities to send a clear message to school leaders about the intent of the Partnership Brokers program and the benefits of schools partnering with business and community.

In terms of key stakeholder engagement, provider reporting has shown that parents and families represent just one per cent of the total number of organisations involved in partnerships. This data is supported by results from a recent provider survey which found that 75 per cent of Partnership Brokers felt that parents and families were the most challenging stakeholder to work with. While the number of parents in partnerships is low, the data shows that there are some emerging partnerships that involve parent bodies such as parent and citizen associations and state parent councils. There are a number of other partnerships that are focused on supporting parents without including them as formal members of the partnership.

Another challenge for providers is building cross-sectoral partnerships involving stakeholders that may not have worked together before. Within this context, an important part of the Partnership Brokers' work is building partners' understanding of each other's needs, developing trust between partners and securing commitment to a shared goal. To do this effectively, Partnership Brokers need to engage with organisations at a decision-making level where there is authority to enter into partnership arrangements and commit resources. Providers report that this is particularly challenging when working with schools and school systems.

### **Variation in performance**

It is clear that there are varying degrees of success amongst providers and some providers appear to be struggling to deliver the program in line with program expectations. There are a number of reasons for this, including:

- Some Partnership Broker organisations were contracted under previous programs in a 'hands-on' service delivery role. Some of these organisations have struggled to make the transition to a strategic, facilitation role.
- The varying nature of infrastructure, culture and capacity across Service Regions. There are different challenges for providers operating in metropolitan, rural and remote areas. Some Service Regions, and some communities within Service Regions, are more conducive to partnership development than others.
- The capacity of personnel undertaking the Partnership Broker role also varies across, and within regions. Some providers, particularly those in remote regions, have had difficulty finding people with the necessary skill set to deliver program outcomes.

### **Support from DEEWR**

DEEWR has supported the achievement of program outcomes through the provision of induction forums, regional forums, training on the information management system, professional development, support tools and the funding of jurisdiction-based and national provider networks. The contract management approach in the first year of operation has been intensive, focused on reinforcing provider understanding and on developing provider capacity.

Provider networks at both a jurisdiction and national level have been established and are developing and implementing strategies to support improved outcomes for the program. However, performance of the networks has been variable and significant examples of the networks proactively engaging with organisations and peak bodies at a state and/or national level are yet to be seen.

### **Program Priorities**

61 per cent of Partnership Brokers reported they were 'very effective' or 'extremely effective' in addressing their top regional priority for 2010. Among the most commonly reported priorities were:

- 
- Increasing Indigenous engagement and attainment.
  - Addressing regional or industry specific skills shortages.
  - Minimising the impact of mental health, drug abuse and homelessness issues on retention and attainment.
  - Enhancing parental and family engagement.
  - Improving regional and remote service delivery.
  - Engaging and improving outcomes for humanitarian refugees and culturally and linguistically diverse young people.
  - Improving literacy and numeracy levels across all age groups
  - Supporting youth mentoring arrangements.

### **Collaboration between Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections providers**

An important feature of the Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections programs is the requirement for providers to work together to identify and address the needs of their region. In some regions, providers are working well together and progressing partnership arrangements to improve support services, however, the level of collaboration in other regions is variable. In regions where collaboration has been limited, Youth Connections providers appear to have concentrated on delivery of case management services and Partnership Brokers have focused on stakeholder engagement and partnership development more broadly.

## **NEW SOUTH WALES**

### **Context**

In NSW 15 of the 30 regions were declared gaps in the initial Request for Tender process. These regions were subject to gap-filling processes which delayed the implementation of services in regions affected. Many providers initially struggled with the concept of 'brokering' partnerships and found it difficult to adopt a facilitator, rather than operational, role. The majority of the NSW Partnership Broker organisations are also contracted to deliver the NSW Government Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) program. This has contributed to Partnership Brokers' focus on establishing school and industry partnerships to address attainment and transition issues for young people in the senior secondary phase of education. To better support the NSW Youth Connections target age group (11-19 years), Partnership Brokers are now shifting their focus to include partnerships that support a broader range of young people, including those attending primary schools.

