

Avon-Midland Country Zone of the WA Local Government Association
MINUTES OF THE ZONE MEETING
held at the Harvest Room, Wongan Hills Hotel, 5 Fenton Place, Wongan Hills
Friday 20 June 2014 commencing at 10.00 am

1 OPENING & WELCOME

The Zone Deputy President welcomed delegates and observers and acknowledged the attendance of Hon Marty Aldridge MLC. He introduced Cr Peter Macnamara, President of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu. Cr Macnamara welcomed delegates and guests to Wongan Hills and commented on –

- Wongan Hills is in the south-west corner of the Shire and this presents some difficulties in servicing outlying areas of the Shire.
- The Shire focusses its attention on Wongan Hills; this has generally been accepted provided roads are maintained.
- A lot of the Shire's bitumen roads have only a 3.6m seal. The Shire is working to widen the seal on these roads to 7.0m. This work has become essential due to the growing volume of heavy traffic, particularly carting lime sand, and the need to meet safety requirements for other road users.
- The Shire is currently focused on completion of the new arts/visitors/community resource centre in Wongan Hills. The original builder went broke before the building was completed. New builders have been engaged and work is back on track.

Cr R Hawes entered the meeting at 10.03 am.

- Aged care. Lovegrove Lodge Hostel is the local residential aged care facility. It was built by locals for locals and is now run by the Health Service. If new units were to be built they would have to be run locally. Finding that locals cannot get placements at Lovegrove Lodge as this is on a needs basis. Recently a member of one of the districts pioneer families was unable to find a placement and as a consequence she has moved to a facility in Applecross.
- Concerns that the HACC service will in the future have to be funded by local government.
- The Shire is currently provides funding assistance for the School Chaplain at the local District High School.

2 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

2.1 Attendance

Chairman –

Cr Steven Pollard Shire of Northam (Deputy President)

Delegates -

Cr Robert Hawes	Shire of Chittering
Cr Robert Nixon	Shire of Dalwallinu
Cr Lawrie Short	Shire of Dandaragan
Cr Val Ammon	Shire of Gingin
Cr Doug Sewell	Shire of Goomalling
Cr Colin Gardiner	Shire of Moora
Cr Julie Williams	Shire of Northam
Cr Paula Greenway	Shire of Toodyay
Cr Stephanie Penn	Shire of Victoria Plains
Cr Peter Macnamara	Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
Cr Pat Hooper	Shire of York

Observers –

Mr Jeremy Edwards	Shire of Gingin
Mr Clem Kerp	Shire of Goomalling
Mr Alan Leeson	Shire of Moora
Cr Rosemary Madacsi	Shire of Toodyay
Mr Stan Scott	Shire of Toodyay
Mr Harry Hawkins	Shire of Victoria Plains
Cr Matthew Reid	Shire of York

Mr Michael Keeble	Shire of York
Hon Marty Aldridge MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Mr Gary Angel	Indigenous Communities Development Officer, Department of Local Government & Communities
Ms Denese Smythe	Youth Connections Manager, RDA Wheatbelt Inc
Mr Trevor Saunders	Sorcit Ltd
Ms Rebecca Brown	Manager Waste & Recycling, WA Local Government Association
Mr Craig Hansom	Roman II Business Manager, WA Local Government Association
Ms Rebecca Kelly	Senior Regional Officer Central Midlands, Wheatbelt Development Commission
Robert Dew	Zone Executive Officer

2.2 **Apologies**

Mr Gary Tuffin	Shire of Chittering
Mr Peter Crispin	Shire of Dalwallinu
Cr Kaye McGlew	Shire of Dandaragan
Mr Tony Nottle	Shire of Dandaragan
Cr Jan Court	Shire of Gingin (President)
Mr Jason Whiteaker	Shire of Northam
Cr David Dow	Shire of Toodyay
Cr David Lovelock	Shire of Victoria Plains
Hon Paul Brown MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Rick Mazza MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Darren West MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Mia Davies MLC	Member for Central Wheatbelt
Mr Shane Love MLA	Member for Moore
Ms Pamela l'Anson	Regional Director, Department of Agriculture & Food WA
Ms Rebekah Burges	Executive Officer, RDA Wheatbelt Inc
Mr Cliff Simpson	Wheatbelt North Road Safety Advisor, WA Local Government Association

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

5 **GUEST SPEAKERS / PRESENTATIONS**

5.1 **Metropolitan Waste to Landfill**

Ms Rebecca Brown, WALGA Manager Waste & Recycling addressed the meeting on the issue of metropolitan waste to landfill.

Mr Harry Hawkins withdrew from the meeting at 10.16 am.

Cr S Pollard referred to the issue of building waste and the problem of identifying where it had come from and how to police. Ms Brown commented on government regulation and inspectors going on site.

Cr C Gardiner commented on recycling and that there used to be some return; now it is a cost. He asked as to the future of recycling. Ms Brown replied that recycling was a commodity; at present Western Australia exports pretty much all of its recyclable materials; before the Global Financial Crisis waste paper was worth around \$200 per tonne now it had little value; there is a need for local industry to process recyclables otherwise market fluctuations will continue to affect their value; experience with deposit legislation shows that it helps; long term remanufacturing and manufacturing in Australia is moving off shore; recyclable materials will always have a value if there is demand.

Cr R Nixon commented on built in obsolescence of products.

Cr P Hooper expressed the view that something had to be done about excessive packaging. Ms Brown replied that the drivers for packaging were around design not recycling - pretty, light and cost.

Cr L Short asked about the future of compost for agricultural use. Ms Brown replied that the challenge was to get households to separate out materials for composting; there were opportunities to develop a product suitable for agricultural use; a three bin waste system in the metropolitan area could divert up to 60% of waste.

5.2 Asset Management

Mr Craig Hansom, WALGA Roman II Business Manager, gave a presentation on Roman II and asset management.

Cr L Short commented that Roman II has proved very useful in location of culverts, watercourse etc and was a tremendous help. Mr Hansom commented that a tablet app was available for use on site.

Cr S Pollard commented that the Accounting Standard for Asset Valuation required annual valuation of assets. Mr Hansom replied that Roman II can store the necessary data.

Mr A Leeson commented on the challenge to educate farmers to use appropriate routes for cartage of grain etc which may differ from their 'normal' routes.

Cr C Gardiner referred to replacement of buildings a lot earlier than needed. Mr Hansom replied that asset management can highlight when to intervene to extend the life of buildings.

Mr S Scott referred to issues the Shire of Toodyay has experienced with getting condition data from Roman II when 'new' condition not showing: messes up the asset management plan. He suggested that the system needs to include a useful life for assets and not be forever. Mr Hansom replied that this issue was being discussed with the consultants.

Cr P Hooper commented on the need for historic buildings to be insured at realistic rates. Mr Hansom replied that this was not a problem if a valuation different from the norm can be justified.

6 MINUTES

6.1 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the Zone Meeting held 2 May 2014 at Bindoon. Copies of these Minutes have been circulated to all member Councils.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Zone Meeting held on 2 May 2014, as printed and circulated, be confirmed.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Hooper moved and Cr L Short seconded –

That the Minutes of the Zone Meeting held on 2 May 2014, as printed and circulated, be confirmed.
CARRIED

6.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

(a) Zone Meetings by Video Conference (Item 6.2 (a))

The November 2013 meeting requested that research be undertaken into some Zone meetings being held by video conference based on the use of laptop/desktop computers. At the Wheatbelt Conference held in York in April a presentation was given by Redback Conferencing on their web conference service.

The last Zone meeting requested that a trial web conference be undertaken to test the feasibility of its use. Enquiries indicate that CRCs within the Zone all have video conferencing capability but outside of the CRC network the required internet connection is problematic. Not all Zone members have a CRC within their area. Enquiries are on-going.

After general discussion the meeting agreed that no further action be taken on this matter.

(b) Grain Freight (Item 6.2 (b))

In response to the Zone's request for advice as to why there are no rail outloading facilities at the new Dowerin receival site and why the Konnongorring receival site is frequently by road rather than rail CBH has advised -

CBH acknowledges the use of road transport from many of the CBH sites that are located in the Avon-Midland Country Zone of WALGA, not only this year but in the recent years since deregulation of the grain industry and the continual increase in marketers demand to get grain to port in the shortest period of time.

The reason for the road transport cartage to the CBH Avon receival point is to move grain from sites that are relatively less efficient into the Standard Gauge railway, where a larger train can be loaded. As an example the site at Dowerin can only load 12 to 14 wagons at a time, and those wagons would hold 59mt each, where the Avon site can load 60 wagons at 78mt each. The train operations to Avon are much more efficient also, with the need to break the train up not required where at Dowerin, for example, the train would need to be broken into three and reattached at the end of the load process, which adds considerable time to the train cycle. The train loading time at the Avon site is also significantly faster at 3,000 tonnes per hour compared to Dowerin at 300 tonnes per hour and Konnongorring at 250 tonnes per hour.

CBH acknowledges the impact and issues that come with the use of road transport on country roads and does take considerable steps with its contractors to operate safely, including accurate loading of vehicles, agreed routes from and to CBH sites, notification of any known issues on routes and re-routing if required and working with local communities to avoid high risk times such as school finishing times. CBH also sends notifications to all local governments of planned use of road transport in their area so that there is awareness in the communities of the planned road transport programs.

CBH will continue to use road from these sites for the foreseeable future, as this logistical movement is the only option to accelerate these tonnes to port. If CBH did not accelerate tonnes, then other entities would engage in their own transport and move these tonnes in an unco-ordinated fashion to port. It is important to understand that CBH does take community feedback into consideration, however other organisations may not.

In specific reply to the resolution made at the WALGA zone meeting the response is as follows

- *The reason that CBH has not built rail out loading facilities at Dowerin 2 is simply due to cost. Brookfield Rail will not allow CBH to use the mainline to load a train, and as a result a rail loop would need to be built, and then rail loading facilities. For the volume of tonnes received at Dowerin 2, this investment cannot be justified. The reasons for frequent out loading by road transport at Konnongorring is mainly answered by the above paragraphs in the letter, however is also compounded by the reduced loading weight per axle on this line, that allows a 47mt payload instead of a 59mt payload at Dowerin.*

CBH will continue to make rail a priority across the state, however there will always be an increasing demand for shipping in early calendar months, which will continue to move by road transport by either CBH or others.

We would be happy to meet at some stage in the near future to explain this in more detail and field any questions your members may have.

The meeting requested that representatives of CBH Group be invited to the November 2014 Zone meeting to discuss the issue of road/rail outloading of receival sites.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned for morning tea at 11.04 am.

RESUMPTION

The meeting resumed at 11.27 am. All those present on adjournment were present on resumption.

(c) Day Care Facilities (Item 9.2)

Last meeting requested that the assistance of the WA Local Government Association be sought in ascertaining the issues of providing 'day-care' facilities within rural local governments and in particular the Wheatbelt. Jodie Holbrook, WALGA Policy Manager Community, has advised that the Association is developing a report for the Zone on the key issues within the region and possible options to address service needs. To capture local issues she has circulated a questionnaire to Zone members; comment requested by 30 June 2014. See also Zone Status Report (Item 6.4).

Discussions with the RDA Wheatbelt and the Wheatbelt Development Commission have yet to be arranged.

NOTED

(d) Zone Tax Offset Reform (Item 6.1)

Cr R Nixon drew attention to the resolution of State Council at its 2 May 2014 meeting and expressed concern at the level of increases to the Zone Tax Offset amounts in the resolution as these amounts still did not adequately acknowledge the higher cost of living in remote areas. He referred to the discussion at the Zone's last meeting and the information presented that if the offsets were indexed in accordance with CPI from the year they had been introduced the amounts would be approximately –

Zone A (introduced in 1945)	\$2,652
Zone B (introduced in 1945)	\$1,326
Special Area (introduced in 1981/82)	\$2,525.

He believed these amounts to be more realistic in assisting those living in remote areas. He also noted that the Zone resolution supporting the recommendation to State Council was subject to the proviso that "the Zone Tax Offsets are indexed from the year in which they had been introduced".

The meeting noted that the proviso to its support for the recommendation to State Council did not appear to have been noted in the information provided to State Council at its 2 May 2014 meeting.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Hooper moved and Cr J Williams seconded –

- (a) That the Zone seek the support of those WALGA Zones within the Zone A and Zone B Tax Offset areas to urge State Council to adopt Zone Tax Offset amounts for advocacy to the Federal Government which are based on indexation of the amounts from the year they had been originally introduced; and**
- (b) That the Zone urge State Council to review the increases to the Zone Tax Offset amounts set out in its resolution of 2 May 2014 (resolution 31.2/2014) and recommends that the amounts be based on indexation from the date the offsets were originally introduced.**

CARRIED

7 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

7.1 WALGA State Council Agenda

Review of the Agenda for the State Council meeting to be held Wednesday 2 July 2014. The Agenda has been circulated by WA Local Government Association to member Councils for distribution to delegates. The Zone is able to provide comment or submit alternate recommendations to State Council for consideration.

Matters for Decision

5.1 Local Government Reform and Poll Provisions

RESOLUTION

Cr R Nixon moved and Cr D Sewell seconded –

That the Zone support Part 1 of the recommendation to State Council.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION

Cr D Sewell moved and Cr R Nixon seconded –

That the Zone oppose Part 2 of the recommendation to State Council and recommends that the existing poll provisions be retained.

Cr P Hooper left the meeting at 12.14 pm.

MOTION LOST 3/7

RESOLUTION

Cr P Greenway moved and Cr D Sewell seconded –

That the Zone support Part 2 (a) of the recommendation to State Council but does not support Part 2 (b) of the recommendation.

CARRIED 8/2

Cr P Hooper returned to the meeting at 12.17 pm.

5.2 Road Funding Campaign

The meeting recommended that the Zone support the recommendation to State Council.

5.3 Microeconomic Reform Inquiry Draft Report Submission

The meeting recommended that the Zone support the recommendation to State Council.

5.4 Draft Submission to the WA Planning Commission: Draft State Planning Policy 3.7 Planning for Bushfire Risk Management

The meeting recommended that the Zone support the recommendation to State Council.

