

Unlocking Sunraysia's Potential



The Key for Better Education Outcomes in the Mallee



Beliefs

- Every young person has potential to be unlocked by learning through inclusion, engagement, participation and support.
- By unlocking the potential of young people they will enjoy strong, safe families and a vibrant, inclusive community in which to achieve sustainable prosperity

Mission

- To promote the highest levels of education attainment for our young people to enter adulthood best equipped to enjoy strong, safe families and a vibrant, inclusive community in which to achieve sustainable prosperity

Vision

- All young people in Sunraysia will enjoy the best possible start in life, embrace learning as the means to unlocking their potential to attain a prosperous, sustainable future and create a vibrant and safe community

Values

- **Learning:** the key to unlocking potential for the highest attainment levels possible
- **Engagement:** inclusive, relevant, client centred
- **Partnership:** unified, flexible, responsive, accessible

Emeritus Professor Tony Vinson AM writes...

My work over many years has clearly evidenced the link between deprived education and social disadvantage. "Unequal in Life" and "Dropping Off the Edge" alert us to the tragic price paid by young people who are often ill-prepared for school and unsupported in their education. My more recent work in Mildura informs me that some rural communities have added vulnerability as a consequence of their isolation and low expectations.

The real joy has been to tell the stories of those young people who succeed in the face of adversity. "Moving from the Edge" has provided us with some important insights in terms of those young people who manage to achieve against the odds.

In the case of Kyleen, we were able to identify a number of helpful influences ...

- The interest shown in her by teachers,
- The personal encouragement of counsellors,
- Her taste of small advances through a willingness to respond to opportunities,
- The inclusive policy of her university enabling Kyleen to partake of tertiary education and mentoring support,
- Assistance with child care, and
- Subsidised housing.

Kyleen's story is a reminder that social and economic disadvantage must be tackled on many fronts. With timely support, Kyleen's personal aspirations were able to blossom. Her success is a predictor of even better prospects for her own children.

The work being undertaken in Mildura, "Unlocking Sunraysia's Educational Potential" has the ability to tell many other encouraging stories. Bringing together a wide range of community interests to tackle this work is in itself laudable and inspiring.

Emeritus Professor Tony Vinson

"Moving From The Edge - Stories of Social Inclusion", Tony Vinson. A Study by Jesuit Social Services, 2010.

Introduction

1.1 THE PROCESS

It was agreed to establish a Taskforce to pursue recommendations from the Forum *Unlocking Sunraysia's Potential: The Quest for Better Education Outcomes in the Mallee.*

The Taskforce has:

Stated the vision for the Sunraysia community. This has been expressed in the form of a Compact (an agreement or statement of shared understanding) to which governments, organisations and businesses can 'sign up' and commit their support.

Prepared a Status Report on progress with the seventeen recommendations arising out of the Forum.

Prepared a Statement of Goals, Objectives, Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators. This statement has room for you, as a stakeholder, to record how you measure up to the Outcomes and what action you will be taking.

1.2 BACKGROUND

If Sunraysia wants a stronger community, there is a minimum level at which all community members should be engaged - they should, at least, be able to discharge their responsibilities as citizens. If Sunraysia is to thrive as well as it can, its citizens should share some core values, a communal consciousness and an awareness of the importance of shared goals.

How can Sunraysia grow stronger? The Forum discussed how to unlock potential and was built significantly on past reports (1) and actions (2). The Forum was one way in which the region committed itself to maintain direction, energy and motivation.

Within the region there are significant pockets of disadvantage and areas of concern that require attention and resources. There are also opportunities that need to be tapped. The region's social profile shows the population is ageing, there are housing and rental stresses on families, childhood accidents are twice those of regional Victoria, there are new arrivals from overseas, the region has high

levels of volunteering, there is a drift from agricultural employment, and Mildura suffers because its workforce has a high level of incomplete education (3). The Forum's commitment to follow up with action is a powerful way to give direction, address inequity and re-energize the community.

The community consists of many parts (for example, universities, governments, the police, businesses, social institutions, schools and farms), each of which have their own functions. These parts of the community are signatories to the Compact. Together, they work to promote social stability and growth. Communities, which are solid and integrated, are more likely to unlock opportunities for their members. This Report looks at some of these parts of the community and how to get them to be involved in strengthening the region.

- (1) For example, the MRCC's Community Wellbeing Survey Report, 2008,
- (2) The MRCC's Community Engagement Governance Team has some responsibility for driving this agenda
- (3) La Trobe University's Mildura Social Indicators Report 2008 by Aarons and Glossop

Compact

Sunraysia's potential must be unlocked.

