Bridging the Gap between the ‘Haves’ and the ‘Have Nots’

Report of the National Education and Employment Forum (NEEF)

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bridging the gap
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I commend this document, Bridging the Gap Between the Haves and the Have Nots, the Report of the National Education and Employment Forum (NEEF) to the Parliaments of Australia in the confident expectation that they will seriously address its recommendations.

This NEEF Report has been developed from the deliberations of a broad section of the Australian community. It addresses key issues of concern across the country about those Australians who continue to experience disadvantage in a variety of ways. It reaffirms the role of education as a major contributor to the transformation of Australian society, and as a passport to employment and fuller participation in that society.

The NEEF Project was made possible by the dedication and involvement of a number of people. I wish to thank those who participated in the five State Forums and the National Forum, especially the speakers, and those organisations and individuals who generously assisted with funding, both financial and in-kind. Significant numbers of people, most of whom were volunteers, gave their valuable time and expertise over a long period, to organize and implement the six Forums. I wish to thank them for their superb efforts. Finally, I wish to thank the team who assisted me to write this Report and the NEEF steering committee. The commitment of all these people to a better education for all Australians, created a unique and historic project that reached out to all levels of society.

While the recommendations in the Report reflect the outcomes of the six Forums, the formulation of this final Report has been the responsibility of the authors.

Dr Anne Feeney  
NATIONAL COORDINATOR  
NATIONAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FORUM
Abbreviations

ABS - Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACE - Australian College of Education
ACOSS - Australian Council of Social Services
ACTU - Australian Council of Trade Unions
AGPS - Australian Government Publishing Service
AHURI - Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
AISPAR - Australian Institute for Suicide Prevention and Research
ANTA - Australian National Training Authority
ANU - Australian National University
ATSIC - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Council
BCA - The Business Council of Australia, CAEPR - The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CEDA - Committee for Economic Development of Australia
CIS - Centre for Independent Studies
CYC - Community and Youth Centre
DEET - Department of Education, Employment and Training
DEETYA - Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
DETYA - Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DOGIT - Deed of Grant In Trust
DSF - Dusseldorp Skills Forum
EBA - Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment

EFTSU - Effective Full-time Student Unit
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
HECS - Higher Education Contribution Scheme
IBM - International Business Machines
ICT - Information & Communication Technology
IESIP - Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program
MIASER - Melbourne Institute for Applied Social and Economic Research
NATSEM - National Centre for Economic and Social Modelling
NCVER - National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NEEF - National Education and Employment Forum
NIELNS - National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PhD - Doctor of Philosophy
PTWA - Pathways to Work Alliance
RCMU - Research Centre, Melbourne University
SES - Socio-Economic Status
TasCOSS - Tasmanian Council of Social Services
VET - Vocational Education and Training
WTFVR - The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Task Force On Violence Report
The National Education and Employment Forum (NEEF) is a project of the World Education Fellowship (WEF) Australia. WEF is an international, not-for-profit, volunteer organisation with no political or religious affiliation. WEF is headquartered in London, and has consultative status with UNESCO. It is not a welfare agency. The Guiding Committee of WEF International endorsed the NEEF project and its Chair opened the National Forum.

NEEF had its genesis at the Annual General Meeting of the Australian Council of the World Education Fellowship (WEF) in January 2000. Some of its members had perceived that education had a role to play in bridging the gap between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ in the Australian community. They acknowledged that the Australian economy had done comparatively well in the transformation of economic activity in the 1990s, characterised by globalisation and the emergence of the ‘new economy’ based on information communication and technology. But WEF members perceived that there was mounting evidence that some parts of the Australian community were being left behind. The challenge was to ensure that those not doing so well did not fall further behind. The fear was that inaction might result in a permanent underclass of disadvantaged in a chronically divided society. A major part of the solution was perceived to be the ability of education to transform the personal and social fortunes of people who are disadvantaged. And so NEEF was born.

NEEF consisted of Forums in five States, (in Brisbane, 7 October 2000, Adelaide 3 March, 2001, Melbourne, 4 May, 2001, Sydney, 12 July and Perth, 16-17 July, 2001) followed by a National Forum in Brisbane on 16-17 August, 2001. Participants were a diverse group of prominent Australians, business people, public administrators, educators including principals, teachers and students from government and non-government schools, lectures from TAFE and academia, welfare executives and workers, Indigenous Australians, people from ethnic communities and politicians from the major political parties. The NEEF Project looked closely at the progress being made in Australia to provide the necessary interpersonal supports, infrastructure, networks, hardware/software, maintenance, and flexibly delivered curriculum initiatives, at all levels of education/training, to ensure that all Australians have the confidence, skills and knowledge to enable them to access an appropriate education, so that they may, more actively, participate in, and contribute to the emerging social and economic structures of this country.

The range of individuals and organisations that became involved in NEEF included:
- the immediate past and the present Governors-General;
- politicians from the main political parties;
- state Government Departments and agencies;
- federal government agencies such as Area Consultative Committees, the Australian National Training Authority and the ECEF;
- international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and WEF International;
- welfare groups such as the Australian Council of Social Services, the State Councils of Social Services, Anglicare, Mission Australia, Brotherhood of St. Laurence and the Smith Family;
- the business community through bodies such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Commerce Queensland, Rotary and companies such as IBM, Telstra, Cisco Systems and Boeing;
- the Indigenous community;
- universities, TAFEs, secondary, primary and preschools;
- The Queensland Catholic Education Commission;
- Adventist, Catholic and Lutheran Education Departments in a number of States;
Research groups such as the Australian College of Education and The Dusseldorp Skills Forum; Training Associations; and Students from government and non-government schools who attended and spoke at the Forums.

NEEF is unique in the breadth of the constituencies that have become partners in the project. That they came together is a graphic illustration of the reality expressed by the polls which regularly and consistently place education as one of the top two areas of concern of the Australian community.

This document is an urgent call for more and different things to be done. But three important clarifications are required. The first is that in making this call the participants in NEEF do not wish to de-value the large number of good things being done by dedicated teachers in schools, colleges and organisations across Australia. Their commitment to education is one of the defining characteristics of the nation. Senator Ian McDonald, Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government and the Hon. Anna Bligh MP, Minister for Education in Queensland illustrated some impressive initiatives being pursued at Federal and State levels. Examples of good practice will be referred to in this document. The NEEF proposals, however, are that even more should be done and that dedicated teachers and educational administrators should be empowered and supported by the Australian community, through its political representatives at State/Territory and Federal level, and in partnerships with their local communities and business, to achieve the goals set out in this document.

The second is that this document does not pretend to address all facets of education in Australia. It is primarily focussed on the actions that need to be taken to assist those most disadvantaged in the community. Its recommendations are not exhaustive or exclusive of other key initiatives in education such as the provision of greater opportunities for gifted students.

The third is that education alone will not be enough. An integrated set of actions based on employment and industry policy, especially to create more employment, on welfare and family policy and community development policy is required, where all relevant agencies of government at both State/Territory, Federal and Local levels, co-operate to achieve desired goals. Recognising that, this document confines itself mainly to the role that educational initiatives should play, but gives attention to the need to integrate welfare support and make it more accessible to those in need and to link it more effectively with schools.

A comment about the nature of this Report which some readers may find unusual. It attempts to reflect the concerns and proposals of the participants in the NEEF State and National Forums, but it also attempts to link these concerns with a range of major Reports at National, State and Territory levels, with research, statistics and expert comment that reflect and illustrate the NEEF concerns. In doing so it aims for mutual reinforcement of this common body of proposals which charts a direction for the nation.

This Report is a call for action. It asks for the exercise of political will at Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local levels, to put into practice the recommendations of this and the significant Reports that have preceded it. As Gregor Ramsey noted in his Report on the Review of Teacher Education in New South Wales, titled Quality Matters, there have been more than 20 reviews of teaching and teacher education in the last two decades and that these had had “limited impact”. We submit that what is needed now is a determined program of implementation, not further reports and trial programs that do not last. The point was put eloquently by an Indigenous woman at the National Forum:

“Stop reporting and doing reports on Indigenous education. What we need to start to do is look at those reports and start working on them. As you can see there’s lots and lots of reports that have been done on Indigenous Education and I know with myself I’m tired of getting consulted and researched and poked and prodded and asked why.” (Sue Thompson, 2001)

A summary of the main proposals of this Report with accompanying brief explanations was distributed to each Federal parliamentarian before the election in November, 2001. It is attached as Appendix 1.
Recommendation 1:
Breaking the educational disadvantage cycle
A concerted effort is needed by governments at all levels to shift the high proportion of expenditure on welfare towards measures that will prevent poverty and unemployment in order to stop the cycle of dependency. There are strong links between educational outcomes and household income, resulting in the continuation across generations of poverty and low attachment to the workforce. Young people from families of low incomes are more likely to leave school early, and early school-leavers have less chance of attaining full time sustainable employment. The gap in educational opportunity is real and successes gained in earlier generations have dissipated as workplace demands raise the required entry standards. A determined focus on achieving successful educational outcomes for children from disadvantaged families is urgently needed to benefit Australia’s economic and social future.

It is recommended that Federal, State, Territory and Local Governments collaboratively work towards targets for higher educational outcomes for young people who are disadvantaged and for geographical areas of concentrated disadvantage.

Recommendation 2:
Major increase in the investment in education
School communities are struggling to meet basic requirements and their fundraising efforts are reduced by tax and higher administrative accountability. The National Education and Employment Forum found widespread agreement that a strong, robust, inclusive democracy required a competitive edge through improved education and training, broadly based, rather than elitist, which would play an increasing role in sustainably supporting equitable income growth. A substantial increase in investment in education, was sought by participants who believed that the population would support a specific tax quarantined for education. The tax would be progressive on income and a component of company tax and GST. The overall education budget must incorporate real increases, taking into account increased taxes and charges now met by schools and individuals.

It is recommended that Federal, State and Territory, Governments:
(a) increase spending on education as a percentage of GDP to the average level of OECD countries with an additional $1.5 billion in each of the next three budgets;
(b) finance the increase with bi-partisan agreement for a specific education tax to be accounted for separately from general revenue through an Australian Education Fund.

Recommendation 3:
Increased access to supports and options for young people through education
Young people face different obstacles in their teenage and early adult years and while certain factors can predict which young people are more likely to be at risk, the most successful programs are ones tailored to individuals and flexible in time and place to meet variable needs. Programs are limited geographically making them neither accessible nor visible, and are fragmented by funding criteria. The demonstrated success of full-service schools warrants their expansion so that all students are able to benefit from access to support services as well as from a wide and flexible range of options such as apprenticeships, vocational education and training, enterprise learning, in addition to the traditional, academic curricula. Priority needs to be given to the most vulnerable communities identified by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute study. In addition, opportunities to establish Community and Youth Centres (CYCs) should be offered to communities, so that all agencies work collectively to support young people with integrated services and comprehensive information.
It is recommended that Federal, State, Territory and Local Governments:

a) within three years designate all schools in vulnerable communities as full service schools;

b) within a ten year period implement an expansion of full service schools to ensure that all young people have access to a full range of options and support services;

c) enable communities, through partnerships, to establish Community and Youth Centres.

Recommendation 4:
Recognise the importance of early childhood learning

Substantial evidence now shows that a strong foundation in the early childhood years is critical to the success of later learning capacities. Investment in early preventative programs can reduce costly remediation later. To ensure that pre-school children from disadvantaged environments develop capacities for literacy before formal schooling, to enable them to participate effectively in their primary schooling, comprehensive programs of intervention and support are needed. The Stronger Families program provides a vehicle for such programs which need to forge strong links between early childhood professionals, parents and community members. Furthermore, parents with young children can be encouraged through directed tax incentives to support their children’s education from the earliest years, rather than increased benefits which can contribute to the dependency cycle.

It is recommended that, in order to limit the effects of disadvantage on children before they enter school, Federal, State and Territory governments collaboratively:

a) provide early childhood education to all children from 0 to 5 in vulnerable areas and in areas where there are high populations of young children;

b) increase the number of specifically trained teacher aides and community volunteers to work with parents in their homes and at pre-school centres;

c) train early childhood education teachers and teacher aides to work with parents in disadvantaged areas, particularly to develop the capabilities of trust, autonomy and initiative in their young children;

d) develop innovative ways of providing low income working parents of young children with additional tax benefits for the education of their young children.

Recommendation 5:
Increased access to learning through information and communication technology

Access and ability to use information and communication technologies is increasingly being recognised as an arbiter of people’s ability to educate themselves and to learn things that are important for their effective participation in society. Research has clearly demonstrated that a serious and expanding digital-divide exists in Australia and that without access to information and communication technologies and the training for its effective use, students, particularly those who are disadvantaged, face the likelihood of falling further behind in their studies and in competition for future employment opportunities. The National Education and Employment Forum recognised three dimensions of ‘access’ that must be urgently addressed:

- an effective national infrastructure;
- financial capacity for connectivity; and
- skills for usage.

These aspects require the simultaneous integration of a number of policies for an effective strategy to bridge the present digital divide and to prevent the emergence of new expressions of this divide. While joint, concerted efforts by governments, business and social sector organisations are imperative, inequality that currently surrounds access to new technologies must be addressed primarily by governments in order to set the appropriate macro-policy frameworks with respect to operating as a knowledge-based economy.

It is recommended that Federal, State, Territory and Local Governments collaboratively:

a) work with Telstra to install high speed broadband across Australia and fund internet connections is all relevant learning spaces in schools;

b) allow tax deductability for parents to purchase computers in homes where school-age children reside;

c) increase training of pre-service and in-service teachers in information and communications technology and its integration across the curriculum, particularly in disadvantaged schools.
Recommendation 6:
Increase the quality of teacher education

The National Education and Employment Forum recognised that the teaching profession has no formal State or National structures for ensuring standards and accreditation to develop ‘quality teachers’. Yet ‘teacher quality’ was seen as the most critical source of variation in student learning outcomes. Teachers now need new skills to meet their changing role as facilitators of learning, including communication skills for parent/family/community interaction, and core modules, which will help them guide students through various learning pathways such as vocational education and training and enterprise education. Inadequate training together with a serious imbalance between male and female role models in an increasingly feminised profession, mitigate against an enhanced status and professional image. With the increased demand on schools to aim towards 100 percent retention in post-compulsory settings, new roles have emerged for para-professional support personnel and other professionals working alongside teachers. In conjunction with governments, a formal professional structure would provide teachers and para-professional staff with leadership, mentors and access to a quality system.

It is recommended that Federal, State and Territory governments collaboratively:

a) support the establishment of a National Institute of teachers;

b) fund effective pre-service teacher education to deliver the teacher education specified by the Departments as future employers;

c) offer, with a 5 year bond, HECS-free scholarships to potential teachers from other professions;

d) provide substantial comprehensive and structured in-service teacher programs on a biennial basis;

e) train para-professional career and transition personnel and information and communication technology officers to work with students;

f) expand remuneration structures for teachers with additional accreditation similar to those in comparable professions;

Recommendation 7:
Prioritise Indigenous education

Prioritise Indigenous education

The complexities surrounding Indigenous education were highlighted at the National Education and Employment Forum. Clearly, many Indigenous children begin schooling from an already low base exacerbated by living in dysfunctional communities, suffering the affects of violence, low self-esteem and loss of personal identity. Improved educational outcomes are insufficient to remove these inequalities which result in poor literacy and numeracy skills, limited attendance at school, a significantly higher rate of early school leaving and fewer job opportunities. The Forum identified a number of areas for prioritisation in education to redress some of these inequalities. Indigenous participants called for action to reduce the effects of alcohol and to provide an education which builds their capacity and confidence as free and autonomous human beings, so that they can choose to participate in a number of cultures, while retaining the foundations of their own. A critical element to achieving change is to ensure that all Australians develop through their education, tolerance, attitudes of inclusiveness, and a broad understanding of Indigenous history and culture.

It is recommended that Federal, State and Territory governments collectively:

a) develop formal positions in education systems for Indigenous parents, elders and other relevant members of the local communities to be involved in the teaching of Indigenous culture to all students;

b) include mandatory courses in Indigenous history and culture in all curricula;

c) fund 500 full fee-paying, bonded scholarships, focussing on areas of greatest need across Australia, to attract Indigenous men and women into teaching;

d) include compulsory modules in Indigenous history, culture and knowledge in pre-service teacher education.
1.1 Disadvantaged People

Public awareness of the extent of disadvantage in Australia was heightened by the publication of the series, *Advance Australia Where?* in *The Australian* over the period 17-25 June 2000. Much of the material in the series was the result of commissioned research from the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) at the University of Canberra. Other research by NATSEM both before and after *The Australian* series and research by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) and the Melbourne Institute for Applied Social and Economic Research expands the picture summarised in that series. Some of the key components of disadvantage are set out in this Chapter to illustrate the depth and extent of the issues that we face as a nation.

1.1.1 Relative poverty

Absolute poverty in the sense of destitute homelessness is not widespread in Australia. That there is relative poverty is not at issue; rather the vexed question among commentators is the extent of this relative poverty. At issue is the method used to define ‘poverty’ and ‘the poverty line’ below which people can be categorized as living in poverty. The commissioned Report by The Smith Family in 1999, *Financial Disadvantage in Australia* 1999 and produced by NATSEM used as its measure of poverty an income that is half of the mean or average income in Australia. This is $406 per week for a family of husband, wife and two children. Using this measure:

- 2.4 million Australians or 13.3% of Australians live in income poverty (disposable income after tax);
- An estimated 732,000 dependent children or 14.9% live in poverty;
- Over 1.7 million adults or 12.8% live in poverty;
- On average the incomes of poor families are 43% below the poverty line;
- Just over 50% of all Australia’s poor live in families whose main source of income is government cash benefits;

- Poverty is particularly acute among those younger and single Australians aged less than 21 years whose Youth Allowance payments fall well below the poverty line;
- 20% of poor Australians now live in families where wages and salaries are the main source of income, thus being part of the growing number of working poor. That is, having a job no longer guarantees that a family will not be living in poverty.

The Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) took issue with this definition of poverty, arguing that the mean or average can rise very significantly if a small number at the top of the income scale experience quite substantial increases in income – as happened in the 1990s. The fact that a few at the top do very well, they argued, does not mean that those at the bottom experience worse poverty. In fact, CIS point out that the income of those below the NATSEM poverty line increased by a total of $38 per week (adjusted for inflation) across the decade of the nineties.

Defining the poverty line as half the median income of Australians, CIS calculated that 1 in 12 Australians (around 8.7%) were living in relative poverty and that their situation had not degenerated significantly over the period of the 1990s.

But the CIS paper went further and argued that calculating poverty lines on reported income was inaccurate because the data were unreliable. They advocate the use of expenditure patterns rather than income patterns, because numbers of the self-employed and those on Government benefits expend more than they report earning. Professor Helen Hughes (2001) estimated that 1 in 20 Australians (around 5%) would be below the poverty line if household expenditure were the measure used.

1.1.2 Increasing inequality

The CIS response to the NATSEM study emphasised two further criticisms. What the NATSEM study was, “really measuring is inequality... This is a concern born not of compassion, but of the all-too-familiar agenda of a politics of envy” ([Poor Arguments] Tsumori, Saunders, Hughes,
nation's population has grown at nothing like that rate. In a separate paper, *Trends in Income Inequality in the 1990s* published in August 2001, the Director of NATSEM reviewed some of the technical measures of income inequality and concluded that:

national income inequality increased between 1990 and 1999-2000, using data from ABS income surveys. Further examination of a range of measures of inequality indicated that this change was primarily due to strong growth in incomes among those at the top of the income distribution. There was relatively little change in the relationship between the incomes of those at the 50th and 10th percentiles (Harding, 2001: 8).

Her Report showed that the top 10 per cent have increased their share of total income from 22.7% to 23.9%, while the bottom 10 per cent were barely holding their own with just under 2.5% of total income, with evidence of some decline, and that this situation was largely the result of welfare assistance combined with some reduction in unemployment.

The key question is of course: What is the relevance of this inequality and what are the negative effects of it (if any) in our society? The CIS Report expressed this issue in these words, “Why should we assume that those below half the median income cannot participate effectively? Where is the evidence for this?” (Tsumori, Saunders, Hughes, 2001:4).

This National Education and Employment Forum (NEEF) Report submits that the evidence for ineffective participation can be seen in the following areas:

- persisting welfare dependency;
- persistent unemployment and particularly long-term unemployment;
- jobless households;
- inadequate social participation, through lack of capabilities;
- suicide rates among the unemployed and low socio-economic status; and
- educational under-achievement described in point 1.3 below.

### 1.1.3 Welfare dependency

Warby and Nahan, (Institute of Public Affairs, 1998) reported the key, stunning statistic that Government welfare spending, in the broad sense of transfer payments, has increased five-fold in real terms since 1960, while the nation’s population has grown at nothing like that rate. Taken in the narrow sense of welfare payments to able-bodied recipients, the unemployed, sole parents, students, those receiving welfare increased from about 1% of the population in 1970 to about 11% in 1996. *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society*, the McClure Report, instanced as one of the key reasons for ‘fundamental reform’ of our welfare system, the fact that:

over the past thirty years, there has been a steady upward trend in the proportion of the workforce-age population receiving income support and other publicly-provided assistance. Of special concern is the proportion of the population that depends on income support for the majority of its income (McClure, 2000:2).

Thus, the financial viability of lower-income households has been maintained only, or to a large extent, by government welfare, at a direct cost to taxpayers. While some of the increase in welfare payments has arguably been directed to more equitable support of people with a disability and single mothers, much of it has been directed to increased income support payments. Because their growth rate is ultimately unsustainable, these payments need to be reduced.

### 1.1.4 Unemployment and persistent long-term unemployment

While Australia’s national economic growth as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and productivity has been very impressive over the 1990s and amongst the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) leaders, unemployment has persisted stubbornly around 6.7–7%. The benefits of very significant and relatively prolonged economic growth are not being translated into low unemployment. Allowing for the 'churn' factor which sees at least some unemployed move in and out of unemployment, this stubborn level of unemployment suggests that Hughes’ (2001) estimates of 5% in relative poverty is probably too low.

More worrying is persistent long-term unemployment. Centrelink unemployment benefits customer data reveals that in September 2000 more than 385,000 Australians had been receiving unemployment related benefits for more than one year. Macklin (2002:2) reported that:

the average period of time out of work for an unemployed Australian is nearly a year. For unemployed men in their forties and fifties, it is nearly two years – 75 weeks.

Since the mid-1990s, the number of long-term recipients of unemployment benefits has hardly declined at all; there has been almost no reduction of the number of those out of work for two years or more. The effects of unemployment were summarised by Anne Neville in her Report for Anglicare, *State of the Family 2002*, which drew on the qualitative research of the Tasmanian Council of Social Services (TasCOSS) telling the stories of jobseekers looking for work:

Unemployment affects all aspects of an individual’s life. It erodes self-confidence and self-esteem and is a major source of stress on families and family relationships. Unemployment isolates the unemployed...
who can no longer afford to participate in social activities previously taken for granted. It can affect the physical as well as emotional health of the unemployed and their families and can lead to homelessness... (Neville, 2002:6)

The crucially important need to address long-term unemployment has been recognised by the Pathways to Work Alliance (PTWA), a consortium of The Business Council of Australia, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), Committee of Economic Development for Australia (CEDA), Jobs Australia, the Dusseldorp Skills Forum (DSF) and the Youth Research Centre at Melbourne University. This Alliance published Pathways to Work: Preventing and Reducing Long-Term Unemployment in January 2001 and has repeated its call in its Pre-Budget Briefing 2002. The NEEF Report endorses its proposals especially that:

measures under the Government’s umbrella of Australians Working Together should be expanded to include those long-term unemployed people on welfare benefits... (because)... the lack of specific focus on long-term unemployment has meant that those concerned continue to miss out on some of the key benefits; including, for example, training credits and access to personal advisers (PTWA, 2002:8).

1.1.5 Increase in the number of jobless households with children

The most worrying trend in the 1980s and 1990s has been the increasing concentration of joblessness in households with very little or no earned income – and this has occurred while employment levels over the medium term have risen. The table below from Dawkins, Gregg and Scutella (2002) demonstrates the increase in jobless households from 12.7% in 1982 to 16.3% in 1998. It also demonstrates the even faster rise in the percentage of dependent children in jobless households, from 10.2% in 1982 to 15% in 1998.

The seriousness of this trend is evident from the fact that Australia is third highest in the OECD countries showing the proportion of children in jobless households – both single parent and couple households.

The McClure Report estimated that in June 1999, about 860,000 children lived in a jobless household and these children according to McClure are “more likely to rely heavily on income support as they grow up” (McClure, 2000:3). This observation is supported by the work of McClelland, McDonald et McDonald (1998) showing that the parents’ socio-economic background is a key determinant of the likelihood of a youth completing secondary school and finding on-going employment. It is also supported by Pech and McCoul’s (1999) analysis of social security data showing that youth between 16 and 18 in families receiving income support are:

much more likely than other youths to become parents at an early age, leave school early, receive income support and be highly income support reliant themselves.... For all of these outcomes but the first, the risk is highest for young people whose parents have received income support continuously for at least two years (In Dawkins et al, 2002:2).

The fact that our nation has conservatively between 650,000 and 750,000 children in jobless households, following a decline from the June 1999 figure quoted above, and that this number has risen, despite the relative economic prosperity of the 1990s, is a key reason for the recommendations of this Report to command the attention of Governments. Remedial action now is urgent to prevent a burgeoning of welfare dependent people in future years, especially in relation to anticipated demographic changes such as ageing population and a declining birth rate.

1.1.6 Social exclusion and diminished capabilities

The Reference Group (McClure Report) appointed to advise the Government on welfare reform conducted the major enquiry into welfare in Australia in recent years. It gathered a range of evidence which led it to conclude that the

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Employment Rate %</th>
<th>Recipient rate of major Income Support Payments %</th>
<th>Jobless households</th>
<th>Working age adults in jobless households</th>
<th>Dependent Children in jobless households</th>
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The fact that our nation has conservatively between 650,000 and 750,000 children in jobless households, following a decline from the June 1999 figure quoted above, and that this number has risen, despite the relative economic prosperity of the 1990s, is a key reason for the recommendations of this Report to command the attention of Governments. Remedial action now is urgent to prevent a burgeoning of welfare dependent people in future years, especially in relation to anticipated demographic changes such as ageing population and a declining birth rate.

1.1.6 Social exclusion and diminished capabilities

The Reference Group (McClure Report) appointed to advise the Government on welfare reform conducted the major enquiry into welfare in Australia in recent years. It gathered a range of evidence which led it to conclude that the

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<th>Working age adults in jobless households</th>
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1.1.6 Social exclusion and diminished capabilities

The Reference Group (McClure Report) appointed to advise the Government on welfare reform conducted the major enquiry into welfare in Australia in recent years. It gathered a range of evidence which led it to conclude that the
emphasis on income support payments in the existing welfare system was fundamentally inadequate; it identified as a major problem the lack of social participation:

Central to our vision is a belief that the nation’s social support system must be judged by its capacity to help people participate economically and socially as well as by adequacy of its income support arrangements (McClure, 2000:3).

That is, the most comprehensive study of disadvantage in Australia framed the problem as, and couched its recommendations in terms of, the inability of too many Australians to participate effectively in their communities. Its conclusions are pre-eminently the ‘evidence’ that CIS was demanding. It therefore, went on to outline as its key objectives the following:

Overall our goal is to minimise social and economic exclusion. Australia’s success in doing this will be measured by the following three key outcomes:

1. A significant reduction in the incidence of jobless families and jobless Households;
2. A significant reduction in the proportion of the working age population that needs to rely heavily on income support; and
3. Stronger communities that generate more opportunities for social and economic participation (McClure, 2000:4).

The emphasis on social participation shifts the debate from statistical measures of income (or expenditure) to the consideration of capabilities in the manner proposed by economist Amartya Sen in his lecture, *Poor, Relatively Speaking* in 1982. He argued that a fully relative view of poverty, which transformed it into a matter of inequality was problematic and ultimately unhelpful. He proposed the idea of capability deprivation as a non-relativistic foundation for understanding poverty. He identified two sets of capabilities that were needed for adequate participation in one’s society and community:

- **basic capabilities** – to meet nutritional requirements, to escape avoidable disease, to be sheltered, to be clothed to be able to travel and to be educated (Sen 1982:162-3).