5.5 DFES Concept Paper: Review of the Emergency Services Acts -WALGA Submission

RESOLUTION

Cr D Sewell moved and Cr L Short seconded –

That the Zone recommends that the recommendation to State Council be amended –

- **In Parts (a) and (b) – by including reference to Federal government agencies; and**
- **Adding new Part (i):**

That DFES liaise with the Department of Planning and the WA Planning Commission regarding fire prone areas which are an impost to rural and regional development.

and;

That the Association's submission on the Department of Fire and Emergency Services Concept Paper: Review of the Emergency Services Acts be amended accordingly.

CARRIED

- 5.6 Regional Planning and Infrastructure Frameworks - Goldfields- Esperance, Wheatbelt, South West, Great Southern and Kimberley Regions

RESOLUTION

Cr P Hooper moved and Cr C Gardiner seconded –

That the Zone support the recommendation to State Council and that the Zone requests that WALGA's submission to the WA Planning Commission be amended in Appendix 1, WALGA's response to the Aviation Strategy for the Wheatbelt, to include Cunderdin airport (before Kalgoorlie or Geraldton) as the emergency alternative airport and the need to link the emergency airport with rail efficiencies.

CARRIED

- 5.7 Local Government and Emergency Management in Remote Aboriginal Communities

The meeting recommended that the Zone support the recommendation to State Council.

- 5.8 Patient Assisted Travel Scheme Inquiry

RESOLUTION

Cr P Hooper moved and Cr P Greenway seconded –

That the Zone support the recommendation to State Council and that the Zone request that the Association's interim submission to Patient Assisted Travel Scheme inquiry be amended to include reference to the need for the scheme to be available to all residents of local governments outside of the metropolitan area and that there be no requirement to travel a specified distance to access the medical specialist service.

CARRIED

- 5.9 Local Government Communique on Future Service Delivery to Discrete Aboriginal Communities

The meeting recommended that the Zone support the recommendation to State Council.

- 5.10 WALGA Submission – Review of Contaminated Sites Act 2003

The meeting recommended that the Zone support the recommendation to State Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the above recommendations and comments be endorsed.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Hooper moved and Cr C Gardiner seconded –

That the above recommendations and comments be endorsed.

CARRIED

Matters for Noting/information

- 6.1 WA Planning Commission's Summary of Submissions – Planning makes it Happen: Phase 2
- 6.2 Rating Exemptions for Land Used Exclusively for Charitable Purposes
- 6.2 Cessation of the Local Biodiversity Program
- 6.3 Report Municipal Waste Advisory Council

RECOMMENDATION

That the above matters for noting/information be noted.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Hooper moved and Cr P Macnamara seconded –

That the above matters for noting/information be noted.

CARRIED

Organisational Reports

- 7.1.1 Report on Key Activities, Environment and Waste Unit
- 7.1.2 Report on Key Activities, Governance and Strategy
- 7.1.3 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure
- 7.1.4 Report on Key Activities, Planning and Community Development
- 7.2.1 Metropolitan Reform Implementation Policy Forum
- 7.2.2 Country Reform Policy Forum
- 7.2.3 Mining Community Policy Forum
- 7.2.4 Container Deposit Legislation Policy Forum
- 7.2.5 Metropolitan Mayors Policy Forum

RECOMMENDATION

That the above organisational reports be noted.

Updated Key Activity report for the Planning and Community Development portfolio was tabled and copies circulated to delegates.

RESOLUTION

**Cr D Sewell moved and Cr L Short seconded –
That the above organisational reports be noted.**

CARRIED

7.2 WALGA President's Report

Presentation of the WALGA President's Report (attached to Agenda)

RECOMMENDATION

That the WALGA President's Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr P Hooper moved and Cr L Short seconded –
That the WALGA President's Report be received.**

CARRIED

7.3 State Councillor's Report

Report by State Councillor Cr L Short on State Council meeting held 7-9 May 2014 (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the State Councillor's Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr R Nixon moved and Cr P Macnamara seconded –
That the State Councillor's Report be received.**

CARRIED

7.4 Zone Status Report

Report by WA Local Government Association on status of Zone resolutions for action by the Association – June 2014 (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the June 2014 Status Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr J Williams moved and Cr P Hooper seconded –
That the June 2014 Status Report be received.**

CARRIED

8 REPORTS

8.1 Country Reform Policy Forum

Report by Cr Short (attached to Agenda) and Cr Hooper on the Country Reform Policy Forum meeting held 7 May 2014.

Recommendation

That the Country Reform Policy Forum Report be received.

RESOLUTION

Cr R Nixon moved and Cr P Macnamara seconded –

That the Country Reform Policy Forum Report be received.

CARRIED

8.2 Local Government Grain Freight Group

No meeting of the Local Government Grain Group has been held since the last Zone meeting. The next meeting of the Group is scheduled for 7 July 2014.

As reported to the last meeting the Grain Group made a submission to the Legislative Assembly's Economic and Industry Standing Committee's inquiry into the management of Western Australia's freight rail network. Representatives of the Grain Group, together with representatives of the WA Local Government Association and the Shire of Kalamunda, were request to jointly give evidence at a hearing of the Committee on 13 June 2014. The Grain Group was represented by the Group's Chair Cr Stephen Strange. A public hearing was also held at Bruce Rock. A report on the hearing will be given at the Group's next meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Local Government Grain Freight Group Report be received

RESOLUTION

Cr P Hooper moved and Cr R Hawes seconded –

That the Local Government Grain Freight Group Report be received.

CARRIED

8.3 Wheatbelt Health MOU

(a) Minutes of the Wheatbelt Health MOU Group

Minutes of the Wheatbelt Health MOU Group meeting held 1 April 2014 (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Wheatbelt Health MOU Group meeting held 1 April 2014, as circulated, be received.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Macnamara moved and Cr P Hooper seconded –

That the minutes of the Wheatbelt Health MOU Group meeting held 1 April 2014, as circulated, be received.

CARRIED

(b) Reports

Report by delegates – Cr L Short and Cr D Dow (attached to Agenda). Cr J Court was unable to attend.

Matters from the MOU Group's meeting on 3 June 2014 included -

- The meeting was attended by Hon Marty Aldridge MLC, Hon Jim Chown MLC, Hon Darren West MLC and Mr Shane Love MLA. The Group's Chair, Mr John Scott, provided an overview of the MOU Group, its history and work to date including an outline of the work currently being undertaken by the Group. Copy of the Chair's overview is attached to the Agenda.
- The MOU Group has adopted its budget for the year ending 30 June 2015. The subscription for each Party to the MOU Group has been set at \$2,600 (excluding GST). This amount will be included in the Zone's 2014/2015 budget.
- The MOU Group has undertaken a review of its Strategic Plan. The draft plan (attached) was adopted by the Group.

- The MOU Group has made a submission to the Inquiry into the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) in Western Australia by the Standing Committee on Public Administration. While no advice has been received as to when hearings are to be held it is understood that the Committee will be holding hearings in the regions.

The next meeting of the Group is scheduled for Tuesday 5 August 2014.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Wheatbelt Health MOU Group Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr L Short moved and Cr P Hooper seconded –
That the Wheatbelt Health MOU Group Report be received.**

CARRIED

8.4 Department of Local Government and Communities

Presentation of report by the Director General.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Director General's Report be received.

Mr G Angel advised that due to a delay in publishing the Director General's Report it was not available for presentation to the meeting. The Executive officer will circulate to members and delegates as soon as it is available.

NOTED

8.5 Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt

- (a) Presentation by Ms Denise Smythe and Mr Trevor Saunders on youth priorities and comments on closing of the Youth Connections program.

**Cr D Sewell moved and Cr R Hawes seconded –
That the Zone request the WA Local Government Association to advocate for the retention of the Youth Connections Program.**

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 1.31 pm.

The meeting agreed that lunch would be a working lunch.

RESUMPTION

The meeting resumed at 1.40 pm. With the exception of Cr P Greenway, Cr R Madasci, Mr S Scott, Cr V Amon, Mr J Edwards, Mr G Angel and Ms R Brown, all those present on adjournment were present on resumption.

- (b) Presentation of report by Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt's Report be received.

The Executive Officer tabled the RDA Wheatbelt June 20214 Update; copies were circulated to delegates.

RESOLUTION

**Cr R Nixon moved and Cr C Gardiner seconded –
That the RDA Wheatbelt's Report be received.**

CARRIED

8.6 Wheatbelt Development Commission

Ms Rebecca Kelly presented the Wheatbelt Development Commission report and commented on –

- State Budget Announcements
 - Southern Investment Initiative
 - State-wide Regional Blueprint Initiative
 - Regional Strategic Projects
 - Regional Telecommunications Project Stage 2
- Planning
 - Regional Blueprints
 - Sub regional Economic Planning and Growth Planning for Regional Centres
 - Aged Care Planning
- Important Dates
 - Wheatbelt Regional Blueprint - Submissions close Friday 18 July 2014.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Wheatbelt Development Commission's Report be received.

Cr P Macnamara and Mr C Hansom left the meeting at 1.51 pm.

RESOLUTION

Cr C Gardiner moved and Cr J Williams seconded –

That the Wheatbelt Development Commission's Report be received.

CARRIED

9 FINANCE

9.1 Financial Reports

Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss report for the period ending 31 May 2014 are attached.

RECOMMENDATION

That the financial reports for the period ending 31 May 2014, as attached, be received.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Hooper moved and Cr J Williams seconded –

That the financial reports for the period ending 31 May 2014, as attached, be received.

CARRIED

9.2 Accounts for Payment

The following accounts are submitted for payment –

<u>Payee</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Great Eastern Country Zone	Executive Support Services Health MOU Group - 1/7/2013 to 31/12/2013 <i>(Note - Final payment under old MOU whereby the 3 Zones met the costs for the Group)</i>	\$2,265.05
	TOTAL (including GST)	<u>\$2,265.05</u>

RECOMMENDATION

That the accounts as listed totalling \$2,265.05 be approved for payment.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Hooper moved and Cr J Williams seconded –

That the accounts as listed totalling \$2,265.05 be approved for payment.

CARRIED

10 ZONE BUSINESS

10.1 Wheatbelt Conference

FROM: Executive Officer

BACKGROUND:

The Zone, in association with the Central and Great Eastern Country Zones, Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt and the Wheatbelt Development Commission has been actively involved in the arrangements and conduct of the 2014 Wheatbelt Conference that was held in York on Thursday 3 and Friday 4 April 2014.

COMMENT:

At its last meeting the Zone agreed to support the holding of a Wheatbelt Conference every two years, with the next Conference being in 2016 and to offer its support for a combined Zone workshop with the Central and Great Eastern Country Zones to be held in 2015. The Central and Great Eastern Country Zones have supported a similar resolution.

The Wheatbelt Conference Organising Committee met on 3 June 2014 –

- 2014 Conference – The Committee undertook an evaluation of the 2014 Conference and considered the report presented to the three Zones at their May meetings. At the time of the meeting the finances for the Conference had not been completed as not all accounts had been finalised. It is estimated that the outcome will be a surplus.
- 2015 Workshop – The Committee considered the one day Workshop proposed for 2015. The following matters were determined:
 - Interim date - Friday 13 March 2015 (9.30 am to 3.00 pm).
 - Expressions of interest are to be invited from members Councils of the three Zones to host the Workshop –
 - Venue to be able to accommodate 100+ delegates and have at least three separate rooms for concurrent sessions.
 - Catering - Morning tea and lunch.
 - The President of each Zone to be invited to participate in the host selection process.
- It was noted that the Workshop could be suited to those local governments which do not have sufficient accommodation to host the Wheatbelt Conference

RESOLUTION

**Cr P Hooper moved and Cr S Penn seconded –
That the Wheatbelt Conference Report be received**

CARRIED

Cr C Gardiner and Mr A Leeson left the meeting at 1.55 pm.

11 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Hon Marty Aldridge MLC commented on –

- There are 61 local governments in his electorate.
- Try to get to as many Zone meetings as possible.
- Road funding to Local Government
 - Regional Crash Run Off Funding removed for the second year.
 - The Wheatbelt has the worst record for crashes – most are on local government roads; 80% are single vehicle run offs.
 - The Road Trauma Trust Account had around \$80m in it at the end of this financial year and is expected to have around \$70m next year.
 - There is a need to keep pressure on Government and local Members of Parliament on road funding for local government.
- Working on the review of the Emergency Services Acts including extension of protection to volunteer firefighters; have met with WALGA.

- Mr Shane Love MLA working closely with WALGA on local government reform.
- Mobile phone towers - \$40m in the State Government budget for new mobile phone towers; highway coverage South Australian border to Northern Territory border; focusing on blackspot infill; there are some views that there should be more competition – does not support.
- Have been unable to obtain access to the documents outlining the lease of the grain freight rail network.
- There are more tonnes of aglime carted out of Lancelin than grain carted on the tier 3 rail lines.

Cr S Pollard asked as to why Mr Aldridge had been unable to access the grain freight rail lease documents. Mr Aldridge replied that the parts of the document including amendments and performance standards over the life of the lease had been deemed to be commercial in confidence. The lease documents had also not been made available to the Legislative Assembly's Economic and Industry Standing Committee's inquiry into the management of Western Australia's freight rail network.

Mr M Keeble enquired as to the logic behind the \$1b per year cap on expenditure from the Royalties for Regions fund. Mr Aldridge replied that the legislation setting up the fund originally had a cap on the amount of money in the fund; took the view that there should be a cap on expenditure; \$4b has been 'locked away' for expenditure over the next 4 years; believe that the cap will have no effect.

Mr M Keeble asked if \$1b Royalty for Regions funds are not fully expended in any one year whether the unspent funds will be carried forward. Mr Aldridge replied no; the challenge will be to get the \$1b 'out the door'; there is 12½% allowance for over programming factored in to the fund.

Cr L Short asked about the increasing tonnage of aglime being used. Mr Aldridge replied that 95% of the aglime comes from within the Shire of Gingin; it is estimated that the amount of aglime used is 30-35% of what should be used; the aglime operators are talking about operating year round.

Cr D Sewell asked as to the National Party's stand on local government amalgamations. Mr Aldridge replied that the National Party has consistently not supported forced amalgamations; assurances have been sought from the Liberal Party that local government reform would not affect rural areas; the metropolitan reform process is running in accordance with the Local Government Act; concerned with recent comments regarding the extension of reform to rural local governments; believe that metropolitan residents are not engaged with their local governments and the reform process.

12 URGENT BUSINESS (as permitted by the Presiding Member)

12.1 Protocol to Recognise Past Presidents

Cr R Hawes advised that recently two previous Presidents of the Shire of Chittering had passed away. He enquired as to the protocol at a Shire meeting to recognise these members.