The region will be economically and socially transformed by completely exposing its children, young people and adults in lifelong learning, making it one of Australia's most liveable places.

Sunraysia's people must have access to the resources and opportunities that will enable them to grow and develop from their earliest years, through structured and informal learning, education and training at home, school and work, and into their senior years. Lifelong learning occurs in the

classroom, at home and in the community. We are especially committed to assisting the most disadvantaged and disengaged to increase their participation in learning, training and work, knowing that educated members of our community are an asset, and under-educated community members are more likely to become a liability.

We agree that action consistent with this commitment will:

- Increase and inspire growth in economic, social, environmental and cultural capital
- Encourage and enable greater community involvement in all forms of education
- Develop stronger and more sustainable local communities, reduce disadvantage, assist children to attain the best of which they are capable and lead to greater personal growth for all.

The signatories commit to:

- Real action in real time
- Encourage local, tailored, sustainable responses and solutions to local challenges
- Maintain and build partnerships, and collaborate respectfully
- Build on existing community strengths and successes
- Give particular support to initiatives that create opportunities for the disadvantaged and remove access barriers to education and
- Share information and apply evidence to inform our decisions and review our successes.

To achieve this:

- The Compact will be supported by an Action Plan which will be championed by a taskforce of key players.
- Signatories agree to communicate the Compact's intent and significance to the region.

Defining Sunraysia

The term 'Sunraysia' was originally a generic title that referred to the irrigated fruit growing areas on both sides of the Murray around Mildura. For some, like the Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC), Sunraysia would usually include Victorian areas around the central business district and suburbs of Mildura, Red Cliffs, Merbein and Irymple. Sometimes it may suit MRCC interests to include outlying areas like Nangiloc or even Robinvale (which is within the Swan Hill Rural City Council's boundaries).

Some people might want to include NSW towns (Wentworth, Dareton, Buronga, Gol Gol, Trentham and Monak). For others, Sunraysia may be defined as the northern Mallee or include parts of the southern Mallee and Mallee Track (to the west). In the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) Loddon

Mallee Region there are two primary and secondary school networks covering the Mildura area - 'Sunraysia' covers Mildura, Merbein and Irymple, while the 'Mallee' network covers the Victorian half of the district around Mildura from Red Cliffs, Robinvale, Werrimull, Ouyen and Murrayville to the South Australian border.

For others, Sunraysia is synonymous with the local government areas of the MRCC, Wentworth Shire (NSW), Robinvale (Vic) and Euston (NSW). And there are many other possible definitions - even the Victorian government is unable to agree within itself. Hence, for the purpose of this project, planners are encouraged to set the boundaries around areas where they can quickly attract committed participants, and effectively achieve results and avoid lengthy debates about who is in or who is out.





USP Forum Recommendations July 20 & 21, 2010

RECOMMENDATION	COMMENT	ACTION/REFER TO
1 Develop a place-based Governance Framework under the Council's Community Engagement approach which has the authority to re-shape how resources are distributed so new solutions are possible and to create incentives for departments and community groups to demonstrate a cooperative and coordinated approach to funding and service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 1, 2, 3 • Approach Connecting Care, Mildura Rural City Council, NMLLEN
2 Establish a performance monitoring framework for target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing targets under the National Partnerships on Youth Attainment and Transition 	Goal 1, 2, 3
3 Create a new website which lists and describes all the services available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment and maintenance costs of new website prohibitive. Consider utilising existing websites 	Goal 1, 2, 3
4 Expand a Total Learning Centre-type model/concept into every primary school in Sunraysia creating a one-stop shop to access service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals and submissions for Total Learning Centre programs are being developed by some local schools 	Goal 1
5 Expand a Total Learning Centre-type model into secondary schools to continue to engage students and their families in the education process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Learning Centre model only applicable to schools with Primary components and not considered appropriate for secondary schools 	Goal 1
6 Change the model so kids are the purchasers of services (this is similar to the direction being taken in the tertiary education sector and with Skills Victoria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This model is not appropriate for all circumstances, models for student involvement in direction setting are being investigated and implemented 	Goal 1, 2, 3
7 Establish referral systems at schools to connect families to the right resources and to coordinate past and present services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment currently used in the Youth Connections program. • See proposal for social service delivery using schools as the 'hub' 	Goal 2
8 Determine how to systematically extend and offer long term mentoring programs which reach more students and parents – it's a stigma free approach that reports 80% and higher levels of engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some mentoring services already available 	Goal 1, 2, 3
9 Build the capacity of educators to engage children and parents from the outset and through every stage of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsed 	Goal 1, 2, 3
10 Support the Industry-based Learning Centre currently under development and create a stronger community-based approach to education so there are more opportunities for students to engage in real industry and community projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers to Mildura Region Trade Training Centre • Nov 4 2010 announcement of \$11.8m for the Mildura Region Trade Training Centre Consortium 	Goal 2
11 Ramp up the Harmony Play Group initiative which reaches a diversity of ethnic communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For further consideration 	Goal 1
12 Develop a strategy around childcare so young parents can continue to study and pursue employment-based education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model being researched currently auspiced by Mallee Family Care 	Goal 2
13 Address transport issues by understanding the funding of current arrangements and better use existing transport infrastructure to meet demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing program Transport Connections • See "Ready for Tomorrow - Blueprint for Regional and Rural Victoria Report" 	Goal 2, 3
14 Create a campaign which promotes how much this community values education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach being adopted by many sectors 	Goal 1, 2, 3
15 Support La Trobe's University's approach to inspiring secondary school students towards tertiary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaffey SC participating in La Trobe University Project 	Goal 2, 3
16 Develop an integrated approach which specifically targets those 10 -17 year olds who are currently involved in the court system and are causing a disproportionate amount of disruption within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options being developed • Flexible learning options models for vulnerable and disengaged youth being investigated 	Goal 2