In relation to these, the difference between absolute and relative poverty might not be large.

- **more developed capabilities** – the capability to live without shame emphasised by Adam Smith, that of being able to participate in the activities of the community discussed by Peter Townsend, that of having self-respect discussed by John Rawls, are examples of capabilities with extremely variable resource requirements... (Sen, 1982:163).

Sen’s key point is that in the case of these latter capabilities, the resource requirements typically go up as the nation’s economy develops, implying that increased need for commodities is required simply for the individual to be able to participate in the mainstream of a more developed society, rather than just exist at its edge. (Our considerations of the ‘digital divide’ in Chapter 5, illustrate the increasing need for information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and literacy if one is not to be left behind in contemporary society).

**1.1.7 Suicide**

The ultimate act of non-participation and alienation in society is suicide. The Australian Institute for Suicide Prevention and Research (AISPAR) at Griffith University produced, in March 1999, a major review of the studies on suicide in Australia. The report included some international comparisons (AISPAR 1999). Some relevant conclusions included:
Strong associations between suicide and unemployment, low socio-economic status and low occupational prestige have been demonstrated. Causal relationships are yet to be determined.

Australia’s male youth suicide rate has steadily increased over recent decades, ranking Australia as a country with one of the higher male youth suicide rates.

At the National Forum, Penny Tripcony, Chair, Indigenous Education Consultative Body, emphasised the high rates of Indigenous youth suicides.

This Report then wishes to focus on a broad concept of ‘disadvantage’ rather than on the debated concepts of poverty (whether absolute or relative), or inequality. It argues that there are identifiable groups of disadvantaged Australians whose individual and social circumstances are not improving as the economy broadly prospers; whose personal situation is maintained only by an expanding network of tax and transfer payments on which they depend and which represent ‘sunk cost’ and not transformational investments; and who are increasingly clustered in communities or localities which are proportionately more deprived in terms of social and economic infrastructure.

1.2 Disadvantaged Localities

The NATSEM Report (2001:8) suggested that, “there was growing regional inequality, with above average growth in the incomes of those individuals living in the most affluent 10 per cent of Local Government Areas relative to all other areas.” This difference in the relative well-being of people in different places or spaces across Australia is the other key element of disadvantage.

The most disturbing feature from recent research is that disadvantage is concentrated and clustered in identifiable localities or areas, a characteristic most comprehensively analysed in the study Community Opportunity and Vulnerability in Australia’s Cities and Towns produced by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) in 1999. This Report was able to identify the 20 most vulnerable communities in each of three categories: metropolitan city regions, larger regional cities and towns; and small regional towns. The Report defined ‘vulnerable communities’ as those with a concentration of groups of the poor unemployed in areas poorly serviced by public services and social support mechanisms (Baum et al, 1999:2). Vulnerable communities were characterised by:

- low or negative employment growth;
- above average growth in rates of unemployment;
- greater concentrations in occupations and industries in decline;
- greater concentrations of low-income households;
- low labour-force attachment;
- higher concentrations of disadvantaged families;
- higher concentrations of households residing in public housing;
- more households facing financial stress; and
- young people caught up in their family’s inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life.

We are thus able to identify the areas where disadvantaged Australians are concentrated and the relevant characteristics of those groups. One of the authors of the Report, Professor Robert Stimson, emphasised in his presentation to the NEEF National Forum that:

the statistically significant discriminators differentiating between clusters of community opportunity and vulnerability related to (a) the level of human capital and income of communities and to (b) the degree of labour market engagement of workers in communities with jobs related to knowledge-based occupations and industries that characterise the ‘new economy’ as well as the level of unemployment in communities (Stimson, 2001: 8).

He drew key conclusions from this Report:

it is clearly evident that the difference between the performances of places and how, over the decade 1986 to 1996, local communities had coped with a rapidly changing and uncertain world, can be explained to a large degree by levels of education and skills for those engaged in work and the types of jobs in industries in which they work – in other words, the rate at which local jobs are shifting from occupations and industries of the ‘old economy’ to those of the new economy. Human capital is thus a key factor explaining differentiation in community opportunity and vulnerability (Stimson, 2001: 8).

The Report also demonstrated that the most vulnerable communities were those with the highest levels of welfare dependency. Appendix 2 sets out the vulnerable communities.

In her paper Postcodes for Prosperity: The Link Between Location, Education and Employment (2002), Jenny Macklin particularized this phenomenon in eight regions of Melbourne. She illustrated the correlation of high unemployment of youths with low levels of attainment in VCE English and reduced retention rates to Years 12. The North Western and Outer Western regions were significantly worse on these measures than the Inner Eastern, Southern and Outer Eastern Melbourne regions. Her conclusion: “Our cities are segregated between the education-rich and the education-poor and this almost directly translates into job-rich and job-poor” (Macklin, 2002:5). Similar conclusions were reached by Baum et al (1999) who showed the correlation of welfare dependency with similar suburbs in metropolitan regions, not only of Melbourne, but of all capital cities.
1.3 Educational Disadvantage

1.3.1 Selected indicators

Educational disadvantage is now experienced by an unacceptable number of young Australians and this correlates with economic disadvantage, experienced as unemployment, under-employment (part-time casual work) or instability in the process of revolving through periods of employment, under-employment or no employment. Material collected by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum shows that:

- By the age of 24 early school-leavers (i.e. not completing Year 12) have an unemployment rate twice that of school completers.
- By the age of 24 66% of females who did not complete Year 12 were not in education or full-time employment or were ‘at risk.’
- By the age of 24 33% of young adult men who did not complete Year 12 were not in education or full-time employment or ‘at risk.’
- Completion rates for all students have declined in recent years after significant increases down from 77% in 1992 to 72% in 1999, and completion rates for Indigenous students are around 32%.
- In May 2000 more than 180,000 or 14.4% of teenagers 15-19 were not in education and were either unemployed, not in the labour force or working part-time.
- The cost to individuals, governments and society from early school leaving is estimated at $2.6 billion every year (Spierings 2000: 34).

1.3.2 Low SES and educational results

Summarising the comprehensive reviews of the relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and educational outcomes, Zappala and Considine (2001) concluded that:

- have lower levels of literacy, numeracy and comprehension;
- have lower retention rates (i.e. children from low SES families are more likely to leave school early);
- have lower participation rates (children from low SES are less likely to attend University);
- exhibit higher levels of problematic school behaviour (e.g. truancy);
- are less likely to study specialised maths and science subjects;
- are more likely to have difficulties with their studies and display negative attitudes to school; and
- have less successful school to labour market transitions (Zappala and Considine, 2001:1)

1.3.3 Scoping the problem: The numbers of ‘at risk’ youth

Figures 2 and 3 (at end of Chapter) show a complete breakdown of the two age cohorts, 15 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years, by employment status and education status as at May 2000 (Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat 6227 2001). Each cell shows the actual number of young Australians in that group and in brackets shows the percentage of the total age cohort for that subset of males and females. In summary, 331,000 Australian youths in the age group 15 to 24 are ‘at risk’, since they are neither in full time work nor studying, including 191,000 who did not complete Year 12.

1.3.3.1 15 –19 year old group

The students predicted to be at risk of failing to gain sustainable employment by the age of 25 years are at the bottom of each of the four main branches in Figures 2 and 3, that is, those who are not studying and have no post school qualification. The number of 15 to 19 year old students without a post school qualification who are not studying (that is, at university, vocational education or school) and are not in full time work is 140,000. This consists of 81,000 early school leavers and 59,000 who completed high school. Of those who are working full time, 61,000 did not complete high school and are not studying so may be in low skilled jobs and may be at risk of unemployment in the long term.

Figure 4 presents another view of the data for the 15 to 19 year old age group, showing the relative proportions of each sub-group of the cohort. From this diagram it is clear that most young people in the age group who are working part time, unemployed or not in the labour force are at school or undertaking tertiary studies. Those most ‘at risk’ are early school-leavers who are not in full time work and not studying. High school completers who are not studying and are not attached to the workforce are also likely to be at risk as the currency of their skills diminishes without being enhanced by further training.

Those with post-school qualifications are more likely to experience shorter periods of unemployment. However those with only a basic vocational qualification who are not attached to the workforce or are marginally attached in sporadic or casual work are less likely to have access to further training and are likely to also be ‘at risk’ in the longer term.

1.3.3.2 20 –24 year olds

The number of 20 to 24 year olds not studying or in full time work in May 2000 was 191,000 consisting of 111,000 early school leavers and 80,000 who completed high school. Of those who are working full time, 115,000 have not completed high school or a post school qualification and are not studying. The same data presented graphically in Figure 5 shows the high proportion of the cohort who...
have by this stage, completed a post school qualification and have full time employment.

There is a noticeable difference between the employment outcomes for males and females who are early school leavers. Almost 50 per cent of 15 to 19 year old males and 65 per cent of 20 to 24 year old males who left school early and are not studying, are working full time, whereas less than 35 per cent of both age groups of female early school leavers are working full time (Figure 6). Over a third of 20 to 24 year old female early school leavers are not in the labourforce. Considering Australia’s low fertility rate and the increasing median age of mothers having a baby to 29.8 years in 2000 (Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat. No. 3301.0 2000), the difference in participation in the labour force by gender cannot be totally attributed to child rearing.

Figures 7 to 10 highlight the differences in education and employment patterns of the two age groups and the two genders. A higher proportion of 15 to 19 year old males who are working full time are studying, reflecting the higher proportion of males in apprenticeships and traineeships. Females in this age group who are working full time are more likely to have completed high school. Those with post school qualifications have the highest proportion of the full time jobs in the 20 to 24 year age group, especially for females, but a high proportion of female part time workers also have post school qualifications.

Over a third of unemployed males aged 20 to 24 are early school leavers. Another third have a post school qualification. The length of time unemployed will be a critical factor in the long-term stability of employment. A quarter of females aged 20 to 24 years who are not in the labour force are early school leavers.

National studies using longitudinal surveys of Australian youth conducted for over 10 years are developing a rich source of information about patterns of movement by
young people between work and study and the demographic and personal factors that favour particular outcomes. Factors present as early as the age of 14 years, which have been linked statistically to successful high school completion and transition from education to work include gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, parents’ language, parents’ level of education, geographical location (rurality), vocational interests in high school, educational performance (especially Maths, English) (Australian Council for Educational Research, 1995 to 2001; Misko, 1991, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 1999).

However, while it may be more likely that a person with a particular characteristic will have difficulty finding sustainable employment in the future, there are many with those characteristics who do succeed, and at the same time there are many young people who exhibit positive characteristics at age 14, who do not make it through to stable employment (Norton, 2002).

Thus ‘at riskness’ needs to be understood as a complex phenomenon that varies through a young person’s adolescence and depends on a combination of factors many of which are outside the young person’s control. These can be categorised as: personal efficacy, educational attainment; environment. As pointed out in the Report of the Prime Minister’s Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce, it is how the young person remains connected to others at a time of crisis that can have a deciding effect on the outcome.

1.4 Conclusions: The Basic Need – An Education that Prepares Youth for a Job

In a recent wide-ranging discussion of globalisation, poverty and inequality, Dr. Ken Henry, Secretary to the Treasury, Commonwealth Government, stated:

Analysis of income-distribution statistics shows that unemployment, rather than low wages is a major factor underlying low household incomes. NATSEM finds that the unemployed and those not in the labour force are over-represented in the lowest percentile of
the income distribution, while wage and salary earners are under-represented. While it should be recognised that there is considerable movement in these groups over time, these findings suggest that a key factor in reducing poverty in Australia is through employment creation. That is, the best way out of poverty is through a job – an observation that sits rather well with Sen’s conceptualisation of poverty as capability deprivation (Henry, 2002:34).

Henry then went on to compare Australian society for much of last century with the changes that have emerged in the last two decades and concluded:

Not only are people’s values, aspirations and lifestyle already much changed, but there is likely to be continuing extensive economic change as applications of computer and other new technologies have pervasive impact on how corporations and the workplace are designed.

In this new environment, improved education and training such as outlined in the Government’s policy statements on Investing in Higher Education, Skilling Up Australia, and Backing Australia’s Ability are likely to play an increasing role in sustainably supporting equitable income growth. Pure ‘redistribution’ through traditional taxes and transfer spending may have a lesser role than in the mid 20th century (Henry, 2002:35).

This Report concurs. The succeeding Chapters will concentrate on what additional steps have to be taken in education and training to ensure that more and more of the current disadvantaged in our society obtain access to the kind of education that will give them the fundamental necessity – a job.

**Recommendation 1: Breaking the educational disadvantage cycle**

A concerted effort is needed by governments at all levels to shift the high proportion of expenditure on welfare towards measures that will prevent poverty and unemployment in order to stop the cycle of dependency. There are strong links between educational outcomes and household income, resulting in the continuation across generations of poverty and low attachment to the workforce. Young people from families of low incomes are more likely to leave school early, and early school-leavers have less chance of attaining full time sustainable employment. The gap in educational opportunity is real and successes gained in earlier generations have dissipated as workplace demands raise the required entry standards. A determined focus on achieving successful educational outcomes for children from disadvantaged families is urgently needed to benefit Australia’s economic and social future.

It is recommended that Federal, State, Territory and Local Governments work collaboratively towards targets for higher educational outcomes for young people who are disadvantaged and for geographical areas of concentrated disadvantage.
Figure 2

Young People 15—19 years
1,338,349 (10.6% of 15-64 years)
Males 684,164 (10.8%) Females 654,184 (10.4%)

Labourforce
786,637 (30;29)

Employed
653,333 (25;24)

Full time
226,376 (11;6)

Post school qual
31,064 (1;1)

At school
1278 (0;1)

Studying
76,326 (4;1)

Did yr 12
57,287 (2;2)

Not yr 12
60,708 (3;1.5)

Post time
426,957 (14;18)

Post school qual
9087 (0;0)

At school
50,943 (2;2)

No post school qual
73,274 (3;3)

Unemployed
133,304 (5;5)

Studying
27,588 (1;1)

Did yr 12
16,639 (1;1)

Not yr 12
29,047 (1;1)

Not in labourforce
551,711 (21;20)

Post school qual
25,936 (0;0)

At school
401,022 (16;14)

No post school qual
144,753 (5;6)

Studying
107,266 (4;4)

Not studying
37,487 (1;2)

Did yr 12
10,309 (0;0)

Not yr 12
26,376 (1;1)

Did yr 12
31,730 (1;1)

Not yr 12
26,080 (1;1)

Bracket shows percentages of whole 15-19 years cohort by males and females of each component.
Rounding adjusted to match aggregates.
This section of the Report argues that:

- to achieve a just and equitable society and a robust, sustainable economy, Australia should invest more in education at all levels, in the confident expectation that the return on investment will justify the increased expenditure;
- to ensure this, the nation must, at the minimum, retain its current revenue base rather than erode it by cuts to taxation;
- optimally, the nation should commit itself to an increase in revenue, which will be applied specifically to education;
- this increased investment in education must be directed both to existing effective initiatives and priorities and especially to people and communities in greatest need because of the relative disadvantages they suffer. 'More of the same' will not effectively address the urgent needs of the most disadvantaged.

Debate about the level and detail of funding of education in Australia is be-devilled by the politicisation of the issue as a result of State vs Federal Government arguments about the relative amount of funding each should provide and by the historical polemics about whether governments (at whatever level) should fund non-government education. If so, how much should go to the non-government schools, whether Catholic or Independent? This Report eschews the sectarian/religious debate and accepts that Australia is a pluralist, multi-cultural society where diversity of educational opportunity is valued. Its focus is on the areas of greatest need in Australian education and will argue for initiatives that meet those needs. It asks for a co-operative, inclusive approach from State, Territory and Federal governments so that a consensus can be built which will lead to concerted action.

Professor Gerald Burke, Director of the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training at Monash University, gave a keynote presentation to the National NEEP Forum (Burke, 2001a) and expanded his remarks in a subsequent paper (Burke, 2001 b). The tables in this Chapter are drawn from Burke unless otherwise noted.

If extra funds are to be provided where are they to go? The case for them to be concentrated on the schools which cater for the less advantaged is strong. It is true that many students from professional and managerial background homes attend government schools and many attend non-government schools. The major issue here though is the students from the workless and other disadvantaged households—these are predominantly in government schools with some in the lower resourced non-government schools.

Where are the funds to come from? It has been argued recently by the head of the Kings School that simply taking the recent increase, or even all the funds, from the high resourced non-government schools will not meet the identified needs of those schools catering for the less advantaged. This is true. At best $100 million would be found this way whereas a 10 per cent increase in total funding for government schools requires about $1,500 million.

A new attitude to government spending could find the funds.

— Professor Gerald Burke: Centre for the Study of Economics of Education and Training, Monash University
2.1 What is Australia funding? The Size of Schooling in Australia

The growth in student numbers in schooling in Australia over the last forty years is shown in Table 2 below:

The total number of students in schools grew from 2,301,000 in 1963 to 3,248,000 in 2000, an increase of 41%. By the mid-1970s enrolments in government schools were around 80% of all students, but since then the proportionately greater increase in enrolments has been in the non-government schools outside the Catholic sector, whose share of enrolments has risen from 4% to 11% of the total which is a 175% increase.

This rising number of students has, in the main, been better served by increasingly more favourable student teacher ratios over the period as demonstrated in Table 3.

These figures show the ratio is most favourable in the other non-government schools, and least favourable in the Catholic schools.

2.2 Overall and Comparative Funding Levels

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Year Book Australia 2001, in the financial year 1998-99 government investment in education at all levels totalled $31,546 million. Of this, 28% went to Universities, 23% went to secondary education, 23% went to primary education and 11% went to technical and further education. Commonwealth Government grants for education were $9,033 million.

This amount of money represents 5.3% of our gross domestic product (GDP).

Spending on schooling by governments and by private individuals has grown in the last few decades reflecting the general importance that is placed on education in the Australian community. Table 4 developed by Burke (2001b) sets out the relevant increases in spending.

In both sectors of schooling the expenditure per students from all sources has more than doubled in the time. While increases in funding to government schools were rapid in the 1970s, largely from State Governments, in the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s the expenditure on non-government schools has been more rapid than in government schools.

To assess the Commonwealth Government’s expenditure on schooling we can first, take a snapshot of the funding for schools in 1999, which shows in Table 5 the relative contribution of Commonwealth and State Governments to public and private schools. Then we can focus only on the Commonwealth Government’s contribution across the period 1989-2001 in Table 6 which shows the very significant direction of Commonwealth Government funds to non-government schools, from 55% to 65% in the period.

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**Table 2: School enrolments, Australia, 1963 to 2000**

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Government Share</th>
<th>Catholic Share</th>
<th>Other Non-Government Share</th>
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<tr>
<td>'000</td>
<td>'000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1752</td>
<td>0.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2156</td>
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<td>1980</td>
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<td>1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2248</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>642</td>
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</table>

Source: ABS

**Table 3: Ratios of full-time students to teachers by type and level of schooling, Australia, 1973 to 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government Primary</th>
<th>Government Secondary</th>
<th>Non-government Catholic Primary</th>
<th>Non-government Catholic Secondary</th>
<th>Other Non-government Primary</th>
<th>Other Non-government Secondary</th>
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<td>1973</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
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<td>17.9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>17.8</td>
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<td>20.0</td>
<td>13.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>17.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Cat No 4221.0 and related earlier publications e.g., Department of Education, Employment, and Training (DEET), *Schooling in Australia: Statistical Profile* No 1, Australian Government Publishing Services (AGPS), 1987.
These figures:

reflect the Coalition Government’s philosophical emphasis on choice, on support for those families that make the effort to fund their children’s schooling and the idea of an entitlement of all children to government funding (Burke, 2001b: 2)

The Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA) allowed funding to flow from the public system to private schools on the basis of movements in the proportion of enrolments without regard to increases in the actual numbers of students in public schools. In 2001 the Commonwealth Government restored the funds channelled away from public schools under the EBA, but imposed conditions on the funds to the States, insisting that they be spent achieving better scientific, mathematical and technological skills.

The more recent Socio-economic Status (SES) formula for apportioning funds to non-government schools has disconnected funding from the level of the school’s own resources. This has attracted controversy because it considers the imputed SES of the area in which the parents live, not their actual financial status, and it appears to take insufficient account of the existing resources (plant, equipment, property) of the actual Schools themselves – which in a number of cases are regarded as ranging from very comfortable to lavish – as Burke noted:

this affects the distribution of grants among non-government schools. At the same time the funds for non-government schools have been significantly increased so that most, even high resource, non-government schools will receive substantial increases by 2004 (Burke, 2001b: 5).

A significant number of the speakers and participants, including practising teachers, at the Forum, found these trends disturbing. Some pointed out that choice was simply not an option for a large number of disadvantaged people who just could not afford the fees associated with independent schools, even some of the lower-resource schools. They were ‘stuck’ with the local government school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government Students '000</th>
<th>Index of expenditure at constant prices</th>
<th>Non-government Students '000</th>
<th>Index of expenditure per student at constant prices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>2253</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2332</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2194</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2248</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: data from Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training & Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and Department of Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA); estimates by author (see Burke and Spaull 2001)

Note: Expenditure data for government and non-government schools differ in scope and there are changes in collections over time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government schools 1998-99</th>
<th>$ billion</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees and donations</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-government schools 1999</th>
<th>$ billion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees and donations</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of reserves?</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MCEETYA National Report on Schooling in Australia

Table 6: Commonwealth Expenditures on Schools 1989 to 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>$ million</th>
<th>% non-government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2129</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1993</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>3601</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>4376</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 est</td>
<td>4784</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DETYA data
And ‘local’ was emphasised because in disadvantaged localities lack of both public and private transport restricted the ability of many to choose between ‘free’ public schools. Speakers, including Michael Raper from Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), Michael Macklin, Hall Chadwick, and Mark Bagshaw from International Business Machines (IBM), called for more funds to be invested in education. Bagshaw along with Moira Scollay, the Executive Director of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), emphasised the potential for business, both large and small to invest in education through partnerships with schools and by investing in the up-skilling in the training of their own workforces. Speakers called for a more equitable distribution of those funds so that proportionately more were targeted to those most in need. As summarised by Burke:

If schools are to play a major role there will need to be more funds, from the earliest years of education, to assist those who might later become marginalised. There is also a need to devise programs in schools and in other areas of post-compulsory education and training to retain these students so that they acquire a basic education that enables them to fit into a modern democratic society. The retention of these students implies more expenditure and the counselling and other aspects of the programs necessary will imply that it is at a funding above average levels, not at an average or marginal rate (Burke, 2001b:10):

2.3 Can Australia afford More Investment in Education?

As noted above, Australia invests about 5.3% of GDP in education. Some free-market proponents such as Warby and Nahan (1998:3) emphasise that, “the tax take is now the largest in peace-time Australia” because the “continuing surge in the size and cost of the transfer state necessitated increased government revenue.” This is argued to be bad and the received wisdom of political commentators appears to be that Australians will not ‘cop’ any increases from our ‘big-taxing’ governments.

But this does not attend to the broader international picture. Comparatively to other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, Australia is neither a high-taxing nor high-spending economy. Figure 11 presents government total expenditure as a percentage of GDP showing Australia’s position behind nine (9) OECD countries. This demonstrates that government revenue raising through taxation, the basis for its spending, is not high in comparison with OECD countries. Similarly the Australian governments’ expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP is below the OECD average and below 9 other countries as shown in Figure 12.

The expenditure on early childhood education at 0.1% of GDP is well below the OECD average of 0.4% of GDP.

Professor Julian Disney from the International Council of Social Welfare, noted at the National NEEF Forum that if Australia raised its taxation “to the average level of tax for developed countries we would have another 20 billion or so dollars to spend” (Disney, 2002:Summation).

He was assuming it would be possible for our country to do so and that it is desirable. Further confirmation that it would be desirable comes from the work of Professor Stephen Dowrick of the Australian National University (ANU) who examined a range of studies, across 51 countries.
and 21 specifically OECD countries, on the economic effects of investments in education and research and development. His conclusion:

the evidence suggests returns to education that are consistent with micro-economic evidence on individual earnings. An increase of one year of schooling in the average educational attainment in the workforce, for example, can be expected to increase the level of output by around eight per cent in a typical OECD country.

These are estimates of the level effects of education. A one-off increase in attainment will produce a one-off rise (albeit spread over time) in the level of GDP per capita. There is mounting evidence, however, that there are also substantial dynamic or growth effects, which are linked to a country’s ability to implement new technologies. This evidence suggests that Australia would do well to increase its educational levels to match the OECD leaders – the USA and Scandinavia (Dowrick, 2002:20).

2.4 How Could More Tax Be Raised?

Dr John Spierings from the Dusseldorf Skills Forum raised, at the National Forum, the issue of ‘hypothecated’ taxes – those which are raised for a specific purpose with the undertaking that funds so raised will be directed solely to the nominated area, such as the Medicare levy of 1.25% or the impost proposed in 1999 to be used for defence in relation to East Timor. Participants explored this issue further at the Forum and raised the question whether taxpayers generally would support the imposition of more taxes if they knew that the extra taxes would be used solely for investment in education.

Withers and Edwards (2001) reported on the results of the 1999/2000 International Social Science Survey/Australia which randomly sampled 1700 Australians on questions related to their desired levels and patterns of public expenditure. The survey found that Education (Schools and TAFE) was the third highest area, after health and police, of desired increases in spending: 52% of respondents wanted an increase, 45% wanted about the same expenditure and 4% wanted a decrease in spending. They also reported the results of the Ipsos-Reid (2000) survey of 9,075 people in 17 countries regarding taxing and spending, which showed that the percentage of Australians prepared to accept an increase in taxation was above the average of those 17 countries. They concluded:

It is not at all axiomatic that the issue of tax increase is political death in contemporary Australia. Australia’s middling opposition in relation to international tax attitudes means that the times may be actually ripe for some serious national leadership on these issues…. (Withers & Edwards 2001:14)

This Report therefore, calls for a bi-partisan commitment to an increased investment in education, with a clear declaration that the additional funds raised will be earmarked for education, and in the first instance invested in education for the disadvantaged and the other proposals espoused in this Report. This investment should be understood as a major quantum leap now, as a circuit-breaker which will, within this decade, change...
the relative amounts that we have to spend on income-support welfare payments and on non-productive expenditure such as on prisons, especially for Indigenous youths (See Chapter 7). Burke noted at the National Forum that demographic changes in this decade will lead to some offsets in education spending, resulting from the fact that there is an expected decrease of 5% in both the cohorts of

0 to 4 year olds and 5 to 9 years olds across the decade 2000 to 2010, and there will be no increase in the cohort of 10 to 14 year olds. Thus, an injection of investment in the next three to five years promises to reverse current trends and establish a new structure that will not require the same level of investment in the on-going years.

Recommendation 2: Major increase in the investment in education

School communities are struggling to meet basic requirements and their fundraising efforts are reduced by tax and higher administrative accountability. The National Education and Employment Forum found widespread agreement that a strong, robust, inclusive democracy required a competitive edge through improved education and training, broadly based, rather than elitist, which would play an increasing role in sustainably supporting equitable income growth. A substantial increase in investment in education, was sought by participants who believed that the population would support a specific tax quarantined for education. The tax would be progressive on income and a component of company tax and GST. The overall education budget must incorporate real increases, taking into account increased taxes and charges now met by schools and individuals.

It is recommended that Federal, State and Territory Governments:

(a) increase spending on education as a percentage of GDP to the average level of OECD countries with an additional $1.5 billion in each of the next three budgets;

(b) finance the increase with bi-partisan agreement for a specific education tax to be accounted for separately from general revenue through an Australian Education Fund.
While the proposal to reconfigure schools as social centres or focal points of community development is not new, there is now a greater imperative to do so, in order to respond more effectively to the context and conditions being experienced by today’s youth. Alarming rates of student alienation, depression, eating disorders, substance abuse, anti-social behaviour and youth suicide indicate that a significant proportion of young people are not receiving appropriate or adequate support at critical stages of their development. Together with other stakeholders, schools need to find more effective ways of addressing the uncertainties and dilemmas that confront students, acknowledging that some will need higher levels of support than others.