### **Program Status**

By April 2011, there were over 500 active and self-sustaining partnerships associated with Partnership Brokers in New South Wales involving approximately 3800 partner organisations. These partnerships are undertaking a range of activity to support the learning and development of young people in their community. Approximately 21 per cent of these partnerships have an Indigenous focus. There have been approximately 3000 Outcomes Framework Key Performance Measure (KPM) evaluations with around 1000 (35%) of those evaluations rating the partnership's progress as 'Considerable' or 'Achieved'.

### **Challenges**

While the information above indicates significant progress, individual providers and the program have also faced many of the challenges outlined in the National Summary. In particular, NSW Partnership Brokers have found it difficult to establish partnerships that involve stakeholders other than schools and industry. Providers recognise the need to engage with parents and community, however, the limited number of organised bodies that are representative of these stakeholder groups presents an ongoing challenge.

NSW Partnership Brokers understand what it means to be strategic and are endeavouring to align partnership development to the attainment and transition issues identified in their Strategic Plan. However, there are a small number of providers who are focused on quantity rather than quality, and are establishing partnerships for purposes that are not clearly linked to the needs of young people in their region. In the geographically larger service regions, some of the more remote communities may not be supported in the same way as communities within the larger population centres.

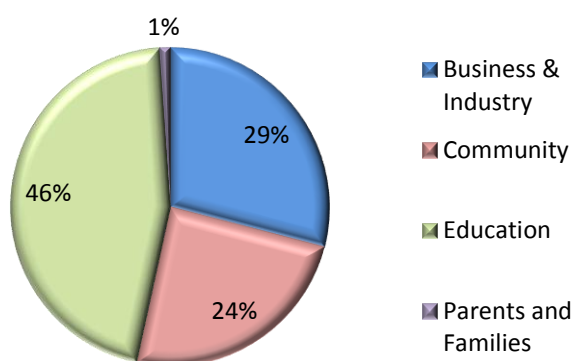
**Table A – Number of Organisations in Partnerships by Stakeholder Group (as at 12 April 2011)**

This table shows the stakeholder groups represented in partnerships added during the selected reporting period.

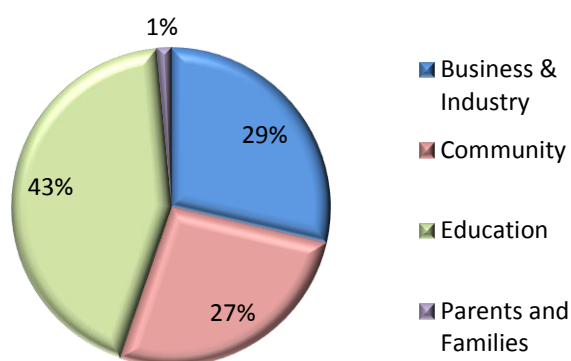
**Note:** this data includes organisations in partnerships with status active, self-sustaining, draft, inactive and terminated. National figures do not include Victoria.

Stakeholder Group	State (NSW)		National	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
Business & Industry	1119	29%	2475	29%
Community	939	24%	2297	27%
Education	1756	46%	3741	43%
Parents and Families	40	1%	127	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3854</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8640</b>	<b>100%</b>

**NSW Partnerships by Stakeholder Group**



**National Partnerships by Stakeholder Group**





**Table B – Key Performance Measure (KPM) Evaluation Ratings (NSW) (data as at 12 April)**

This table shows the number of times each KPM evaluation value (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) has been selected, based on the latest evaluation rating recorded in the system (YATMIS). KPMs map to one of four program outcomes. Each evaluation value corresponds to a descriptor of the progress a partnership has made against a particular KPM. The values and their corresponding descriptors are outlined below:

Key: 1 = Limited Progress; 2 = Some Progress; 3 = Satisfactory Progress; 4 = Considerable Progress; 5 = Achieved

Outcome	Total KPM Evaluations	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Education and training providers partnering with stakeholders in their community to ensure all young people participate in challenging, relevant and engaging learning that broadens personal aspirations and improves education and transition outcomes.</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>136 (17%)</b>	<b>149 (19%)</b>	<b>162 (21%)</b>	<b>184 (24%)</b>	<b>148 (19%)</b>

The following KPMs contribute to this outcome:

An increase in the number of education and training providers who accredit community-based learning	79	24%	29%	20%	13%	14%
An increase in the number of education and training providers who have increased opportunities for young people to access trained mentors	170	22%	18%	19%	22%	18%
An increase in the number of education and training providers who have increased their career practitioner capacity	114	20%	16%	25%	19%	19%
Opportunities for meaningful learning as a result of education and training providers partnering with other stakeholders	416	13%	19%	20%	27%	20%