Delegates indicated that generally the President announces the passing of the past members, advises their terms of office and invites the meeting to hold 1 minutes silence.

13 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The Zone's next meeting is scheduled for Friday 22 August 2014 and to be hosted by the Shire of Moora.

Future meetings of the Zone are scheduled for –

22 August 2014	Shire of Moora
21 November 2014	Shire of Goomalling

RECOMMENDATION

That the next ordinary meeting of the Zone be held Friday 22 August 2014 and be hosted by the Shire of Moora.

RESOLUTION

**Cr P Hooper moved and Cr D Sewell seconded –
That the next ordinary meeting of the Zone be held Friday 22 August 2014 and be hosted by the
Shire of Moora. **CARRIED****

14 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 2.18 pm.

CERTIFICATION

These Minutes were confirmed by the meeting held on

Signed:
(Chairman of meeting at which the Minutes were confirmed)



ZONE REPORT JUNE 2014

STATE BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1 Southern Investment Initiative

A significant announcement in the budget is the five year \$600m (\$515m between 2014-15 and 2017-18) Southern Investment Initiative. This fund is for the Great Southern, Peel, South West and Wheatbelt Regions and aimed at achieving more sustainable social and economic outcomes. A governance structure and process is currently being developed to support the delivery of this fund.

1.2 State-wide Regional Blueprint Initiative

This is a new State-wide program that has been announced to receive \$292m over five years (\$168m from 2014-15 to 2017-18) to develop major economic, social and community development projects. A governance structure and process is currently being developed to support the delivery of this fund.

1.3 Regional Strategic Projects

This fund has been allocated a total of \$78m from 2014-15 to 2017-18 (with \$30.7m in 2014-15) to support forward planning and implementation of State-wide and regionally significant projects. A key focus will be for projects that link to the priorities outlined in the Regional Blueprints and while-or-government State Planning and Development Framework. Included in this funding is \$10m/year (across the forward estimates to begin in 2014-15) for the Regional Development Commission's to support new regionally significant projects and existing projects that will improve and develop infrastructure and services in the regions through a Regional Grants program. A governance structure and process is currently being developed to support the delivery of this fund.

1.4 Regional Telecommunications Project Stage 2

This project has been announced to receive an additional \$45m to build on the \$40m Regional Mobile Communications Project (Stage 1) investment. Stage 2 will focus on broadband accessibility in regional and remote communities.

2. PLANNING

2.1 Regional Blueprints

A Wheatbelt Roadshow was held to publically launch the Wheatbelt Investment Blueprint. The Blueprint is currently out for public comment of where the document can be found on the Wheatbelt Development Commission website www.wheatbelt.wa.gov.au. Submissions close Friday 18 July 2014.

Any enquiries to Carol Redford Regional Officer Central Coast M: 0408 073 993, carol.redford@wheatbelt.wa.gov.au

2.2 Sub regional Economic Planning and Growth Planning for Regional Centres

The Central Midlands Sub Regional Economic Strategy was launched on 6 June. The Central East and Wheatbelt South are in their final stages of development with the third round interviews having just been completed with Wheatbelt South Local Governments. The partnership with LandCorp to develop Growth Plans for Moora, Wongan Hills and Dalwallinu, Merredin, and Narrogin is also progressing well.

Any enquiries to Elise Woods, Research and Project Officer Avon M: 0407 196 952,
E: elise.woods@wheatbelt.wa.gov.au

2.3 Aged Care Planning

Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Project

Most local governments have noted or endorsed the final draft of the *Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Solutions* Report. An Implementation Plan is currently being developed.

State Wide Ageing in the Bush Project.

WDC is the lead commission for the Regional Development Council's (RDCo) *State Wide Ageing in the Bush* project. Verso Consulting were awarded the tender to undertake this project and recently presented the preliminary findings to RDCo. Regional consultations will occur during June and July 2014.

Any enquiries to Lauren Clarke, Research and Project Officer Wheatbelt South M: 0488 120 476, E: lauren.clarke@wheatbelt.wa.gov.au

Important Dates

Wheatbelt Regional Blueprint

Submissions close Friday 18 July 2014



Director General's Report

June 2014

The release of the Department of Local Government and Communities (DLGC) Strategic Plan 2014-2018 has given us the opportunity to outline the new values guiding our work, our role in 'Making a difference for local communities' and our integrated planning framework.

DLGC has a well-defined commitment to building closer collaboration and stronger partnerships between State Government, local governments and community service organisations.

It has been exciting to see this put into practice through a range of initiatives, such as the Youth Friendly Communities Grants program. This program encourages partnerships between local governments, community service organisations and community members to fund projects that engage young people in the planning and development of their communities.

In addition, the second Community Development Roundtable (established by DLGC) was held in June. The roundtable identifies initiatives and actions that will help to build connections between the Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS), Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and Local Government Managers Australia - WA (LGMA-WA).

The activities highlighted in this report demonstrate DLGC's continuing commitment to sharing knowledge and building relationships through special events, and enabling public comment on community and local government matters.

As Western Australian communities continue to grow and change, I look forward to strengthening DLGC's partnerships with communities and local governments now and into the future.

Jennifer Mathews
Director General



In this issue ...

- Metropolitan Local Government Reform update
- IPR Capability Survey results
- Training for elected members in country areas
- Local government rating application resources
- Getting prepared for bushfire season
- ECRU targets 100 per cent visits in 2014
- Celebrating women in non-traditional occupations
- Women and entrepreneurship luncheon
- Carers Research Symposium 2014
- Have your say on caravan parks and camping grounds
- Youth mentoring
- Youth Friendly Communities Grants
- Annual OMI highlights
- WA Language Services Policy 2014 released

Metropolitan Local Government Reform update

The Local Government Advisory Board is continuing its deliberation on the formal proposals it has received for changes to Perth's metropolitan local government boundaries and expects to provide its report to Local Government Minister Tony Simpson within the coming months.

The board is considering 38 proposals, including four additional proposals submitted by the City of Subiaco, Town of Mosman Park, City of Perth and the Shire of Kalamunda.

Public submissions on the four proposals closed on Thursday 26 June.

With the reforms planned to take effect from 1 July next year, the State Government has provided a \$60 million assistance package for local government boundary reform. The package

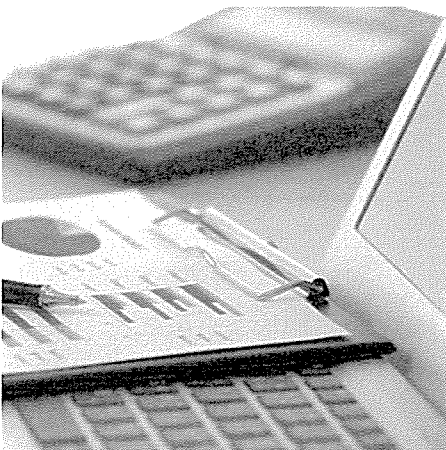
includes \$15 million in direct grant assistance to local governments and access to subsidised loans of up to \$45 million.

The first \$5 million of the grants will be available to local governments in the coming financial year for start-up costs associated with the reforms.

The money is in addition to grants totalling \$1.7 million that have already been provided to assist local governments in their early planning for metropolitan reform.

IPR Capability Survey results

The Department of Local Government and Communities has completed the fourth edition of its Capability Survey, which measures the extent to which local governments have adopted the requirements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Framework.



More than 70 local governments responded to the survey, with the results demonstrating local governments' commitment to IPR. For example: the proportion of local governments with a Strategic Community Plan has grown to more than 95 per cent. In addition, the number of local governments that have developed a Workforce Plan and Corporate Business Plan has increased to 90 per cent and 84 per cent respectively. Eighty-seven per cent reported they had adopted a Long Term Financial Plan, and 86 per cent have developed an Asset Management Plan.

DLGC is continuing to support local governments to implement effective planning and is verifying compliance with IPR requirements.

Training for elected members in country areas

Country local governments will benefit from a \$1.52 million Country Local Government Fund Capacity Building program funded through the State Government's Royalties for Regions program which will provide training programs for elected members.

Delivered by the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA), the voluntary training is an opportunity for local governments to ensure their elected members are aware of their responsibilities and have the tools to make informed decisions to benefit their communities.

The course aims to improve governance and decision-making by enhancing the skills of elected members, and it can be used as a stepping stone to achieving a Diploma of Local Government.

Successful pilot sessions have been held in Murchison and the South-West and training for other local governments is now being rolled out across the State.

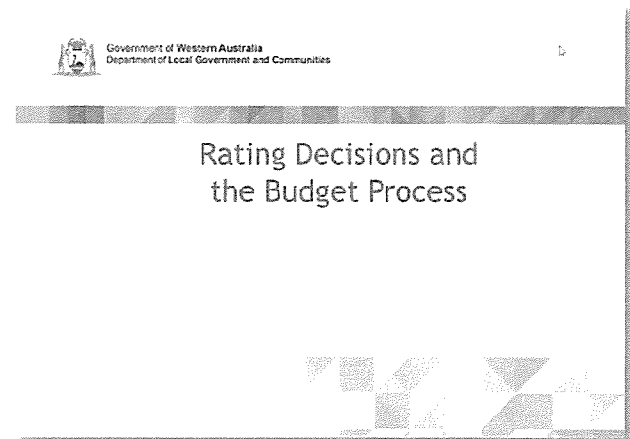
Local government rating application resources

The Department of Local Government and Communities has produced a new resource to assist local governments in preparing applications for Ministerial approval of differential rates and minimum rates for 2014–15.

The rating processes webinar is a PowerPoint presentation with audio which explains the processes to be followed during the annual rates calculation for a local government budget. It is available online and plays in the .avi format on most video players.

In addition, the application forms and ratings policies necessary for a successful submission are also available for download at DLGC's Local Government website under local government rating policies.

This time of year the DLGC receives a large number of applications which can only be processed if they are complete. For further assistance with applications, local governments are encouraged to contact the DLGC.



Getting prepared for bushfire season

The Department of Local Government and Communities is working with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the State Emergency Management Committee and other stakeholders to assist local governments and their communities prepare for the bushfire season.

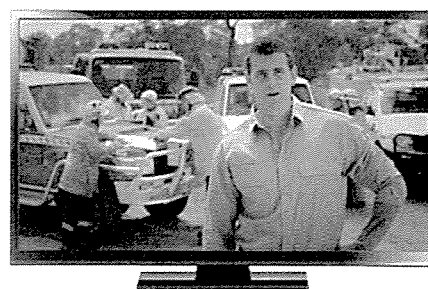
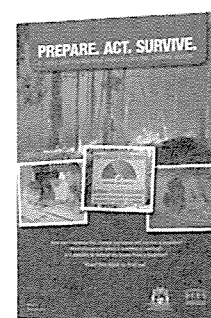
The State-wide 'Are You Ready?' campaign encourages local governments to promote the 'Prepare. Act. Survive.' message in their communities.

Local governments have an important role to play in bushfire planning, response and communication. They are well placed to promote the fire readiness message and to communicate with residents about bushfire risks and what they can do to prepare themselves for the fire season. For more information visit: <http://areyouready.wa.gov.au>

DLGC also advises on proposed emergency services reform and is working with the State Emergency Management Committee on the implementation of the bushfire risk assessment process. This includes the Bushfire Risk Management Planning Project being piloted at

the Collie, Boyup Brook, Augusta-Margaret River and Nannup local governments.

In addition, DLGC has contributed to Department of Planning consultation about land use planning and bushfire prone areas, and is active on a number of inter-agency working groups and committees.



ECRU targets 100 per cent visits in 2014

The Education and Care Regulatory Unit (ECRU) has announced the goal of visiting Western Australia's 1,027 services within 2014. Forming part of ECRU's ongoing commitment to the quality of education and care services across WA, these visits will be performed alongside the National Quality Framework assessments currently taking place to ensure that every education and care service within the jurisdiction has regular contact and communication with its regulating authority.

WA has proven to be a hotspot for growth in education and care, with the number of new services increasing by more than 4 per cent in the first quarter of 2014 – the largest increase in Australia.

Since making this commitment to visit 100 per cent of services, the Education and Care Regulatory Unit is already ahead of schedule

and quality indicators continue to show meaningful progress is being achieved in the centres. Sixty-six per cent of services that have been reassessed under the National Quality Framework show a marked improvement in ratings. The visits will ensure that the quality of care across the State is strengthened.

Celebrating women in non-traditional occupations

A Women in Technology WA (WiTWA) breakfast event recognising that non-traditional occupations can provide rewarding careers for women and a pathway to economic independence was held on 29 May. More than 60 women attended, including members of the Curtin University Women Engineers Club.

For several years the Department of Local Government and Communities has partnered with WiTWA, a Perth-based organisation that aims to raise the status of women in Australian business and technology industries, and encourage youth and women to choose technology-based careers.

Keynote speaker, Liz Behjat MLC, representing Women's Interests Minister Liza Harvey, shared insights into her non-traditional career in politics.

Ms Behjat announced that funding for the 2014 partnership would be doubled.

Fellow speakers Rebecca Kellam, Helen Pedersen and Michelle Sandford, who work in mining, engineering and computing, discussed their insights and experiences.

The event was an opportunity to network and to discuss the benefits and challenges of pursuing a non-traditional career.

Women and entrepreneurship luncheon

The Inspiring Entrepreneurship Luncheon – Celebrating Women in Enterprise was held on 30 May at the Parmelia Hilton Perth. The luncheon is a joint initiative of the Department of State Development, Department of Local Government and Communities and the Small Business Development Corporation. This annual event promotes and recognises the success of West Australian women in international markets of strategic importance to the State.



Guest speakers at the luncheon (L-R) Jane Muirsmith, Eleni Evangel MLA and Janelle Marr

Women's Interests Minister Liza Harvey was represented by Eleni Evangel MLA, who opened the event and launched several new initiatives including Curtin Ignition scholarships for women and Austrade – Women in Global Business scholarships.

In 2014, up to 10 scholarships will be offered for women for the Curtin Ignition program and 16 scholarships will be funded for the Women in Global Business mentoring program. Almost 200 entrepreneurs and business people attended

the luncheon and enjoyed entertaining talks from Jane Muirsmith, head of Lenox Hill Consulting Agency, and Janelle Marr of StepBeyond Business Advisors. The speakers shared their professional and personal experiences of navigating the business world to achieve success.