Early Year's Goal (birth to school)

Goal 1: Every child will enjoy the best start in life

Objectives

We want every child in their early years:

1. To be as fit and healthy as possible
2. To engage in quality learning experiences from birth that build appropriate levels of, social and emotional, physical and academic skills
3. To feel safe, and enjoy their early years so they enter school having developed foundational relationship, identity and communication skills and knowledge; and learning and thinking skills
4. To share these objectives, regardless of a child's culture, ability or family of origin
5. To be supported by effective and sufficient resources

Outcomes

Is there a contribution we can make to have:

1. Increased recognition of parents as the first educators
2. Children enrolling at kindergarten and school who are:
Fit and healthy
Eating well at the start of the day
Applying foundational skills and knowledge for learning at kindergarten, school and for lifelong learning at home
Physically active and increasingly coordinated
Emotionally stable
3. Disadvantaged or vulnerable children receiving targeted and tailored assistance
4. A workforce which is:
Attracting more qualified people
Well trained and supported
Collaborating well with fellow educators and professionals from other services
Skilled in working with and engaging families
Skilled in working with different cultures
5. Barriers to attendance at preschool removed
6. Child care available at school for teen parents
7. Public campaigns about;
Stages of childhood development
The impact of a child's early years on later development
Attracting workers to the field of early childhood development
Child safety and accidents prevention
8. Local input into school's early years curricula and adult early years workforce training
9. Transition into, through and beyond kindergarten supported by the sharing of information, programs and resources

Key Performance Indicators

We will see:

1. Increased input by parents into their child's early years programs and services.
2. Improved child immunization, oral health and safety statistics
3. Increased participation by vulnerable and disadvantaged children in playgroups
4. Improved foundational capabilities for learning at school
5. Less required referrals for first year school children for social and emotional stability
6. Increased participation by 3 and 4 year olds in kindergarten
7. Close the gap to a best start for Indigenous children by:
Reducing smoking, low birth weight, and perinatal mortality
Increasing MCH service use, and child protection substantiations
Increasing 3 and 4 year old kindergarten participation
8. Improved retention of early years workforce
9. Improved networking between early years service providers, kindergartens and schools
10. Targeted media campaign regarding the impact of early years development implemented
11. Improved communication with families with vulnerable or disadvantaged children about services and programs available
12. A Child Care hub available to all teen student mums
13. Improved satisfaction with transition into kindergartens and schools
14. Improved training and professional support for early years workforce
15. Improved access to, and efficiency in the use of resources for early year

School Year's Goal (start of school to 18)

Goal 2: School age youth will acquire skills to prepare them for further education, training and employment, and participation in community.