The data above shows that:

- Providers reported 43% of partnerships that have been evaluated have *achieved* or made *considerable progress* against this outcome.
- Providers reported 36% of partnerships that have been evaluated have made *limited* or *some progress* against this outcome.
- There are 416 partnerships (83% of the total number of partnerships in NSW) that have made progress towards providing '*opportunities for meaningful learning as a result of education and training providers partnering with other stakeholders*'. Providers reported that 47% of these partnerships have *achieved* or made *considerable progress* against this KPM.

Outcome	Total KPM Evaluations	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Business and industry actively engaged in sustainable partnerships that support the development of young people, contribute to the skills and knowledge of the future workforce and improve young people's education and transition outcomes.</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>107 (19%)</b>	<b>102 (18%)</b>	<b>128 (23%)</b>	<b>106 (19%)</b>	<b>116 (21%)</b>

The following KPMs contribute to this outcome:

An increase in the number of businesses providing mentoring/coaching opportunities for young people	187	22%	19%	22%	19%	18%
An increase in the number of businesses providing professional development opportunities for teachers and career practitioners	93	18%	20%	24%	17%	20%
An increase in the number of businesses providing quality workplace and community learning opportunities for young people	279	17%	17%	23%	20%	23%

The data above shows that:

- Providers reported 40% of partnerships that have been evaluated have achieved or made considerable progress against this outcome.
- Providers reported 37% of partnerships that have been evaluated have made limited or some progress against this outcome.
- There are 279 partnerships (56% of the total number of partnerships in NSW) that have made progress towards increasing ‘the number of businesses providing quality workplace and community learning opportunities for young people’. Providers reported that 43% of these partnerships have achieved or made considerable progress against this KPM

Outcome	Total KPM Evaluations	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Partnerships that support parents and families to provide an informed and supportive environment for all young people to enable lifelong learning and career and pathway planning, and improve their education and transition outcomes.<sup>16</sup></b>	<b>618</b>	<b>176 (28%)</b>	<b>135 (22%)</b>	<b>151 (24%)</b>	<b>96 (16%)</b>	<b>60 (10%)</b>

The following KPMs contribute to this outcome:

An increase in the number of parents and families that are actively engaged in supporting learning inside and outside the classroom	134	34%	22%	22%	11%	10%
An increase in the number of parents and families that are actively involved in career transition planning for their children	88	27%	24%	25%	13%	11%
An increase in the number of parents and families that are better informed about learning and career options	143	23%	21%	31%	17%	8%
An increase in the number of parents and families that are confident to interact with education and training providers, employers and community groups to support participation and engagement of their children	123	30%	20%	24%	15%	11%
An increase in the number of parents and families that have improved understanding of the link between learning and career aspirations	130	28%	23%	19%	21%	9%

The data above shows that:

- Providers reported 26% of partnerships that have been evaluated have *achieved* or made *considerable progress* against this outcome.
- Providers reported 50% of partnerships that have been evaluated have made *limited* or *some progress* against this outcome.
- There are 143 partnerships (29% of the total number of partnerships in NSW) that have made progress towards providing ‘*an increase in the number of parents and families that are better informed about learning and career options*’. Providers reported that 25% of these partnerships have *achieved* or made *considerable progress* against this KPM.

<sup>16</sup> In many cases, progress against Parent and Family KPMs has been achieved through partnerships that do not include parent or family groups as members. While there are some partnerships that do involve parent and family groups, these groups represent only one per cent of the total number of organisations in partnerships.

Outcome	Total KPM Evaluations	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Community groups participating in partnerships that harness resources and build social capital to support young people to identify and achieve their goals and improve their education and transition outcomes.</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>139 (14%)</b>	<b>240 (25%)</b>	<b>291 (30%)</b>	<b>165 (17%)</b>	<b>139 (14%)</b>

The following KPMs contribute to this outcome:

An increase in the number of community groups that partner with stakeholders to align services for young people and reduce service duplication and resource wastage	70	10%	24%	31%	23%	11%
An increase in the number of community groups that partner with stakeholders to build networks and linkages among agencies to support young people	214	9%	22%	36%	17%	15%
An increase in the number of community groups that partner with stakeholders to harness and grow community resources for young people	132	12%	26%	33%	16%	14%
An increase in the number of community groups that partner with stakeholders to identify and respond to emerging trends and skill needs with reference to young people	105	19%	22%	28%	18%	13%
An increase in the number of community groups that partner with stakeholders to improve young people's employability and life skills	181	18%	22%	25%	18%	18%
An increase in the number of community groups that partner with stakeholders to provide mentoring and coaching opportunities for young people	116	18%	26%	26%	14%	16%
An increase in the number of community groups that partner with stakeholders to provide young people with opportunities to connect with the community	156	15%	31%	29%	15%	10%

	Total KPM Evaluations	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>2930</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>463</b>

The data above shows that:

- Providers reported 31% of partnerships that have been evaluated have *achieved* or made *considerable progress* against this outcome.
- Providers reported 39% of partnerships that have been evaluated have made *limited* or *some progress* against this outcome.
- There are 156 partnerships (31% of the total number of partnerships in NSW) that have made progress towards providing '*an increase in the number of community groups that partner with stakeholders to build networks and linkages among agencies to support young people*'. Providers reported that 32% of these partnerships have *achieved* or made *considerable progress* against this KPM.

## **Youth Connections – National Summary**

In the first 14 months of operation, Youth Connections has provided individual support services to 24,738 young people. 11,320 young people have achieved a final outcome in the program, which represents re-engagement or a sustained improvement in a young person's engagement with education, training or employment. A further 5,090 were assessed as making significant progress in addressing their barriers to full engagement in education. In addition, 3,578 activities were held to find and connect with at-risk young people, with providers linking with 125,900 young people through these activities. In this period, providers undertook a range of initiatives to strengthen services in the region, with 3,049 activities being held.

Under 'Individual Support Services', Youth Connections providers must deliver flexible and individualised services to young people at risk, including those who are most at risk of disengaging from learning or disconnecting from school or education through to those who are severely disconnected from education, family and community. Delivering services to individual young people has been a focus for providers in the first year of the program. Many providers had established services and were able to quickly deliver this aspect of the program. While Youth Connections has achieved significant results in 2010, the elements of the program relating to outreach and re-engagement activities, and activities to strengthen services in the region have been slower to be established and embedded in service delivery.

Under 'Outreach and Re-engagement Activities', Youth Connections providers must offer proactive, youth focused re-engagement activities and outreach services. Outreach and re-engagement services aim to find severely disengaged young people, and to connect these young people with activities to support their re-engagement with learning, family and community. In the first 14 months there has been considerable activity in this area, however not all of this activity has been well targeted or outcomes focused.

Under 'Strengthening Services in the Region Activities', Youth Connections providers must work to build capacity and strengthen services for young people at risk and ensure that providers of other services in a region are connected. Again, providers have been reporting effort in this area, however it appears provider understanding and capacity in this area is not strong. Some of this effort has been directed toward awareness raising and promotional activities or attendance at stakeholder group meetings, neither of which would be considered 'Strengthening Services in the Region Activities'. This area of provider performance is most closely linked with the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program, and providers are expected to work together, where appropriate, to address the needs of their region. In some regions providers are working well together and progressing partnership arrangements to improve support services, however, the level of collaboration in other regions is variable.

The Youth Connections program includes a focus on Indigenous and humanitarian refugee young people. These two groups are more likely to be at risk, and may require mainstream programs to be tailored to meet their specific needs. The Youth Connections program has had mixed success in supporting these two target cohorts. Indigenous young people represent 18% of the caseload (more than 4,300 young people) receiving individual support services in the Youth Connections program, and 27% of outreach activities included an Indigenous focus. While the rate of Indigenous young

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people achieving outcomes is lower than for non-Indigenous, more than 1,500 Indigenous young people achieved a final outcome in the program, and a further 1,000 made progress in addressing their barriers to engagement. For humanitarian refugee participants, the program has been less successful at delivering support and achieving outcomes. Nationally, only 202 young humanitarian refugees have been provided with individual support services in the first 14 months of the program.

DEEWR has supported the achievement of program outcomes through the provision of induction forums, regional forums, training on the information management system, resource tools and the funding of jurisdiction based and national provider networks. The contract management approach in the first year of operation has been intensive and focused on reinforcing provider understanding and developing provider capacity. In February, DEEWR provided a redefinition of the service types, in an effort to clarify the intention of these activities for providers, and to focus their efforts. Case studies are being developed to strengthen provider understanding, and to demonstrate effective practice.