— Jim Cumming, Australian Council of Education at the National Forum

The previous Chapter of this Report argued for a substantial increase in investment in education in Australia. This is not a plea for ‘more of the same’. Rather the NEEF Forum emphasised the need for different and more varied initiatives to meet the needs and aspirations of the bottom 20% who were not as successfully negotiating the traditional schooling that has been very rewarding and effective for a large proportion of Australia’s youth.

3.1 The Need for Diverse Pathways

The evidence is now clear that youth who do not complete the equivalent of 12 years of education and/or training and who do not possess a qualification, are those most at risk of persistent unemployment, under-employment and welfare dependency. We need a variety of systematic and structured pathways through the teen and early twenty years so that youth emerge with work skills, employability and competencies to function effectively in our complex society.

Proposals and reports on pathways and initiatives abound. Appendix 3 lists a number of them. The most comprehensive coverage has been provided by Footprints to the Future – Report from the Prime Minister’s Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce (2001) (henceforth referred to as the Eldridge Report). Speakers and participants in the National Education and Employment (NEEF) Forums repeatedly echoed, in their own ways, the experiences, ideas and proposals in the Eldridge Report. This NEEF Report endorses it and its recommendations are attached in full at Appendix 4. However, the Eldridge Report remained at a level of generality and many of its recommendations were couched as exhortations to “Commonwealth, State and Local Governments to work together to...”. How the various levels of Government might achieve these ends was not detailed. The point behind the exhortation however, is that the Eldridge Report identified the key problems with access to, and delivery of, the services that the programs were designed to deliver. The Task Force identified over 500 separate Commonwealth and State initiatives that might be accessed by youth or their families. Some examples are set out in Appendix 5. From the point of view of the youth
at risk it ranges from difficult to overwhelming, to find out about the existence of the particular program that might be most useful, where and how it can be accessed and the steps young people have to go through to obtain benefit from it. Both the Eldridge Report and the McClure Report: Participation Support For a More Equitable Society – Final Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform (2000:9) emphasise the difficulties, from the individual’s perspective, in understanding and accessing the various programs. From the point of view of efficient funding and delivery of programs by government agencies, the duplication, fragmentation, overlapping, short-term duration of, and in some cases competition between programs, result in disappointing outcomes.

This NEEF Report proposes two major strategies to address this situation:

1. The transformation of a majority of our schools (from the minority experimenting with these approaches now) to include diverse learning combinations in: school curricula, apprenticeships, vocational education training (VET), enterprise education, full- or part-time work, adult and community education, so that the school becomes a ‘community learning centre’ with clear recognition by students, families, parents, teachers, employers and community groups, that these are all valid and valuable learning activities.

2. The development of a network of single service centres where Commonwealth, State and local Government services and programs can be accessed – Community and Youth Centres or “CYC”s. These ‘one-stop shops’ would provide information about, and access to, all of the human service programs provided by each level of Government in the relevant locality. Crucially, they would be linked to the schools – ‘community learning centres’ – in their localities.

These strategies are developed in the remainder of this Chapter.

3.2 Genuinely Comprehensive Schools

The Eldridge Report noted that, “during the Taskforce’s consultations, young people consistently called for more relevant, accessible and flexible secondary schooling” and concluded that a “paradigm shift in the content and delivery of education” was required which gives “equal value to a range of outcomes beyond those of university entrance” (Eldridge, 2001:14). The NEEF Forums endorsed this. The paradigm shift involves an acceptance of a series of transitions in and out of a variety of experiences which may be in or out of school as we now know it, rather than a linear progression through years of schooling and then into work or tertiary education. It also involves linking the (often isolated) school with key sectors of the community in which it is located so that the learning and development of students are more varied, relevant and directly preparing them for active membership in their communities.

3.2.1 Full Service schools

The paradigm shift is already taking place in ‘full service schools’. Working examples – the partnership between the Berry Street Victoria program and Banksia Secondary College and Ardeer College – were demonstrated at the NEEF Forum by some of the students who were taking part in them.

The rationale for the ‘full service school’ was described by Kemmis and Lynch (2000:3):

The full service school is one that aims and claims to create conditions that allow each and all – to a greater extent than is now possible – to make and remake the conditions of their own lives. That is, the full service school sets out to help students, families and communities to overcome the conditions that trap some people in disabling circumstances, and that sustain their disadvantage and exclusion. But it does not focus only on those with special needs or on students at risk. It aims to create inclusive, engaging and enabling conditions for all.

It aims to welcome families, the community and a variety of other agencies, service providers and professionals into the school to help build these kinds of relationships in the community as a whole.

It also aims to reach out to young people who have dropped out of school, building bridges back into the school for those who want to return....

In reaching out, it does not assume that schools are the sole or even the primary site through which individuals and communities develop. It recognises that families and many community groups and agencies have roles to play in both personal and community development. The full service school aims to find its place in these processes alongside families and other groups and agencies. It aims to make the school site hospitable to students, to their families and to other community groups and agencies that share its commitment to the well-being of each individual and the community as a whole....

Full service schools work to overcome the fragmentation that accompanies specialisation of services and service provision, by shared acknowledgment that different kinds of services have a combined impact on a student, a family or a whole community. They aim to co-ordinate different kinds of service provision so that students, students, families and communities benefit from their combined efforts, and to avoid working at cross-purposes with one another (at the expense of individual students, or families or the community)

Pilot programs have been put in place. The Commonwealth Government launched the ‘Full Service Schools For Students At Risk Program’ as a two-year pilot in 1999, and the ACT set up the ‘Schools as Communities Program’. This Report calls for the continuation of the full service
schools program and its extension in all States. These full-service schools would provide the range of pathways described in the next section of this Report.

3.3 The Variety of Pathways

This NEEF Report supports the inclusion in the majority of schools/community learning centres of access to:

- Apprenticeships, which will be done part-time in conjunction with on-going schooling and which will be recognised as an element of an education certificate at the end of 12 years of schooling/training. This will be an expansion of the New Apprenticeships Scheme.
- Accredited vocational education and training with both public and private providers, which will also be accredited on an education certificate. Such training should be in sequential modules during schooling years, in either full – or part-time mode, so that a structured learning process is undertaken. All students should be encouraged to undertake such studies, including those planning to enter university, as workplace competences will help to ensure their financial security while they are studying.
- In-work experience, for brief or extended periods, with the ability to return to an appropriate stage in schooling at the completion of each period in work.
- Learning groups which accommodate youth who return to education after various periods out of schooling or structured training, in unemployment or casual employment so that they can obtain a qualification or skills to ensure that they obtain effective full-time employment.
- Specialist supports and alternative settings for those who are not achieving the equivalent of a pass level in core subjects and an expectation that all children will achieve a minimum standard in Maths and English, which will equip them for daily life.
- Enterprise education, to introduce youth to the basics of running a business enterprise.

Implementing these initiatives will be demanding and difficult and will require additional support for, and training of, existing teachers and the introduction into the schools/community learning centres of educators with different roles from those of our traditional class-room teachers. (See Chapter 5). However, schools such as Salisbury High School in Adelaide provide examples of success in recent years in transforming their ‘failing’ school into a major contributor to a very vulnerable community and its youth. The additional roles would include career counsellors and transition advisers who can assist youth to decide which transition is most appropriate for them at any particular stage of their journey. Successful implementa-

tion will require the co–ordination of resources outside the traditional school context and continuous and effective interaction with the CYCs explained below.

Successful implementation requires more detailed consider-
eration of the kinds of support that are required for youth to navigate the pathways most helpful to them. As described in Chapter 1, while some areas of disadvantage are predictable and can be addressed by specifically designed responses, it is the intertwining of factors that determine whether or not a young person is able to meet the challenges of adolescence and emerge with knowledge and skills that ensure employability. Personal factors such as self-esteem and resilience are shaped by and shape the young person’s capacity to satisfy school demands. The environment determines the support mechanisms in place to guide the young person at times of crisis and so also shapes these personal characteristics.

Figure 13 shows schematically the collection of factors that contribute to this complex interplay and the types of interventions that are necessary to prevent the young person from falling too far through the net. These interventions cross government portfolio boundaries and disciplines and require new ways of thinking about the delivery of connected services and the knowledge and skills of the professionals who administer them. Flexibility of pathways and supports is needed both in terms of the nature of services, the modes of delivery and the times at which the services are available. The need for support is not linear. For some young people, there will be recurring issues and long term attention. For others, a single timely intervention will be adequate.

Most of these interventions already exist, but are in small pockets and are least available to those who are most disadvantaged. Such services should be a part of main-stream community services. Access to appropriate support services and flexible pathways will only occur with a change in expectations that ALL children have the right to achieve their potential.

3.4 A Network of Community and Youth Centres (CYCs)

Recommendation 6 of the Eldridge Report proposes that Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments: promote the development of transition support networks in local communities by bringing together key agencies committed to supporting young people and their families and enabling them to:

- set their own locally relevant objectives within agreed frameworks;
- design their own youth advisory and planning structures that would be empowered to initiate local project development and delivery;
- design and operate their own local action structures; and
pool the expertise and resources of local State and Commonwealth bodies to support local initiatives.

- initiate demonstration projects to trial a range of models which respond to local youth transition priorities. These would be rigorously evaluated for replication and sharing of good practice;

- encourage integrated service provision for young people. As a first step the Commonwealth should look to ways to:
  - improve the co-ordination of a number of its own youth-related programs;
  - examine tendering and contractual arrangements to ensure that they promote appropriate co-ordination in local communities; and
  - ensure that the programs and services are able to meet both the personal needs of young people and the circumstances of local communities (Eldridge, 2001:47-8).

This recommendation reflects a dilemma: How to implement adaptation at the local level without having to ‘re-invent the wheel’ over and over? How to develop local initiatives which will be visible and enduring? The NEEF response is that a systematic framework of integrated access and service provision centres should be set up Australia-wide to provide a common structure and consistent procedures within which local adaptation will have some chance to develop and meet the needs of those people who are the most disadvantaged.

Each Community and Youth Centre (CYC) should be:

- Located at one geographic centre close to the likely recipients of its services;
- Branded with a uniform title and the logos of the Commonwealth Government and the relevant State Government, so that the Centres become as recognisable as commercial icons such as MacDonalds;
Structured as a ‘one stop shop’ so that individuals can obtain most of the necessary information and support without having to travel to a range of different agencies;

Designed so that the first point of contact is a client service officer who is able to provide up to 80% of the information that a client might ask for and who is able to refer the client on to more specialised advisers or service providers as required. The McClure Report called for a “redesigned delivery system” featuring a “central gateway” (McClure, 2000:10) to service delivery which acts as an initial assessment point as the centrepiece for the Reference Group’s view of a more effective social system. Figure 14, from McClure, illustrates this role. Using a redesigned assessment process, the gateway assessment role would:

- Determine entitlement to a participation support payment;
- Assess a person’s risk of long-term joblessness;
- Identify appropriate participation requirements;
- Assess a person’s relative labour force disadvantage and level of job readiness;
- Determine the type and level of intervention required (including brokers and economic and social participation support services);
- Refer people to brokers and service providers;
- Authorise participation plans and monitor individual outcomes and fulfillment of participation requirements.

Under the NEEF proposal, the initial contact officer would be able to provide this ‘gateway’ assessment and information, to youth clients who needed assistance to identify and decide upon appropriate pathways;

- Equipped to process transactions (such as completing of application forms, payment of benefits, enrolment in programs) on the spot without requiring a return visit(s);
- Occupied by representatives of all of the relevant human service agencies at Commonwealth and State levels. This would include Departments or agencies providing services in:
  - Employment
  - Health
  - Families
  - Justice and juvenile justice
  - Training
  - Welfare

- A contact point for employer organisations (such as Chambers of Commerce), service groups (such as Rotary etc.) and other community organisations which can provide relevant services;

- Equipped with a common database that contains details of all Commonwealth programs, and in each State, the relevant State programs. The database already assembled by the Youth Pathways Action Taskforce would be the kernel of this system with a ‘front end’ that allows service officers to interrogate the data and provide information relevant to the client in his/her locality. The McClure Report also called for the

**Figure 14: Proposed Service Delivery System**
“development and integration of an IT system...encompassing the whole participation support system” (McClure, 2000:16). In our view, web-enabled access to a back-end database would allow regional locations to have relatively straightforward access to this common ‘warehouse’ of information, which would be updated centrally and then immediately available to the distributed users;

❖ Staffed by service officers who are trained to have a comprehensive knowledge of all of the relevant programs and how to access them and by more specialised case managers or providers from the various Departments or agencies (McClure, 2000:14);

❖ Able to be contacted directly by phone, without having to be routed through a call centre, with the phone number prominently displayed in the local directory under each of the relevant Government Departments or services.

Putting in place a network of Centres which integrate information, service provision and reference to more specialised providers will be a major mechanism for delivering cost-effective assistance to those who need it most. The implementation process would involve streamlining the multiplicity of outlets now in operation. Co-locating officers from various agencies in the one set of premises would facilitate co-operation and would assist in the identification of over-lapping or duplication of initiatives and would highlight where gaps exist in service delivery. Making the ‘back office’ of the combined service outlet work in practice would be a major task in planning and effective co-ordination. But such a model of co-located integrated provision of access, information and service could be varied and adapted in consultation with local community representatives and local Government representatives. This would further the ‘enabling’ role of the State so that communities would be able to take a more active role in pooling and coordinating their resources to meet local needs.

The existence of such a visible, commonly understood and consistent network of Centres will support the full service schools and provide local partners who can co-operate with such schools to achieve their full-service goals. They will provide what it is unreasonable to expect a single school or clusters of schools to provide and will ensure that teachers are not burdened with the impossible expectation to be teacher, welfare officer, careers counsellor and transitions adviser.

Recommendation 3: Increased access to supports and options for young people through education

Young people face different obstacles in their teenage and early adult years and while certain factors can predict which young people are more likely to be at risk, the most successful programs are ones tailored to individuals and are flexible in time and place to meet variable needs. Current Programs are limited geographically making them neither accessible nor visible, and are fragmented by funding criteria. The demonstrated success of full-service schools warrants their expansion so that all students are able to benefit from access to support services as well as from a wide and flexible range of options such as apprenticeships, vocational education and training, enterprise learning, in addition to the traditional, academic curricula. Priority needs to be given to the most vulnerable communities identified by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute study. In addition, opportunities to establish Community and Youth Centres (CYCs) should be offered to communities, so that all agencies work collectively to support young people with integrated services and comprehensive information.

It is recommended that Federal, State, Territory and Local Governments:

a) within three years designate all schools in vulnerable communities as full service schools;

b) within a ten year period implement an expansion of full service schools to ensure that all young people have access to a full range of options and support services;

c) enable communities, through partnerships, to establish Community and Youth Centres.
The Commission wishes to emphasise the importance of early childhood education. Apart from the socialisation process that early childhood centres and programs allow to begin, there is evidence that children who receive early childhood education are more favourably disposed towards school and less likely to drop out prematurely than those who do not. Early schooling can contribute to equality of opportunity by helping overcome the initial handicaps of poverty or a disadvantaged social, or cultural environment.


4.1 The Need for Early Intervention

The debilitating disadvantage, which is the focus of this Report, often begins in the earliest years of life. A high priority at the National Education and Employment Forum was the need to intervene early to counter the effects of disadvantage in the pre-school years before it becomes embedded. The proposed action is to treat the causes which are more likely to be found in the early developmental stages within the family. Reaching children especially in jobless households, whether of single or couple parents, will require not merely expansion of existing systems, but a redesigning and development of new models and systems.

In their Interim Report, the reference Group on Welfare Reform quoted from Martin:

> Early childhood interventions of high quality can have lasting effects upon employment and earnings prospects of disadvantaged children, especially if they are sustained over time and not limited to one-off interventions. It cannot be over-emphasised that if young people leave the schooling system without qualifications and a good grounding in basic education, it is well nigh impossible for labour market programs to overcome these handicaps later on. (Interim Report on Welfare Reform, 2000:8).

Based on a range of similar submissions including those from the National Council for Single Mothers and their Children, the Final Report stated as one of its key findings:

> Insufficient attention is paid to prevention and early intervention that can build capacities for participation and self-reliance. Foundation skills for social and economic participation are developed from early childhood and throughout the school years. Relationships skills are also important for individuals when they participate in their family, community and work settings (Participation Support for a More Equitable Society (McClure, 2000:9)

The Report from the Prime Minister’s Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce (Eldridge, 2000:48) listed as one of its key findings in the section on Families that:
Effective interventions in early childhood, followed in the first years of schooling, may alleviate the need for more intensive support in later years. This includes resolving difficulties in family relationships as early as possible.

The Reports quoted above demonstrate the wide recognition that prevention is more effective than later attempts to cure. The Federal Government’s own report from the Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee: *Childhood Matters, the Report on the Inquiry into Early Childhood Education* (quoted in Latham, 2001: 39) estimated that every dollar of early childhood spending is likely to save seven dollars in later expenditure on remediation.

In his keynote address to the National Education and Employment Forum in New South Wales, Michael Raper, then President of the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), stressed two findings from relevant research:

Boocock’s 1995 conclusion that good quality child care and pre-school programs promote cognitive development in the short term and prepare children to succeed in school particularly for disadvantaged children.

Barnett’s 1995 conclusion that enhanced early childhood and development programs can produce large effects on IQ during early childhood years and sizeable, persistent effects on reading and maths achievement, grade retention and socialisation, thereby making a significant difference to the lives of disadvantaged children (Raper, 2001: 8).

The Eldridge Report acknowledged the Federal Government’s *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy* which comprised eight new initiatives from 1 July 2000, one of which was ‘Early Intervention, parenting and family relationship support’ (Eldridge, 2000: 49).

Early intervention, parenting and family relationships support will be expanded by family skills training in more locations, establishing more playgroups in rural and regional areas and helping families with children with special needs to access playgroups, promoting relationship education in new and more responsive ways, providing early intervention support for families in rural and regional communities and developing training resources for professionals.

This NEEF Report endorses these initiatives, but calls for more targeted intervention as described below.

### 4.2 How does Australia compare?

Currently Australia spends well below the OECD average on pre-primary education and early childhood development – 0.1% of GDP compared with 0.4% of GDP OECD average (Raper, 2001: 8). The OECD Report *Education Policy Analysis* (1999) estimates that infants in Australia spend on average eight months in pre-primary education, whereas in France, Sweden, Germany and Japan they spend at least 30 months (in Latham, 2001: 38-40).

While participation rates in pre-school vary widely across Australia, only 25% of 3 year olds and 70% of 4 year olds attend pre-school, which positions Australia near the bottom of the OECD countries (Latham, 2001: 39).

The *Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy* prepared for the OECD by the Institute of Early Childhood at Macquarie University, surveyed the provision of early childhood education and care (ECEC) across Australia and proposed that:

- the provision of good quality, affordable and accessible Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the years before school;
- the shortage of qualified staff, particularly early childhood teachers, as well as the need to improve staff retention rates and the status of those working in early childhood settings;
- the recognition of the role of early childhood teaching qualifications in enabling staff to provide the high level planning and programming skills required to facilitate children’s development whilst in group care;
- the expansion of culturally responsive ECEC options for Indigenous communities that are holistic and that address a range of areas including health and development;
- the enhanced access to ECEC for all children with additional needs, given that there are many children who do not fit within existing guidelines for assistance;
- the continued facilitation of continuity between all ECEC settings;
- the further strengthening of partnerships with parents, their communities and ECEC providers;
- the development of a comprehensive research base and enhanced ECEC research capacity with a greater coordination of research efforts focused more centrally on the key issues confronting ECEC in Australia, including the monitoring of the outcomes for children;
- the identification of ECEC as a priority research area;
- the promotion of ongoing dialogue between all relevant Government departments concerned with ECEC and community stakeholders to develop a national framework for early childhood building upon emerging government and community initiatives;
– the enhancement of co-operation between all relevant portfolio areas to build a shared understanding of ECEC and cohesive policy responses; and

– the evaluation of new and existing services in the light of outcomes for children in order to provide a better understanding of the implications of policy on the experiences of young children and the factors which give rise to successful ECEC initiatives (The Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy, 2000:62-63).

4.3 What should we do?

At the National Forum, Dr. Margaret Henry proposed a model of early childhood education that would have the effect of instilling and enhancing the kinds of capabilities that Amartya Sen emphasised (see Chapter 1.1.6) and laying the foundations of the ‘personal efficacy’ noted above in Chapter 3.3.

In a model based on Erikson (1950), Henry identified three fundamental development needs, which, when we meet them, provide essential internal resources, – trust, autonomy and initiative. Describing them as the “building blocks to a good life” she stressed the:

first three great challenges or developmental needs: first trust or confidence, creating a secure base, goodness-of-fit, leading to the capacity for doing one’s own thing, leading to new ideas, at which point enhanced insights feed into a new sense of goodness-of-fit with the environment – and the process begins again. In other words, I’m suggesting that trust, autonomy and initiative – that is, confidence, doing our own thing, and having new ideas – are developmental needs which we go on trying to meet all through our lives (Henry, 2001:2).

The absolutely essential role of early childhood education, she proposed, was ensuring that these developmental needs are met so that young children would have the capacity to engage in effective subsequent schooling.

To expand this thesis, Henry went back to the work of Robert Hess (1971) which assessed all the studies that had been done in the US linking parents’ behaviour at home with children’s performance in their first years at school. Re-working Hess’s findings, which have been validated by subsequent studies, Henry outlined key behaviours that characterise, not only early childhood education, but ongoing learning by adults across their lives. Adults including teachers:

- promote trust in children and adults through our responsiveness, by:
  - relating warmly to them
  - expressing high regard for them
  - being attentive to and engaged with them

- promote autonomy in children and adults through our control methods, by:
  - encouraging their independence
  - explaining why some things have to be done
  - being as consistent as we can

- promote initiative in children and adults through our involvement, by:
  - encouraging them to achieve
  - talking with them rather than to them
  - engaging in ‘by the way’ teaching
  - having interesting resources around for them (Henry 2001:4).

Henry’s call, endorsed by the NEEF participants, was for a short component in the education of early childhood teachers which will prepare them to do this, so that teachers and trained teacher aides can meet with the parents of pre-school children and work with them to assist them to meet these development needs in themselves and in their children, and for a curriculum and pedagogy in pre-school education that focuses on these fundamental capacities.

This Report therefore, calls for a doubling of the $240 million committed to the Stronger Families program, so that:

- early childhood education in the most disadvantaged areas can be expanded to ensure that the children from these areas are supported to participate effectively in their primary schooling;
- more teacher aides can be trained and employed to work with parents in their homes and at pre-school centres; and
- the curriculum in institutes providing training for early childhood education teachers include development of the capabilities, described by Henry above, in a way that assists early childhood teachers to work with adults (parents) in furthering these capabilities as well as with children;
- community members can help other community members with young families to build fundamental capacities (as Home Start Australia from the University of Newcastle trains volunteers to visit families with young children experiencing difficulties).

This should be regarded as a basic investment which will reduce the costs of subsequent remediation work with those children who fail to progress in the accession of basic literacy and numeracy skills in their initial primary schooling and who are therefore, at greater risk of early school leaving in later years.
4.4 Directly Assisting Families – Reduced Taxation

Alan Drurey, from the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, put an emphatic case at the NEEF National Forum for the kind of assistance to families, particularly those experiencing any kind of disadvantage, which will enable them to provide the care and nurturing in the pre-school years that will set their children up for successful participation in primary and secondary schooling. He called for a review of taxation on families with young children as a matter of urgency. This Report proposes a possible, significant change to the way parents, whether in sole parent or couple households, are taxed. Without such changes, many parents will continue to be dogged by the financial difficulties which prevent them from giving their pre-school children, in particular, the kind of nurturing that is indispensable for later success in education and training.

In a wide-ranging review of the lessons learned from Australia’s first century of Federation, Professor Ross Garnaut included the following ‘lessons’:

We learned from the relationship between wage rigidity and unemployment in the twentieth century that fiscal payments for families is more effective in alleviating poverty than high legal minimum wages.

We learned as well that social security payments targeted tightly on people on low incomes create problems through the effects of high effective marginal tax rates on incentives for employment. We have to be much more clever in designing social security arrangements in ways that maintain incentives to employment to the greatest extent possible. A form of negative income tax, with lump sum payments to members of the labour force, would reconcile most effectively income security of low-income people with economic incentives to full employment. It happens that such a system could also address problems of child-care (for its own sake and as an incentive to fertility) and inter-regional equity. The negative income tax is fiscally demanding, and its introduction would need to be phased in over six to ten years of relatively strong growth. In the meantime the Five Economists’ tax credit can generate much of the gains, at low fiscal cost, while being consistent with later movements towards a negative income tax (Garnaut, 2002:27).

The Five Economists’ Plan, referred to by Garnaut, has been summarised by Peter Dawkins:

The key elements of the plan were:

1. Steady fiscal policy and monetary policy and microeconomic reform aimed at continued strong and stable economic growth.

2. A reduction in the rate of wage increases relative to the rate of productivity growth, to be achieved by replacing Living Wage adjustments, for the time being, with tax credits for low wage earners in low income families.

3. These tax credits would be introduced in a way that lowered effective marginal tax rates facing low income families and improved their incentives to pursue employment opportunities, with a long-term commitment to further reduce effective marginal tax rates for low and middle-income families.

4. A systematic approach to labour-market programs.

5. Upgrading the education and training systems over the longer term (Dawkins, 2002:4).

The plan proposes a trade-off of tax credits for at least a freeze on minimum wage increases. This results from the paradox that wage increases are not an efficient way to increase equity because most of any wage increase is lost through higher income tax and reductions in various forms of means tested government assistance. As Dawkins notes:

By comparison tax credits can be targeted towards those who are low wage earners in low income families so that only they benefit, and they retain that full amount of higher credit. Thus for a two income family with two children and a combined annual income of $44,600, an earnings credit of as little as $10 per week would lead to the same increase in their disposable income as a $23 increase in the ‘living wage’ (Dawkins, 2002:7).

These changes will have an initial cost impact and the cost-benefit analysis will have to include the predicted growth in GDP and therefore, government revenue that will result from having many more Australians in employment and off welfare. This Report argues that the implementation of tax credits, in Dawkins’ terms, will be a beneficial investment and endorses Dawkins’ comment:

In this context it might be noted that in recent years government social expenditures on income support, education, health and housing have been restructured in favour of higher income groups. In particular, changes to family assistance, aid to private schools and the health insurance rebate have all contributed to upper middle class welfare. Thus there would seem to be significant scope to review government priorities and achieve savings in favour of the most disadvantaged. And assisting those people to realise their full potential by participating in work and society would then improve economic performance over time. Indeed the question might well be put can Australia afford not to take action along these lines? (Dawkins, 2002:8)

This Report therefore, calls for a re-configuration of the taxation system by the use of an appropriate mix of earned tax credits and negative income tax to achieve the result that parents, whether sole or couples, receive the equivalent of an additional $2000 per child in disposable income for
pre-school children. This will assist them to access child-
care or pre-school places and/or adapt their own employ-
ment arrangements to provide them more opportunity to
nurture their pre-school children.

The following recommendations are made ‘without
prejudice’ in relation to the on-going need to reform
welfare in Australia. They are made on the assumption
that the necessary reform to the unsustainable welfare
system in this country will result in the on-going provision
of a basic ‘safety-net’ of welfare, that it would be more
effectively delivered through CYCs in partnership with full-
service schools and that this combination is more likely
to facilitate the transfer of more Australians into productive
employment and social engagement rather than chronic
welfare dependence.

Recommendation 4: Recognise the
importance of early childhood learning

Substantial evidence now shows that a strong
foundation in the early childhood years is critical to
the success of later learning capacities. Investment
in early preventative programs can reduce costly
remediation later. To ensure that pre-school children
from disadvantaged environments develop capa-
cities for literacy before formal schooling, to enable
them to participate effectively in their primary
schooling, comprehensive programs of intervention
and personal support are needed. The Stronger
Families program provides a vehicle for such
programs, which need to forge strong links between
early childhood professionals, community members
and parents. Furthermore, parents with young
children can be encouraged, through directed tax
incentives, to support their children’s education from
the earliest years, rather than receive increased
benefits which can contribute to the dependency
cycle.