For information about the scholarships visit the women's section of DLGC's Communities website.

Carers Research Symposium 2014

The Carers Advisory Council hosted the Carers Research Symposium on 29 May. With speakers from Curtin University, Carers WA and the Independent Living Centre's Carelink and Respite Centre, the symposium showcased research and sector developments.

More than 70 people from government and community service providers and individual carers attended the symposium.

Keynote speaker Associate Professor Barbara Horner's presentation, 'An exploration of the lived experience of being a carer living with someone with dementia: improving understanding to inform training, support and primary care', was based on the first stage of her research project.

Carers WA staff Natasha Brockwell and Patricia Mullumby shared insights from the Good Practice Model Project which promotes the building of

meaningful relationships between supported accommodation service providers and carers across all health sectors (aged care, disability and mental health).

Casey Keeley from The Independent Living Centre Carelink and Respite Centre shared new approaches to working with Aboriginal young carers caring for people with mental health issues and how social media can be used to interact with young carers.

Copies of the symposium's presentations are available by emailing jo.brooker@dlgc.wa.gov.au

Have your say on caravan parks and camping grounds

Western Australia has more caravan, camper-trailer and campervan registrations than any other State, with an estimated 30 for every 1,000 people.

To cope with the changing needs of caravan park and camping ground users, it is proposed that new legislation is developed to replace the current *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995* (the Act). DLGC is implementing Recommendation One of the Western Australian Caravan and Camping Action Plan 2013-2018 which is to review the Act and its associated regulations. The aim of the review is to provide simpler and more flexible laws to meet the needs of the locality and to allow tourism to evolve and flourish.

It is intended that the development of new legislation will provide a legislative framework which:

- meets the needs of consumers, operators and regulating authorities

- reduces red tape, and
- safeguards the health and safety of users.

Local Government Minister Tony Simpson launched the consultation paper in Broome on 30 May. It

was developed after months of consultation with State and local government, industry, consumers and other key stakeholder groups which helped identify the focus areas for public consultation. The consultation period runs until 1 September 2014.

To have your say or to promote the consultation period in your community, visit: www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/CPCG-Consultation-Paper



Youth mentoring

The three-year youth mentoring reform project is drawing to a close.

Run by a partnership group of community sector organisations, government agencies, the Association of Independent Schools WA and the Catholic Education Office, it was supported by the Department of Local Government and Communities and funded through the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions.

During its tenure, the project set a precedent for collaboration between youth mentoring groups, government, academics and other stakeholders.

Two resources were recently launched, The Mentor Handbook and the Guide to Mentoring Aboriginal Young People, which have been produced with consultation and input from young people, reference groups of relevant stakeholders and advice from academics and researchers.

The Mentor Handbook provides mentors with practical advice on mentoring a young person. It is now being trialled in newly established mentoring programs. The Guide to Mentoring Aboriginal Young People focuses on program based mentoring, targeting WA mainstream youth mentoring agencies that want to work with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal mentors and young Aboriginal mentees.



The benefits of the youth mentoring reform project for the sector have included an increased awareness of the Australian Youth Mentoring Benchmarks, improved quality of mentoring programs, provision of a suite of mentoring resources under the umbrella of Mentoring Worx, and delivery of training for agency staff, mentors and volunteers.

The focus of DLGC, now that the project is drawing to a close, is to help build a sustainable and secure WA youth mentoring model.

The Australian Youth Mentoring Network will now work with the Youth Mentoring Reform Group to coordinate youth mentoring activities in WA.

The guide is available from the youth mentoring section of DLGC's Communities website.

Youth Friendly Communities Grants

Projects from the previous round of Youth Friendly Community Grants in 2012 saw 1,700 young people participate in consultations in their communities. Partnerships were formed with community groups around projects based on the needs, networks, resources and expertise in the local community. Each local government stated that through this process, young people's views would inform their youth policies and plans, as well as their Strategic Community Plan.

This year about \$210,000 has been invested in expanding the Youth Friendly Communities Grants program through a second round of grants so that local governments, which were unsuccessful applicants in 2012, have the opportunity to engage young people more effectively.

Currently the Department of Local Government and Communities is finalising the provision of

grants to local governments in Bassendean, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Broome (acting as the Kimberley zone secretariat), Capel, Collie, Cunderdin, Denmark, Esperance, Geraldton, Kwinana, Toodyay, Wanneroo and Wyalkatchem.

For more information visit the youth section of the DLGC's Communities website.

Annual OMI highlights

The past year has been one of consolidation and innovation for the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI). The many achievements include:

- New Strategic Plan 2014–18 developed following consultation with CaLD communities, government and non-government organisations, business and industry groups, young people, Multicultural Advisory Council, and input from two public online surveys and submissions responding to a discussion paper.
- Review of the Community Grants Program to streamline processes and increase provision of grants.
- Review and release of the WA Language Services Policy to ensure that language is not a barrier to services and programs.
- Introduction of the Harmony Champions Program, which consists of a grants program, a Harmony Week event for volunteers and a Harmony Champions online honour roll.
- Expansion of Diverse WA to the non-government sector, a cultural competency online training package to help organisations provide appropriate services for people from all communities.
- Provision of media training workshops for community members.
- Production of 30 statistical profiles of WA's major culturally diverse communities to assist service providers and policy makers.
- Provision of a series of funding forums to help communities understand the processes for securing funding for projects and events.

For information visit www.omi.wa.gov.au

WA Language Services Policy 2014 released

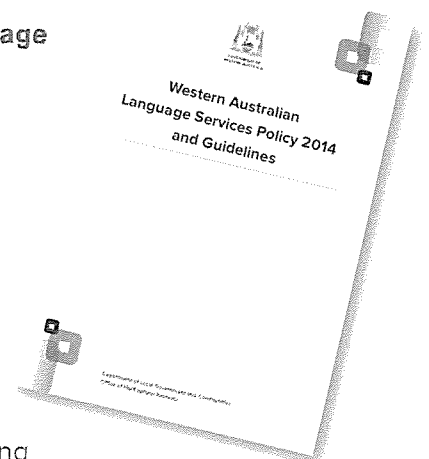
The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) has released the WA Language Services Policy 2014. The policy requires State Government agencies to plan for, fund and deliver language services that take into account relevant government policies, legal circumstances and the particular profile and needs of current and potential clients.

Western Australia is notable for its linguistically diverse population which is made up of speakers of about 270 languages and dialects, including around 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

About 1.6 per cent of the population speak English not well or not at all and a number of West Australians communicate through Australian Sign Language (Auslan). For some older migrants, their English language skills may regress as part of the ageing process, and for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, English is their second, third, or even fourth language.

The new policy also requires WA Government agencies to incorporate provision for meeting language services needs in contractual arrangements with funded agencies.

The policy, associated guidelines and information sheets are available at www.omi.wa.gov.au Translated brochures are available in 10 languages.





**Regional
Development**
Australia
W H E A T B E L T W A

Youth Connections

Case Studies



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An Australian Government Initiative

A - YC became involved with "A" and her family in June 2012 when it was identified through a referral that "A" was completely disengaged from any type of learning environment and had not been attending school since October 2011 and she was only 14 years old. "A" had also been placed under supervision of the Juvenile Justice Team due to out of control behavioural issues which escalated into fighting caused through bullying. Exclusion from mainstream education and the absence of support systems within the school had started to cause "A" problems such as isolation, low self esteem and at risk behaviour.

YC recognised that "A" needed assistance in returning to school as to establish a form of stability to assist "A's" behaviour and emotional management and to create social normality to encourage self esteem. YC met with A and her father to discuss what she wanted to do YC provided other options such as SIDE learning or home schooling, "A" said she just wanted to go to school like normal kids and not be picked on. YC let her know that they can act as advocates in school and connected meetings and provide support on her return to and during her time at school. "A" and her father were happy with this as they felt totally confused regarding school decision making and actions

YC met with the Principal to discuss the current situation and to set into place a re-enrolment plan. Throughout this meeting it was mentioned that "A" had arrived to the district with a history of behavioural and emotional issues as reported from her previous school. "A" had not been at the school very long and she got into a physical fight with another girl. It appeared that the schools way of dealing with "A" was to direct her into an alternative learning program called Fresh Learning for Youth (FLY) and to remove her from the school. "A" didn't fully understand to why she had to be the one to leave school anyhow she complied and enrolled in FLY. "A" lives in country town where peoples business becomes known well the girl who "A" fought in the school had friends in the FLY program and they bullied her to the point she lost control and got into more physical fights and yet again it was "A" who had to leave as the other girls had precedence over her in enrolment. Both situations were a result of being bullied and instead of supportive behavioural monitoring being put into place "A" was asked to leave both learning environments. Also as a consequence of the bullying "A" could not go anywhere without being picked on by this particular group of girls therefore isolating her in a town to where she had only recently moved and didn't know anyone?

YC met with Education Participation regarding why "A" was directed to leave school when it was not her choice they replied that she had behaviour problems, couldn't fit in and was under a final assessment of a psychologist to ensure her ability to return to school. This was confirmed by the Deputy Principal of the school. Therefore acting as an advocate for "A" and her father YC met with the psychologist who although could not discuss confidential matters could however tell YC that "A" was suitable to return to school. The psychologist also mentioned that she was surprised to be asked to do such an assessment as it was a professional matter and should never have been connected to "A's" ability to attend school.

YC met with the school's Student Support Officer with "A" and her father to discuss enrolment, behaviour management and supervision of known bullies with the intent of improving relations with the concerned students. YC informed the school that YC will be supporting "A" in her attendance and social confidence until she finds her place and no longer needs YC. YC also mentioned that "A" needs supported learning in a safe environment and would benefit from in school support systems rather than external, as she is only 14 and needs to learn and socialise with her peers. With all information and an IEP in place A was able to re-enrol in August 2012.

"A's" re-entry into school progressed slowly the school monitored interaction and dealt more positively with the bullying which allowed "A" to see bullying would not be tolerated. "A" gained confidence and was able to discuss issues that upset her which resulted in positive outcomes. YC supported her attendance and well being in and out of school. "A" got upset at one stage due to her father moving into another district and her not being able to get to school, YC registered her on the school bus system and she was able to attend school as usual.

January 2014 and YC is still supporting "A" through her schooling she is now in Year 12 undertaking the NEST program an alternative learning program delivered within the school. Throughout the past two years YC has supported and guided "A" through her Juvenile Justice Commitments, drug and alcohol counselling, self esteem and behaviour management strategies. "A" has developed into a positive, responsible independent thinking young adult ready for future pathways. YC has stepped back to allow her to mature she developed some positive relationships with the school and learnt to discuss issues. However she quite often thanks YC for getting her back on track she knows herself she would have slipped through the system if intervention had not taken place on her behalf. "A" says with a smile I probably don't need YC as much as I used to but I like knowing your there if I do.

T - YC became involved with T's family in April 2011 with the regions previous Case Worker, T was referred to YC as he was disengaged from school and was petrol sniffing. YC worked with T to engage back into education by supporting him to enrol into a youth building project that was designed for youths considered to be at risk. YC attended classes and did a lot of hands of work with T to help him settle in and to support his learning.

During this time T displayed some anti social behaviour and was not always engaged, however over time and with the continued support form YC, T became more engaged and would put more effort into his learning.

T remained engaged in school and over a 12 month period he was showing positive behaviour, his educational performance improved and he remained engaged with YC. The school were positive about T and his parents reported no more self harm in the form of petrol sniffing. T reported that he did not have the urge to engage in such behaviour since he was back and school. In December of 2012 the case was closed due to all outcomes being achieved.

In July 2013 T was referred to YC again due to a Youth Justice Order, being disengaged from school, and for drug and alcohol use. T was happy to engage with YC and wanted support to complete his order, re engage in school and to overcome his drug and alcohol issues. T expressed a keen interest in becoming a diesel mechanic.

YC attended Drug and alcohol counselling with T for the month until he advised that he had moved to Perth and asked to be referred to a Perth based YC worker. YC was aware that T's home life was not always stable and so kept the case open to continue contact until YC was confident that T was stable in Perth. T had moved back to his home town by September.

YC worked with T and his family to help T be in a more stable environment at home so that he could work towards his goals of completing year 10. There is a lot of domestic violence, drugs and alcohol in this family. YC would home visit early in the morning and it would not be uncommon to find the parents heavily intoxicated, fighting or passed out on the lawn. T struggled with this and would take long walks and sleep at different houses to avoid this as much as he could. YC fought with his father physically when his father was heavily drinking and abusive.

YC worked with T to engage him in school, and in late September engaged T into a PCYC course, YC provided transport and attended classes most days to provide intense support to T. YC attended meetings with Youth Justice and Centrelink to help T become independent.

T achieved great outcomes at PCYC, he attended daily and was becoming a very active member of the group. He showed great artistic skills and so was asked to paint the mural on the community garden wall. T was showing great leadership skills and was given more and more responsibility. T was becoming a bright, confident and intelligent young man.

YC arranged a bus to transport the Youths to PCYC to help them be more responsible for themselves without the daily face to face contact. T continued to attend PCYC and continued to do very well.

YC visited T at home week to week and noticed that he was becoming less engaged, although he was still attending PCYC. YC home visited to speak to his parents to see if there was any reason for the change in behaviour. YC arrived to the house where his parents were very distressed due to T being missing since the afternoon before. YC used T's fathers phone to call him, YC called on repeat until he answered. T was hardly able to talk but after half an hour said he was in the bush and then told his father that he had 'taken the other path'. T's parents said that there was a fight the day before between T and his father, and that there were a lot of people around drinking and taking drugs. T reportedly went to his grandmother's house where there was another fight that he witnessed. T had not been seen since then.

YC walked through the bush area he would most likely be. YC found T in a tree, with a rope around his neck. He had a suitcase with him and there was an empty alcohol bottle by the tree. YC quietly approached T and sat a bit of a distance away on the ground; Y started softly talking to him about the way the morning had gone. T remained in the tree but looked in YC's direction and appeared to start listening. YC talked about knowing what family life must be like and talked about being aware of the drug, alcohol, and violence problems with his parents. YC continued this while gauging T's reactions. After a long period of time T asked YC why they were there. YC talked about caring about his future and wanting to see him become the best he can. T appeared to have a

very 'dark' face and to be intoxicated. YC and T stayed talking for a very long time until YC convinced T to come down from the tree. YC took T to another town and got breakfast, from here T spoke in depth about all his personal demons, issues and fears. YC and T went through these 1 by 1 and made a plan for each. Some of these things were sorted out that day, such as Centrelink and JYJT order. Other things were written down and taken by T so that he felt like he was in control and had a plan.