### **Program Priorities**

In 2011, DEEWR is working, with jurisdictions and provider networks, to improve program and provider performance in a number of areas. These focus areas have been identified based on the quantitative and qualitative data that providers have reported, through contract management activities, and through feedback from jurisdictions. These focus areas include:

- *Services to individual young people* – increasing the number and the quality of outcomes for severely disconnected young people
- *Outreach and Re-engagement Activities* – improving provider understanding and increasing the number of young people who are referred from outreach activities into case management
- *Strengthening Services in the Region Activities* – improving provider understanding and the effectiveness of activities delivered
- Indigenous young people and Closing the Gap – continuing the focus on this priority area
- Humanitarian refugees – building provider capacity and focusing effort for this cohort
- Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers – improving their relationships and translating these into outcomes for at risk young people
- Improving the quality of data and reporting from providers.

## **New South Wales Summary**

### **Context**

The delivery of Youth Connections in NSW is directed by a number of specific NSW criteria agreed through negotiation with the NSW state government, the Catholic Education Commission NSW and the Association of Independent Schools of NSW. The program is delivered across 30 regions and is focused on young people aged 11 to 19 years.

Youth Connections providers work closely with a number of NSW government programs and ensure services targeted to young people who have already disengaged from education include as a priority students who become disengaged because of special learning problems.

23 regions are identified as having significant populations of Indigenous young people and ten regions have significant populations of young people from a humanitarian refugee background. The providers in these regions need to meet additional service delivery and staffing requirements in order to support these two groups.

### **Program Status**

Since January 2010 providers have gradually improved their knowledge of the program and their regions, which has contributed to improvements in service quality and overall performance. Induction sessions, regional forums and state provider network meetings have facilitated sharing effective practices, promotion of the program and information exchange between Youth Connections providers and DEEWR, the Department, the Catholic and Independent School sector and School Business Community Partnership Brokers.

In the first 14 months of operation in New South Wales, Youth Connections has provided individual support services to 8,910 young people. 4,357 young people in the program achieved a final outcome, which represents re-engagement or a sustained improvement in a young person's engagement with education, training or employment. A further 1,630 young people were assessed as making significant progress in addressing their barriers to full engagement in education. In addition, 1,116 activities were held to find and connect with severely disconnected young people, with providers linking with 59,062 young people through these activities. In this period, providers undertook a range of initiatives to strengthen services in the region, with 509 activities being held.

In New South Wales 21% of young people in the program were identified as Indigenous Australians, more than 1,880 young people. 31% or 721 Indigenous young people achieved a final outcome, and a further 442 were assessed as making significant progress in addressing their barriers.