It is recommended that, in order to limit the effects
of disadvantage on children before they enter school,
Federal, State and Territory governments collabor-
atively:

a) provide early childhood education to all
children from 0 to 5 in vulnerable areas and
in areas where there are high populations
of young children;

b) increase the number of specifically trained
teacher aides and community volunteers to
work with parents in their homes and at pre-
school centres;

c) train early childhood education teachers and
teacher aides and community volunteers to
work with parents in disadvantaged areas,
particularly to develop the capabilities of
trust, autonomy and initiative in their young
children;

d) develop innovative ways of providing low
income working parents of young children
with additional tax benefits for the education
of their young children.
Communication and information technologies are the new currency of power and our students have a need to know how to operate in that currency and a right to do so.

– Brendan Ryan: Their Future Not Our Past.

Speakers at all the State NEEF Forums and at the National Forum, emphasised in a variety of ways that the ability to access information via the new technologies has been recognised as a key component of participation in a knowledge-based economy. They noted that the Internet and associated information and communication technologies (ICT) are becoming central to education, cultural activities, services, employment and social and political participation. There is a risk that the unequal access to and usage of ICT across the population, commonly referred to as the ‘digital divide’, will further compound and entrench poverty and marginalisation among those already disadvantaged.

Lack of access to information technology is creating a group of ‘information poor’ Australians who are increasingly unable to participate effectively, or at all, in the emerging knowledge economy. For many, their existing disadvantage will be further compounded by their inability to develop the set of capabilities that will be required to allow them to participate in a society dominated by versions of the ‘new economy’ emerging in Australia. The advantaged, who are in a position to benefit from access to ICT, will move further away from, and ahead of, those already disadvantaged.

5.1 Key Policy Requirements

In Australia, governments at Federal, State and Territory levels are attempting to develop policy responses and initiatives to assist Australia’s transition to a new economy. For instance, the Federal Government established the New Economy Branch within the Department of Industry Science and Resources in 1999. A key objective of this Department is to enhance the economic and social benefits of the new economy for Australia through a strengthened national system of innovation.

In addition, the role of the National Office for the Information Economy is to coordinate the development of the Commonwealth Government’s Strategic Framework...
for the Information Economy. A range of other policy initiatives dealing with issues such as computer literacy standards at school, increasing the numbers of science and IT graduates, and increasing private expenditure on research and development are being announced on a regular basis. This Report endorses these initiatives and calls for further systematic interventions described in the remainder of this Chapter.

In order to address this problem, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2000) recently highlighted three dimensions of ‘access’ to the new ICT:

- an effective national infrastructure
- financial capacity for connectivity
- skills for usage.

It is important to consider each of the dimensions of access along with a number of policy implications for them together. All three areas need to be addressed simultaneously and require the integration of a number of policies for an effective strategy to bridge the present digital divide and to prevent either its exacerbation or the emergence of new expressions of it in the future.

5.1.1 Availability of advanced networks at a national level to support the provision of Internet services

Australians have always been quick to take up new technologies, especially when they offer us the ability to reduce the distance barrier we have faced both internally and externally. Those countries able to keep costs relatively low are showing higher rates of Internet connectivity. Over the past three years, Australia has seen an increase in both the number of computers in homes and the number of homes connected to the Internet. Computer ownership increased from 53% in 1998 to 64% in 2000 while Internet usage has increased at a rapid rate from 25% in 1999 to 37% in 2000. Despite the rapid uptake of the Internet in Australia (see Figure 15), some have warned that Australia risks falling behind in technology leadership because it lacks the low cost, high speed Internet access that can be provided by broadband to meet the requirements of future developments.

The issue of adequate infrastructure is indispensable as a starting point. However, it will not be possible even to begin to implement effective policies without a serious and coordinated Federal and State investment to ensure access to high speed, low cost, broadband technology. The provision of an effective platform for all Australians to access ICT effectively and consistently will require an industrial grade infrastructure throughout Australia. Without equitable access to quality ICT infrastructure, progress in overcoming the digital divide will not be likely. Addressing the inequality that presently surrounds access to the new information and communication technologies requires concerted policies from governments, business and social sector organisations. However, governments will need to set the appropriate macro-policy frameworks with respect to operating as a knowledge-based economy.

Without such a commitment to infrastructure development, we are not likely to make progress in providing access to computers and to the Internet in every learning space as a basic standard in all schools.

5.1.2 Peoples’ capacity to purchase and maintain an Internet connection

The second dimension of access relates to the cost of hardware and connection for individuals and the maintenance of that connection. Recent research shows that while Australia may be a leader in terms of Internet access and usage the rate of access is not equally distributed across the population. The levels of income and education are important factors in determining who benefits from the new technology. In 1998/99, for instance, only 6 per cent of households on incomes less than $19,000 were connected to the Internet compared to 47 per cent of those on incomes of more than $84,000. In 2000 the disparity...
between income groups was still relatively high. Income earners in the top bracket were 3.5 times more likely to have an Internet connection at home than those in the lowest bracket (see Figure 16).

The most recent survey by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)* suggests that while almost 60% of households earning above $50,000 had home Internet access, only 21% of households with incomes below $50,000 were connected. Confirming once again, the importance of socio-economic factors in the ‘digital divide’, a key reason why households with computers (especially those with incomes below $44,000) do not have Internet access is because the costs of connection are too high (see Table 7).

Children need access to computers and the Internet at home in order to facilitate their school-based learning. While Figure 16 suggests that there has been a steady increase in the number of Internet connections across all income levels, Table 8 shows that those *families* that have an income below $19,000 are the least likely to have a computer or the Internet at home. In other words, children from low-income households are particularly disadvantaged. An eight year old child in a household with an income of more than $84,000, for instance, is almost seven times more likely to have home access to the Internet than an eight year old in a household with an income below $19,000.

Internet access is also related to an individual’s level of educational attainment. Those individuals with a university education are 2.5 times more likely to have home access to the net than those without (see Figure 17).

Apart from the role of socio-economic factors in Internet home access and usage, other variables such as age, sex, occupation and geographical location were also found to

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**Table 7: Main reasons why households with computers do not have Internet access**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household income</th>
<th>Costs too high (%)</th>
<th>Lack of interest (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-$14,000</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,001- 27,000</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27,001- 44,000</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44,001- 66,000</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $66,000</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS 8128.0 (1998)

**Table 8: Percentage of adults with access to the Internet at home by household income and age of the eldest child, 1999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of eldest child</th>
<th>Household Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$0-19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No children</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4 yrs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 yrs</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 yrs</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17 yrs</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hellwig & Lloyd (2000:20)
be important determinants of access. Older people have a much lower incidence of Internet access at home than other groups. The gap between city and country in terms of access is decreasing. For instance, 40% of all metropolitan households had Internet access compared to 32% of all households in non-metropolitan areas.

In considering all of these interrelated factors, however, the financial capacity to meet the initial cost and maintenance of connectivity is an urgent policy priority for an immediate positive impact on access to ICT. Research shows students’ access to ICT depends on the economic status and education of the parents. Those already disadvantaged because of low socio-economic status will be doubly disadvantaged because of their inability to share in the new economy either through accessing information, or through ICT transactions. It will be important for governments, in collaboration with business, schools and local communities, to devise effective strategies to ensure that disadvantaged families and their children have the assistance needed to become connected and maintain access to the opportunities made available by adequate infrastructure.

Indeed, either ensuring the financial capacity for connectivity or ensuring that the cost to go on line is kept to a minimum will be indispensable for initial readiness and the ongoing development to participate in the new economy. This investment can be compared to the social investment needed to ensure acceptable levels of health throughout Australia. However, instead of directing the investment to institutions, we consider it will yield more effective outcomes if it is directed to families and their children. In that way, tailored opportunities for connections between the education that takes place in schools and also in the workplace and the community in general are more likely to be integrated effectively with greater flexibility.

5.1.3 The attainment of skills and capabilities necessary for the use of information technology

The third and perhaps most critical barrier to Internet access is a lack of appropriate ICT skills and knowledge. As more organisations embrace the use of ICT, employees will be expected to acquire a range of skills and be required to continuously update these skills as the technology changes. Computer literacy is also becoming increasingly important for re-entry to the labour market. Studies (Galbraith 1998, Thurow, 1999) show a rise in the amount of training required for jobs, an increasing use of computers and importance of communication, social and problem-solving skills and a simultaneous reduction in the use of manual skills.

There is a real danger that if the necessary investment in education, training and skill formation is not made, the dividing line between ‘new economy insiders’ and ‘new economy outsiders’ will widen further as the pace of change in new technology continues to increase. For the ‘insiders’ there are benefits to be gained from being in an occupation where computers and the Internet are readily available. The environment will facilitate the opportunity for individuals to keep abreast of the technological changes by increasing their experience and ability to participate in further training.

The problem is that the privileged one third of workers who do well out of the new economy in terms of good jobs and pay also have a better capacity to further invest in their skills. The bottom two-thirds of society face a ‘double jeopardy’ whereby they lack the personal resources to upgrade their skills and their employers are also unlikely to provide adequate training. Evidence in the United Kingdom (Green et al, 1998) suggests that workers who are in low paying jobs, on short-term contracts, not covered by a union collective agreement, and work part-time, have experienced substantially fewer skill increases and work-related training than better off workers.

As the new economy exacerbates the trend towards marginal forms of employment, earnings inequality is likely to further increase since jobs that offer less training have lower earnings. In other words, being employed in the new economy does not in and of itself ensure social inclusion. Australian and international evidence indicates
that the jobs the new economy is creating, for a large part of the labour force, are not jobs that can restore a sense of control or offer prospects for the future for those already marginalised (Atkinson, 1998).

Given the young age at which disadvantage affects an individual’s life chances, schools have an important role to play in ensuring that students are fully prepared to participate socially and economically in the new economy through providing them with the necessary ICT skills and knowledge. Students will need to learn ‘how to learn’ in order to face the challenges and accept innovation because specific ICT skills that are dependent on current technologies will inevitably become redundant. Just as importantly students will have to learn how to assess and analyse what Professor Phil Candy at the National Forum (2001) called “deeper and deeper wells of useless information” that is, “coping with the information glut” will be a skill that teachers have to nurture in their students.

5.2 Improving Equity of Access

Each State Government announced policies of providing computers in schools at various levels of penetration by various dates, ranging from 1:5 in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia to 1:7.5 in Queensland and 1:14 in New South Wales (Finger and Russell 1999). As at the end of 2001, no State had achieved its targeted ratio across the complete system. These targets however, do not match the goal set by the USA Presidential Commission on Information Technology, which in 1997, set a target of 5 students to 1.6 multimedia capable computers. Internet access has been facilitated in the USA by non-government, ‘public benefit’ organisations such as Schools Online (http://www.schoolsonline.org) which commenced in 1996. By April 2000 Schools Online had connected 5,695 under-resourced American schools to the Internet and had provided specialist training to more than 10,000 teachers. It has since extended this service to 392 schools in 32 countries, developing a wealth of tested expertise that could be well utilized in Australia.

As is the case with home access to the Internet, there is also considerable disparity between schools with regard to the availability and access of the Internet. This disparity is evident even within the state school system. Some schools, for instance, have a ratio of 12 students per computer while others have a ratio of 6 students per computer. Part of the disparity can be explained by school size while another contributing factor is the wide discretion given to schools with regard to how they allocate their technology funding. In addition to providing computers and networks, there needs to be an integrated approach linking information technology resources to whole of school planning. A recent report (Meredyth et al, 1999) found consistent links between those schools that had a clearly defined ICT policy and the priority given at a school to the acquisition of computers, networking, technical support and professional development for teachers.

A school’s capacity to perform the role of preparing students for the new economy is going to be closely linked to availability of resources because the implementation of a sophisticated ICT policy is more likely to occur in schools that are well resourced. Some private schools, for instance, are able to implement ICT policies that reflect workplace practice both in terms of their acquisition of ICT and in the way typical knowledge based workplaces are structured with email, Internet access and remote access facilities. In such schools, children are being taught to take responsibility for their own learning and will therefore, be better prepared for the workplace. It is the ability to take an holistic approach to the use of ICT that sets many of the private schools apart.

The better integration of ICT into school curricula in private schools will further increase the advantages of private education obtained by some children. What about those children who are already at a disadvantage and more likely to be in the state school system? Recent research in the United Kingdom (Sparkes, 1999) and in Australia (Ryan, 2000) has suggested that higher per pupil spending, reduced class sizes, and high quality teaching can have a positive impact on the educational outcomes of disadvantaged students. Furthermore, a relevant and engaging curriculum is one of the main keys to improving outcomes in schools that serve disadvantaged communities. The effective and focused use of ICT methodologies, therefore, is a possible means of ameliorating the educational disadvantage that children from low Socio-economic Status often experience. Despite the complexity and challenge of reversing the educational outcomes of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, ICT can create important opportunities for these students (see below). Current Federal Government policies with respect to education funding, however, are likely to privilege those students that are already gaining from the new economy and penalise those that are outside it.

5.3 Skilling Teachers In ICT – In-Service and Pre-Service

Practicing teachers attending the NEEF Forums were eloquent in their descriptions of the difficulties they faced in attempting to keep abreast of the developments in ICT and to make use of it effectively in their classrooms. Several admitted that numbers of students were well ahead of them in general computer literacy by the time they reached middle secondary schooling!

The most extensive survey of the skills and experience of both teachers and students in ICT was carried out by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA); 6213 students, 1258 teachers and 22 Principals were surveyed and the results published in Real Time: Computers, Change and Schooling – National Sample Study of the Information Technology Skills of Australian School Students (DETYA, 1999)

Finger and Russell (1999) analysed the report’s findings and concluded that while the majority of teachers had the
basic skills in using computers as tools, they did not believe that adequate training was available to meet their needs as teachers and had particular concerns about the duration, type and location of the training. “Brief professional development sessions run after the end of their teaching were not supported” (Finger & Russell, 1999:15). More importantly:

only 5% of teachers definitely agreed that they were able to keep abreast of new programs and educational applications, and only 6% definitely agreed that they were sufficiently informed about incorporating information technology into the curriculum. Teachers from independent schools, large schools and high income areas were considerably more in agreement with both statements, while teachers in large country towns and small country towns were more likely to disagree than urban teachers that they were sufficiently informed about incorporating IT into the curriculum (Finger & Russell, 1999:16).

Finger and Russell concluded that better professional development was an urgent requirement to assist practicing teachers use ICT more effectively in their everyday teaching, not just in courses about computers, but across the curriculum.

They also drew implications about the kind of pre-service training required for teacher trainees if they are to implement ICT effectively into their pedagogy and curricula. Their conclusions were that the DETYA national sample showed that teacher education institutions will need to:

❖ provide sufficient time for student teachers using computers for instructional purposes to develop confidence in using hardware and software;
❖ provide student teachers with computer education activities such as analysing material downloaded form the Internet, creating home pages for schools and facilitating communication between students;
❖ require student teachers to demonstrate facility in word processing, using spreadsheets, use of the Internet, sending and receiving attachments and establishing desktop videoconference links with other schools;
❖ encourage student teachers to model positive reinforcement strategies and constructivist approaches to learning and teaching;
❖ require students teachers to complete some class presentations using computer presentation applications;
❖ require student teachers to prepare student assessment portfolios using computers (Finger & Russell, 1999:19).

As teachers have utilized ICT in classrooms in recent years and as researchers have debated the alleged impacts and possible benefits of using ICT in education – quite apart from the need to be thoroughly familiar with them in their role as omni-present tools of trade in the workplaces of the new economy – there have emerged a number of conclusions about the ways in which ICT can actually modify the way learning takes place in education, especially the ways in which collaborative work between teachers and students using ICT can intensify student-centred learning and problem-solving in new and more effective ways.

In June 2001 Nicola Yelland published a careful review of the studies of ICT usage in *Teaching and Learning With Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Numeracy in the Early Childhood and Primary Years of Schooling*. While she concentrated on mathematics education, Yelland covered a broad range of research and found that:

studies have shown that effective computer integration is not found in classrooms that are traditional and use didactic teaching methods. Rather, effective integration of ICT occurs in environments where teachers and learners engage in new partnerships for learning. These are collaborative, problem-solving settings where all participants learn, the relationships between learners are dynamic and Information and Communication Technology complement engagement in authentic learning tasks (Yelland 2001:10).

After summarising research throughout the 90s, she concluded that the researchers generally agreed that:

the interactions between teachers and students changed with the introduction and use of computers, but that the introduction of computers in itself will not change schools: there has to be a corresponding change in classroom climate and pedagogy for the use of technologies to have an impact (Yelland 2001:10).

Yelland illustrated the potential changes by referring to the conclusion from the USA CEO Forum (2000) ([http://www.ceoForum.org/](http://www.ceoForum.org/)), which indicated that:

when digital content is integrated into curriculum a change in the learning process occurs which is characterised as being:

**Problem or project oriented** – whereby investigations are authentic and there will be a variety of solutions to a problem;

**Student-centred** – so that students feel empowered in their work and participate in creating and developing their own investigations while their teachers guide, facilitate and provide them with materials to support their learning. Teachers remain the cornerstone of the educational process in a learning partnership with their students, parent, peers and other professionals, but adopt a role which is less authoritarian and more one of encouraging and guiding the learning of their students towards goals that have been defined by them and the curriculum;
Collaborative – since learning with authentic tasks is an interactive experience between students and their teachers, as students acquire and use information, exchange ideas with each other and create relationships with professionals relevant to their work;

Relevant – learning with ICT has the potential to increase educational opportunities that meet the needs of individuals and groups in diverse ways and allows them to work according to their needs and interests. For teachers, they can initially use digital devices to record and report on their students’ performance in enhanced ways, tracking achievement using databases or using video captures for observation of skill development. Additionally, teachers may develop online content for use by students when they have specific learning opportunities in mind;

Productive – as the use of ICT encourages both students and teachers to become ‘content producers’ (CEO 1999:10) this has the added benefit that the level and quality of the productions is usually high; in turn this encourages students to engage with learning more effectively. The productions are not only in the form of quality presentations and reports but also in creating relationships extending beyond those in the immediate locality. Issues of copyright and plagiarism become important discussion points in this context;

Lifelong – students develop skill in learning how to learn, which will benefit them in the long term and enable them to interact with people and ideas in a borderless manner. Skill in determining when and where to seek out information and people, and in how to use the information in context, becomes a fundamental part of the learning process. (Yelland, 2000:11).

These characteristics of a pedagogy and curriculum using ICT effectively have obvious relevance to the needs of disadvantaged or ‘at risk’ students (reported in the Eldridge and McClure Reports and articulated at the NEEF Forums), for a varied curriculum that accommodates flexible pathways and meets their needs at the particular stage of the pathway at which the individual might find him or herself. Engaging them via creative and clever uses of ICT may well provide a circuit-breaker that will re-orientate them to a pathway that will lead to employability and actual and sustained employment.

Yelland’s first recommendation at the conclusion of her study was that, “the use of ICT is a fundamental aspect of learning, and funding needs to be specifically targeted to its successful implementation in the schools and universities in Australia that provide teacher education programs”. Her comment reinforces that of Finger and Russell (1999) that pre-service training of future teachers will need to concentrate explicitly on developing the skills to use a pedagogy that incorporates ICT at its centre and in doing so provides a more varied and flexible range of learning experiences for their students.

Recommendation 5: Increased access to learning through information and communication technology

Access and ability to use information and communication technologies is increasingly being recognised as an arbiter of people’s ability to educate themselves and to learn things that are important for their effective participation in society. Research has clearly demonstrated that a serious and expanding digital-divide exists in Australia and that without access to information and communication technologies and the training for its effective use, students, particularly those who are disadvantaged, face the likelihood of falling further behind in their studies and in competition for future employment opportunities. The National Education and Employment Forum recognised three dimensions of ‘access’ that must be urgently addressed:

– an effective national infrastructure;
– financial capacity for connectivity; and
– skills for usage.

These aspects require the simultaneous integration of a number of policies for an effective strategy to bridge the present digital divide and to prevent the emergence of new expressions of it. While joint, concerted efforts by governments, business and social sector organisations are imperative, inequality that currently surrounds access to new technologies must be addressed primarily by governments in order to set the appropriate macro-policy frameworks with respect to operating as a knowledge-based economy.

It is recommended that Federal, State, Territory and Local Governments collaboratively:

a) work with Telstra to install high speed broadband across Australia and fund Internet connections in all relevant learning spaces in schools;

b) allow tax deductability for parents to purchase computers in homes where school-age children reside;

c) increase training of pre-service and in-service teachers in information and communications technology and its integration across the curriculum, particularly in disadvantaged schools.
Teaching is the critical profession. Its quality, its health matters in ways which have consequences for society far greater than is the case for many other professions, occupations and vocations. Teaching has always been important, but never more so than in a society which knows its very future depends on the knowledge and skill base of its people. An investment in teacher education is an investment in teachers; an investment in teachers is an investment in student learning arising from quality teaching; an investment in student learning is an investment in the long-term quality of individual lives and in the prosperity and well being of the people of [Australia].


These concluding words of Ramsey’s landmark Report Quality Matters. Revitalising Teaching: Critical times, critical choices. [Report on the Review of Teacher Education In New South Wales, 2000] express a number of truisms. We all agree that teachers are important, but as Ramsey demonstrates repeatedly, our structures and our treatment of teachers show that in practice we remain half-hearted in our support. If we are going to do the new and different things that this Report calls for, then teachers will have to be the main doers and deliverers. This is asking a great deal of teachers. Teachers who presented to, or participated in, the NEEF Forums demonstrated dedication and a desire to operate more effectively. But they reported being under-resourced and under-appreciated.

It is important therefore, to re-iterate the fundamental importance of the work of individual teachers. Jim Cumming, Executive Director of the Australian College of Education, in his keynote address to the National Forum, emphasised that, “evidence has been mounting for some time that teachers constitute ‘the’ critical factor in the achievement of learning outcomes in schools” (Cumming, 2001:1). Kenneth Rowe has recently offered a detailed analysis of a number of studies of the variations in the levels of students’ performance. This was in the context of the debate over the better performance by girls across the curriculum. He found that the “most important source of variation in student achievement is teacher quality” (Rowe, 2002:1). This was more important than the socio-economic background of the students, even though that background was important and contributed to some of the difficulties experienced by children from such families. Rowe concluded, “It is not so much what students bring with them, but what they experience on a day-to-day basis in interaction with teachers and other students in classrooms that really matters” (2002:10). He found this was particularly the case for general literacy, verbal reasoning and written communication skills which underpin so many other competencies that develop as the student progresses through education. The fundamental role and importance of the individual teacher cannot be over-estimated. This Chapter, therefore, presents a range of initiatives that must be put in place to support teachers adequately.
### 6.1 Status of the Profession

The teaching profession generally is ageing and increasingly feminised. The graph above reproduced from Ramsey (2000:194) presents the data for New South Wales (NSW), showing that 59% of male teachers in government schools are over 45 and 45% of female teachers are in the same cohorts. The average age of teachers in Queensland is 47 years.

The current rate of replacement of these ageing teachers is not addressing the imbalance since the resignation rates of teachers is highest in the first two years of service; in 1999, 122 secondary teachers and 42 primary teachers resigned from NSW government schools in their first year of service and the numbers in their second year were 58 and 37 respectively (Ramsey, 2000:196).

The over-representation of females in the profession continues. In 1999, for example, males comprised only 12% of new primary teachers in NSW and 34% of new secondary teachers (Ramsey, 2000:46). Not with standing, it must be remembered that prior to and into the 1960’s alternative, professional openings, especially for women, were limited. Teaching was seen as an upwardly mobile profession and therefore, in the profession now, are some of our most intellectually able women.

The majority of new teachers enter the profession after training at universities which they entered immediately after secondary schooling.

### 6.2 The Need for Rejuvenation and Renewal

In his presentation to the National NEEF Forum, Jim Cumming sent a ringing call to:

- strengthen the teaching profession. Given the critical importance of the teacher in achieving student learning outcomes, it is essential that the profession assumes greater responsibility for a range of matters including entry standards, training and development and recognition. A simple measure of increased status for the profession will be when teachers re-establish a level of confidence and pride that enables them to recommend teaching as a vocation to others (Cumming 2001:9)

The following sections of this Chapter address these issues.

The Ramsey Report comprehensively sets out a detailed set of recommendations and ‘policy directions’ to address the perceived need to strengthen the profession and to improve teacher education – both pre-and in-service. The NEEF Report endorses them and they are attached in full as Appendix 6. Ramsey summed up the essence of his proposals in this way:

Change is needed in teacher education and in teaching which will:

- guarantee adequate funding arrangements for an effective and contemporary system of teacher education to involve all employers and Commonwealth and State governments;
- attract more of the ‘best and brightest’ into teaching and retain them;
- embed the initial preparation of teachers in the profession’s practice;
- strengthen the diversity of entry pathways and the diversity of preparation models to meet client and employer needs;
- establish the strongest possible sense of professional identity for teachers, including standards of professional practice;
- create the strongest possible culture of lifelong learning in teachers
- encourage and reward our best teachers;
- prepare our future educational leaders to connect pedagogy and teaching with broader societal changes (Ramsey, 2000:205).

Ramsey was addressing the NSW context, but in endorsing his proposals this Report calls for the creation of a single Institute of Teachers at a national level, which will set
professional standards and manage accreditation of teachers nationwide. The prospect of six States and two Territories setting up their own individual Institutes in a nation the size of Australia must rank as inefficient and expensive folly. At the National Forum, Jim Cumming called for further work on the development of professional teaching standards, referring to The Australian College of Education (ACE)’s Working Document on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism (2001). The proposed National Institute should take on the responsibility for developing these standards, in collaboration with the stakeholder groups representing the profession (unions, associations of principals, State Departments etc.).

This Report wishes to emphasise a number of issues, which while noted by Ramsey, were not centre-stage. On page 58 of his Report, he refers to the need to allow teacher education students to “understand...the role of the teacher in school, parent and community relations” and to equip them with “knowledge and skills to fulfill and sustain the parent partnership critical to the quality of schooling outcomes.” This Report wishes to stress the crucial importance of the teachers’ interaction with parents and families and community, welfare organisations and government agencies and other education or skills providers such as employers and employer organisations, and Vocational Education and Training (VET) training providers. These interactions are indispensable if teachers are to facilitate the diverse pathways referred to in Chapter 3 and function effectively in full-service schools. The proposals below will emphasise these themes.

### 6.3 Funding and Priority Setting

We now have a situation in teacher education in Australia where the major future employers of teachers – State and Territory Education Departments – have little role in the planning and delivery of the training for future teachers, which have become the preserve of University Faculties/Schools of Education. Ramsey refers to the “unsustainable situation which currently applies, of the Commonwealth Government having funding responsibility for teacher education, but the State Government having responsibility for teacher supply and quality. In this separation resides many of the current issues in teacher education...” (Ramsey 2000:207). The peculiar way in which funding is provided for student places by EFTSU (effective full-time student unit) in comparison to the relative levels of funding for research activities, or for post-graduate students such as PhDs, has meant that Schools/Faculties of Education are under continual pressure to maximise their funding by undertaking research and post-graduate supervision rather than focus primarily on the professional preparation of teachers. The strong emphasis on ‘professional experience’ in schools which Ramsey rightly emphasises, is being undermined. Further, the numbers of students entering education is not governed by the State employers’ workforce needs nor is the quality and suitability of the entering students monitored by the future employers. Rather, they are too often products of the enrolments and ‘student load’ policies of Universities constantly attempting to maximize funding formulae. Schools/Faculties of Education remain under-funded for the key roles they have to play.

The NEEF Report takes the view that the attraction and preparation of the kinds of teachers Australia now needs, will only be possible when a fundamental and systemic change to the prevailing teacher-education structures is made. Increased funding of teacher education faculties by State Governments leverage greater control of the process and specification of the competencies and professional standards of the graduate teachers. Such funding will ensure that the necessary number of places is made available to meet the needs of schools as determined by the State governments’ workforce planners and that the kinds of emphases required by the employers are being given centre-stage priority.

We therefore, call on the Commonwealth Government to provide an extra $75 million per annum, to be distributed to the States on the basis of their school-age populations. We call on the State Governments to match this dollar for dollar, so that the full amount of these funds can be applied to the State Governments (and not directly to the Universities) and used by them to negotiate improved outcomes from the university faculties providing teacher-education in their respective States. Without such a funding circuit-breaker, it remains quite unlikely that the extent of change required will take place in the university schools/faculties.