From this day, T was not able to return home. YC found a relative that lived far away and was not a drug and alcohol user who was willing to take T and care for him. YC arranged with an uncle to take T out camping and fishing for the weekend as YC felt that this was a time that T needed to connect with his culture and to the land.

YC remained engaged and visited the town to see T as well as very often phone contact. The difference between T in the short space of time was absolutely amazing, his physic, attitude and voice were so positive and happy in comparison. T is now engaged in school as well as with PCYC. He also attends boxing classes at YMCA and is working on his fitness to be able to play league football. T has completed his Youth Justice Order requirements and has remained drug and alcohol free.

T says that he no longer needs YC support as he has everything he wants and is in a happy family environment. T has expressed deep gratitude for the YC support and feels that without YC he would not be the man he is today.

M - Barriers: Abuse/domestic Violence issue, Young Carer responsibilities, Disconnection from cultural heritage, Low literacy and/or numeracy, Low Self Esteem, Unstable living arrangements, Inadequate family support, Financial distress, Critical life event.

Initial Assessment (Pre Assistance):

The client was referred by the local Police as he, his mother and siblings had come to live with his grandparents. There has been an issue with domestic violence from the father and the Police believed that the family needed help in supporting the client to stay on track and remain in school.

Personal development was the key focus, including improved positive self esteem and communication skills both with peers and adults. Also work on his resilience skills was provided by giving him examples of techniques to use and practicing the use of these. Socialisation skills were also developed by providing him with opportunities to mix with other young people within the district.

During Enrolment:

The family found a house of their own a couple of months after the client joined the YC program. Within a month of that, the client's father had returned home. Over the course of the client's enrolment, there did not appear to be any issues of domestic violence (the father had received extensive counselling and support), and the client was happy to have his father back in his life. Dad expressed his pride in the client's achievements, especially with his football.

The client took some time to settle into the larger school environment of a Regional College, however with the support of Youth Connections (and his sporting ability) remains well liked by both his peers and teachers. He is currently a Student Leader at the college, where he undertakes the role with enthusiasm and responsibility.

Post Assistance:

The client has reengaged with his education, and is undertaking year 11. He is focusing on a VET pathway, but continues to strive for excellence in his football and other sporting pursuits

K - Building Relationship

- June 2012 – Student “K” crumpled under pressure of school, change in learning direction - “K” was head girl at her SHS, however was feeling the pressures of studying tertiary level subjects. She had moved to stay at the School Hostel last year when she was in year 11, and explained she found it difficult to be living in a boarding facility and coping with studies although she managed to keep it under control. However the pressure this year got too much - leading up to the mid-year exams and when assessments were due, she just crumpled. So much so that she had to spend a week in hospital to recover. She explained she couldn't eat and everything just gets out of perspective, then the work started building up more. Some other relationship/gender issues had occurred and this may have had an impact as well.
- She and her mum had travelled to Perth to talk about things and decided on choosing a "Cert 3 Digital Media" course at Midland TAFE. She would be able to stay with a nearby aunty. YC was able to be part of this planning discussion with appropriate courses and where they could lead. YC encouraged a positive attitude towards going in this direction and not feeling down and as though she had failed!
- K plays guitar, composes her own songs and has put a CD out. In discussion she came round to the realisation that this was the best move for her with her passion and talents. Really it was a better choice than hanging in at school under existing pressure for another 6 months. This way she is already beginning to learn in the direction she hopes to be heading and building life skills. It is a 6 month course and she should find it easy while she settles in to life in Perth which is a bit daunting at this stage. It will also provide an opportunity to go to gigs and develop connections in the music industry which she is excited about. She does have a gig coming up in Perth soon. YC was a key initiator in these direction changing discussions.
- YC gave her and her mother information to commence the process of applying for Youth allowance and discussed healthy strategies such as going for a walk each day, healthy food choices, strength of mind in thinking positively, enhancing self esteem strategies etc.

Enrolled K 2nd July – Assessed as Service Type 1, Year 11 being highest completed education.

Barriers – critical life event, suspected or diagnosed mental health issue, low self esteem, socialisation issues, gifted, plus gender issues

Reengagement Plan created 2nd July - K was head girl at her SHS, however was feeling the pressures of studying tertiary level subjects. She moved from home to stay at the Hostel in Year 11 last year, explained she found it difficult to be living in a boarding facility and coping with studies, however she managed to keep it under control. This year the pressure got too much, leading up to the mid-year exams, when assessments were due, she just crumpled, resulting in spending a week in hospital to recover. Some other relationship issues had occurred and this was also having an impact. K is academically and musically talented, she plays guitar, composes her own songs and has put a CD out. She was considering enrolling in a TAFE course in Perth and needed support with making the transition from school to an appropriate TAFE course of study in Perth, including financial support options. Support was needed to reassure her that she wasn't failing, in fact what she was about to embark upon was probably the best choice for her and she was setting herself up for her future career in the music, media, performing industry. YC support to be delivered included further personal development of confidence, self esteem, resilience and positive physical health strategies.

Target Progressive Outcomes – to be completed by Dec 2012:

- Addressed and minimised the barriers created by a critical life event
- Address & minimise the barriers created by a suspected or diagnosed mental health issue
- Addressed and minimised the barriers created by low self esteem

- Addressed and minimised the barriers created by the fact that the participant is gifted that impacted

Target Final Outcome - to be completed by Dec 2012

- Re-engaged in education – the participant re-engaged in education over the whole school term or for 13 weeks

2nd July - Mentoring – K accepted into Perth TAFE Music Course – Really 22nd June '13 - Met up with K at home in Dalwallinu. Mum joined us during her lunch approx break. Rang Centrelink to progress Youth Allowance, plus Assistance for Isolated Children boarding support (both State & Federal funding), positive result. K has officially heard she has been accepted into TAFE course, will move down 7th July to Perth. Letting her know that she will be ahead of others at school by doing a Cert 3 at TAFE, and to be confident with the choices she is making. Discussed issues to work through for when she makes the move to Perth. K also looking at courses she can lead on to for Certificate, Diploma or Degree courses – maybe in Audio production, film production or Electronic Music production; also WAPPA (WA Performing Arts).

29th August – K's move all positive - K has settled in well, living environment going well and she is enjoying TAFE course. K is not finding work difficult and so has time to go to gigs and develop her connections in the music world in Perth. All positive. Mum seriously considering selling her house and moving to Perth before Christmas, second daughter is in Year 10 next year.

29th September – individual support, K on track, achieving well, has plans for next year

Chat with K and her mum. K is doing really well, she has achieved well with her music TAFE studies, has gone for job interview (didn't get it) and is volunteering for a couple of things. Mum is considering selling house in regional town and plans to move to Perth before Christmas so then K can live with them. K said she is halfway through the course now, on a study break this week, then next term will complete the Certificate. Her plan is to move on to Central TAFE in Perth next year, then possibly WAPPA the following year. YC encouraged her to attend some of the WAPPA student's final performances which will be coming up soon and are open events, to give her an idea of performance levels. She said WAPPA starts at Cert 4 so she plans to do a joint Cert 3 & 4 at Perth TAFE next year so she can go straight into Bachelor studies at WAPPA the following year. She said her accommodation has worked out okay but will be great with mum down here to stay with. She has a fair few gigs now in Perth, easier because she is now located there, a couple of radio plays one being on Pirate FM, Fremantle radio station. She feels she is going okay with her direction now and I was able to help her through the hiccup stage this year. She knows she can make contact with me if she ever would like further support.

Completion engagement – 29th September – Progressive & Final Outcomes Achieved

K crumbled during her Year 12 studies at SHS due to pressure, not coping with boarding away from home and other personal issues. Largely I was there to support her transition to an appropriate TAFE course of study in Perth; and to come to realise that she wasn't failing, in fact it was probably the best choice for her and she was setting herself up for her future career in the music, media, performing industry. A positive move forward!

K 2 - Female – Pregnant – 16years old

Youth Connections enrolled K on 22nd May, 2012 as Type 2B and we have enrolled her via Balga TAFE to do externally CGEA to complete Year 11. K has a partner-father of the baby and was being harassed by 2 girls and YC is working with one of the girls and so is able to observe and monitor without intruding. YC spoke with K's mum who stated there was Restraining Orders placed on girls harassing her and now they are awaiting birth of baby.

YC worked with Balga TAFE and K to make sure all work is delivered on time and until the birth of her baby son, K's Year 11 Certificate was completed ahead of schedule.

YC organised counselling for K and partner after his mother tried to strangle her in the driveway in front of their son (6 months old) and they were taking a RVO out on her. YC spoke on many occasions with regards to lots of arguments, tension, behaviour and angst due to family problems.

YC organised for Department of Communities to come and visit K, son and house, which is extremely untidy and dirty but the baby is very happy and healthy and YC encouraged her to take him to playgroups in the Town.

K has been in the process of setting up a poultry business and is doing well with breeding and selling them. K and partner have been building lots of cages for the different types of birds.

K has expressed how Youth Connections has supported her through a huge roller coaster ride.

Completion 30th December, 2013.

Reengagement Activity case study

Date: 13th August 2013

Venue: Kooraminning Centre, Narrogin

Purpose: To engage with the early school leavers in the Narrogin to gather information on issues faced by the young people in the Narrogin area from their perspective.

Initial steps:

This event was organised following on from the Elders Lunch and Yarning session held on 16th June 2013 and was organised by RDA Wheatbelt, Youth Connections Program and Sorcit, School, Business Partnership Broker with support from Heidi Astbury from the Department of Education. Invitations were developed and sent to the early school leavers in the Narrogin area, posters were also produced and distributed to the local Police, KEEDAC, CANWA, Careers on Track, the Town of Narrogin and various shops in the town.

Invited Guests:

Disengaged aboriginal young people in the Narrogin area.

Attendees:

Aboriginal young people and their family members.

Both the PB & YC staff visited invited guests homes with family members to encourage the young people to attend, some of the invited guests were no longer in Narrogin, others would not get out of bed and some said they would come down later

Family Members:

Local Noongar Elders

Agencies

- Sorcit, School, Business Partnership Broker
- RDA Wheatbelt, Youth Connections
- Holyoake – Drug & Alcohol Counselling
- Community Arts Network WA
- Dept. Child Protection
- Dept. Education

Outcomes:

Young people from the Narrogin area were invited to attend where they could learn how to beatbox and express their thoughts through rap lyrics using “Facebook” as the theme for the day. They were provided the opportunity to use the equipment and learnt how to beatbox and rap.

The workshop was also used to gather information in their words on how the young people see their future, including barriers to reaching their goals, how they like to learn, what they would like to learn about and the types of jobs they would like, and why they do not go to school. This information will be used in order to build a partnership to address engagement and transitional issues in response to a request from the Elders at a recent “Lunch and Yarning” session held in the community.



Destination Study

Where Are They Now?
"Class of 2012"

Survey data from clients
who participated in
Youth Connections in 2012

March 2014

Executive Summary

This paper provides recent Destination data about the Youth Connections programme 'Class of 2012'. In January 2014, Youth Connections providers across the nation collected surveys from 835 young people who participated in and received a 'final outcome' from Youth Connections in 2012. This Destination data built on an earlier study undertaken in July 2013, when 206 young people were surveyed.

The data presented here provides evidence that Youth Connections is highly successful at delivering sustained engagement in education and employment for vulnerable, disengaged and often marginalised young people.

Youth Connections was established as part of the Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership to improve school retention and achievement. Most of the young people who participate in Youth Connections have been disengaged from formal learning for long periods of time, and as a result, face many barriers to learning and making a successful transition from school to work.

The Youth Connections model involves intensive and highly flexible case management support, which identifies aspirational goals, addresses barriers to meeting those goals and provides a blend of advocacy, one on one support and local community intelligence to make sure the best possible outcome is achieved for each young person.

The 'Class of 2012' Destination data gives further weight to the evidence that investing in disengaged young people through Youth Connections creates activation and long term engagement in education and employment.

Therefore, investing in Australia's disengaged and inactive young people is a 'good spend' with long term social and financial benefits for both government and the wider Australian community.

Gerrie Mitra

Chair

Youth Connections National Network (YCNN)

Of the 835 young people surveyed who received a final outcome from Youth Connections in 2012, our results showed the following:

93.4% (780) were still engaged in education or employment six months after receiving a final outcome from Youth Connections. Of this total, 188 were engaged in full-time or part-time employment including 65 participants in either traineeships or apprenticeships.

88.7% (109) of Indigenous participants were still engaged in education or employment six months after receiving a final outcome from the Youth Connections.

Nearly 18 months after receiving a final outcome, 80.2% were still engaged in education or employment. The remaining 19.8% were either looking for employment or engaged in carer roles for children or other family members.

38% (318) were engaged in either part-time or full-time employment including traineeships and apprenticeships, even though Youth Connections is not an employment service.

Youth Connections is highly successful at delivering sustained engagement in education and employment for vulnerable, disengaged and often marginalised young people.



Personal Characteristics of Survey Participants

Of the 835 participants surveyed, 429 (51.3%) young people were female and 406 (48.7%) young people were male. Of the total number surveyed, 123 (14.73%) participants were recorded as identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI), reflecting a 19% overall ATSI participation rate in Youth Connections programme nationally. Additionally, of the total number surveyed, 50 (6%) respondents were recorded as being from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds (CALD) and of this cohort, 23 (2.75%) respondents were recorded as being from a Humanitarian Refugee background. The average participant age was 17.4 years. While, Youth Connections is generally delivered across Australia to young people aged 13 to 19, the higher age group surveyed is a reflection of the fact that this group of young people had achieved a 'final outcome' and therefore more likely to be on the older spectrum. Graph 1 below outlines the survey participants by age group.