### **Challenges**

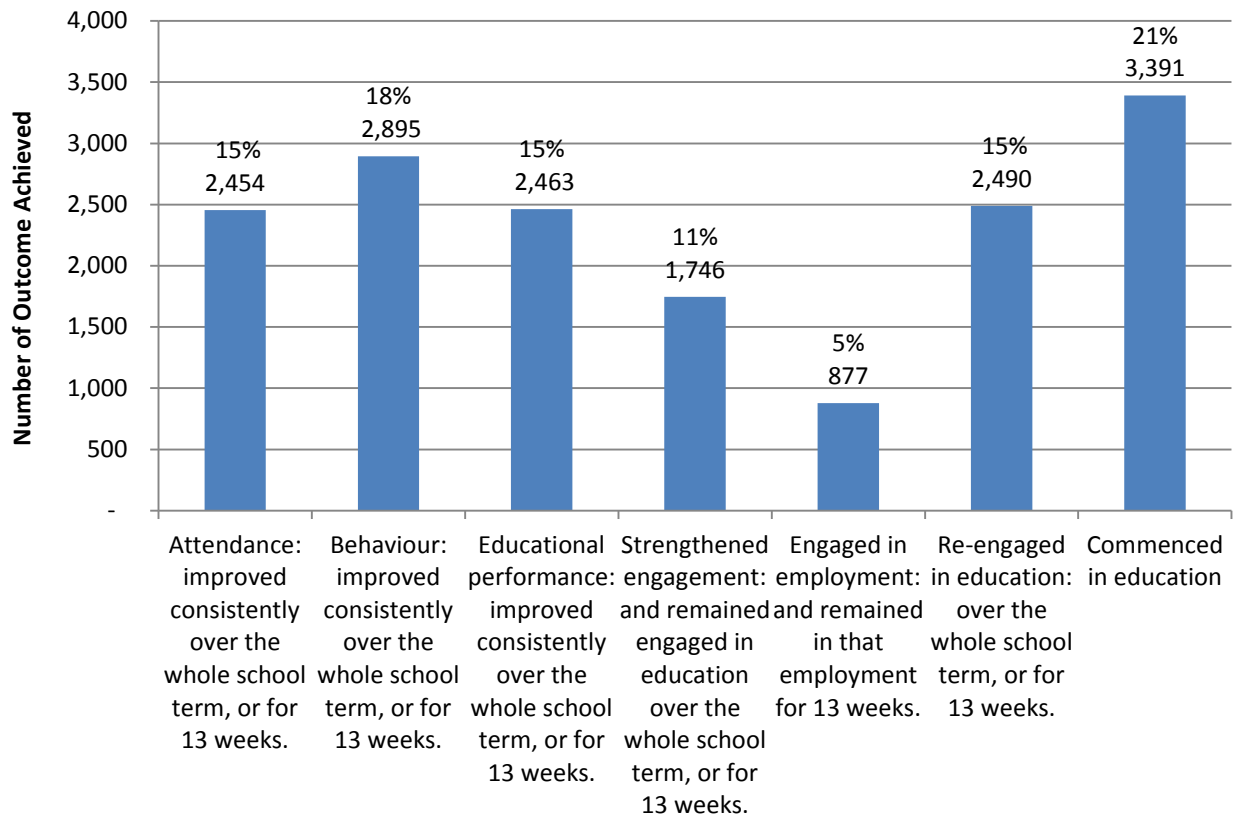
While Youth Connections has delivered significant outcomes, providers have faced many of the challenges outlined in the national summary. The large size of the majority of the non-metropolitan regions, in particular western NSW, has made it difficult for providers to penetrate the whole service region. Providers also report difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified and experienced staff to service the more isolated areas of these regions.

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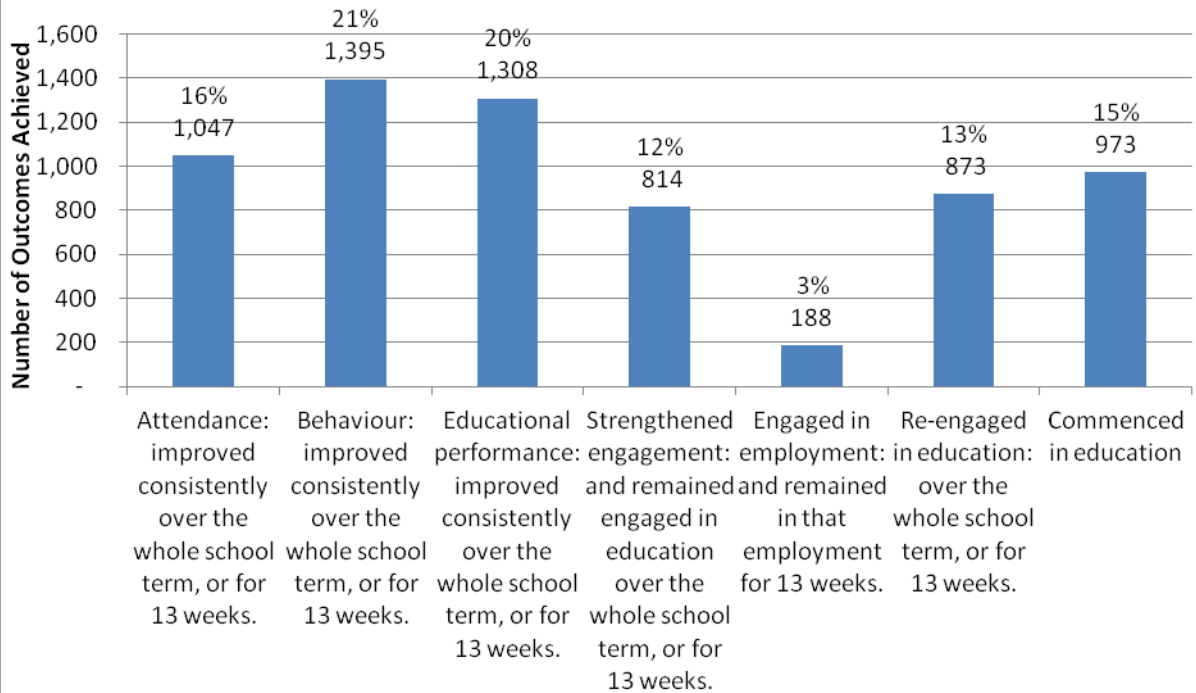
In some regions, the Youth Connections provider and the Partnership Broker have not established an effective working relationship, despite the requirement for both services to work together to address the needs of at risk young people in their region. The main issue seems to be that some organisations see themselves as being in competition, rather than complementary services. DEEWR is continuing to work with providers and the state provider network to resolve these issues.