### 6.4 Attracting Quality Teachers

Several initiatives need to be pursued to redress the current imbalances in the teaching workforce. The first is the attraction of more males into the profession particularly in the primary sector. The provision of role models from both genders is a necessary part of a rounded education.

The second is the attraction of potential teachers who have had a variety of experiences outside the schooling-university-schooling progression that has been the life experience for most teachers. Actual experience in workplaces and in the varieties of employment for which students are being prepared enables teachers to relate more effectively with the providers of the pathway experiences which this Report is calling for. A caveat here is that education is more than simply preparation for working and this Report’s emphasis on preparation for a working life is not meant to be exclusive or restrictive of the full richness of children’s educational experience. Potential teachers who already have networks in the communities served by schools will move more readily into the roles of interacting and co-operating with key members of the communities of relevance to the school and its students.

The third is attracting high quality, suitable candidates for the profession. At the National Forum, Jim Cumming profiled the characteristics of innovative teachers that...
resulted from the ACE’s Reforming Schools Through Innovative Teaching (2001):

innovative teachers are passionate about learning and its application to the lives and futures of their students and communities. While highly-skilled in change management and human relations, their in-depth understanding of adolescence and youth culture matches the subject area(s) in which they have expertise. They abide by a personal code of ethics which includes a commitment not only to young people, but also to all those with whom they work (Cumming, 2001:6).

Attracting entrants with the potential to be great teachers is the challenge, since entry scores into education programs in universities are not at the level for other professions such as medicine, law, dentistry, therapies, engineering etc. Increasing the professionalism and status of teaching in the manner proposed by Ramsey will hopefully make teaching more attractive to highly-endowed students. The suitability issue goes to the need to assess which potential students have, namely, the psychological and interpersonal attributes that will allow them to function well under the inevitable pressures placed on teachers. There is arguably a need for more comprehensive screening and aptitude testing of applicants for teacher-education, and the future employers, State and Territory Governments, should be able to ensure such a selection regime is introduced as part of their negotiations about funding.

We believe that a program of scholarships and bonded studentships will address these needs. The scholarships would be widely advertised to attract more mature members of the community who may wish to change careers and would allow them to attend university full-time to complete their pre-service training without taking on a Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) liability. The bonded studentships would act in lieu of HECS, in the sense that the potential employer would absorb the HECS fees in the additional funding to be made available to universities and the student would be obligated to give at least the same number of years of service as were spent in training.

6.5 Preparing for Community Interaction

This Report does not wish to impose on teachers the additional roles of social workers, counsellors and brokers of service provision. But there is a need for teachers to be thoroughly informed about policies, programs, initiatives and structures in the wider community, including the business world, and provided by Governments. This knowledge is essential if they are going to work effectively with youth to redress disadvantage and promote their navigation of different pathways and with other providers of services such as welfare officers, at the local level.

We do not see these issues as subsumed under the general heading of ‘Behaviour Management’, with its potentially negative connotations of conflict, containment and sanctions. Rather, modules or subjects which expound the different learning needs of youth at various stages of their transitions and which positively illustrate good practice in the provision of multiple pathways and full service are required. In particular, a coverage of the policy-making processes in government and of the structure of Government Departments and agencies along with an overview of the range of policies and programs already on the books at Commonwealth and State level is essential. These would provide a positive context in which the graduating teachers can assess the suitability of partnerships and co-operation at their particular local levels.

Within this broad coverage, there is a particular need for more detailed consideration of the roles and responsibilities of parents in education and the kinds of more productive relationships that can be utilized between parents and the teachers in the schools. Collaborative relationships between adults (parents and teachers) have to be learned – they are not automatically inherited. Teacher-education should explicitly address the development of these abilities in student teachers, particularly those whose life experience has been limited because of their relative youthfulness. (Refer to Chapter 4 above for the special need for these relationships for early childhood education).

6.6 Educating Para-Professionals

To make the school a community learning centre, to ensure that it is co-operating with other providers and employers, to enhance the access to and utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) there is a need for a range of para-professionals who will work with teachers to ensure that a full range of learning opportunities and services are provided. We emphasise the following:

6.6.1 Careers counsellors

We see these as staff members who are not necessarily trained teachers, and who would be preferably more mature and experienced persons who can offer practical and informed advice to students about vocational and work choices, and the necessary preparation for them. They could assist students in accessing in-work placements at various stages of their progress through 12 years of education/training. Certificate and/or Diploma level training is the pre-requisite for such guidance to allow them to function effectively without having to achieve accreditation as registered psychologists. We do not see them as personal counsellors, who are qualified professionals in their own right, providing specialised individual treatment to students in need.

We would see their role to be more wide-ranging than the traditional careers counsellor role in schools. They would have to be able to function as ‘transitions advisers’ who were familiar with the range of pathways available to youth and who would be the school’s first point of contact with
other providers, employers (for apprenticeships etc), welfare officers and the CYCs proposed above in Chapter 3.

6.6.2 ICT officers
To achieve the level of penetration of ICT into the schools which we advocate in Chapter 5 of this Report, teachers will need support from trained ICT technicians attached to a school or cluster of schools to ensure that the computers, terminals and printers, the local area networks and servers, and internet connections are all functional and maintained and up-graded as required.

These officers will need, in addition to technical qualifications, some training as ‘trainers’ since they will have to explain the use of equipment and some of the applications software introduced with equipment, to students and teachers alike. That is, they will need to be taught to explain to non-technicians some of the more technical aspects of ICT operations in ways which are comprehensible and effective.

6.7 Progression and Improved Remuneration
Linked to In-service Development and Competency Acquisition

At the NEEF National Forum one Principal of a large suburban High School entered a plea for genuine care for teachers “as we continue to think about new modes of delivery, longer days, and more flexible curriculum, we ensure that conditions for teachers are commensurate...If we do not consider their conditions, development, preparation, then we will have a new group of disadvantaged – and worse, we will have great difficulty in finding the quality of teachers we need” (Haddrell, 2001:2). By comparison with other professions, professional development for teachers is largely unstructured and is unrelated to the on-going registration or accreditation of the members of the profession. Paradoxically, for a profession that asserts the value of learning, teaching in a number of the jurisdictions does not have in place mechanisms to note or record or reward the attainment of increased competencies such as post-graduate study in the discipline (Ramsey, 2000:210).

This Report calls for far more systematic in-service development for teachers on two counts: one is the incentive for teachers to maintain and enhance their effectiveness in a rapidly-changing world and to progress in their profession. The other is the stakeholders’ requirement that teachers can actually do the jobs that are now required of them.

These two needs can be met by institutionalising at least biennial in-service attendance for each teacher, with provision for the funding of replacement teachers from a regional or State staff development budget. That is, leaving the in-service development of teachers to the local school is futile, given the pressures schools currently face and the level of their resourcing. While the co-ordination of the in-service programs can be the prerogative of the State Education Departments, the delivery of the programs can be contracted to a range of providers such as University Faculties of Education, commercial trainers in areas such as ICT or registered providers. At the National Forum, Jim Cumming urged that in-service programs should include opportunities for teachers to undertake in-school development activities, following on from the findings of the Innovation and Best Practice Project as reported by Cuttance (2001:xxvi) “the most powerful innovations incorporated teams of teachers learning by ‘working’ with new knowledge and, in the process, enhancing their understanding of the learning needs and capacities of their students. In these ‘learning teams’ teachers played a variety of roles.”

Further, attendance at a pre-determined number of in-service programs, particularly those that focus on revitalising the actual pedagogy used to enhance teaching and provoke learning in students, should be a pre-requisite for progression to the highest level of status in the teaching profession, – Master Teacher – howsoever that is named in each State. Given the importance of overseas and Australian findings on the crucial contribution of quality teaching in classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 1996; Slavin 1996, Rowe, 2002), then this consistent and repeated up-skilling of teachers by systematic in-service training must be a fundamental priority. Without it, pretensions to truly professional status for teachers will be treated with scepticism by an informed public.

For the teachers who do invest in repeated in-service training the payoff should be increased remuneration at levels which confirm their relative status with other professionals as masters of their disciplines. That is, we should unambiguously foster excellence in professionalism by expanding the remuneration structure for highly qualified, well performing teachers. This will increase the costs of education in this country, but this should be regarded as an investment and one that will contribute to the lowering of the inordinate costs that the nation pays for burgeoning welfare payments.

The corollary of this is that poor performance from individual teachers cannot be accepted. This will be a matter for industrial negotiation with relevant unions in which the quid pro quo for an expanded remuneration scale might be a process of in-classroom review by highly qualified teachers, one nominated by the teacher and one nominated by the school principal.
Recommendation 6: Increase the quality of teacher education

The National Education and Employment Forum recognised that the teaching profession has no formal State or National structures for ensuring standards and accreditation to develop ‘quality teachers’. Yet ‘teacher quality’ was seen as the most critical source of variation in student learning outcomes. Teachers now need new skills to meet their changing role as facilitators of learning, including communication skills for parent/family/community interaction, and core modules, which will help them guide students through various learning pathways such as vocational education and training and enterprise education. Inadequate training together with a serious imbalance between male and female role models in an increasingly feminised profession, mitigate against an enhanced status and professional image. With the increased demand on schools to aim towards 100 per cent retention in post-compulsory settings, new roles have emerged for para-professional support personnel and other professionals, including quality teachers returning to the workforce, working alongside teachers. In conjunction with governments, a formal professional structure would provide teachers and para-professional staff with leadership, mentors and access to a quality system.

It is recommended that Federal, State and Territory governments collaboratively:

a. support the establishment of a national institute of teachers;
b. fund effective pre-service teacher education to deliver the teacher education specified by the Departments as future employers;
c. offer, with a 5 year bond, HECS-free scholarships to potential teachers from other professions;
d. provide substantial comprehensive and structured in-service teacher programs on a biennial basis;
e. train para-professional career and transition personnel and information and communication technology officers to work with students;
f. expand remuneration structures for teachers with additional accreditation, similar to those in comparable professions;
g. expand remuneration structures to include incentives and career pathways for those quality teachers returning to the workforce who have gained significant personal and professional development through further experience and qualifications.
When I was younger there I never learnt about my culture. When I was in primary school or in high school and I really found that I missed out on a lot of my childhood because I would have liked to have practised those ways; learnt the ways that my ancestors did and also my family. It was a very big thing for not only myself but also the mainstream children that were in my class as well, because I believe that together we can learn a lot. It’s not just the Indigenous people that need to learn about the culture, everybody should. It’s a great thing. We should be proud of where we’re from.


7.1 The Most Disadvantaged of All?

Indigenous Australians were estimated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): Measuring Australia’s Progress (2002:15) to number 427,000 in June 2001, about 2% of the population. The life expectancies of Indigenous males at 57 years and of Indigenous females at 62 years are some 20 years below that of the comparable Australian levels. Indigenous Australians are proportionately more dispersed into regional and rural remote locations, with only 30.4% in urban areas compared to 62.7% of the total population. Indigenous people run the risk of being ‘out of sight and out of mind’ for many Australians. The total number of Indigenous people in prison in June 2000 was around 4,100 representing 19% of adults in prison at the time, compared with their 2% share of the total population (ABS, 2002:119).

About 10% of Indigenous people over 25 years experienced separation from their natural families during their childhood and this group have arrest rates twice as high as those who experienced no separation. (ANTA: Partners in A Learning Culture, 2000:12-14)

The ABS (2000 Cat no. 6287.0) estimates that unemployment rates for Indigenous people are more than twice the levels for other Australians and that the labour force participation rate for Indigenous people had changed little from the 53% recorded in the 1996 census. The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), Australian National University (ANU), assessed that some elements of contemporary changes in Indigenous communities predicted that unemployment rates amongst Indigenous people could increase to above 40% per cent by 2006.

Compared to the rest of Australia, the Indigenous people are proportionately younger. 40% are under the age of 15 years and only 3% are over 65 years compared to 21% and 12% respectively for the rest of Australia. But this is a generation under threat. Some 5.8% of Indigenous youths between 15 and 25 are in prison, which is a rate around 20 times higher than their non-Indigenous counterparts.
7.2 Educational Disadvantage

Michael Raper, immediate past President of the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), summarised at the National Education and Employment Forum, New South Wales, the state of education among Indigenous people:

- Nearly half of Indigenous people aged 15 years and over have received no formal education.
- The year 10 certificate was the highest educational qualification achieved by almost 30 per cent of Indigenous people.
- Only 14% of Indigenous had a post-school qualification compared to 34% of non-Indigenous Australians.
- 69% of Indigenous people had not completed the highest level of secondary school available, compared to 34% of non-Indigenous people whose first language was English (ABS, 1998).
- 69% of Indigenous people had poor to very poor skills on the Prose literacy scale (ABS, 1998).
- Higher educational attainments are associated with improved labour market outcomes for Indigenous youth, but there are still poorer labour market outcomes for Indigenous than non-Indigenous youth, even when they have the same level of educational attainment and live in the same region. This suggests that improved educational outcome are not sufficient to remove the inequalities experienced by Indigenous Australians (Raper, 2001:8).


- an overall decline in attendance at the same time that enrolments have been increasing;
- actual attendance in terms of days per week being worse than system averages would show;
- actual enrolments omitting more compulsory school-age children than system participation rates would show;
- poor retention rates beyond Years 7 and 10;
- advice from employer bodies that, more than ever before, they are unable to find people who meet basic literacy and numeracy entry criteria for employment and training;
- a repeatedly stated observation from Indigenous elders that their children and grandchildren have lower literacy skills than they do (Collins, 1999:3).

The Report found that the “stark reality is that many Indigenous students are leaving the school system with the English literacy and numeracy ability of a six to seven-year-old mainstream child” (Collins, Overview).

Indigenous children and youths therefore, experience multiple disadvantages including poor outcomes in education. Since they are a young and growing segment of the Australian community there is a correspondingly greater need to invest in the education of Indigenous youths and children. Neglect of these needs will see the present generation spiral downwards into poverty and hopelessness.

7.3 Policy Framework – A Brief Overview

The key question is what kind of education would allow Indigenous peoples to preserve their own value and belief systems, their sense of belonging, pride and achievement as Indigenous while attaining, through education and training, the skills and competencies that would enable them to participate in the mainstream Australian society to the extent of their choosing, primarily through getting and keeping a job.

The ‘modern’ era in policy in relation to Indigenous education began with the 1972 move from the ‘assimilationist’ policies that had characterised the previous decades, to a broadly understood principle of self-determination for Indigenous people. Explicit national policy direction was first given in the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* in 1989. In the area of Indigenous education, as in so many other areas covered by this NEEF Report, there is a multitude of documents and earlier reports. For example, the National Board of Employment Education and Training published in 1995, *Meeting the Educational Needs of Aboriginal Adolescents*, (MENAA), which focused on *Aboriginal adolescents in the middle years of schooling who live in urban areas*. It listed the following key objectives:

To ensure that schools are effective in meeting the educational needs of Aboriginal students we must:

- raise the skills of all teachers in dealing with Aboriginal students;
- recognise and promote the needs of Aboriginal students at every level of education;
- improve communication between educators at all levels, and Aboriginal families, communities and organisations;
- develop a number of schools in each State or Territory which, by their educational environment, staffing and programs, will attract Aboriginal students;
- establish or extend careers or tertiary aspirations programs;
- develop resource materials to assist Aboriginal students in their personal development, especially in the areas of identity and self-esteem;
initiate strategies to recruit more Aboriginal secondary teachers;

implement further research to increase the national knowledge base on the educational needs of Indigenous students; and

use this report as a contribution to the development of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Strategic and Operational Plans for the next triennium (MENAA 1995: xvi).

The Federal Government has published its National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS) and supported this with the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP). The most recent edition of the strategy, NIELNS 2000-2004 was released by the Prime Minister in March 2000.

In 1999, The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century was published by the Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), incorporating explicit recognition of Indigenous education outcomes and recognising the importance of culture in such education. (See below).

The Federal Government maintained the focus on outcomes in the ‘Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act’ 2000, which provided $515 million over four years to providers of Indigenous education in the States and Territories.

Most recently, the document Maintaining A Commitment to Action, was developed at the IESIP National Conference, November 2000. It identified a number of challenges which demanded action:

engage the teaching profession (eg. Acknowledge the work of those who have contributed with a view to changing the attitudes, beliefs and expectations of all educators re. Indigenous education);

promote inter-cultural understanding (eg. Identify and build on Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge, values and experience);

build learning communities (eg. Develop ‘shared ownership’, ‘continuous improvement’ and the use of schools as community resources);

maintain genuine partnerships (eg. Ensure that power and responsibility is shared equally between all partners);

promote genuine decision-making (eg. Involve parents, students, teachers, administrators and communities in a variety of settings and contexts);

empower individuals and groups (eg. Develop strategies designed to achieve self-determination and economic independence);

adopt holistic strategies (eg. Integrate policies and service delivery that span education, health and related areas);

review the work of Indigenous schools (eg. Evaluate the effectiveness of schools and related educational agencies that are owned, operated and managed by Indigenous communities);

explore ‘third way’ thinking (eg. Construct common ‘bridges’ that will involve powerful conversations and collaborative approaches); and

communicate effectively (eg. Avoid jargon and minimise the level of academic and/or bureaucratic language) (ACE, 2000:3–4).

In summary, Indigenous education is now recognised as a national education priority at both State and Federal level. And participants at the IESIP National Conferences in Alice Springs in November 1999 and at Sydney in November 2000 were able to report ‘optimism’ and ‘considerable progress’ in the efforts to improve outcomes for Indigenous education.

7.4. Dysfunctional Communities

But while these national policy developments were being perceived to be making headway, a different and darker side of Indigenous affairs was insistently drawing attention to itself. Perhaps the most distressing signs were the conclusions of The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Task Force On Violence Report (WTFVR) (December 1999), produced for the Queensland Government. The Executive Summary is attached as Appendix 7 to this Report. The task force was formed at the request of Indigenous women and the fifty female members investigated most Indigenous communities in Queensland.

The findings were appalling. The following extracts from the Executive Summary will suffice:

This Report reveals that there has not only been a significant increase in the number of offences recorded in Indigenous Communities, but the level of severity in such crimes has also increased. Violence is now overt: murders, bashings, and rape, including sexual violence against children, have reached epidemic proportions with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people being perpetrators. Youth suicides over the past decade have increased to an alarming level. In one Community alone, there were 17 youth suicides in one year. In another Community there were 16 suicides within a similar period. Indigenous youth were said to feel undervalued, lost, disillusioned, with many now living without hope. Aboriginal people, both young and old, are continually going through ‘sorry business’, with death becoming an all too frequent presence in their lives. By any measure we must all admit that something has gone desperately wrong and that urgent intervention is now required (WTFVR, 1999: Executive Summary).
reflected in the statistical data on interpersonal violence, homicides, rapes and suicides. For those three categories of violent offences, sexual offences and breaches of domestic orders, the total for all reported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders in Queensland has increased from 664 in 1994 to 1075 in 1998.

The harsh reality is that many families are now trapped in environments where deviance and atrocities have become accepted as normal behaviour and as such, form an integral part of children’s socialisation (WTFVR, 1999 Executive Summary).

Most distressing was the sense of the writers of the Report that the plight of Indigenous communities and of women and children in particular was simply being ignored:

While the violence being regularly committed in Indigenous Communities has become front-page news, it is not new. It has been acknowledged by Indigenous and non-Indigenous forums for many years. The people who could have made a difference have failed to intervene to stop innocent women and children from being bashed, raped, mutilated and murdered and exposed to forms of violence that have been allowed to escalate to a level that is now a national disgrace.

Indigenous women’s groups, concerned about their disintegrating world, have been calling for assistance for more than a decade. While their circumstance may have been recognised, their pleas have not always been met and in some cases, deliberately ignored. At times, Government representatives appeared to regard violence as a normal aspect of Indigenous life, like the high rate of alcohol consumption. Interventions were dismissed as politically and culturally intrusive in the newly acquired autonomy of Indigenous Communities. Moreover, the ‘Aboriginal cause’ attracted little interest or sympathy in the broader Australian community, which seemed oblivious to the mayhem that was happening, even though the plight of Indigenous people had been described in numerous reports. The violence being witnessed can only be described as immeasurable and Communities, pushed to the limit, are imploding under the strain (WTFVR, 1999: Executive Summary).

The Queensland Government was stung into mounting a comprehensive response to this Report. The First Step an initial response to the Report was tabled in May 2000 and The Next Step, a follow-up audit was published in May 2001 and the two documents together demonstrate both the extent of the problems and the extraordinary remedies that need to be implemented to address them. While many are actively being pursued, this NEEF Report submits that the urgency of the situation disclosed in the Taskforce Reports requires more concerted action by Federal and State/Territory governments, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ Council (ATSIC) and local communities.

The Women’s Taskforce on Violence Report, the State Government’s Responses and the persistence of violence in communities in Northern Territory and Western Australian in conjunction with the decline in some key outcomes in Indigenous education, as demonstrated by Collins, have served to reveal the enormity of the task facing the Australian community, both non-Indigenous and Indigenous, in redressing the results of decades and generations of disadvantage experienced by Indigenous people. The Women’s Taskforce identified:

causes and contributing factors: Dispossession, cultural fragmentation and marginalisation have contributed to the current crisis in which many Indigenous people find themselves. High unemployment, poor health, low educational attainment and poverty have become endemic elements in Indigenous lives… (WTFVR, 1999 Executive Summary).

Paradoxically, in the 30 years under a policy of ‘self-determination’ we have seen more clearly revealed the profundity of the consequences of forcible relocation onto separate settlements such as the Deed of Grant In Trust (DGIT) communities: – loss of identity and self-esteem, and the emptiness that has been filled by alcohol, frustration, male anger and violence or simply succumbed to by suicide. We have become aware of what we have asked Indigenous communities to achieve under these very adverse circumstances, with their own resources so severely undermined. We have been forcibly reminded of the long-haul of re-construction and healing that is required. The children, born in the ‘self-determination’ era and knowing nothing but its characteristics, need a major continuing contribution from all levels of Government to simply survive and then to prosper.

7.5 Key Emphases: Culture. Partnerships and Role Models

Culture

All of the Indigenous speakers at the NEEF Forums – both youth and experienced adults – pleaded for a recognition of Indigenous culture, for greater efforts by non-Indigenous Australians to understand it, and for the communication of that culture in schools. Suzanne Thompson, a 34 year old social worker expressed it like this:

I believe that what it is we need to start teaching (when it comes to cultural awareness) is the beliefs and value structure of my people, that survived for 40 thousand years. About the respect of ‘men’s’ and ‘women’s’ business. That young people did have a place; that we did work in a circle and I think that that’s what Indigenous can give back when it comes to cultural awareness. I don’t think it’s about learning how to do our dot art. I don’t think it’s about learning how to throw a boomerang and you find that a lot of cultural educators that do come in the schools, that’s what they’re placed to do. But I believe that it’s sitting down and teaching this (Thompson, 2001:4).
At the Brisbane Forum, Penny Tripcony, Chair of the Indigenous Education Consultative Body, gave particular attention to the notion of ‘culture’ and how it may usefully be applied in the context of Indigenous education. Referring to Groome’s (1996) work on the process of ‘forming patterns of personal cultures’ rather than a static, single culture, she stated:

There is not now, nor has there ever been, such things as the Aboriginal culture, or the Torres Strait culture. Yet lists of Aboriginal learning styles or Aboriginal behaviours continue to be made available to teachers. Such lists are problematic in that they reinforce what is termed ‘essentialism’, a notion which seeks to reduce Aboriginality to a few ‘essentials’ or basic descriptors, usually based on traditional values. The lists are often then interpreted into practice as one of two approaches to teaching Indigenous students. Both approaches are dangerous. One approach denies urban Indigenous students any claims to having a characteristic identity; and the other approach proposes a generic Aboriginal culture or Torres Strait culture that anticipates certain behaviour of students. Both approaches result in Indigenous students being stereotyped and lumped together. Thus schooling becomes a de-empowering process that hampers students’ potential to learn and progress through their years of formal education. All students need to be accepted as individuals and provided with educational opportunities accordingly (Tripcony, 2000: 72).

Tripcony’s caution does not lead to the conclusion that effective transmission of culture has become an impossible task for educators, rather that it is a task of very considerable complexity. This complexity was revisited by Dr Ken Boston, Director-General of Education and Training, NSW in his presentation Culture and Power, at the IESIP National Conference in 2000 (2000:16 ff). Accepting the premise that, “cultural reconstitution and revival is a critical component of the policy of Indigenous self-determination in the aftermath of the era of assimilation” (Boston 2000:18), Boston proposes a number of precepts, the first of them being: “systems, schools and teachers must listen to, learn, and take direction from Aboriginal people – from their particular histories and cultures – both generally and in regional and local contexts.” He then addresses the dilemma implied in the emphasis on culture: “How do we employ Aboriginal culture as a means of strengthening education for Indigenous communities, without confining the young members of these communities to the legacy of the past – no matter how rich that legacy might be and how important it is to the future?” Having raised that question he proposes a very demanding task for educators. Schools, he stated, have two purposes, “not only to initiate children into their home culture...but also to build their capacity and confidence as free and autonomous human beings, able to choose to participate in many cultures, while keeping their foundations in their own, and able to create their identities as citizens in a democratic, pluralist Australia and in a larger world.”

Not only must we make Aboriginal culture the basis of the education of young Aboriginal Australians, but we must do so by employing a curriculum and pedagogy which allows young Aboriginal people to transcend it (Boston 2000: 19). The task is no less than making cultural understanding an intercultural passport for young Indigenous people (Boston 2000:20).

A similar conclusion emerged from Bob Collins’ review: “The predominant goal articulated to the review was the need for Indigenous children to develop their English language oracy, literacy and numeracy skills while maintaining their own language, cultural heritage and Indigenous identity” (Collins Overview).

The 1999 Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling included the following goals relating to culture:

All students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

All students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally (Adelaide Declaration 1999).

In Boston’s terms this goal is proposing that we make ‘cultural understanding an intercultural passport’ not just for Indigenous people to move self-confidently into the mainstream Australian western society, but for non-Indigenous Australians to broaden their understanding, tolerance and inclusiveness by appreciating Indigenous culture and its contribution.

Jim Cumming emphasised to the National Forum that success is possible. Referring to the findings of McRae and his colleagues in What Works (2000), which was a report on the IESIP Strategic Results Projects, he pointed out that:

the negotiation of elementary changes can lead to significant improvement. For example, the following ‘fundamentals’ were identified as a means of improving outcomes for Indigenous students:

1. they must be given respect;
2. their culture and its relevant implications must be respected;
3. they must be taught well; and
4. they must attend consistently (Cumming, 2001:10).
Partnerships

Boston’s second precept in his addresses to the IESIP National Conferences was that there must be genuine partnerships in education and that, “community partnerships must flow through into teaching practice” (Boston, 2000:17). His aim is to make ‘self-determination’ work in practice. This means that getting the parents or the community involved is not an add-on or optional extra for schools as it has been in some of the ‘isolated’ schools in our mainstream education. Rather it is an essential and central feature of the kind of education that will be successful for Indigenous students faced with the dysfunction that has marked a significant number of communities.

Community and family partnerships have been essential to a number of initiatives that have been successful in recent years: the Murri school in Brisbane, the Yipirinya School in Alice Springs, the Walgett Community Schools Project in New South Wales, the Northern Rivers Project in NSW, the Dareton Public School initiatives in SW NSW, the Gumala Mirnuwarni project in Roeburne/Karatha in Western Australia and the Cherbourg School in Queensland.

Role Models

Numbers of speakers at the NEEF Forums pointed to the crucial influence of teachers as role models in their lives. We have seen in Chapter 6 the importance of male role models in mainstream education, and the need for Indigenous teachers, both male and female, in Indigenous education is acute, so that students in the remote and DOGIT communities will be less inclined to view schooling as a ‘whitefella’ business from which they can be regularly absent. One speaker at the National NEEF Forum illustrated this by reporting the impact of the first Indigenous Principal at Cherbourg School; absences went from around 1500 per annum to 150 within a year. In the urban and provincial schools, the presence of Indigenous teachers will be a major force in mediating the content and processes, that many Indigenous find alien, in a more successful way. This Report calls for a sustained recruitment effort to attract more Indigenous men and women into the teaching profession as teachers or teacher-aides.