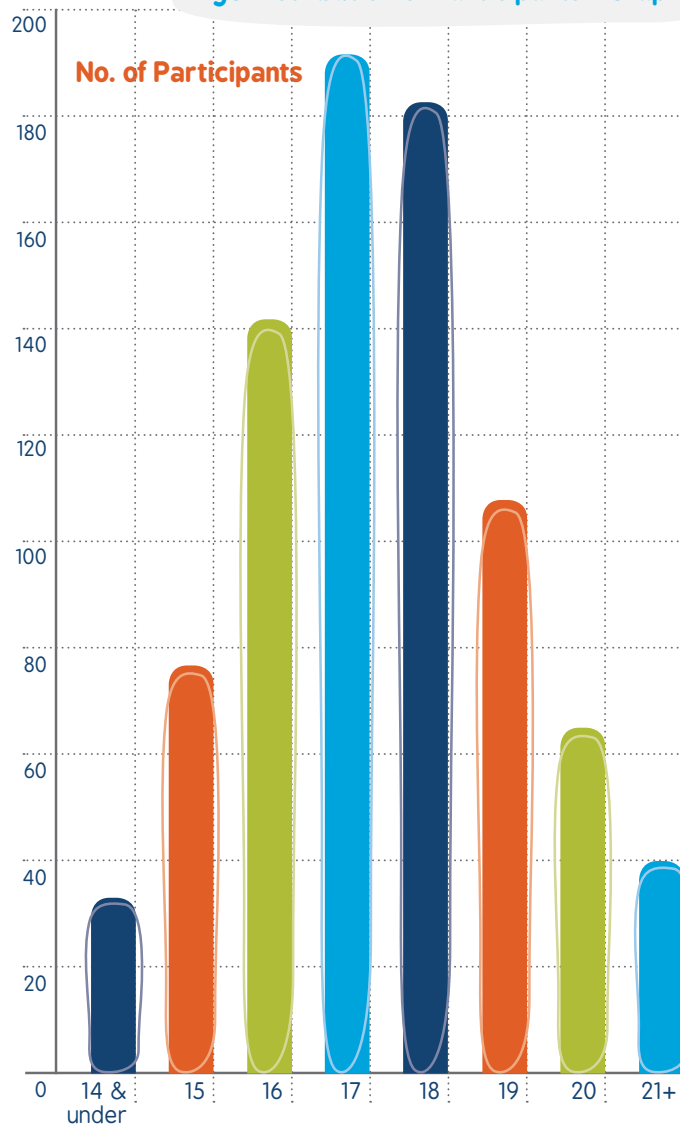
Introduction

In January 2014, a total of 1,231 previous Youth Connections participants were contacted to participate in the Destination data survey. Only a small number of participants declined to participate, and of those who declined, some stated that they were at their place of employment and unable to talk, while a number of young people were unable to be contacted due to a change in contact details or no one answering the phone.

It should also be noted that once a young person exits Youth Connections their personal details are no longer updated. It is not unreasonable to expect that the contact details of many young people change during this period of time as many transition from school to employment and move away from home. Further consideration should be given that contact was made during the Christmas/January school holiday period. For young people in remote communities making contact is further hampered by the transient nature of many communities and the lack of telephone coverage.

In the end, a total of 835 (68%) of young people contacted agreed to participate in the survey. Each of these young people received a 'final outcome' that is recorded as a minimum of 13 weeks reconnection to education, training or connection to employment. As part of the surveys, young people were contacted either by phone or face to face and asked a series of questions about their current circumstances.

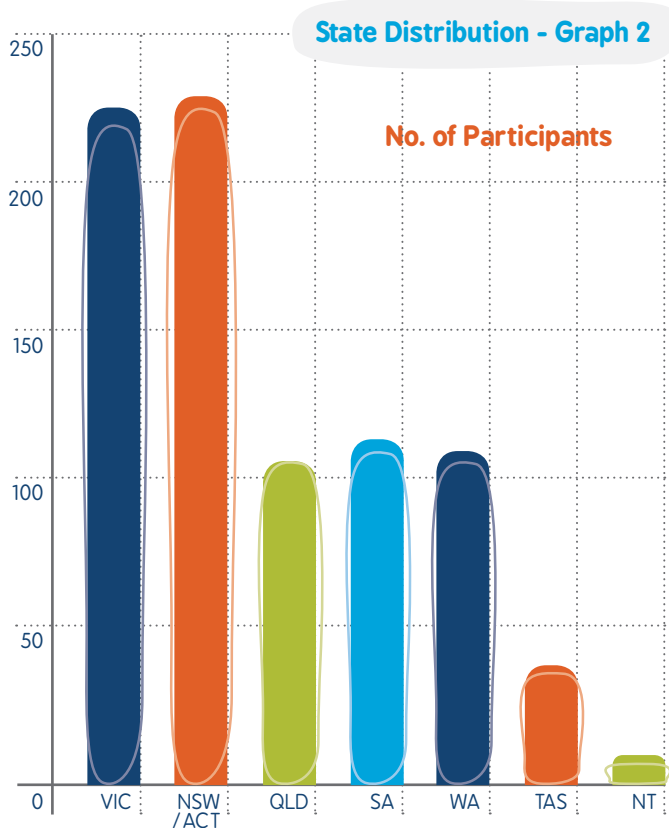
Age Distribution of Participants - Graph 1



Location of Participants

Surveys were collected from every state and territory; however, due to a change of contracts for three of the five Northern Territory regions at the end of 2013, data from 2012 could not be accessed for those regions. Consequently, only ten survey responses were received for Northern Territory from region 1 (Darwin and surrounds).

Similar to the last survey, the largest cohort of participants were classified as living in a rural region (349) followed by metropolitan (278); outer metropolitan (128) and remote/very remote Australia from which 80 responses were received. Graph 2 details the state/territory distribution of respondents.



Disengagement Level at Commencement of Youth Connections

Young people participating in Youth Connections are classified at the commencement of their time on the programme by the level of disengagement that they experienced prior to connection. Young people who are still loosely connected to school and who are deemed to be at significant risk of dropping out are classified as connection level 1. Of the survey participants, 203 (24.3%) were classified as level 1.

Young people experiencing high levels of absenteeism or who are disengaged from school for a period of up to three months are classified as connection level 2A. Of the respondents who participated in the survey nationally, 311 (37.2%) young people entered the programme under this classification.

Young people who are severely disengaged from education and have experienced a disconnection from education for a period of three months or more are classified as Connection Level 2B. Of those who participated in the destination data collection, 321 (38.5%) were under this classification. Of this cohort, 75 (23.4%) were disengaged from education for more than one year and some of those young people recorded more than two years of disengagement.

In total, 532 (63.7%) of the young people that responded to this survey were disengaged or severely disengaged, being that they were out of education for at least one month and up to two years before engagement with Youth Connections.

Youth Connections taught me to believe in myself and pursue my dreams

Felicity Banking on a Career

Youth Connections helped me find the person I am today. After losing my father at the age of 12 I was very disengaged at school, never really wanted to go and when I did I wasn't really bothered to try. Youth Connections taught me to believe in myself and pursue my dreams. The team never gave up on me and believed in me more than I did in myself and that gave me the drive to become the person I am today. I am currently working at Commonwealth Bank Australia; it took a lot of courage to go for the job interview, but once I got there I gave it my all and was shocked when I got told I got the job. I'd say it's safe to say that my time at Youth Connections was very beneficial and I thank everyone that helped me out along the way.



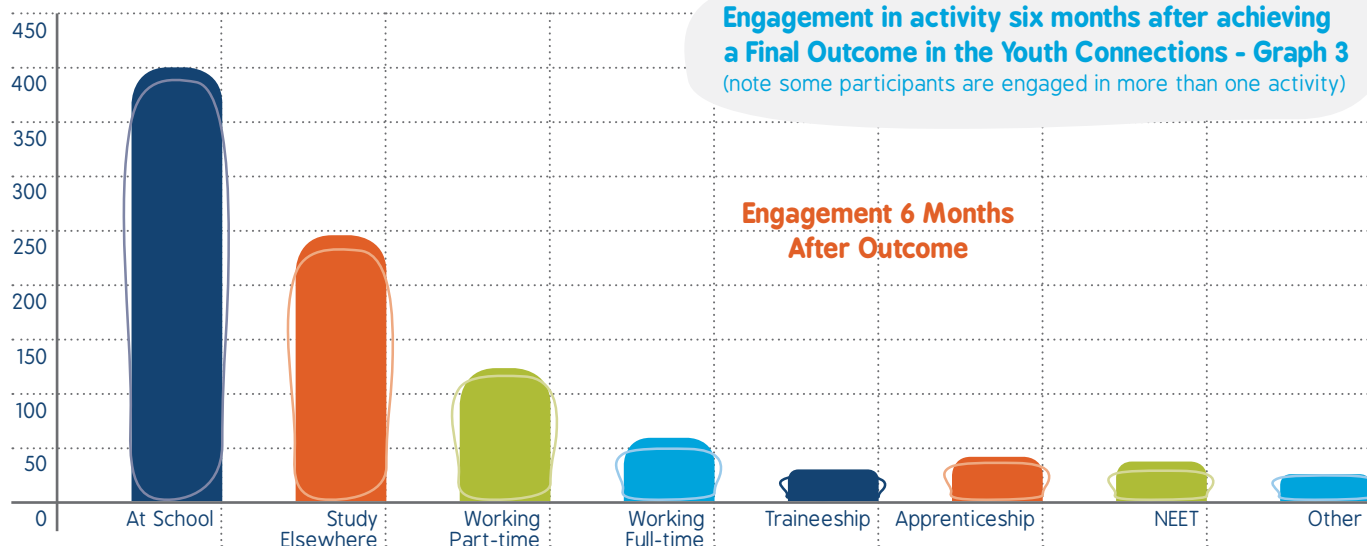
Six Months after Youth Connections

Once a young person has completed a minimum of a 13 week re-attachment to education or to employment, the young person is normally exited from Youth Connections. The Destination study asked where young people were six months after exiting or receiving a final outcome. For young people transitioning into adulthood, six months can feel like a lifetime, however, we were pleased to find that many of the young people surveyed continued to remain highly engaged and involved in both education and part-time employment. In particular, our Destination study revealed:

93.4% (780) were still engaged in education or employment six months after achieving a final outcome in Youth Connections. Of this total, 188 (24.1%) were engaged in full-time or part-time employment including 65 participants in either traineeships or apprenticeships.

88.7% (109) of Indigenous participants were still engaged in education or employment six months after achieving a final outcome from Youth Connections.

Only 32 (3.8%) young people recorded Not in Education or Employment (NEET) while the remaining 23 (2.8%) young people (not in education or employment) were carers for their children or other family members.



Highlighting Outcomes of Connection Level 2B – Long term Disengaged Young People

As previously outlined, Connection Level 2B young people in the Youth Connections programme are considered to be the most disengaged cohort of young people in Australia. Young people in this cohort experience a number of barriers because their long term disengagement means they are well behind their peers educationally. Many also face complex mental health and environmental barriers because of their isolation from school. Such personal barriers include very poor self-esteem and low levels of numeracy and literacy. Of the 321 young people classified as 2B, 47 (14.6%) identified as Indigenous, and 21 (6.54%) young people were identified as coming from a CALD background.

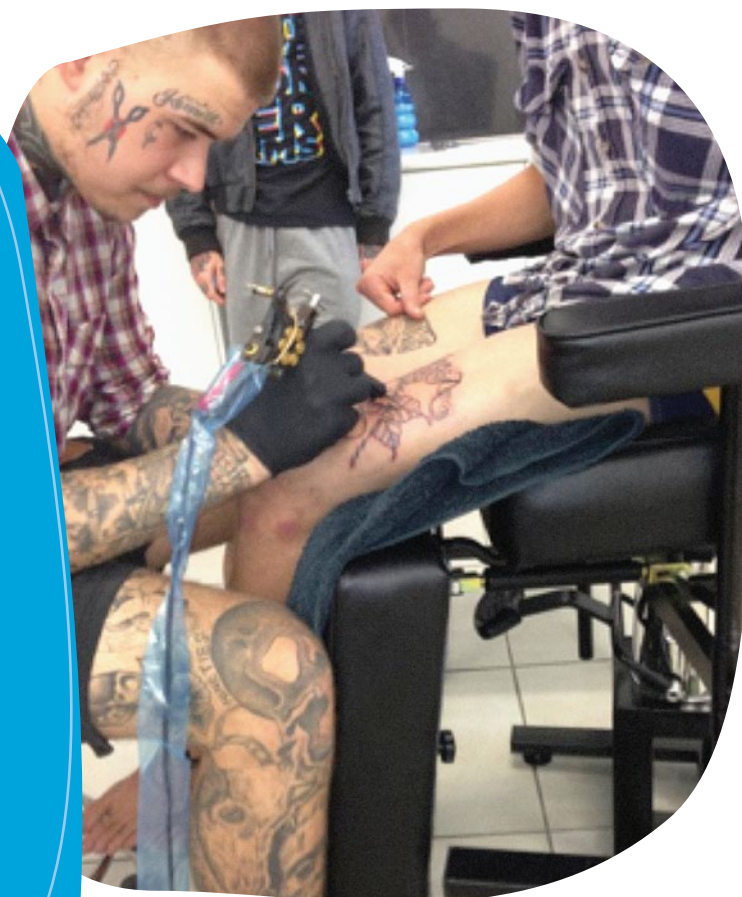
However, despite their long term disengagement, the Destination data shows that Youth Connections providers worked successfully with 2B young people to activate and sustain their engagement. Of the 2B cohort, 209 (65.1%) reported that they were still re-engaged in education either at school or another learning facility six months after receiving a final outcome from Youth Connections. Additionally, 93 (29.0%) of this cohort reported that they were in either full-time or part-time employment, 29 of which were in either in a traineeship or an apprenticeship six months after receiving a final outcome and some participants in both education and employment. Finally, of the 2B cohort, only 20 (6.2%) young people recorded themselves as NEET (not in education or employment) and a further 16 young people recorded that they were doing 'something else'; this included being a parent and/or carer.

This evidence demonstrates Youth Connections' ability to activate the most highly disengaged young people in Australia and engage them in education or employment. Proving that, although it was not a goal of the initial programme, Youth Connections providers have been able to successfully assist the most disengaged young people into employment.

Jay Turning a love of art into a career

Jay commenced Youth Connections in August 2010 after leaving school in Year 10. Jay began a Certificate 2 at a community learning facility but had difficulties with numeracy and literacy. He struggled to remain engaged because of the difficulties he experienced learning. Jay did, however, draw amazing art work over his school booklets and it was clear that this was where his passion and talents lay.