Outcomes for young people from humanitarian refugee backgrounds are low, including in regions identified as having significant populations of young humanitarian refugees, despite providers employing suitably skilled staff. Feedback from providers is that many of the Humanitarian Refugee communities encourage and support their young people's participation in education and Year 12 attainment, which makes it difficult to enrol sufficient numbers of young people with this background.

### National - Final Outcomes Achieved



### New South Wales - Final Outcomes Achieved





	National		New South Wales	
Young people enrolled in individual support services (current and exited)	24,738		8,910	
Young people who have achieved a final outcome	11,320	46%	4,357	49%
Young people who have achieved an outcome - progressive or final <sup>17</sup>	16,410	66%	5,987	67%

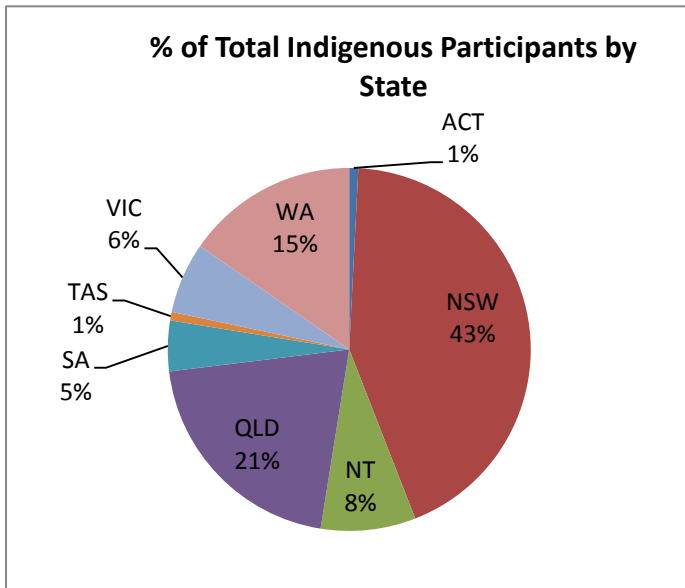
Final Outcomes Achieved <sup>18</sup>	National	New South Wales
Attendance: The participant's attendance at school or education setting improved consistently over the whole school term, or for 13 weeks.	2,454	1,047
Behaviour: The participant's behaviour at school or education setting improved consistently over the whole school term, or for 13 weeks.	2,895	1,395
Educational performance: The participant's educational performance improved consistently over the whole school term, or for 13 weeks.	2,463	1,308
Strengthened engagement: The participant's engagement was strengthened and they remained engaged in education over the whole school term, or for 13 weeks.	1,746	814
Engaged in employment: The participant started employment and remained in that employment for 13 weeks.	877	188
Re-engaged in education: The participant re-engaged in education over the whole school term, or for 13 weeks.	2,490	873
Commenced in education: The participant commenced in education.	3,391	973

	National	New South Wales
Outreach and Re-engagement Activities held	3,578 (125,900 young people attending)	1,116 (59,062 young people attending)
Strengthening Services in the Region Activities held	3,049	509

<sup>17</sup> A final outcome represents re-engagement or a sustained improvement in a young person's engagement with education, training or employment. A progressive outcome represents a young person making significant progress in addressing their barriers to full engagement in education.

<sup>18</sup> A young person can achieve more than one final outcome.

## Indigenous



	National	New South Wales
Indigenous Participants	4,354	1,884
All Participants	24,738	8,910
% Indigenous	18%	21%