Measures that might be taken are:

- The enhancement of Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in the Northern Territory so that it is enabled to graduate more Indigenous teachers from its School of Education.
- The establishment of similar Institutes in Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales, either as stand alone Institutes or as organisational units attached to the Schools/Faculties of Education of appropriate Universities (such as James Cook University in Townsville or Charles Sturt University in central NSW).

But the responsibility to develop cross-cultural understanding cannot be left only with Indigenous teachers. All students in all schools need to be exposed to adults who ‘model’ the ‘intercultural competence’ that Boston called for. This Report calls for the inclusion in all pre-service teacher education of courses that cover Indigenous history, culture and knowledge. This will assist the graduating teachers to deal more effectively with any Indigenous students they meet in their schools and to communicate to non-Indigenous students an understanding of the role of Indigenous Australians in our communities.

Recommendation 7: Prioritise Indigenous education

The complexities surrounding Indigenous education were highlighted at the National Education and Employment Forum. Clearly, many Indigenous children begin schooling from an already low base exacerbated by living in dysfunctional communities, suffering the effects of violence, low self-esteem and loss of personal identity. Improved educational outcomes are insufficient to remove these inequalities which result in poor literacy and numeracy skills, limited attendance at school, a significantly higher rate of early school leaving and fewer job opportunities. The Forum identified a number of areas for prioritisation in education to redress some of these inequalities. Indigenous participants called for action to reduce the effects of alcohol and to provide an education which builds their capacity and confidence as free and autonomous human beings, so that they can choose to participate in a number of cultures, while retaining the foundations of their own. A critical element to achieving change is to ensure that all Australians develop through their education, tolerance, attitudes of inclusiveness, and a broad understanding of Indigenous history and culture.

It is recommended that Federal State and Territory governments collectively:

- develop formal positions in education systems for Indigenous parents, elders and other relevant members of the local communities to be involved in the teaching of Indigenous culture to all students;
- include mandatory courses in Indigenous history and culture in all curricula;
- fund 500 full fee-paying, bonded scholarships, focussing on areas of greatest need across Australia, to attract Indigenous men and women into teaching;
- include compulsory modules in Indigenous history, culture and knowledge in pre-service teacher education.
Australia has achieved notable successes in recent decades. Our economic record in the nineties has been among the OECD’s best. This Report acknowledges the initiatives of governments, community members and organisations that have contributed to growth and development for most Australians.

However, many Australians still find life difficult. They see their disadvantages continue while the economy expands. Unemployment has persisted, stubbornly, remaining around 6-7%, with estimates of 5% in relative poverty probably being too low. Long-term unemployment also persists with some 350,000 Australians out of work for more than one year. The increase in jobless households - couples and sole parents, is of serious concern; 16.3% in 1998 showing an increase of 3.6% since 1982. An even faster increase has been in the percentage of dependent children in jobless households, growing from 10.2% in 1982 to 15% in 1998. Some 750,000 children now live in these jobless households. The number of 15 –24 year olds who are ‘at risk’ of unemployment, welfare dependency and marginalisation is around 331,000.

The central argument of this Report is that disadvantaged Australians require additional, carefully targeted support so that their disadvantage will not be more permanently entrenched. If we are to be a just and equitable society as well as an economically successful one we need:

- to avoid chronic welfare dependency becoming inter-generational;
- to arrest the steady growth in income-support welfare payments;
- to reduce or eliminate the consequences of disadvantage such as persistent unemployment, poor health, law-breaking and imprisonment or suicide; and
- to offer the opportunity and capacity to participate in the mainstream of Australian society.

The Report argues that providing a more accessible, relevant and flexible education will be the crucial support that can transform the lives of those who are disadvantaged. Its thesis is that an investment in education, targeted at the most disadvantaged people and communities, will assist them to break out of the cycle of unemployment, under-employment, marginalisation and reduced participation in our society.

Such an investment will be a circuit-breaker. It will achieve systemic and structural changes to the causes of disadvantage and provide children and youth with the capabilities to obtain sustainable employment. The Report argues that we have the economic strength to make the necessary investment. Forecast budget surpluses and a realignment of current expenditure priorities can achieve this. We have a window of opportunity to achieve the recommendations of the Report. The demographic statistics indicate that the increased expenditure called for will not need to be sustained at the same level beyond this decade.

The Report calls for five major strategies to be pursued:

1. More intervention in early childhood care and education to assist both children and their parents, and an accompanying re-structure of the tax system to enable families with young children to give them the care and development they need. This early support will ensure that potentially disadvantaged children are better prepared for schooling. It will prevent the costly remedial work that would otherwise have to be carried out in later years.

2. The provision of much more flexible pathways through the secondary schooling years, so that the varying needs of youths for learning, training, and preparation for and participation in work are more effectively met. The aim is to have all youth emerge from their formative years with the skills and qualifications that will allow them to obtain employment and to continue to learn and acquire the qualifications to keep them in employment when the demands of the marketplace inevitably change. This will involve a paradigm shift in ‘secondary’ education. The result must be that schooling, Vocational education and training,
apprenticeships, participation in work, and flexible learning opportunities are all readily available to youths in transformed schools which will act as community learning centres. In the more disadvantaged localities, such schools should be closely linked to centres which provide a 'one-stop' access to the range of human services provided by governments at all levels and community organisations.

3. Provision of access to information and communication technologies in all education facilities at the most advanced level of technology possible. The aim is to ensure that all young Australians learn to use the tools of the information age and the 'new economy' so that they will be both skilled for the workplace and able to participate in an increasingly information-driven society. The second element of this strategy is to use the functionality of Information and Communication Technology to change the pedagogy in our learning areas. The result will be that children and youth with diverse needs at different stages of their pathways can be more effectively engaged in their own education.

4. Concentrated attention to the provision of relevant and appropriate education to Indigenous Australians. Proportionately, children and youth are a larger section of the Indigenous community; they truly represent the future of the Indigenous population but are demonstrably at profound risk. Greater numbers of Indigenous teachers and teacher aides and greater involvement of community representatives and elders in schooling are required. Information about, and understanding of, Indigenous culture should be included in the curriculum of all schools and all teachers should be educated about Indigenous history and culture.

5. Recognition of the fundamental importance of the role of teachers in our society and the re-valuing of the teaching profession. The result will be that practising teachers are prepared, and provided with the resources, to deliver the kinds of education that are called for in this Report. This will include more intensive pre-service preparation and more extensive in-service training for experienced teachers, with corresponding incentives through more attractive remuneration.

The participants in the six NEEF forums were remarkable for their diversity – students, teachers, business men and women, government officials, politicians, service providers, retirees – but they were united in their call for a “fair go” for those less fortunate in Australia. They were equally united in their belief that Governments had the privilege and the responsibility to address the educational needs of people who are disadvantaged. They also believed that addressing the needs of these members of our society would benefit us all, that investments in education of the kinds recommended in the report would result in advantages for all Australians and not just for those who, deservedly, would be the first to benefit from the strategies proposed.
APPENDICES

Appendix 1:
*Summary Recommendations and Explanations from NEEF – September, 2001.*

Appendix 2:
*The Most Vulnerable Communities*

Appendix 3:
*Summary of Key Reports On Youth Transitions from School to Work*

Appendix 4:
*Recommendations from the Eldridge Report: Footprints to the Future*

Appendix 5:
*Examples of Programs Available to Youth*

Appendix 6:
*Recommendations and Policy Directions of the Ramsey Report*

Appendix 7:
*Executive Summary, Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Women’s Taskforce on Violence Report*
THE KEY MESSAGE OF THE FORUMS IS THAT THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO INVEST MORE IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN AUSTRALIA. AN EXTRA $1.5 BILLION PER ANNUM FOR AT LEAST EACH OF THE NEXT THREE YEARS IS REQUIRED.

This is a call to:
• State and Federal governments
• to the business community and
• to all Australians

To take action to provide a better education for all Australians, particularly those who are disadvantaged. These requests are urgent. They should be implemented as soon as possible to achieve a just and equitable society and a robust and sustainable economy. Failure to address these proposals will lead to increasing social division, chronic welfare dependency and the accelerating erosion of public educational services across the Australian community threatening further discontent and disengagement.
We call on all political parties contesting the coming election to commit to

**PROPOSALS**

1 **INVEST MORE IN EDUCATION**
   The Federal and State governments and the business community should invest more in education at all levels with the confident expectation that the return on such investment will justify the increased expenditure. Governments must retain current revenue bases rather than erode them by cuts to taxation. Optimally, the Federal Government should commit itself through an Education Pact between parliament and the people to an increase in revenue which will be applied specifically to education. $1.5 billion per annum for each of the next three years is essential.

2 **DIRECT FUNDS TO THOSE IN GREATEST NEED**
   The increased investment in education should be used both to enhance existing effective initiatives and priorities, and particularly to start new and different initiatives. ‘More of the same’ is not the solution. Governments must target at least 60% of this new funding in particular to people and communities in greatest need because of the relative disadvantages or disabilities they suffer.

3 **USE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO PROVIDE DIVERSE ‘PATHWAYS’**
   ‘Educational experiences and opportunities provided to Australians of all ages should be broader, more varied and more flexible to cater for diverse backgrounds and abilities. Schools and vocational education and training institutions should be integrated into community learning centres and provide employment and career advice, child-care, welfare support services, and family and community development. Stronger partnerships between learning centres, parents, government agencies, business, welfare groups and volunteers will make this possible.

4 **PROVIDE MORE EFFECTIVE SUPPORT TO OUR TEACHERS**
   ‘Teachers need and deserve enhanced professional status and conditions, better initial preparation and more effective ‘in service’ development. $75 million in each of the next three budgets should be set aside to provide more intensive and targeted development programs, to deal with information technology in their curricula, with the education of indigenous and disadvantaged students, and with the ‘know how’ to work co-operatively with teacher aides, parents, community welfare officers and other human service professionals. Building positive relationships among all stakeholders of education is a priority.

5 **TARGET EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND YOUNG FAMILIES**
   More extensive early intervention in the development of our children, especially those who are disadvantaged and those actually or potentially ‘at risk’ is imperative. We need integrated education, social welfare and community services in the pre-school years 0-5 to ensure that the life-long growth of our children is not prejudiced or permanently flawed, even before they commence primary school. Better tax support for parents is required.

6 **BRIDGE THE ‘DIGITAL DIVIDE’ BY INVESTING MORE IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**
   Lack of access to information technology is creating a group of “information poor” Australians who are increasingly unable to participate effectively, or at all, in the emerging knowledge economy. To prevent the entrenchment of a “digital divide” urgent action is required by governments to take dramatic steps to improve access to information by: installing high speed Internet connections in all classrooms/learning spaces and community service venues; providing systematic training in all schools in standard computing applications; integrating information technology into all aspects of the curriculum; fostering the development of local content and material in courseware and curricula.

7 **INTENSIVELY SUPPORT INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**
   The acute disadvantages suffered by most Indigenous Australians require a proportionately greater investment in education and development. We need to provide: Indigenous role models in education (both teachers and principals); 500 scholarships to young Indigenous people to attract them into the teaching profession; training for all teachers – Indigenous and non indigenous – in cultural studies so that they can teach all their students about the culture and history of Indigenous Australians; and involvement of parents and members of the Indigenous communities in the transmission of local cultures within the schooling system.
the implementation of these proposals in the first budget after the election

### EXPLANATIONS

**Australia is NOT a high-taxing or high-spending country.** Our spending on education at all levels is 5.3% of GDP. This is below the OECD average and below 9 other comparative OECD countries. We can afford to invest more in education. Tax cuts now will deprive Federal and State governments of the funds needed for education. Hardest hit by this will be public schools and TAFE which has already experienced a 10% reduction in funding per teaching hour between 1997 and 1999. Public educational services will be run down and ‘social exclusion’ will increase.

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<td>2.4 million Australians – or 13.3% – live in poverty. 732,000 dependent children live in poverty. Incomes of poor families are, on average, 43% below the poverty line 50% of Australia’s poor live in families whose main source of income is Government cash benefits. Youth Allowance payments for singles under 21 fall well below their poverty line. By the age of 24 early school-leavers (not completing Year 12) have TWICE the unemployment rate of school completers.</td>
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The ‘bottom 20%’ of students are least successfully negotiating schooling or post-schooling education or training. Completion rates have declined from 77% in 1992 to 72% in 1999. Indigenous completion rates hover around 32%. Teachers in ‘isolated’ schools cannot provide all the social support required. Involvement of parents, teachers’ aides who visit families, and community welfare workers should be integrated with schools into community learning centres where parents and adults can access ‘lifelong learning’. The ‘full service school’ model must become the norm rather than the exception. Opportunities for secondary students to mix some schooling, some work and some vocational education and training experiences as ‘pathways’ into meaningful employment are essential and should be valued as much as the ‘academic’ pathway leading to university. The recommendations of the Eldridge Report (Jan 2001) “Footprints to the Future” – Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce should be implemented.

Teaching is an increasingly ageing and feminized profession (eg Average age of Queensland teachers = 47). Teachers bear the front-line responsibility for delivering learning opportunities to students of all ages. We need to attract more males, and more persons with work experience outside teaching into the profession through scholarships to complete initial training and more competitive remuneration. They need comprehensive and systematic ‘in-service’ training to assist them to integrate Information and Communication Technologies into their curricula. The recommendations of the Ramsey Report in NSW should be extended across all States. Teachers are often those to whom students in distress turn. They need access to knowledge, referral points and support systems to assist them to respond effectively to the students’ families and the students showing signs of distress which may lead to early school leaving.

Investment in prevention will be more effective than later, expensive efforts at remediation. We invest less than comparable OECD countries in early childhood education. Identifying problems in families through early intervention for children from birth to 4 years is essential. This needs the involvement of parents, teachers and teacher aides working with children through home visitation. Positive child-adult and adult-adult relationships are essential. Prevention efforts should include adequate financial support through tax incentives or child endowment to allow mothers to give necessary care to children under 4 years. Parents should receive tax relief in the form of $2000 per child to their tax-free threshold in the first budget of the next government.

Research shows students’ access to Information and Communication Technologies depends on economic status and education of the parents. Those already disadvantaged because of low socio-economic status will be doubly disadvantaged because of their inability to share in the new economy either economically through work in high skill jobs or socially through accessing information, transactions and communication through Information and Communication Technologies. “Communication and information technologies are the new currency of power and our students have a need to know how to operate in that currency and a right to do so” (Ryan 2000). Access to computers and to the internet is required in every learning space as a basic standard in all schools. Teachers need further and deeper training in the use of ICT in all subjects of the curriculum. For students finding difficulties in learning, Information and Communication Technologies based education may assist them to learn in new and different ways especially in developing better numeracy skills.

40% of the Indigenous population is currently under 15 years of age. Indigenous youths between 15 and 25 are 9 times more likely to be in prison than their white Australian counterparts. 5.8% of indigenous youth in this age-group are in prison. This is a generation under threat. Different responses are required for urban-suburban, regional-provincial town and remote-community groups. Involvement of the local parents and elders in each location is required to provide cultural knowledge and promote self-identity and a sense of achievement. Attendance problems raise the need for a ‘whole-of-community’ approach to education for children and youth. Targeted provisions of scholarships to young indigenous to become teachers are urgently required and the wider spread of successful strategies is urgent.
The Proposals for Action summarised in this brochure are explained and supported in a major report from the NEEF project. Besides input from the speakers and participants in the NEEF State and national forums, this report is based on research from:

> The National Centre for Social and Economic Modeling
  University of Canberra (NATSEM)
> The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
  (AHURI)
> The Smith Family
> The Australian College of Education
> Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs,
  Canberra (DETYA)
> Centre for the Economics of Education and Training,
  Monash University
> The Dusseldorp Skills Foundation
> Berry Street, Victoria
> The Eldridge Report

This brochure will be presented to all politicians in the Federal and State Parliaments of Australia and the major report from the NEEF project will be sent to representative members of Parliament from each of the major parties with the request that it be tabled and debated in each Parliament and that the Proposals for Action be implemented as a result of decisions to be taken by the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and enabled by consistent legislation in the Federal and each State Parliament.

Patron of NEEF:
> The Governor General of the Commonwealth
  of Australia (present and immediate past)

NEEF recognises the support and contribution from:
> Anglicare, Western Australia
> Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS)
> Australian Scholarships Group – Friendly Society Ltd
> Business corporations (IBM, Boeing)
> Catholic Education Commission, Queensland
> Catholic Education Department, Victoria
> Commerce Queensland
> Department of Employment and Training, Queensland
> Department of Education and Training, NSW
> Department of Education, Employment & Training, Victoria
> Department of Families, Queensland
> Dusseldorp Skills Forum
> Education Queensland
> Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEF)
> Greater Brisbane Area Consultative Committee (DEWRSB)
> Hall Chadwick Queensland
> International Council of Social Welfare
> NSW Council of Social Services
> Queensland Council of Social Services
> SA Council of Social Services
> The Australian College of Education
> The Smith Family
> The Indigenous community
> University of Queensland
> Victorian Council of Social Services
> Western Australian Department of Training
> Western Australian Council of Social Service
> The National Centre for Social and Economic Modeling
  University of Canberra (NATSEM)
> The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
  (AHURI)
> The Smith Family
> The Australian College of Education
> Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs,
  Canberra (DETYA)

NEEF recognises the contributions of participants from:
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> Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
> Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)
> Cisco Systems Australia Pty Ltd
> Edith Cowen University, Western Australia
> Guiding Committee, WEF International
> Monash University, Victoria
> National Institute of Labour Studies, SA
> Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD)
> Queensland University of Technology
> Recruitment and Consulting Services Association
> Representatives from Federal Government,
  Opposition, Democrats
> State politicians
> Secondary school principals
> Students from Public, Catholic, Independent schools
> Telstra

The NEEF project is co-ordinated by the Australian Council of the World Education Fellowship, a not-for-profit, non-aligned volunteer organisation headquartered in London, with consultant status UNESCO.

More information on the NEEF Project from the National Co-ordinator:
Dr. Anne Feeney [07] 3374 0365 anne.feeney@uq.net.au
### Appendix 2

#### The 60 most vulnerable communities in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>SLA</th>
<th>State / Territory</th>
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### Summary of key reports on youth transition from school to work

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<tr>
<th>Report Author, Title</th>
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<th>Conclusions</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INTERNATIONAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Delors, J (Chair) (1996), <em>Learning: the treasure within</em>, Report to the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
<td>Reports growing inequality due to rising poverty and exclusion, not just between nations or regions in the world, but between social groups in both developed and developing countries.</td>
<td>The four pillars of learning: <em>Learning to live together; learning to know; learning to do; learning to be</em> should be the foundation for education. Major reform of high school education should diversify types of study available to maximise talents and reduce academic failure which leaves young people feeling excluded and with no prospects. Alternative forms of schooling and bridges between options are needed to allow changes in directions and encourage the return to education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Ireland (2000) National Children’s Strategy: Our children—their future</td>
<td>Developed through a multi-disciplinary, cross-sectoral process, the plan provides a holistic, all-encompassing plan to ensure the best outcomes for children. Goals: Children will have a voice; Children’s lives will be better understood; Children will receive quality supports and services. Principles: child centred, family oriented, equitable, inclusive, action oriented, integrated.</td>
<td>Policy responses focus on each stage of child physical, emotional, intellectual development and ensure that those at risk have access to integrated professional services and specialist programs with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention. Structures support the cross-sectoral approach locally and nationally and an evidence-based approach to decision making at all levels. Set of child well-being indicators are to be the basis of a bi-annual report: the State of the Nation’s children, closely linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom Department of Education and Employment (2000) Connexions: The best start in life for every young person</td>
<td>Overarching strategy for a cohesive program response for: schools to work better, to equip pupils for personal life, citizenship and the world of work; social services to be more responsive to the needs of vulnerable children and young adults.</td>
<td>Sets attainment targets at the end of post-compulsory schooling for all children-raising standards at all levels with Education Action Zones. Emphasis on cross-agency responses locally and at department level (police, social services, health services, schools, local communities, employers, young people) and on a strong case management approach to children and youth at risk. Access to specialist services. Financial support to encourage children to stay, youth smart card.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2000) <em>From Initial Education to Working Life: Making Transitions Work</em></td>
<td>Report on the Thematic Review of 14 countries labour market, social and education policies to understand the ways in which national transition contexts and transition processes relate to transition outcomes.</td>
<td>Proposes goals and key indicators for transition. A dual strategy is the most effective: inclusive systems for youth to keep the numbers who are not in education, training and employment low and programs to ensure that the small numbers who do fall in the cracks are closely monitored and rapidly re-inserted into employment and training. Transition is most likely to occur well if learning pathways and qualification frameworks are clearly defined, well-organised, open, designed and developed in a lifelong learning model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2001), <em>Cities and Regions in the New Learning Economy</em></td>
<td>The analysis of ‘learning regions’ focuses on relationships between the development of regional systems of innovation and the processes of individual and organisational learning. Linkages across departments, government sectors and organisations should foster social capital as a key mechanism.</td>
<td>Ten policy principles for creating and sustaining ‘learning regions’ are recommended for cities and regions seeking to improve their economic performance within a knowledge-based economy through the development of innovation-intensive activities. High quality and well-resourced education is the basis with emphasis on individual learning throughout people’s lives and careful supply of skilled individuals matched to demand in the regional economy.</td>
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<td>Report Author, Title</td>
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<td><strong>NATIONAL</strong></td>
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| Prime Minister’s Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce: (2001) *Footprints to the future* | The report addresses ways to:  
- strengthen pathways for young people from school to work, further education and active citizenship;  
- provide the earliest possible assistance for young people at risk;  
- strengthen and support the capacity of families and the community to help young people; and  
- expand opportunities for young people to participate fully in social and economic life | The report recommends the development of a national commitment to all young people related to school completion and employment. Specific policy responses aim at young people at risk of becoming disconnected and who are disconnected.  
- Improve the capacity of institutions and services to build solid transition pathways for all young people including vocational learning and enterprise education experiences while at school;  
- Identify, engage and effectively support young people in difficulty and at risk of disconnecting from mainstream support systems;  
- Contact and support young people disconnected from mainstream systems;  
- Improve collaboration between Commonwealth, State and local governments, integration of services, links with schools, more flexible curriculum options for those at risk, mentoring and case management, peer and family support;  
- Adopt funding systems that respond to local needs as part of a holistic approach. |
| Brotherhood of St Laurence, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Hanover Welfare Services & Melbourne City Mission (2001) *Negotiating the Maze* | Report sees key problem for young people is the fragmentation of services, age and eligibility restrictions that create gaps and barriers, lack of coordination and accountability for young people’s needs, significant limitations to the types of programs provided, substantial difficulties in re-entering education and training, lack of support and navigation for individuals trying to make their way through the system. Programs are inaccessible, inappropriate and unavailable at the key transition points. | Tailor programs to individual transition needs at points where they need them most for entry to and transition through the system, enhance linkages and improve client and provider knowledge of pathways. Develop an overview of programs in each sector. Ensure maximum transferability of policies and services between localities and states. Track young people to provide continuous support and rapid response to changing status. Reinforce education system’s responsibility to provide accessible and supporting opportunities for disengaged students to return to formal training. Provide:  
- a range of customised routes for progression which meet all young people’s needs, enabling each to build up the range of capital (material, knowledge, social, cultural and psychological);  
- brokering support to mediate between family, organisations, and services. |
| Business Council of Australia (2000) *Pathways to work: tackling long term unemployment* | The report was developed collaboratively with peak unions, research groups, business and employment organisations to propose answers to reducing long term unemployment. Priority areas are: Ensuring successful transition from education to employment and from retrenchment to re-employment; reducing long-term unemployment. | All young people need access to education, training and employment with Year 12 completion or its equivalent the minimum expectation. Strategies include:  
- Alternative options to school for early school leavers;  
- Community partnerships between industry, schools and other government agencies to identify early leavers and provide support;  
- Cooperation between all levels of government across programs;  
- Measures to determine success of initiatives;  
- Local accountability. |
<p>| National Centre for Vocational Education Research (1999) <em>Early school leavers and VET</em> | The <em>Research at a Glance</em> publication pulls together key research findings about the experiences of early school leavers with vocational education and training | Not all early leavers are “at risk”. Some leave for positive reasons with strong work orientation. Competition in the labour market is high and so is entry to vocational education and training where adults and Year 12 completers are taking places. A lot of services are available for early school-leavers but it is fragmented, disparate and provider or area specific. Community-based approaches with integrated preventive and intervention services, developed by local partnerships to meet individual student needs are suggested. |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Author, Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Robinson, C (1999)</td>
<td>A paper presented to the conference ‘Post-compulsory education and training: Looking to the Future’. Developments in the changing nature of work and demographic structure of the population are examined. Skill formation developments are considered, and the need to embrace the concept of lifelong learning requires substantial reform to the post-compulsory education and training system.</td>
<td>• Successive governments in Australia have ensured there is a comparatively sound level of national investment in education and training. However, investment in skills and knowledge, from both public and private sources (business and individuals) needs to increase from 6 to 7% of GDP over 10 to 20 years. Ways of achieving this such as loans and income-contingent repayment schemes are suggested. • Future directions will need to focus on new learning pathways for adults as well as young people with increased flexibility through modularisation of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusseldorp Skills Forum Australia’s Youth: Reality And Risk (1998); Australia’s young adults: the deepening divide (1999) The cost to Australia of early school-leaving (1999) How young people are faring 2001: learning work and in between</td>
<td>The reports provide extensive analysis on various aspects of the Australian labour market and other factors that affect the transition of young people from school to employment. Since the mid 1970s many young people have had difficulty in securing a firm foothold in working life and this is evidenced in the high rates of youth unemployment. The reports urge governments to recognise the economic loss to individuals and society that occurs with inadequate transition policies.</td>
<td>Marginalisation of 15-19 year old and 20 to 24 year old Australians who have not completed a high school education is growing. Rigidity in policy and institutions are failing to meet the demonstrable needs of our youth. An estimated 35,000 students in each age cohort do not complete high school annually and will not obtain further formal qualifications, at a cost to the country of $74,000 each. Three indicators for assessing transition are: Proportion of the population aged 15 to 19 years not in full time education and not in full time employment; Ratio of the unemployment rate among 15 to 24 year olds to the unemployment rate among 25 to 34 year olds; proportion of the population aged 20 to 24 years who have completed Year 12 or a post-secondary qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian National Training Authority (2000) National Marketing Strategy for vocational education and training.</td>
<td>A strategy to instil within the Australian community and enterprises a desire to: • acquire skills that are valued • engage in lifelong learning and • create a framework for the effective marketing of skills acquisition and lifelong learning.</td>
<td>Australian international competitiveness depends on a well-educated workforce which, now and in the future, must never stop learning. A strategic marketing approach would include: a national public awareness campaign with inspirational stories; regional and local campaigns, community research process linked to the learning city/learning region movement; better marketing of vocational education and training; an Australian Declaration on Learning, campaigns for segments of the population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzgerald, Dr V (2001), Skills in the Knowledge Economy – National Investment in Vocational Education and Training.</td>
<td>The report identifies the role of vocational education and training in developing a workforce to operate a “knowledge economy” and argues that higher national investment in vocational education and training is needed.</td>
<td>Vocational education and training is a more important economic contributor than higher education in terms of the proportion of the workforce it covers and is important in transferring knowledge and innovation into real productivity gains through skills development and in imparting specific and directly applicable skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kearns, P (1999) Lifelong Learning and VET, NCVER, Adelaide Kearns, P (1998) Lifelong Learning, VET in the learning age: The Challenge of lifelong learning for all.</td>
<td>The study and discussion paper argues the need for VET to broaden its scope in response to the anticipated changes of the 21st century, and to ‘converge’ with what we now think of as ‘life-long learning’. The result of such convergence will be a new form of learning, different in character from the prior forms, and better able to meet the needs of individuals and society as a whole.</td>
<td>Lifelong learning, in the context of a learning society, is the inevitable direction for the future. Australia should, can, and become a ‘learning society’ in which lifelong learning opportunities will be available to all.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kirby P (2000) Ministerial Review of post-compulsory education and training pathways in Victoria</td>
<td>The review includes an analysis of employment, education and training for people in their transition years; recent outcomes of young people in Victoria within the post compulsory years; and recommendations for change in order to engage all young people in education and training of good quality, to provide the individual with a successful outcome.</td>
<td>There is a link between education and training and economic security and prosperity, both at individual and societal levels. The needs of young people must be put above vested interests. Proposed reforms centre around: greater flexibility in program provision; alternatives to schools including TAFE and the Adult and Community sector; local cross-sectoral planning networks with significant elements of planning and delivery of programs and services; better guidance and advisory services; professional development to assist personnel with change, particularly in mentoring and case management; coherence in funding regimes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teese R, Polesel J, O'Brien, K, Jones B, Davies M, Walseb A, Maughan A (2000) Early school leaving: a review of the literature</td>
<td>The report provides a summary of recent national research concerning early school leaving. The policy challenge is not just to retard the flow but to improve skill levels and preparedness of young people before they leave school by ensuring a high level of basic and general education.</td>
<td>Early school-leaving may have better outcomes than “reluctant stayers” but overall results in higher unemployment and part time and casual work. Boys more likely to leave early but also have easier access to work. Complex overlap of reasons for early school-leaving: parents education, poverty, rurality, family breakdown, failure at school, school exclusion, alienation, expectations, cultural identity, educational failure, desire to work, teacher relationships, view of future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McIntyre J, Freeland J, Melville B, Schwenke C (1999) Early school leavers at risk</td>
<td>The research documents experiences of early school-leavers in two regions in New South Wales to explore the success of vocational education and training in assisting them to negotiate an effective transition from school to adults roles.</td>
<td>The report provides considerable detail about early school leaving from the perspective of young people, service providers and employers. Outcomes vary according to the young person’s goals for post-school life. A more integrated approach with clearer pathways is required and schools should monitor schools after they leave. The report recommends: discourage early leaving; manage early leaving; facilitate returning to school; build school and employer networks; develop area-coordination; address lack of resources in local services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schofield, K (2000) Inside the Shell: Australia’s Apprenticeship and Traineeship System</td>
<td>A critical look at the role that apprenticeships and traineeships should play in the very different environment of work and training that has now emerged.</td>
<td>Apprenticeships and traineeships should primarily be an entry level system to assist transition from school to work until Australia achieves the Finn targets of 95% of 19 year olds having Year 12 or equivalent. Funding regimes and incentives should only engage quality training providers and training-oriented workplaces where the reciprocal obligation is met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carson E, Fitzgerald P, Roche S (2001) Changing social and legal frameworks for young Australians: A new social contract</td>
<td>The report provides several perspectives on the profound and dynamic change on legal and social structures in Australia which have redefined rights and responsibilities of young people, families, community and government.</td>
<td>Young people are confused by contradictory roles based on old and new structures that have created an imbalance of power with young people and the government and are now premised on contractual relationships. Recommends: consistency of age requirements across government, whole person/whole community, integrated approach using individual focused strategies, clear specification of outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonsall A &amp; Associates (2001) Apprentice, Trainee and Employer Awareness and Opinions</td>
<td>A market analysis of Queensland employers, trainees and apprentices, jobseekers and school-leavers seeking opinions about apprenticeships and traineeships. The analysis proposes a segmented approach to providing information to young people, parents, the school sector and employers.</td>
<td>Trainees are more likely than apprentices to be undecided re the future. There is more knowledge amongst jobseekers and school-leavers about apprenticeships than traineeships. Most school leavers do not have a pathway by years 11 and 12 unless parents are in a trade. Choices have less to do with ability than with confidence. Most employers, trainees and apprentices are under-informed about what is expected of them and who to seek help from. Jobseekers and school-leavers are more likely to look for work, go to TAFE or uni than choose a traineeship or apprenticeship. Schools with a committed approach to vocational studies and an apprenticeship or traineeship scheme are more likely to have students focussed on a career path.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Andrews P, Kenman S, Smith Dr L (2000)</strong> <em>An evaluation of school based apprenticeships and traineeships</em></td>
<td>An evaluation of the introduction of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland in 1999.</td>
<td>The program has good outcomes and is highly valued by stakeholders, has been inadequately resourced. Recommendations relate to flexibility of subjects required for a tertiary entrance score; funding arrangements; funding for students with special needs; leadership within schools; flexible timetables; information and marketing; industrial relations; workplace readiness. Continued monitoring of completion rates was recommended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Callan V (2001)</strong> <em>Report on: Apprenticeship &amp; Traineeship Completions</em></td>
<td>Comparison of experiences between sample groups of apprentice and trainee completers and non-completers.</td>
<td>Completers are more satisfied than non-completers across most aspects of their training. Most frequent reasons for not completing related to the quality of on-the-job training, the work supervisor and the off-the-job training. Recommendations addressed career guidance, quality of training, studies on preferred methods of learning, longitudinal studies of students and their outcomes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Schofield K (1999)** *Independent Investigation into the Quality of Training in Queensland's Traineeship System* | Inquiry into the quality and effectiveness of the traineeship program in Queensland, particularly in relation to fully on the job programs. | The Queensland traineeship system should clarify its role as an entry-level option for young people and ensure quality through:  
  - regulation and quality frameworks  
  - audit and evaluation processes  
  - improved stakeholder relationships  
  - better co-ordination between State and Commonwealth agencies. |
| **Smith Dr L, Cameron P, Dean J, Winning Dr A (2000)** *Evaluation of the pilot phase of the Youth Access program* | Evaluation of the 1999 Youth Access program which provides an alternative pathway for secondary school students that will lead to a senior school certificate a vocational education and training qualification and sustainable employment. A group training company facilitates industry and employment component in conjunction with the school. | The evaluation showed the program was very successful with strong support from participants, teachers and 84% of participants were offered apprenticeships. The report identifies critical factors for success related to: marketing and promotion, overt support of senior administrators, other mainstream teachers, the group training scheme, timetabling, flexibility of subject choice in relation to tertiary entrance, sufficient funding. |
Recommendation 1
The Taskforce recommends that:

- the Commonwealth Government work with State and Territory governments to develop a National Commitment to All Young People which underpins and sustains their transition to independence through:
  - the opportunity to complete 12 years of schooling or its vocational equivalent;
  - an opportunity to participate in shaping and managing their education, training and community participation;
  - the development of independent living skills;
  - alternative settings for education and training which ensure opportunities for all young people particularly those with complex learning and support needs;
  - access to vocational education and training, structured workplace learning or part-time New Apprenticeships while at school;
  - professional career and transition support including the opportunity for each young person from year 8/9 onwards to develop a ‘Learning Pathways Plan’;
  - the opportunity for early school leavers to access affordable and relevant re-entry education opportunities;
  - access to effective employment preparation and placement programmes;
  - strengthened peer, family and community support networks;
  - appropriate early recognition, prevention and response strategies which actively support young people to maintain their connection to families, schools, and their communities;
  - opportunities for young people to participate in affordable sporting, recreational, cultural and community service activities;
  - opportunities to participate actively in their local community through a national community building scheme;
  - follow up of every young person to ensure they achieve a successful transition; and
  - support from a professional workforce (teachers, youth and community workers) skilled to meet the emerging challenges identified in this report.

To realise this commitment, young people, families, schools, governments, business and communities will need to work together to recognise and act on their shared responsibility to equip young people for the future.

Recommendation 2
The Taskforce recommends that:

- as a matter of urgency school system authorities and schools accelerate implementation of the Commonwealth and State agreed National Goals for Schooling to ensure that all young Australians are guaranteed access to high quality education and training essential in enabling the completion of school education to year 12 or an appropriate vocational equivalent.

- Commonwealth, State and Territory governments in consultation with key industry organisations and the Australian National Training Authority develop a nationally agreed set of key employability competencies to reflect changes in the workplace, emerging new industries over the last ten years and projected changes to the year 2010.

Recommendation 3
The Taskforce recommends that:

- all young people have access to a range of vocational learning and enterprise education experiences while at school.

To achieve this the Taskforce recommends that:

- the mandate of the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation be refocused to facilitate the development of an integrated and effective transition system for young Australians by:
  - driving the cultural change necessary to forge strong partnerships between schools, business and communities;
  - generating a wide range of opportunities for all young people to participate in learning about work culture;
- developing nationally accredited structured workplace learning which provides meaningful enterprise and vocational educational experiences;
- fostering and developing enterprise skills;
- promoting innovative education, training and employment opportunities which respond to the needs of the local community; and
- commissioning and disseminating research and information on career opportunities, the effectiveness of partnerships and the outcomes of structured workplace learning.

Recommendation 4
The Taskforce recommends that:

- all young people and their families have access to a career and transition support system through and beyond school which is focused on individual needs and circumstances and can assist them to:
  - make informed choices when selecting schools, courses and post-school opportunities;
  - connect education and training pathways with realistic career choices and employment prospects; and
  - know how to access the broad range of community services and specialist support available to them.

The Taskforce also recommends that:

- the Commonwealth Government, working with State and Territory governments, ensure that all young people have access to high quality career and transition support by:
  - ensuring each young person receives professional and on-going career and transition support beginning at year 8 (age 13) which should include the continuous development of a learning pathways plan designed to address transition issues as they arise;
  - making effective, relevant and appropriate career and transition support available for all young people and their families both in school and in local community settings; and
  - developing comprehensive career advice connected to job opportunities (including local opportunities) supported by information technology systems accessible at the local level.

The Taskforce recommends that this career and transition support be:

- overseen by school principals who should have the prime responsibility for:
  - ensuring that each young person has access to this professional career and transition advice; and
  - following-up young people’s transition outcomes for a period of 18 months after leaving school.

Recommendation 5
The Taskforce recommends that:

- the Commonwealth Government work with State, Territory and local governments to resource a process for developing community partnerships which brings together key local individuals, employers, community agencies, religious groups, government departments and young people to address the following issues:
  - the provision of innovative education, training, leadership and employment opportunities which respond to the particular needs of their local community;
  - the development of local programmes that build the confidence and self-esteem of young people as they identify and promote their capacity and contribution to their community;
  - the promotion of positive images of young people which celebrate their achievements and counter negative stereotypes;
  - the establishment of policies, practices and protocols that promote prevention, early identification and intervention approaches appropriate to the needs of local communities;
  - the creation of coherent local networks of support for all young people, particularly those working with young people with high support needs, which includes building opportunities for their participation in cultural, sporting, recreational activities and access to education and training in supportive and flexible environments; and
  - the sharing of information and the promotion of good practice, innovative responses, quality assurance and standards in the delivery of programmes to all young people.

To achieve this the Taskforce recommends that:

- a national body comprising representatives of the Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments, young people, business, community service agencies and education providers be established to:
  - drive cultural change across a broad range of community groups to set the framework for building community partnerships;
- identify and promote good practice in community partnership building; and
- work with governments in establishing, monitoring and evaluating a national set of indicators on young people's participation in community life including their transition through school and beyond.

Recommendation 6
The Taskforce recommends that:
❍ Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments:
  - promote the development of transition support networks in local communities by bringing together key agencies committed to supporting young people and their families and enabling them to:
  - set their own locally relevant objectives within agreed frameworks;
  - design their own youth advisory and planning structures that would be empowered to initiate local project development and delivery;
  - design and operate their own local action structures; and
  - pool the expertise and resources of local, State and Commonwealth bodies to support local initiatives.
  - initiate demonstration projects to trial a range of models which respond to local youth transition priorities. These would be rigorously evaluated for replication and sharing of good practice; and
  - encourage integrated service provision for young people. As a first step the Commonwealth should look for ways to:
    - improve the co-ordination of a number of its own youth-related programmes;
    - examine tendering and contractual arrangements to ensure that they promote appropriate co-ordination in local communities; and
    - ensure that programmes and services are able to meet both the personal needs of young people and the circumstances of local communities.
  - An intergovernmental protocol be established to further develop, maintain and make available an effective youth programmes database.

The Taskforce also recommends that:
❍ Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments review the appropriateness of preparatory and ongoing training for all practitioners working with young people, including teachers and youth workers, to ensure that they:
  - are aware of how specific services and assistance contribute to and interact with a wider system of youth transitions;
  - have the appropriate knowledge and tools to establish and promote linkages between different institutions and services relating to young people; and
  - actively engage young people and their families in identifying options and in developing solutions which enable effective transitions.

Recommendation 7
The Taskforce recommends that the Commonwealth Government continue to work with State and Territory governments to:
❍ strengthen the capacity of families and communities to actively contribute to their local schools, by ensuring that:
  - schools strengthen links with home and the home learning environment by more actively engaging families in the learning experience;
  - teachers and careers counsellors work with parents and young people to ensure that they are aware of the broad range of career paths including vocational courses, structured workplace learning, New Apprenticeships and opportunities to articulate vocational qualifications into tertiary education pathways;
  - the organisation and activities of schools better reflect their broad role as part of community infrastructure through flexible opening hours, 'family friendly' practices and by providing after-school assistance for students, for example, homework support;
  - resources which assist in preventing homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, youth suicide and mental health problems are effectively used in schools and in the broader community; and
  - education and training providers facilitate the professional development of staff directly involved in youth homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, youth suicide and mental health issues and provide on-going support for their work in schools.

Recommendation 8
The Taskforce recommends that:
❍ the Commonwealth Government work with State and Territory governments to strengthen peer support amongst young people by:
  - providing resources for the training of peer support workers and the development of peer support
networks within schools and organisations in the local community; and
- helping young people develop skills to support each other, especially when making key decisions about education, employment and life choices.

Recommendation 9
The Taskforce recommends that:

- all policies and programmes designed to address the needs of Indigenous young people and their communities must:
  - be developed locally in consultation with the communities themselves and those communities must be empowered to deliver them;
  - be designed in partnership with Indigenous peoples;
  - be flexible enough to meet the diverse environments in which Indigenous people live, whether urban, rural or remote; and
  - recognise the strong links between culture, land, language, kinship, identity and self-awareness.
- the Commonwealth, together with the States and Territories, in developing policies and programmes for Indigenous young people and their communities should be prepared to consider locally identified practical initiatives. These might include:
  - tailoring school calendars to local conditions and cultural practices;
  - establishing community houses and support networks for those young people who have to leave home to go to school;
  - initiating a school exchange programme to build up knowledge of the world beyond the community;
  - developing youth centres and facilities with appropriate Indigenous staff who have access to staff development;
  - creating opportunities for youth participation and leadership, for example the trials proposed for the development of the Cape York Youth Strategy; and
  - encouraging role models and mentors.
- the Commonwealth, in association with the States and Territories, continue to implement with some urgency the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, the National Statement of Principles and Standards for more Culturally Inclusive Schooling in the Twenty-first Century, and the model of More Culturally Inclusive and Educationally Effective Schools.

Recommendation 10
Given the necessity of up-to-date information about young people’s transitions in order to improve policy and programme development, and identify priorities for future activity, the Taskforce:

- endorses the steps taken by the National Education Performance Monitoring Taskforce (NEPMT) of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) to develop a framework of transition goals and indicators to give effect to the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century. The framework which MCEETYA has adopted for reporting on young people’s participation in education and training and labour market activities, by single year of age for the 15 to 19 year old and 20 to 24 year old age groups, and the qualifications obtained by 19 year olds and 24 year olds, will provide a basis for reporting at regional, State and Territory, and national levels, and a benchmark for reporting by individual institutions and organisations, as detailed in recommendation 11 below.

The Taskforce recommends that:

- MCEETYA work with other relevant Ministerial Councils, including the Health and Community Services Ministerial Council (HSCMC) and organisations such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to:
  - jointly produce a common reporting framework of outcomes and indicators across the broad range of young people’s transitions to independence; and
  - review the extent to which existing data collections from administrative sources, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and longitudinal surveys, may need to be enhanced to give effect to the common reporting framework.

In noting the importance of outcomes data in helping individual institutions and agencies improve the effectiveness of their programmes for young people, the Taskforce recommends that:

- studies be undertaken in priority regions where there is little or no community infrastructure (for example, health services, housing or where school completion rates are low and youth unemployment rates are high) on procedures to assist institutions and agencies collect and use relevant information on their young people’s activities (including non-attendance) and outcomes for up to 18 months after leaving secondary school, tertiary education and training (including non-completion), or other relevant programmes for young people;
- appropriate and cost-effective procedures for collecting and using transitions outcomes data be implemented in all secondary schools, tertiary
education and training institutions, and other relevant programmes for young people;

Ministerial Councils jointly establish a Transitions Research Advisory Committee (TRAC) to work with and support research funding and planning organisations in order to:

- identify and fund research in priority areas in young people’s transitions;
- develop improved early identification and intervention measures and strategies;
- support action research by practitioners working with young people;
- disseminate good practice identified through research;
- encourage the training of new researchers;
- develop mechanisms for more closely connecting research with transition policy, practice and local community needs; and
- ensure that the data and findings from research are publicly available and effectively disseminated to potential users.

Recommendation 11
The Taskforce recommends that:

- the Commonwealth work together with State and Territory governments and other relevant stakeholder groups to:
  - develop clear and measurable goals and indicators for young people’s transitions to work, further learning and independence that are appropriate for secondary schools, tertiary education and training providers, and other agencies working with young people;
  - ensure that reporting of transition outcomes for young people is incorporated into regular reporting on performance by secondary schools, tertiary education and training providers, and other agencies working with young people;
  - develop regular public reporting on young people’s transition outcomes at regional, State and Territory, and national levels. Where feasible, reporting should be developed for a variety of groups of young people, including those classified according to:
    - gender;
    - urban, rural or remote location;
    - social background;
    - educational background;
    - language background other than English;
    - Indigenous status;
    - disability; and
    - being the subject of child protection or juvenile justice orders.

Recommendation 12
The Taskforce recommends that:

- all schools and community organisations have in place an easily identifiable and accessible solution-oriented complaints system which is sensitive to the issues young people face in transition, responsive to their needs as consumers, and which ensures confidentiality, natural justice and procedural fairness.

- schools and community organisations ensure that they have established relationships with a range of agencies (eg. including community mediation, youth and family counselling and legal services) which can provide independent support to assist young people and their families resolve complaints.

- education departments, individual schools and community organisations ensure that the information they provide to young people, parents and local communities about complaints is complete and readily accessible. This should include links between relevant websites, such as The Source, Kids Helpline, Reachout and Lawstuff.

Recommendation 13
The Taskforce recommends that:

- the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business (DEWRSB), the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) and Centrelink develop and implement strategies to:
  - ensure that preparing-for-work agreements take into account the individual situations of young people, are culturally appropriate and focused on local community circumstances;
  - examine existing activity test and administrative breach arrangements, with a view to taking better account of the individual circumstances of young people who face difficulties in meeting existing requirements;
  - better integrate income support with Job Network assistance for young people and more broadly, consider and implement ways of integrating services for young people accessing income support; and
  - investigate the circumstances under which young people are breached on the recommendation of Job...
Network providers, with a view to implementing guidelines that take account of an individual young person’s circumstances.

- the Commonwealth Government examine levels of income support available to young people to maximise their participation in activities which promote active and responsible citizenship:
  - in particular, the Commonwealth should consider ways of recognising and assisting with the costs of participation in study or job search. The Taskforce encourages further consideration and development of the proposal canvassed by the Welfare Reform Reference Group for a participation supplement or account; and
  - the Taskforce also encourages the Commonwealth Government to consider the extension of existing ‘one-off’ payments, additional to existing income support entitlements, to help defray up-front costs associated with entry to study, work, or rental bonds.

- the Commonwealth Government investigate options to better align the Youth Allowance and Family Tax Benefit income tests to ensure effective targeting of assistance to low-to-middle-income families.

Recommendation 14
The Taskforce recommends that:

- community service programmes, such as cadet schemes, Green Corps and Work for the Dole, as well as leadership programmes like Ausyouth, be recognised and endorsed as part of a national vision of community building opportunities for young people.

- local community partnerships work with governments at all levels to build opportunity-rich communities which value and listen to young people as well as offering:
  - transitions supported by appropriate income support, health care and housing;
  - community meeting venues designed and managed by young people;
  - local opportunities for all young people to participate in individual and team sports;
  - youth-focused cultural activities which value the diverse ethnic and social experiences of young people;
  - leadership development programmes; and
  - creative options which encourage and develop enterprising skills in young people.

- the Commonwealth work with State, Territory and local governments to ensure that adequate resources are directed to support these responses at the local community level.

Recommendation 15
The Taskforce recommends that:

- governments at all levels work with local communities in responding to the diversity of young people’s personal and community circumstances. This necessitates a range of transition support opportunities and outcomes such as:
  - additional support for young people and their families where a severe or profound disability will require both assistance from specialist agencies and a broader definition of outcomes in relation to educational and vocational options;
  - the provision of culturally appropriate support for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
  - the exploration of creative solutions to the transition issues of young people in rural and remote communities.

To do this governments and local communities need to examine good practice initiatives across Australia and trial innovative approaches.

Recommendation 16
The Taskforce recommends that:

- every school develop its capacity to recognise, at the earliest possible time, behaviour issues which indicate that young people are at risk of becoming disconnected from their peers, family, school and community.

- all teachers, in-school support staff and the staff of youth and community agencies have opportunities for professional development, through initial and in-service training, that equips them with the skills for early recognition of ‘at risk’ behaviours in young people and assists them to effectively engage families and other appropriate supports in school and the community.

- peer support networks are established in schools and local communities with appropriate training and support for peer network facilitators.

- local community and government agencies be adequately resourced and skilled to play a role in the early recognition of ‘at risk’ behaviours and in responding appropriately.
Recommendation 17
The Taskforce recommends that:

- every school has established policies, processes, protocols and practices that promote early recognition and intervention, including access to an identified network of local agencies, with the capacity to address the full range of youth issues in the community.
- local government work with schools and community agencies in establishing a collaborative network within their community to develop early response plans. These should ensure that the early recognition of issues for ‘at risk’ young people can be effectively responded to and addressed. This will require:
  - local networking groups comprising key agencies being drawn together to develop the plan;
  - the identification of locally-based ‘first to know’ agencies; and
  - consultation with young people, families and community agencies on the range of responses appropriate to local circumstances.
- the Commonwealth Government work with State and Territory governments to extend the coverage of the Reconnect programme so that it can play a role in the development of early response plans in local communities.

Recommendation 18
The Taskforce recommends that:

- the Commonwealth Government work with State, Territory and local governments, in building local partnerships with schools, employers and other community agencies, to ensure that young people at risk of becoming disconnected have access to a range of cultural, sporting, recreational and community service activities.
- schools, community agencies, cultural, recreational and sporting bodies should actively engage with each other to ensure that young people at risk of disconnection have real opportunities for participation in their programmes.

Recommendation 19
The Taskforce recommends that:

- the Commonwealth Government work with State, Territory and local governments to ensure that:
  - community-based networks are identified in each local government area to develop localised approaches which identify and support young people not in education or employment;
  - all young people living without adequate support are linked to a local service network with an individual worker or agency assigned a key support responsibility;
  - appropriate, accessible and affordable services for young people with high needs are available in all local communities;
  - local community-based networks should assist young people with high support needs to reconnect with peers, family and community; and
  - local support services commit to delivering an integrated response to young people which offers holistic support across community and government agency jurisdictions.

Recommendation 20
The Taskforce recommends that:

- Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments work together with community agencies to ensure governments, education and training providers and community agencies collaborate in developing practical local packages of support for young people with high support needs that include:
  - the development of local service networks involving any individuals or agencies identified by young people as being significant personal supports;
  - fostering and resourcing connections with local recreational, cultural, sporting, religious and social groups to encourage the participation of these young people;
  - the opportunity for disconnected young people to work with youth support staff in developing mutually agreed personal support plans;
  - the provision of accessible personal and programme resources to achieve the objectives of personal support plans; and
  - the availability of appropriate training and support for staff working in these programmes.
- the Commonwealth extend the coverage of the JPET programme and incorporate the approaches outlined above in its work in local communities.

Recommendation 21
The Taskforce recommends that:

- the Commonwealth work with State and Territory governments to develop partnership outreach education models focused on delivering relevant education and training to young people who are unable to participate in mainstream education. The key elements of this response are that:
bridging the gap

- education and training services are delivered in settings where young people gather and are comfortable;
- local partnerships involving youth and community agencies, schools, training providers and local employers are essential;
- education and training approaches are developed and delivered in consultation with young people; and
- foundation and employability skills such as literacy, numeracy, information technology, effective communication, independent living, and civics are a primary focus.

Recommendation 22
The Taskforce recommends:

○ that the Commonwealth Government work with State and Territory governments, the Australian National Training Authority, and the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation to ensure that young people not connected to formal education and training or employment have:
  - opportunities to develop their understanding of work culture;
  - vocational experiences in supportive and well-supervised work settings; and
  - opportunities to participate in structured workplace learning models and obtain employability skills including competence in up-to-date information technology usage.

Recommendation 23
The Taskforce recommends that:

○ the Commonwealth Government promote effective integration of Job Network services and local youth support strategies including:
  - more opportunities for young people to benefit from Intensive Assistance; and
  - an increased awareness of the needs of young people by Job Network providers and of the impact of breaching penalties.

○ the Commonwealth Government work with State and Territory governments to develop:
  - New Apprenticeship placements in the government, private and community sectors for disadvantaged young people; and
  - a recognition of the importance of education outcomes for young people in New Apprenticeships Access Programme.

○ to ensure that young people with high support needs can access New Apprenticeships there must be:
  - adequate pre-placement preparation and post-placement support of young people;
  - on-going mentoring;
  - careful selection, training and support for host employers;
  - a staged induction process developed in consultation with young people; and
  - recognition and assessment of prior learning and a creative approach to structured workplace learning.

○ the Work for the Dole programme be enhanced so that it incorporates:
  - adequate preparation of participants in their understanding of occupational health and safety requirements;
  - local programme development processes which consult with young people and community groups in planning and delivering the programme; and
  - clear articulation into traineeships, employment or accredited training.

Recommendation 24
The Taskforce recommends that:

○ the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) lead the response to the findings and recommendations of this report, in conjunction with the Health and Community Services Ministerial Council (HCSMC) and other relevant Ministerial Councils as appropriate.
Examples of programs and services for youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Need</th>
<th>Example of Programs</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal efficacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support in crisis</td>
<td>Kids Help-line</td>
<td>To provide counselling service, referral to local services and advocate for children</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Private sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>Reboot</td>
<td>Improve emotional and mental health outcomes through counselling, youth at risk of offending</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>SA Department of Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools to manage own behaviour</td>
<td>Behavioural Intervention Service</td>
<td>To provide responses for young people with extreme and complex behavioural difficulties where other interventions have not succeeded.</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Department of Education, Training and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills of self-advocacy, self-worth</td>
<td>Create</td>
<td>Programs for children in care such as Mission: Be at aimed at personal development</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Various — government and private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicle use and safety</td>
<td>Keys Please Driver Education Program</td>
<td>To equip learner and provisional drivers and parents and guardians with information that reduces young driver crash rate.</td>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist personnel working with students with a disability</td>
<td>Transition officers</td>
<td>Ensure students with a disability have a realistic plan for post school, linked to industry and community agencies</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>Education Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs designed for young people not achieving in post compulsory schooling and at risk of early school leaving</td>
<td>Youth Access Program</td>
<td>Provide strong supports in the development of a range of vocational skills and basic literacy and numeracy skills to lead to work, traineeships of apprenticeships</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>Department of Employment and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young unemployed early leavers — re-entry</td>
<td>TAFE Voucher Initiative</td>
<td>Vouchers entitle the holder to up to 400 hours in accredited training</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 There are thousands of excellent programs aimed at specific groups of people, specific needs and providing specific services. The problem is not the number of distinct programs, but that many programs are not available all over Australia but depend on providers gaining contracts in particular areas, are often only for a limited time such that by the time relationships and infrastructure are established, funding is moved elsewhere; the guidelines, performance outcomes, or timelines inadvertently prevent access by the very people they are intended for; and most importantly, because there is no one source of information that can effectively refer people to the range of services available across agencies. Chronic lack of information and coordination of programs means that energy and effort are spent in reinventing programs that have already been shown to be effective. This collation is purely an indication of what could be a comprehensive, but not complete, array of programs to meet various needs of young people within a community.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Need</th>
<th>Example of Programs</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum with obvious relevance to work</td>
<td>New Apprenticeships Incentive Program</td>
<td>Structured vocational education linked to paid work within industry</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Department of Education, Science and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>Home school liaison officers</td>
<td>Follow-up students of compulsory school age who are non-attenders</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>Department of School Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At risk of early leaving</td>
<td>Face to Face Program</td>
<td>Early intervention and prevention strategy aimed at retention and participation, health and well being and literacy.</td>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Department of Training and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>Which Way You Mob Youth Project</td>
<td>To develop capacity of Indigenous communities and their youth to plan and conduct activities for young people during at risk times — crime and youth suicide prevention</td>
<td>Far North Queensland through the Aboriginal Coordinating Council</td>
<td>State government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerless, vulnerable to systems and individual abuse or discrimination</td>
<td>Youth Liaison Officer with the Youth Ombudsman</td>
<td>To assist a young person who wishes to make a complaint or inquire about making a complaint about government services.</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>New South Wales Ombudsman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links between parent and school</td>
<td>Aboriginal Secondary Students Parent Awareness</td>
<td>To increase educational outcomes for Indigenous students by involving their parents and community in school decisions</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Department of Education, Science and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>Developing Alternative Solutions Housing</td>
<td>To provide properties specifically for young people’s accommodation</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Department of Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic needs</td>
<td>Breakfast programs</td>
<td>Provide breakfast and counseling needs</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>Department of Education and Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Justice</td>
<td>Adopt-a-Cop program in secondary schools</td>
<td>To foster better understanding and respect between police officers and children/youth.</td>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>Department of Police and Public Safety.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6

Recommendations and Policy Directions of the Ramsey Report

12. List of Recommendations and Directions

Recommendations arising from evidence considered in the Review can be found in chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11 of this Report. They are provided here in a consolidated list. The page references refer to the location of each recommendation in the text. The recommendations refer, in the main, to actions the Government will need to take, on occasion in conjunction with the Commonwealth, to bring about desired changes in teacher education.