Objectives

We want every school aged person:

1. To engage in learning which successfully leads them into further study, training or employment
2. To be able to contribute to community life to the best of their ability
3. To feel safe and respected
4. To share these objectives, regardless of culture, ability or family of origin

Outcomes

We want to have

1. Children and young people who are:
 - Fit and healthy
 - Eating well at the start of the day
 - Achieving academically
 - Emotionally stable
 - Engaging in their local community
2. Children and young people whose school experience:
 - Places them on appropriate, negotiated learning paths
 - Provides access to flexible learning options
 - Retains them in learning
 - Prepares them for work and provides
3. Young people who are disadvantaged or vulnerable receiving a targeted and tailored service and programs to retain and re-engage them
4. An ICT system that:
 - Successfully tracks every young person
 - Provides educators, students and families with access to required information
 - Enables timely, effective communication
 - Facilitates cross-sector referral
5. Coaches, mentors and leaders engaged in a positive way to:
 - Influence the development of young lives
 - Be role models
6. A workforce that is:
 - Attracting more qualified people
 - Well trained and supported
 - Collaborating well with colleagues and professionals from other services
 - Skilled in working with and engaging families
 - Skilled in working with different cultures
 - Trained and supported to re-engage and retain disengaging and disengaged young people

Key Performance Indicators

We will see:

1. Dental caries halved for young people at 15 years by 2020
2. Child and Adolescent Mental Health admissions trend reversed
3. Schools offering breakfast or lunch programs to address poverty gap by 2012
4. Unless otherwise stated, data sets available to measure outcomes by 2012
5. 92.5% Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment by 2015
6. Halve the gap for Indigenous students regarding reading, writing and numeracy by 2020
7. Halve the gap of Indigenous young people attaining Year 12 by 2015
8. Reliable list of children and young people who are at risk or disengaged available by 2012
9. Improved information available to support children and young people at risk of disengaging.
10. School attendance better than state mean and disengagement halved by 2015
11. Comprehensive systems in place by 2013 for :
 - Flexible learning options to be mapped and tailored to meet demand
 - Flexible learning options providing reportable learning outcomes for students
 - Personalised tracking of individualised learning and career pathways plans
12. 20% increase in enrolments in post secondary education on school completion by 2015
13. Teachers report satisfaction with ICT
14. Professional supervision provided to educators and education managers delivering student wellbeing support
15. Evidence of all schools building partnerships to support disengaged children and young people with:
 - Service and training providers
 - Community organisations
 - Indigenous organisations or their community leaders
 - Ethnic communities
16. Evidence that young people aged 15-18 are supported in appropriate work experience or work placed learning as part of their academic or training program
17. A plan to train and place mentors is implemented, which includes supporting apprentices by a mentor during, at least, the first 6 months of their employment

Young Adult Year's Goal (post school to 24)

Goal 3: All young adults access ongoing learning to prepare them for further education, training and employment, and participation in community.

Objectives

We want every young adult:

1. To have the capacity for meaningful and sustainable employment
2. To grow in self-understanding and that of others
3. To enjoy rewarding leisure and recreation
4. To increase, and then share knowledge about the world and community in which they live
5. To be able to contribute to community life to the best of their ability
6. To achieve appropriate social emotional and economic wellbeing

Outcomes

We want to have:

1. Young adults who are:
Able to be employed in meaningful work
Appropriately fit and healthy
Able to enjoy learning
Emotionally stable
Engaged in their local community
Able to share their life experiences and knowledge
2. Young adults who, through learning and employment, are better able to meet their basic needs (e.g. food, shelter, good health, security)
3. Young adults who are able to access learning at appropriate places of training and through employment
4. A workforce that is:
Attracting more qualified people
Well trained and supported
Collaborating effectively with colleagues and professionals from other services
Skilled in working with and engaging families
Skilled in working with different cultures
5. Strong networks of program and service providers, and industry and business, who monitor, plan, implement and review, with and for young adults, to improve services, programs and employment opportunities for them.
6. Local research and study that addresses local issues regarding young adults participation in education, training and employment and community.

Key Performance Indicators

We will see:

1. Rates below the national average for dental caries, mental illness, diabetes and trauma, injury and death due to accidents and acts of crime
2. Rates of Year 12 completion of 19 - 24 year olds match or exceeds the national level
3. Halve the gap for Indigenous young adults in attaining Yr 12 or equivalent completion and tertiary education by 2015 by 2015
4. Halve the gap for disadvantaged or vulnerable young adults in attaining Year 12 or equivalent completion and tertiary education by 2015
5. 20% increase in enrolments at University, TAFE and RTO's by 2015
6. Evidence that training and tertiary education institutions use advice from students and community to design courses to meet locally expressed needs
7. Local enrolment for post-graduate research doubled by 2015
8. Halve the unemployment rate for 19 - 24 year olds by 2015
9. Effective networks between education, training and employment sectors



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