Youth Connections staff helped Jay to stay focused while encouraging him to develop an art portfolio. Jay hoped for an apprenticeship as a tattoo artist, however it was difficult to get a start as work experience isn't allowed in the industry. Youth Connections staff helped Jay to find alternative pathways in graphic design. Then Jay was offered his dream job of working as a tattooist where he is still working today.





Patrick

From disengaged to busy apprentice

Patrick was referred to Youth Connections after he disengaged from school. Experiencing a range of mental health issues, Patrick identified that his main goals were to improve his mental health, stop taking drugs and to gain an apprenticeship. Youth Connections worked with Patrick to address his barriers and as a result Patrick dramatically reduced his drug intake, worked on his resume, job readiness and became very motivated about employment.

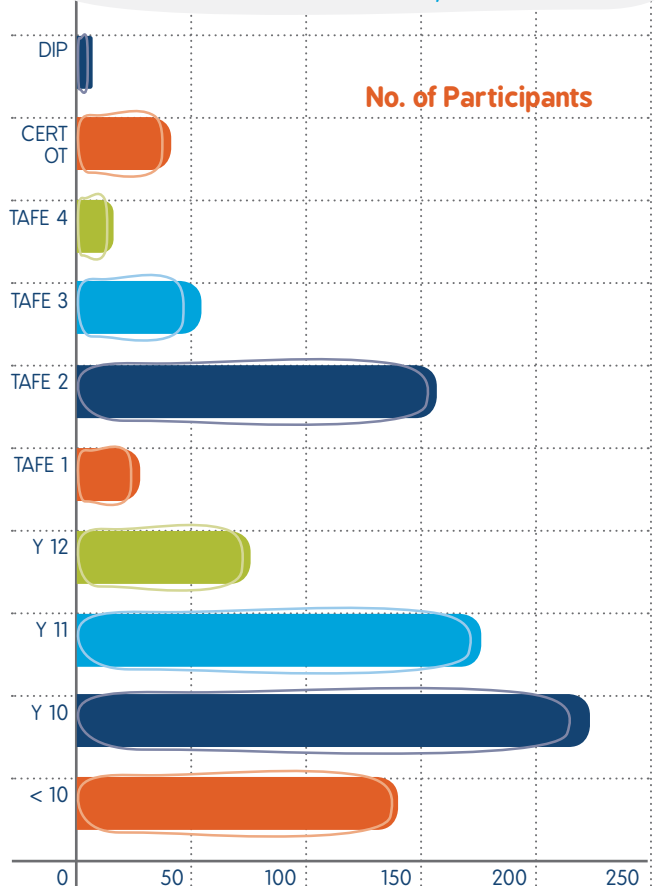
Since exiting Youth Connections, Patrick gained an apprenticeship where he is still currently employed. Patrick stated "My aim now is to work hard to become a manager, (Youth Connections) was great, it helped me wake up to myself and realise the way I was living was not how I wanted to spend the rest of my life. I am grateful that I was able to spend time at Youth Connections as it really saved my life."

Education Level of Participants (recorded January 2014)

The majority of participants in Youth Connections favoured vocational education pathways over traditional school based education. Of the total number of students, 227 (27%) recorded that they had a vocational education attainment of Cert II or higher with 67 (29.5%) young people recording attainment level Certificate III or Certificate IV. Five (2.2%) young people have completed Diplomas.

However, it should be noted that some young people were highly engaged and pursued a traditional school based education concurrently with vocational studies with 252 (30%) of surveyed Youth Connection participants recorded as completing year 11 or 12. Further, the majority of these young people surveyed were still undertaking study, so the data shouldn't be construed as a final educational attainment.

Education Attainment of Participants - Graph 4 (recorded January 2014)



Brandon

*Re-engaged in education,
then into employment
in remote Australia*

Brandon commenced in Youth Connections in October 2012 after the long term illness of a family member which was affecting Brandon's interest in and engagement at school. Youth Connections supported him to engage with school including a Certificate 1 course and explaining how this may assist him in to access further education or training. Brandon commenced work experience and made the decision to leave school and commence employment. Brandon's engagement has resulted in increased personal and emotional wellbeing, including greater involvement in his local community and sporting activities. Brandon now works approximately 45 hours per week and is actively involved in the Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade having completed his training in May 2013.

Brandon thoroughly enjoys working and hopes to gain an apprenticeship to become a qualified boilermaker. He said he is looking forward to obtaining his licence and has a car that he is working on... when he gets the chance!



Highlighting Outcomes of Participants in Rural and Remote Australia

Young people in rural and remote Australia are often faced with increased barriers in comparison to young people in metropolitan areas as there may be little choice in traditional education institutions, and reduced options for employment. When factors such as the lack of public transport and in some cases, options for safer, alternative housing are also considered, the tyranny of distance for many young people in rural and remote Australia makes re-engagement in education or connecting to employment extremely difficult.

The Destination survey gathered information from 349 young people classified as living rurally, and 78 young people classified as living in remote or very remote Australia. Of this total, 20% (85) young people identified as being Indigenous.

Youth Connections providers in rural and remote Australia were able to use their community connections to assist young people into education and employment pathways. Of this cohort, 94.9% (425) recorded being in education or employment after six months. When surveyed in January 2014, 82.44% (352) young people recorded that they were still in education or employment. This figure is higher than the nationwide average of 80.2% engagement in January 2014.

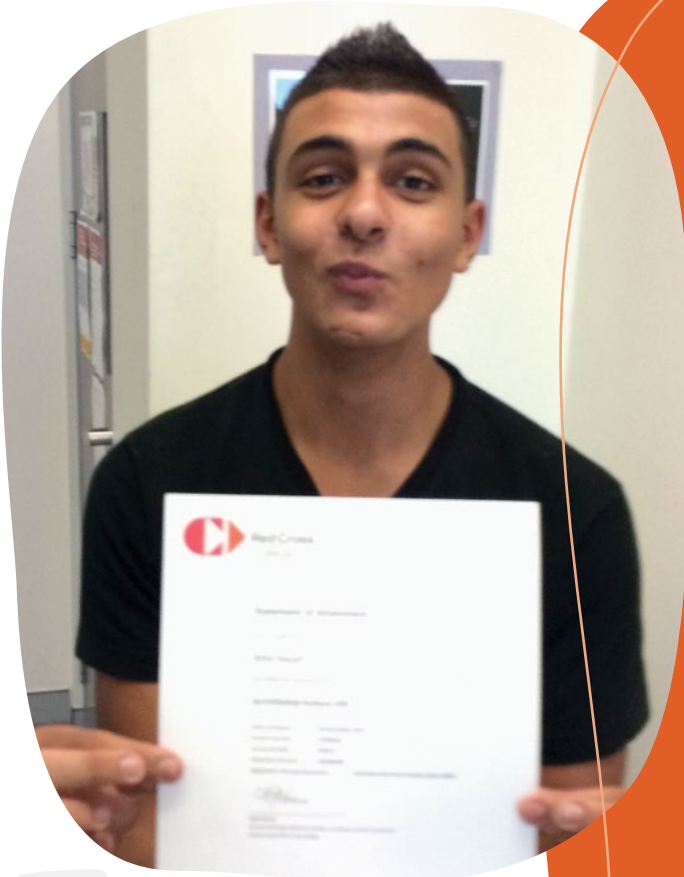
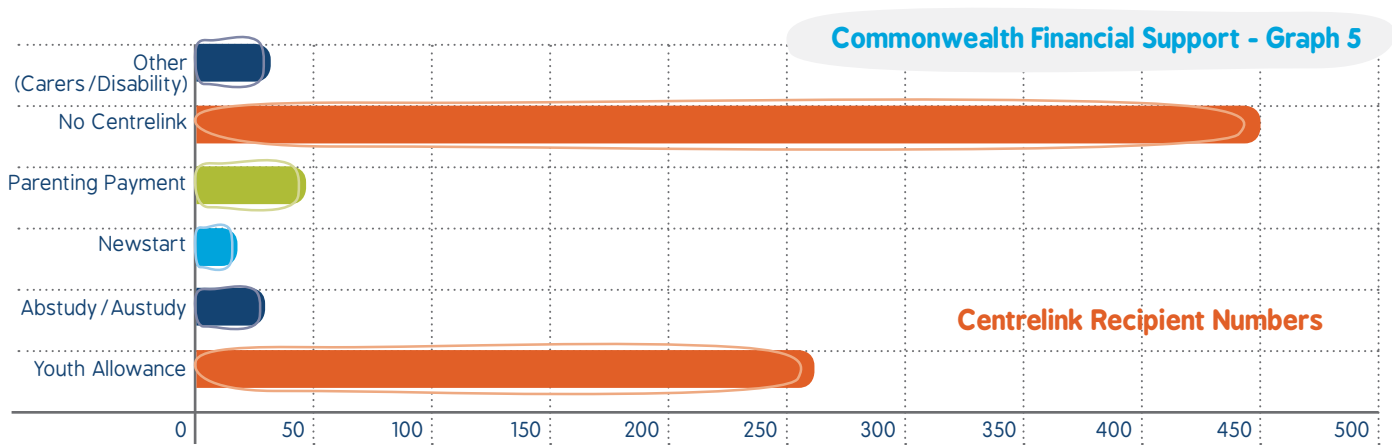
Despite the perceived lack of opportunities in rural and remote Australia, the respondents were highly aspirational. Only 4.4% (19) respondents stated that they were not intending to be in education or employment in the following twelve months. In total, 560 responses were received from the 427 young people to the question "What are you planning to do in the next 12 months?" This shows that many young people see more than one opportunity/activity goal in their immediate future even when they live in rural and remote communities that often have limited opportunities.

Living Arrangements and Commonwealth Financial Support

Whilst 66.2% (553) of the young people surveyed were still living at home, 20.3% (180) of the young people were living independently, either in a de facto partnership, with a flat mate, alone or in a boarding hostel. Many young people recorded living with other family members or grandparents. Worryingly, ten respondents recorded that they did not have a fixed address and therefore were classified as homeless.

A measure of a person's financial status is whether they need to receive Commonwealth financial assistance in order to meet their daily living expenses. Of the 835 young people surveyed, the majority of young people (53.9% - 450) recorded that they did not receive any Centrelink payments in their name. Those who were receiving Centrelink were typically receiving Youth Allowance. In total, 16 (1.9%) young people were receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP).

Given the high number of young people living independently, the data reflecting the majority of young people are living financially independent of Commonwealth financial support (Centrelink) is an incredible feat.



Billal Achieving his Dreams

Billal was referred to Youth Connections due to negative and violent behaviour at school. Billal would use his size to intimidate others and did not have the skills to communicate effectively. Billal had a desire to 'fit in' even though he was struggling in his current learning environment.

Billal engaged with Youth Connections and built a strong rapport with his worker. Billal actively participated in specific behavioural monitoring, communication and anger regulation workshops which gave him the skills to achieve his learning goals. Billal enrolled in the Links to Learning Certificate II Course in Skills to Work and Training and established positive bonds with fellow students and the teacher. Billal explained that the support he received was the main reason he was able to complete his Certificate II course. Weekly consultations showed that Billal was maturing and an asset in the classroom.

Youth Connections assisted Billal to secure a plumbing apprenticeship. Billal is enjoying work and has recently commenced at TAFE.

'Don't give up' is message to young

WHEN Jasmine came to MTC Australia's Youth Connections, she had not attended school in over six months.

"No one in my family has ever completed high school, and I had lost all motivation myself. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life," the 18-year-old said.

With the assistance of Youth Consultant Gabrielle Davidson, Jasmine began a Certificate II, through Peppertree Café in Bankstown, which gave her motivation to get her life back on track.

With Gabrielle's help, Jasmine applied for an Indigenous Traineeship at Qantas - however in order to be eli-

gible she had to be enrolled in school.

"The traineeship was just the push that I needed."

She enrolled into Year 11 at Bankstown Senior College for 2014, and submitted her application for the Qantas traineeship.

After being selected from over 100 applicants to attend an interview, she received the wonderful news that her application was successful and is now looking forward to studying full time and completing her exciting traineeship.

And what advice does Jasmine have for other young people who have lost their way? "Don't give up," she says. "My time at



□ Jasmine has turned her life around, thanks to support from MTC Australia's Youth Connections.

Youth Connections gave me direction when I needed it most and I now have a future that I couldn't have imagined at the start of last year." For more info, go to mtcaustralia.com.au.

Living Arrangements and Commonwealth Financial Support

In January 2014, when the 835 respondents were contacted to ascertain what they were currently doing, 80.7% (674) of respondents were engaged in education or employment.

For many young people, the contact came 18 months after they exited or received a final outcome from Youth Connections.

Of the 674 engaged in education or employment, 68.5% (462) recorded that they were in school or alternative education. A further 8.75% (59) young people recorded that they were in an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Of the 674 engaged in education or employment, 257 young people advised that they were in employment, with 94 young people in full-time employment.

Given that in 2012, 630 (75.4%) of the young people surveyed were classified as disengaged from school (2A or 2B) with 157 (24.9%) of those young people disengaged more than six months from their education, we believe this conclusively shows that Youth Connections greatly assists chronically inactive young people to sustain engagement in education or employment.

Jesse

Working with a Certificate III in Retail

Jesse was referred to Youth Connections from Centrelink. He had just moved, had no social network and was dealing with trauma after being removed from his mother at the age of 14 and placed with extended family.

Jesse had completed Year 10 but decided to move away from mainstream education and find employment. Jesse worked with Youth Connections and gained skills in looking for employment. Youth Connections helped Jesse write a resume, gain interview skills and confidence. Jesse applied for employment and received a part-time job at McDonalds. From this, Youth Connections then assisted Jesse to enter into a work based traineeship gaining a Certificate II in business which McDonalds encouraged.

Jesse also enrolled and participated in midnight basketball every Saturday with his Youth Connections worker being the coach. After completing Youth Connections, Jesse has continued working at McDonalds gaining extra responsibilities and completing a Certificate III in retail. Youth Connections provided Jesse with guided support so that he could achieve his goals and live a prosperous future.





Haley

Completed Year 12, working
& further study planned

Haley was referred to Youth Connections by her school. Haley presented with geographical isolation, significant trauma history and multiple family barriers; leading to unstable living arrangements.

Haley participated in Youth Connections and was supported throughout her Year 12 VCE studies. During this time Haley transitioned into independent living, became involved in her community through sport and successfully gained her Year 12 VCE.