12.1 Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the New South Wales Government establish an Institute of Teachers whose primary purpose is to enhance the level of professionalism of teachers and teaching. The Institute to be responsible for:

- the establishment and promulgation of performance standards at designated stages of development as a teacher, together with standards of ethical practice for teachers
- the accreditation and disaccreditation of teachers against such performance and ethical standards, determining related requirements for maintaining and extending or removing such accreditation, and establishing and maintaining records of teachers so accredited
- endorsing and disendorsing courses and programs of teacher education, both initial and continuing
- accrediting those schools and other institutions involved in the provision of professional experience in initial and continuing teacher education
- advising universities on ways to strengthen postgraduate programs and research in pedagogy and teacher education
- advising the Government and the community on issues relating to teacher quality and professional standards, and on the qualifications, profile and experiences of teachers employed throughout the State
- promoting the position and standing of the profession on professional matters
- communicating on professional issues among members
- determining, in co-operation with the Government and in discussion with parties involved in the profession, the fees and other means of providing the resources to be applied in fulfilling its responsibilities

- advising on areas where research is needed, particularly in pedagogy to advance the skill level of teachers in the State. (page 147)

Recommendation 2

That in the development of professional teaching standards the Institute of Teachers:

- establish, articulate and promulgate a clear purpose for such standards
- establish effective processes for the development, validation and assessment of such standards based on appropriate models of teacher development
- make the standards simple, transparent and easily accessible to all teachers
- consult widely to ensure ownership of and commitment to such standards by teachers
- determine requirements for teachers to maintain their accreditation or to be disaccredited if they do not fulfil the required performance and ethical standards. (page 158)

Recommendation 3

That the standards established by the Institute of Teachers be the basis for a staged accreditation system for practising teachers at three levels:

- a professional competence (Accredited Practising Teacher 1)
- professional specialisation (Accredited Practising Teacher 2)
- professional leadership (Accredited Practising Teacher 3). (page 158)

Recommendation 4

That the Institute of Teachers:

- establish standards and processes for the endorsement of programs of initial teacher education to prepare teachers for New South Wales schools, setting out the outcomes expected of graduates in subject content, pedagogy and ethics
- establish standards for the provision of the professional experience component of initial teacher education, including standards for the supervision and mentoring of student teachers
- in the assessment process, take account of the priority given by the university to teacher education
Recommendation 5
That the Institute of Teachers establish processes and procedures for the endorsement of programs of continuing teacher education, consistent with the stages of the accreditation system for individual teachers. (page 162)

Recommendation 6
That the New South Wales Government require the Institute of Teachers to:
- work with universities and relevant school systems to develop jointly criteria, processes and procedures for the accreditation of those schools providing professional experience for student teachers
- advise on the possible merit of, and options for, the eventual accreditation of all schools where quality educational practices can be certified
- maintain jointly with the universities a registry of accredited schools. (page 164)

Recommendation 7
That a taskforce be formed to provide advice to the Government on the structures, partnerships and resources required to establish an Australian Graduate School of Teaching in New South Wales. The taskforce should include nominees of the Institute of Teachers, employers of teachers and vice-chancellors of universities interested in the proposal. (page 165)

Recommendation 8
That a Joint Committee on Teacher Supply he established representing the New South Wales Government, the Commonwealth Government, the employers, the universities and the Institute of Teachers to:
- develop improved funding arrangements for teacher education in New South Wales
- advise the New South Wales Government and the Commonwealth Government on the most appropriate allocation of government resources to ensure the adequate supply of quality teachers in the State. (page 188)

Recommendation 9
That the Joint Committee on Teacher Supply, in consultation with the Institute of Teachers and employers:
- determine the mechanism whereby the State’s requirements for the supply of quality teachers can be submitted to open tender from potential providers of teacher education courses
- institute a range of scholarships and paid training opportunities to attract talented young people to teaching, aimed at supporting those teaching subjects and teaching localities where supply problems are apparent
- seek advice from the universities on the design of specific courses for scholarship holders. (page 188)

Recommendation 10
That the Joint Committee on Teacher Supply work with universities, employers, the TAFE system and the Institute of Teachers to increase the diversity of pathways for entry into teaching, giving priority to strategies which emphasise high quality professional experience in the workplace. (page 199)

Recommendation 11
That the New South Wales Government present the case for the current Taskforce on Teacher Preparation and Recruitment established by the Council of Ministers (MCEETYA), to be replaced by a working group acting for governments, employers and universities to establish an agreed basis for the development of mid-term and long-term projections of national teacher supply and demand. (page 201)

Recommendation 12
That the New South Wales Department of Education and Training:
- abolish the waiting lists of people wishing to be employed
- develop and implement a policy which selects the best available applicant for any vacancy at the time
- differentiate between applicants for appointment to particular positions on the basis of qualifications and experience and the extent to which they match the requirements of the position
- give increased priority to:
  - succession planning,
  - the open national advertising of educational leadership positions. (page 202)
Recommendation 13
That the Teaching Services Act 1980 be reviewed by the Government with a view to amending those provisions affecting the employment of teachers by the Department of Education and Training to:

- enable the recommendations of this Review to be implemented effectively
- bring the Act up-to-date
- allow for reasonable change without requiring further amendment. (page 203)

Recommendation 14
That the Institute of Teachers coordinate consultation among universities, the TAFE system and employers to:

- define their respective responsibilities in the induction of teachers
- expand, as a priority, current professional development initiatives which equip educational leaders and mentors with the knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles in the induction of new members
- allow new teachers after a period of satisfactory performance to be accredited at Level 1 in the system of teacher accreditation. (page 208)

Recommendation 15
That the Institute of Teachers establish professional standards for advanced accreditation in digital information and communications technology to:

- increase the knowledge and skill base of the profession in information and communications technology
- enable teachers to demonstrate that they have achieved advanced standards in information and communications technology
- strengthen interaction between professional development in information and communications technology and pedagogy at the classroom level. (page 208)

Recommendation 16
That the Institute of Teachers establish professional standards for advanced accreditation in behaviour management to:

- increase the knowledge and skill base of the profession in the management of student behaviour and the creation of positive learning environments
- enable teachers to demonstrate that they have achieved advanced standards in behaviour management, including specific areas such as the management of students with behaviour disorders and drug education. (page 209)

Recommendation 17
That the Government:

- establish a process to monitor and report on the implementation of the Review’s directions
- in five years time establish a subsequent review to determine the extent to which the quality of provision of initial and continuing teacher education has improved to meet the needs of the employers and of the profession. (page 213)

12.2 Policy directions
Policy directions arising from evidence considered in the Review can be found in chapter 5 of this Report. They are provided here in a consolidated list. The page references refer to the location of each policy direction in the text of the Report.

Policy directions provide advice mainly to employers, universities and other stakeholders in teacher education and teaching on changes that should be made to current practice.

It will be necessary that:

1 those universities involved in and committed to teaching as a profession give teacher education the highest priority in their strategic planning, funding and reporting (page 38)

2 universities involved in teacher education develop arrangements to enable responsibility for the preparation of teachers, including appropriate knowledge, pedagogy and the values required, to be shared by the faculty of teacher education, other relevant disciplines in the university and professional associations (page 38)

3 employers of teachers, together with universities and the profession, support the development of standards to be applied at all stages of initial and continuing teacher education (page 39)

4 universities, in co-operation with employers of teachers and the profession, develop models of initial teacher education which place professional experience at their core and require joint planning, delivery and reporting (page 39)

5 teaching be established formally as a profession in which teachers can exercise responsibilities as professional people, consistent with other self-regulating professions (page 39)

6 universities, employers, the TAFE system and the Board of Studies promote teaching in schools and other educational institutions, including the development of Higher School Certificate courses which will give advanced standing to students who aspire to become teachers (page 48)
entry into initial teacher education include processes which enable the universities to assess suitability to teach, including personal qualities and capacities regarded as important to success in the profession (page 48)

the universities, in consultation with employers, the unions and the profession structure initial teacher education to give students significant professional experiences early in their course to inform them about their suitability for teaching and enable them, where teaching is not a suitable option, to pursue other study pathways (page 49)

the universities be required to attest to those graduates who meet acceptable standards at the end of their course prior to employment (page 49)

scholarships, traineeships and internships be offered to attract and retain outstanding students in initial teacher education programs, in ways that contribute to raising the quality of the profession (page 49)

employers introduce, in negotiations where appropriate with relevant unions, a system of differentiated salaries and conditions of employment to attract and retain high quality teachers in difficult-to-staff teaching subject areas and schools (page 49)

universities, employers and the TAFE system expand pathways into teaching for mature age entrants, including, where appropriate, guaranteed appointment to positions after completion of initial training (page 49)

the Department of Education and Training in its recruitment practices give priority to teacher quality in making teaching appointments rather than time spent on a waiting list (page 49)

the Graduate Recruitment Program of the Department of Education and Training be revised to give greater priority to assessing performance of such graduates in professional experience (page 49)

employers, in collaboration with universities, the TAFE system and schools, develop paraprofessional pathways into teaching which target talented and suitable applicants from a range of relevant backgrounds (page 49)

strategies be developed cooperatively between employers and the profession which promote teaching as an attractive and rewarding career for talented and suitable male as well as female school leavers and those already in the workforce (page 49)

universities and employers, in conjunction with schools and the TAFE system, develop further paraprofessional pathway programs into teaching for talented and suitable indigenous people (page 49)

universities, employers and the unions in conjunction with the profession facilitate and support increased research into the career and employment decisions of teachers in New South Wales to inform workforce planning (page 50)

the provision of teacher education in the State be sought from a range of institutions which are prepared to meet predetermined requirements and have a strong commitment to its provision (page 59)

university teacher educators responsible for professional experience as members of the teaching profession be expected to undergo the same processes of accreditation as teachers (page 59)

universities value and reward academics in teacher education, irrespective of their faculty or discipline, particularly by recognising the role they have working with teachers and schools (page 59)

teacher education be structured and funded to meet the unique needs of regional and rural communities (page 59)

courses be developed for para-professionals in rural and remote educational settings to provide credentials to people who have important roles in the teaching process (page 59)

standards be established for the external assessment and endorsement of programs of initial teacher education (page 59)

a process be established to attest to the quality of professional experience provided for student teachers in schools (page 59)

the term ‘professional experience’ replace ‘practicum’ to emphasise the shift from ‘practice’ to ‘experience’ as being central to teacher preparation (page 63)

the professional experience of student teachers over their total pre-service program be provided in a diversity of settings (page 63)

the final pre-service professional experience be substantial and occur in a setting similar to that where employment for the individual teacher is most likely to be found (page 64)

teachers who supervise student teachers be professionally accredited in appropriate areas such as mentoring or educational leadership (page 64)

universities and other potential providers of teacher education expand significantly the number of conjoint appointments (page 64)

the professional experience component of initial teacher education give all student teachers significant structured learning about the operation and culture of schools, including perspectives across different school systems,
ethics in teaching and the role of the teacher as a change agent (page 64)

32 standards and guidelines for the induction of new teachers be established, making induction programs consistent in terms of quality (page 68)

33 teachers who exercise an educational leadership role in the induction or supervision of new teachers be professionally accredited (page 68)

34 universities, the TAFE system and employers work together to define their respective responsibilities in initial teacher education and induction (page 68)

35 universities, the TAFE system and employers work together to determine how best to develop and make available teacher induction programs directly related to the specific requirements of their new employment (page 68)

36 employers reduce the initial workload of teachers in the first year of service and provide effective mentoring in the early years of teaching (page 68)

37 universities, the TAFE system and employers give greater attention to the preparation and induction of casual or contract teachers, equivalent to the provision for permanent teachers (page 68)

38 priority be given in initial and continuing teacher education to providing teachers with knowledge and skills to use information and communications technology to create learning environments that are both broad in scope and deep in concept development (page 75)

39 information and communications technology be used to strengthen and expand professional communication between teachers (page 75)

40 priority be given to commissioning research into specific models for integrating information and communications technology into pedagogy to create new learning opportunities for students (page 75)

41 the implications of information and communications technology for pedagogy and structures of teaching become a major focus in educational leadership programs (page 75)

42 approaches in initial and continuing teacher education programs give priority to issues related to interpersonal relationships (page 81)

43 learning about behaviour management in initial teacher education be addressed primarily within the framework of professional experience (page 81)

44 employers give teachers regular and diverse opportunities for professional revitalisation, including shortterm exchange placements in other schools and educational settings and, where appropriate, opportunities which will assist the transition from teaching to other employment (page 81)

45 universities and the TAFE system in conjunction with the profession provide courses for teachers in behaviour management, including behaviour disordered students and drug education (page 81)

46 employers and teachers support a system of teacher accreditation which encourages and rewards their Professional development throughout their career (page 86)

47 employers and teachers support an approach to continuing teacher education which emphasises the responsibility the profession and its individual members have for further learning to improve the quality of professional practice (page 86)

48 standards be established for educational leadership to which teachers can aspire, be accredited against, and for which they can be recognised and rewarded (page 90)

49 the universities have a better defined and more substantial role in the provision of educational leadership programs, especially by broadening the range of pedagogical and inter-disciplinary studies (page 90)

50 the Department of Education and Training consider strategies to broaden the sources of educational leaders in government schools (page 90)

51 employers, and particularly the Department of Education and Training, in their leadership and management structures take account of how the quality of teacher education and teaching can be improved through greater localisation of authority and decision making in schools (page 93).
3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SHATTERING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

All we want is for the violence to stop. We don't want our men to go to jail. But by the same token we as a community have to try to address the issues of alcohol, drugs and violence.¹

Violence at its most blatant has become a part of everyday life. Horrifying crimes are occurring regularly and have instilled in the minds of the elderly, the young and others a level of fear previously unknown to the Australian population. Murder and other violent crimes are destroying what has traditionally been the Australian way of life.

However, for most people, their contact with violence is second-hand, through the daily newspaper or the nightly news or a movie. In many cases, people have a choice about whether they allow themselves to become exposed to the violence or whether they avoid it. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities do not have the luxury of being able to disassociate themselves from violence. The high incidence of violent crime in some Indigenous Communities, particularly in remote and rural regions, is exacerbated by factors not present in the broader Australian Community.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Task Force on Violence was formed when the degree of suffering in many Indigenous Communities had reached a crisis point.

While the plight of Indigenous people has been highlighted in numerous state, national and international reports, many people found the current level of violence in Indigenous communities difficult to comprehend.

Although there has been much speculation about the causes of the violence being witnessed, the impact of history cannot be isolated in any discussion on its origins and the consequences of such violence in the lives of Indigenous peoples in the contemporary context.

Dispossession, cultural fragmentation and marginalisation have contributed to the current crisis in which many Indigenous people find themselves. High unemployment, poor health, low educational attainment and poverty have become endemic elements in Indigenous lives, and while the correlation between these factors and violence has been recognised, a more rigorous understanding is warranted.

While the violence being regularly committed in Indigenous Communities has become front-page news, it is not new. It has been acknowledged by Indigenous and non-Indigenous forums for many years. The people who could have made a difference have failed to intervene to stop innocent women and children from being bashed, raped, mutilated and murdered and exposed to forms of violence that have been allowed to escalate to a level that is now a national disgrace.

Indigenous women’s groups, concerned about their disintegrating world, have been calling for assistance for more than a decade. While their circumstances may have been recognised, their pleas have not always been met and in some cases, deliberately ignored. At times, Government representatives appeared to regard violence as a normal aspect of Indigenous life, like the high rate of alcohol consumption. Interventions were dismissed as politically and culturally intrusive in the newly acquired autonomy of Indigenous Communities. Moreover, the ‘Aboriginal cause’ attracted little interest or sympathy in the broader Australian community, which seemed oblivious to the mayhem that was happening, even though the plight of Indigenous people had been described in numerous reports. The violence being witnessed can only be described as immeasurable and Communities, pushed to the limit, are imploding under the strain.

In investigating the violence, members of the Task Force were advised that the strongest message that they could give to the Government and the public of Queensland is that violence in all its forms, whatever its locale and in any circumstances, is unacceptable, and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must work together to help in its eradication.

While Governments of all persuasions have made funding available to address the issues pertinent to violence in the lives of Indigenous peoples, the Task Force was advised that only minimal intervention has occurred to date. Service provision to Indigenous Communities was reported to be so poor in many Communities that people believe the services intended for their protection, are in reality increasing their violation. Many people in various locations, particularly rural and remote communities, have become almost totally reliant on welfare, due to the breakdown of traditional social support and the lack of infrastructure and real employment, with the human services, health, family and welfare agencies, being clearly incapable of meeting the increasing demands raised. This has serious consequences in areas where poverty, crime and violence have already reached levels that will require both immediate and long-term interventions.

The time for preventive measures is long past. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people must work together to stop the carnage through proactive intervention. Indigenous people can no longer live under a system that
defies and inhibits autonomy and self-determination. In the spirit of reconciliation and reciprocity, a whole of Government approach is required, with Indigenous people also taking responsibility to repair the broken lives of an increasing number of people. There must be no skimping; no shortcuts or kneejerk reactions, because as an Elder indicated ‘there may not be another chance’.

Informants to the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Task Force on Violence were adamant that while it was important to expose the severity of the violence, it was equally important to identify solutions. Many Elders acknowledged that while the stories must be told, it is also important to provide a way forward. The text of this Report therefore reflects these principles.

Forms of violence
The degree of violence and destruction in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities cannot be adequately described. The Task Force found evidence of all forms of physical, psychological, cultural and structural violence being perpetrated, and while many may consider the violence to be a characteristic of Indigenous cultures, there are other factors that must be considered.

The history of race relations in Australia is one in which Indigenous people have been subjected to forms of violence that were unknown to many non-Indigenous Australians and as a consequence, the atrocities inflicted against Indigenous people have only recently been fully exposed. Colonisation and dispossession were factors identified throughout the consultations as being central to the current alcohol and drug abuse, violence and dysfunction witnessed in Indigenous Communities.

Indigenous people generally have been profoundly affected by the erosion of their cultural and spiritual identity and the disintegration of family and Community that has traditionally sustained relationships and obligations and maintained social order and control.

While some Indigenous peoples were able to escape the past, whole families and Communities are now fighting to address the consequences. Appalling acts of physical brutality and sexual violence are being perpetrated within some families and across Communities to a degree previously unknown in Indigenous life. Sadly, many of the victims are women and children, young and older people who now in many cases are living in a constant state of desperation and despair.

Throughout the consultations, there was a strong message from Indigenous women that they recognise that their men are hurting too, and if there is to be a break in the cycle of violence, they must work collectively to reunite their families and to address the effects of alcohol and drug misuse and to eradicate these illnesses from their lives.

There are few services available in Communities to deal with these critical situations. Although many Indigenous people carry unresolved trauma and grief from both historical and contemporary experiences, there are inadequate counselling services available in a majority of Communities. This situation not only compounds the stress experienced by individuals but also exacerbates the likelihood of violence because of the limited services available to assist people with their alcohol or substance addictions or to deal with their unresolved traumas. The atmosphere in many Communities is now one of continuing fear from which there is currently no escape.

Due to isolation, poverty and the relatively small size of many Communities, innocent people cannot escape the violence as public transport and private vehicles are primarily nonexistent. It was reported to the Task Force that at least one member of each family in some Communities is likely to become a victim of violence.

This Report reveals that there has not only been a significant increase in the number of offences recorded in Indigenous Communities, but the level of severity in such crimes has also increased. Violence is now overt; murders, bashings and rapes, including sexual violence against children, have reached epidemic proportions with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people being perpetrators. Youth suicides over the past decade have increased to an alarming level. In one Community alone, there were 17 youth suicides in one year. In another Community, there were 16 suicides within a similar period. Indigenous youth were said to feel undervalued, lost, disillusioned, with many now living without hope. Aboriginal people, both young and old, are continually going through ‘sorry business’, with death becoming an all too frequent presence in their lives. By any measure, we must all admit that something has gone desperately wrong and that urgent intervention is now required.

Causes and contributing factors
As a result of ill-chosen, discriminatory and poorly researched Government initiatives, Indigenous people have endured decades of oppression and neglect. The massacres and inhumane treatment of their families remain fresh in their minds. Many members of contemporary Indigenous Communities can still remember the policies that isolated them from the broader community, that exempted them from associating with family and kin, that forcibly removed them as children and subjected them to treatment that breached even the most basic human rights. Indigenous families today are continuing to be affected by the losses they have suffered.

The harsh reality for those in authority who have ignored or failed to intervene in the atrocities thus far, is that action is now essential. The very public implosion of Indigenous Communities can no longer be hidden or excused as being ‘the Aboriginal way’. Such thinking is a serious indictment that must be challenged and rejected. Indigenous Communities have endured, and continue to
endure, substandard and overcrowded housing, poor health, poor education and welfare dependency. Many live in environments similar to those in the poorest developing countries, and lack access to the resources required to alter their impoverished state. This is a situation that warrants urgent address.

A majority of the informants believed that the rise of violence in Aboriginal Communities can be attributed to the so-called ‘Aboriginal industry’ in which both Indigenous and non-Indigenous agencies have failed in many ways to deliver critical services. In times of economic rationalism, the ‘industry’ has failed to produce tangible outcomes. Concerns have been raised about the absence of initiatives in many reports commissioned by Governments over the past two decades. Informants were aware of the misuse of services with the culprits being both non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. An example of such misused authority and how it assists violence is the sly grog trade where there seems to be reluctance on the part of authorities to prosecute for breaches to the regulations. The sly grog trade and violence were expressed by many throughout the consultations to be inseparable issues, worsened by the failure of responsible bodies to carry out their duties at the expense of Indigenous people.

Extent of violence and abuse
The extent of violence is demonstrated by the rapidly mounting incarceration rates. It is also reflected in the statistical data on interpersonal violence, homicides, rapes and suicides. For those three categories of violent offences, sexual offences and breaches of domestic orders, the total for all reported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders in Queensland has increased from 664 in 1994 to 1075 in 1998.

The Task Force believes the number of violent offences is much higher than the officially recorded data. This observation was expressed in the Indigenous Women in the Criminal Justice System Report (1996). The Task Force researchers heard many stories about crimes that women did not report for fear of reprisals from the perpetrator, his kinfolk or the justice system.

In all the consultations, there was an obvious reluctance to talk about sexual assaults. This reluctance was reported to result from fear of reprisals or shame because of the nature of the attacks. One Community survey found that 90% of rape victims were women. Non-Indigenous men committed 42% of the rapes, 41% were committed by Indigenous men and the remaining 17% were pack rapes. Anecdotal evidence was given that sexual abuse of young males is increasing, and remains largely unreported, because of the hidden nature of male to male sexual attacks and the shame that is often expressed by the victims.

Members of the Task Force were advised that while some Indigenous people do not experience violence, there are others whose daily lives are marked by its constant and/or intermittent presence. The harsh reality is that many families are now trapped in environments where deviance and atrocities have become accepted as normal behaviour and as such, form an integral part of the children’s socialisation.

Working for change
The lack of collaboration in the past has hindered progress for Indigenous people. The reasons for poor collaboration include:

- a failure by all levels of Government to commit to long-term initiatives, instead of quick-fix solutions;
- constant staff changes among senior public servants;
- appointment of Government Ministers for short terms, so they do not become familiar with their portfolios;
- the lack of coordination of policies and programs across Governments;
- the squandering of public monies in duplicated programs;
- the under representation of Indigenous peoples in senior positions; and
- the absence of Indigenous people in decision-making processes.

The informants considered and applauded models based on reciprocity to eliminate welfare dependency. Members of the Task Force believe, however, that economic independence and sustainability cannot be achieved without significant cultural and social development. All elements should form the basis of future Government and Community initiatives, with improved education, employment and training and cultural revitalisation being priority initiatives.

Innovative solutions were identified to deal with the high alcohol consumption evident in some Communities. In particular, rehabilitation and family unification programs were suggested as methods of reducing violence.

The Task Force found that non-Indigenous professionals working in Communities often suffer premature burnout, especially if their cultural awareness preparation has been inadequate. Indigenous people also often suffer burnout because of the immense workload that they carry and the limited resources available to provide assistance. Substantial issues exist concerning the delivery of services in remote and rural Communities and must therefore be addressed.

Issues affecting Indigenous people cannot be separated from a holistic approach to health and therefore, the Indigenous concept of health must be an essential component of health care solutions. Health is:

\textit{not just the physical well-being of the individual but the social, emotional, and cultural well-being of}
While much attention has been given to raising the standard of Indigenous health, there continue to be serious issues that are not being met. Stress, unresolved grief and complications from alcoholism and drug misuse are aspects of Indigenous lives that present serious implications for the future, if left unattended.

Mental health services are urgently required to address the emotional trauma experienced by Indigenous people. There is a need for localised healing programs that are specifically developed and subject to Community accountability.

The injustices of the justice system were unequivocally stated to be causing Indigenous peoples most grief. When discussing Community concerns, informants frequently expressed dissatisfaction with the justice system. The Task Force was told repeatedly that the justice system is archaic and must be adapted to meet the needs of the current environment. Crime prevention should not be wholly owned by Government but include diverse stakeholders. Elders throughout Queensland are calling for the use of cultural lore to address the escalating crime in Communities and the over incarceration of Indigenous people in both adult and juvenile centres. Crime prevention strategies are considered to be deficient with little relevance to traditional lore which provides the most effective deterrent. The informants saw the legal system as being fatally flawed, ineffective and unable to meet the challenges currently being presented.

While investigating violence was the primary objective of the Task Force, Elders and Community representatives stressed the need to analyse both causes and contributing factors involved as a means of presenting solutions. Although alcohol and drug abuse were reported to be primary factors in the level of violence and abuse being witnessed, there were other factors arising from both historical and contemporary experiences that were also believed to be present.

In providing a way forward, it was consistently stressed that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people must work together to halt the violence and reverse the long-standing disadvantages suffered by Indigenous Australians. Social justice, equity and reconciliation will depend on the full implementation of the recommendations of this Report.

The future of Indigenous people can no longer be taken for granted and therefore this Report has been developed in a genuine attempt to address those issues that have stifled the advancement of generations and maintained the multiple violations they have experienced.

1 Consultations, Central Queensland, 1999.
2 Consultations Gulf, 1999.
3 Submission, North Queensland, 1999.
REFERENCES


The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), Australian National University (2000) Cat. No. 6287.0