"Youth Connections helped me to get where I'm today. They helped me get through a difficult time at home and also helped me develop more confidence in myself to reach my full potential. Most importantly they got me through my year 12 VCE when I didn't even think I would. Since passing my year 12 VCE, I have enrolled with TAFE for 2014 to undertake my Certificate III in Children's Services.

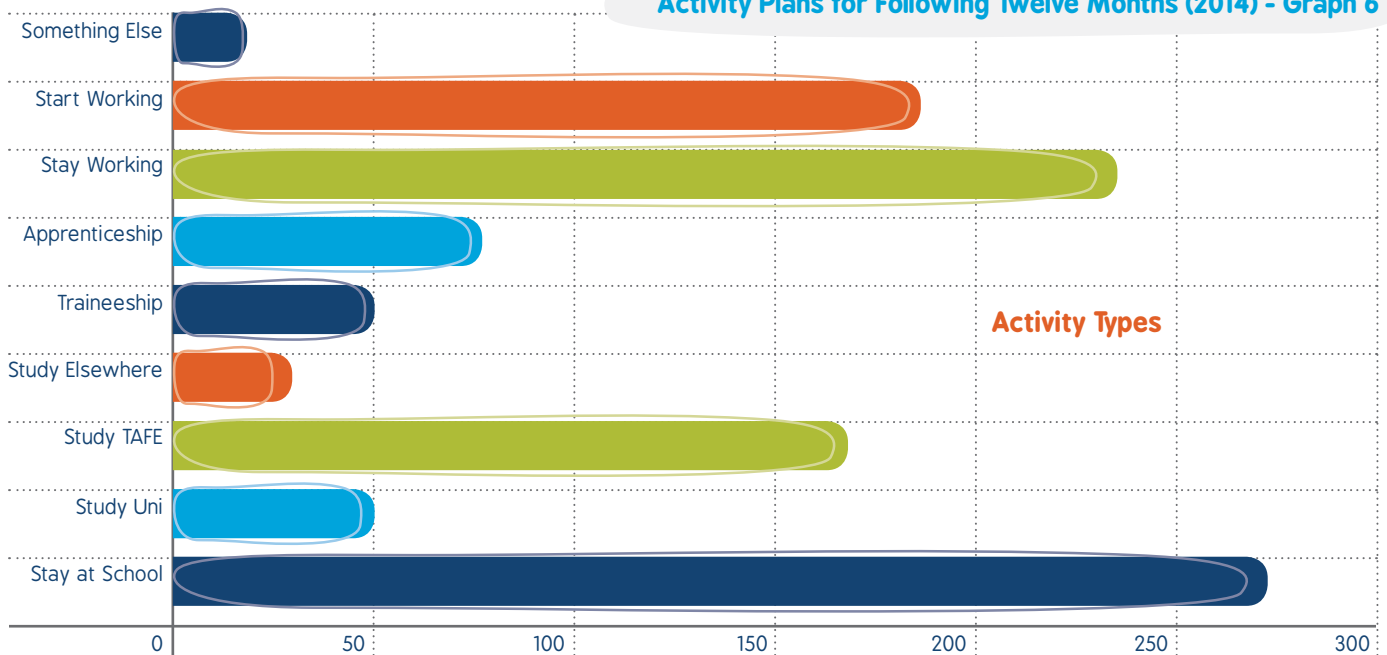
I also plan to keep my part-time job at a restaurant as a waitress to supplement my income and learning opportunities. In the future I aspire to become a fully qualified primary school teacher by continuing my studies to university. If it wasn't for Youth Connections I don't think I would be here today to pursue my dreams so I would like to say thank you."

What Are They Planning in the Future?

Young people who participated in the 'Class of 2012' Destination data are highly aspirational and forward thinking. Of the 835 participants, the majority of young people intended to stay or graduate from school and continue in employment. Fifty young people intended to enrol at university in the 2014 academic year.

In total, 1103 answers were received from the 835 respondents, showing that many were intending to do a number of activities in 2014. Only 38 participants advised that they were not intending to study or be in employment in the next twelve months, mainly due to caring for their children or family members.

Activity Plans for Following Twelve Months (2014) - Graph 6



Melissa Medical Traineeship Success

Melissa commenced Youth Connections in November 2011 and explored past personal and employment experiences and how they impacted on her well-being. Melissa actively engaged in self-reflection and confidence building exercises while also continuing to explore employment goals and training options. Melissa then secured a traineeship at a medical practice.

Melissa has set herself short, medium and long-term goals, developed strategies to achieve those aspirations, and has adapted to changing environments as she achieves her goals and sets new ones. "Youth Connections gave me the confidence to achieve some of my goals".



Summary

Destination data from the sample of 835 respondents who participated in Youth Connections in 2012 demonstrates that intensive support delivered by Youth Connections providers nationally translates to sustained engagement in employment and education.

The current activity level of young people shows that 80.2% are engaged in employment or education, with many young people engaged in both study and work, over a year after involvement in the programme. Considering that 157 (18.8%) of these young people were disengaged for a period of six months or longer, some up to two years, prior to commencing Youth Connections, we believe that these outcomes demonstrate that Youth Connections is highly effective at re-engaging and activating severely disengaged young people.

Young people who participated in the Destination data survey are determined and ambitious for their future. The majority are financially independent of Commonwealth financial assistance (Centrelink) and have positive and aspirational plans for their lives.

The Youth Connections National Network (YCNN) believes that this study further supports evidence(1) that Youth Connections effectively supports disengaged young people and increases their capacity to become productive and contributing young Australians. In essence, this further strengthens the argument that investing in disengaged young people is a worthwhile and logical spend by Government, especially when the goal of Government is to increase Australia's workforce participation and the nation's productivity as a whole.

If you have any queries regarding the Destination study, please feel free to contact the Youth Connections National Network Executive Officer, Rebekha Sharkie via email rsharkie@hypo.net.au or on 0411 982 191.

Intensive support delivered by Youth Connections providers nationally translates to sustained engagement in employment and education.

1. Dandolo Partnership Second Interim Evaluation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions
<http://docs.education.gov.au/node/31022>



Youth Connections Issues Paper

KEY ISSUE

Funding for the Youth Connections program ceases on 31st December 2014 and the Australian Government is not offering any replacement service for young people that are at risk and in particular those that are disengaged from education. Youth Connections across the Wheatbelt was delivered by RDA Wheatbelt staff since 2010, who offered a flexible individualised service to help young people with barriers to making a successful transition through education into further education or employment. The potential impact for young people and our communities is of real concern as there is no one in the Wheatbelt that offers the same intensive one on one case management that YC provides. Currently in WA there are almost 1,500 young people on provider's case lists

YOUTH CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

The Youth Connections (YC) program has three types of service to support young people at risk of disengaging from education and training and to help them to reengage and make a successful transition to further education training or employment.

1. Individual Support Services:

Individual case management support is provided to those young people at risk, including those most at risk of disengaging from school through to those who are severely disengaged from education, family and community. Service delivery is flexible and tailored to the young person's personal situation and circumstances. Activities include mentoring, advocacy and referral. An example of the support provided by our Youth Officers is assisting a young person on a Sunday who was threatening to self harm and run away.

2. Targeted Engagement Services

Youth focused activities that aim to find, connect and engage with severely disengaged young people. These activities may provide an avenue for maintaining participation and engagement for participants in Individual Support Services. For instance the Wheatbelt Heritage Rail Project in Dowerin was a successful Targeted Engagement Service provided by RDA Wheatbelt Youth Connections Program and the Bilya Budjar program in partnership with KEEDAC and Max Employment has also provided the opportunity for young people to attain a Certificate of General Education for Adult (CGEA).

3. Regional Coordination Services

These services are aimed at strengthening services in the region by building the capacity of stakeholders and education providers, this can be achieved by developing relationships with potential employers, business and industry to broaden transition outcomes for young people. An example of this is the Health Industry Pathways Roundtable recently held in Northam.

Youth Connections staff in the Wheatbelt have assisted 545 young people, including 220 Indigenous young people during the contract period up to March 2014 and although having reached the targeted referrals for 2014 we are still receiving referrals for at risk young people from schools and other service providers. Most of the young people receiving support have had multiple outcomes. RDA Wheatbelt Youth Connections has also held 50 Targeted Engagement activities specifically aimed at connecting with severely disengaged young people and delivered 35 Regional Coordination activities during the period including developing a Wheatbelt Youth Strategy in collaboration with key youth stakeholders.

Young people in rural and remote Australia are often faced with increased barriers in comparison to young people in metropolitan areas as there may be little choice in traditional education institutions, and reduced options for employment. When factors such as the lack of public transport and in some cases, options for safer, alternative housing are also considered, the tyranny of distance for many young people in rural and remote Australia makes re-engagement in education or connecting to employment extremely difficult.

OUTCOMES

Youth Connections has been evaluated and acknowledged broadly as a highly successful program. A comprehensive, independent evaluation by Dandolo Partners, commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Education has been conducted throughout the course of the funding. <http://www.youthconnect.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Space-in-between-4web.pdf>

The January 2014 report indicates:

The Youth Connections program has consistently delivered positive outcomes for young people and is strongly supported by education and training, community and youth sector stakeholders. A strong feature of the program has been robust performance measurement and continuous refinement in response to assessments and feedback over the four years of the National Partnership.

PROGRAM COST

The Youth Advisory Council of WA (YACWA) has expressed real concerns about the closure of Youth Connections, stressing that it is a successful and cost effective program. The average cost of providing Youth Connections services to a young person is approximately \$2,500 excluding GST, with the highest cost being for severely disengaged young people at approximately \$4,000.

IMPACTS OF PROGRAM CLOSURE

David Thompson, the CEO of peak employment services body, Jobs Australia said *the service was needed more than ever and should be extended or replaced with a similar service. "There is a growing crisis in Australia of youth unemployment and disengagement. Some young people need a lot of support to successfully overcome the challenges and issues in their lives that are holding them back...if we don't make the effort to keep young people engaged in education and work, then there's a greater risk that they'll engage in anti-social behaviour. And it makes no sense from a Budget perspective because giving up on young people means more of them will end up on the dole, costing the Government money, rather than paying taxes. Youth Connections fills a critical gap in services and with youth unemployment at crisis levels in some areas, it's just not the time to be cutting a programme like this."*

In the Wheatbelt, Youth Connections is the only specialist provider of "one on one" youth case management and so has a broad impact on the community. In addition to individual support RDA Wheatbelt use YC funding to assist in the delivery of alternative education programs for severely disengaged young people, such as the Award winning "Wheatbelt Heritage Rail Project" in conjunction with the Shire of Dowerin

YC providers assist in building community capacity at local, state and national levels. Providers contribute to strategic development, identifying local strengths and gaps and develop programs and support networks. As a YC provider RDA Wheatbelt has contributed to the development of the Wheatbelt Youth Strategic Plan; has been instrumental in setting up the Narrogin Interagency Group Local Agency Agreement, is an active member of the Northam Local Drug Action Group, and continues to advocate for youth across the Wheatbelt. The loss of this program will not only impact young people but the wider youth services sector and communities.

WHY IS THIS SERVICE SO IMPORTANT?

The Dandolo Partners report highlights concerns around youth attainment and transitions in Australia.

Australia's school completion rates, in particular, continue to lag behind leading OECD nations despite some recent improvements. The proportion of teenagers who are unemployed or inactive is higher than in the majority of OECD countries, and well above international best practice countries such as Norway, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Given Australia's wealth, strong labour market and relatively sound performance in school-aged literacy and numeracy, it could be argued that Australia's attainment and transition outcomes should be far better than they are.

Major lessons from Australia and around the world include:

- *Economic and education fundamentals create the foundation for good outcomes*
- *Reducing early school leaving is more efficient and effective than treating disengagement at a later stage*
- *Rapid responses to disengagement are most effective*
- *Formal participation requirements can be effective in improving outcomes*

- *Individualised approaches are often necessary, though more expensive to deliver*
- *Solutions that are driven locally tend to be more sustainable and effective*
- *Integrated responses help reduce confusion and are more efficient and effective*

The nature of youth attainment and transitions in Australia has changed in recent years, increasing the policy challenge associated with achieving improved outcomes. Full-time employment opportunities have been declining, the transition to stable employment after leaving education has become harder, and transitions are more uncertain and more unstable. Since the early 1990s, there has been a notable increase in the proportion of young people who are neither in education, employment nor training. The key to improving Australia's transition outcomes overall is to raise outcomes among the lowest achievers and the most disadvantaged.

http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/np_yat_final_evaluation_report.pdf

Jobs Australia has identified that *the Job Services Australia program lacks capacity to provide the intensive support and individual case management needed by highly disadvantaged and disengaged young people. Also the highly complex and regulated system of JSA services inhibits the development of innovative and specialised services. For these reasons, JSA providers will often refer the most disengaged early school leavers to Youth Connections. In this way the two distinct programs complement each other.*

FUTURE PROGRAM DELIVERY

The Commonwealth Government will not fund a replacement program for Youth Connections, yet it is clear that specialised youth transition services should continue to be delivered.

Jobs Australia believes a transition service should be adequately resourced and have the following features:

- *provide intensive, tailored, flexible and long term support where required, to address complex and specific barriers to engagement;*
- *be youth-friendly and considerate of the specific needs of highly disadvantaged young people;*
- *be demand-driven, with no waiting lists;*
- *involve a flexible combination of engagement, reward and compliance;*
- *offer foundational skills development, career development and a focus on engagement with education and training that would continue to complement the work focus of employment services; and*
- *have a role in building partnerships between key stakeholders.*

http://ja.com.au/submissions/Jobs_Australia_Youth_Transitions_Policy.pdf

The Youth Connections National Network, through their policy papers "The space-in-between" and "Outside the School Gate" have suggested potential models of services to support young people. Youth Connections has been characterised by flexible delivery and responsiveness to the local and individual needs. Non government organisations are typically adaptive to ensure they can respond to priorities. In Western Australia providers will work with key stakeholders to identify the most appropriate model for the state that align with State priorities.

<http://ja.com.au/>

As stated by YACWA in regards to the conclusion of YC: *"If we are serious about young people earning or learning we must provide sufficient resources to ensure vulnerable young Australians have the best possible opportunity to reengage or effectively transition to education, training or employment."*

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information

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