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## **BACKGROUND**

In 1998 the Northern Area Consultative Committee commissioned an action research project to investigate the impact on young people of the introduction of the Youth Allowance. The project identified a lack of connection between the various agencies working with young people (schools, TAFE institutes, adult community education providers, Whittlesea Council, community support agencies, Centrelink and the Job Network). In addition, the project identified a low level of systems knowledge among young people.

Research showed that the City of Whittlesea had a low school retention rate (at 71%) in comparison to other regions, and along with other regions, high unemployment (at 19%). Nearly 35% of the students who left school in 1998 did so without completing Year 12 and at the time had no known destination. The prospect of these early school leavers becoming long-term unemployed was high.

The research undertaken by The Dusseldorp Skills Forum showed that, across Australia, significant numbers of young people were not in work or education, or were in part time-work with no training. It also showed that 70% of those at risk of long-term unemployment were early school leavers. It is obvious that retaining young people in school or ensuring they have a training or employment base when they do leave school is of benefit to the young people themselves and in the interests of the community as a whole.

The local data was presented in a series of forums within Whittlesea and as a result of those presentations to key stakeholders the Whittlesea Youth Commitment was formed.

The establishment of the Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network in 2001, combining the two LGAs presented a challenge which became an opportunity for the WYC. A strong collaborative relationship has been developed with the HWLLEN whereby the Management Committee of the WYC is recognised as the local planning group for Whittlesea within the LLEN.

A number of key initiatives characterise the work of the Whittlesea Youth Commitment, and these all support the outcomes and related performance indicators of the VLESC LLEN Performance Agreement.

A partnership amongst government schools sees them contributing funds to employ a team of Transition Brokers to work across the seven schools.

A Community Team draws together operational staff from participating organisations to build working relationships and support the work of the HWLLEN Pathways Development Officers in Whittlesea.

A professional development program for schools and other education providers which is designed to promote inclusiveness through diversity in curriculum and pedagogy.

The establishment of a Whittlesea Youth Voice Team to continue the work of the stakeholders in ensuring the WYC is youth driven focused and responsive.

This group of young people work collaboratively with other youth participation groups in Whittlesea on initiatives such as Youth Forums and Summits as well as the development of projects such as a Youth Website and Radio Program in Whittlesea.

Other activities include:

- Facilitation of a network for VCAL co-coordinators and teachers.
- Staging of an “Employment Fair” in February of each year, specifically designed to ensure that no exiting Year 12 student falls through that gap between year 12 completion and success in obtaining a higher education or TAFE place or employment.
- Regular consultation with the LCP and YP providers in Whittlesea to ensure collaboration and co-ordination of activities to deliver maximum value to young people in Whittlesea.

Whittlesea itself is a growth area, with increasing pressure on young people to achieve positive employment outcomes. The Whittlesea Youth Commitment was and continues to be a positive move by the community to provide a new context for linking young people with employment, education and training support.

## **EFFECTIVE TRANSITION**

Traditionally, school responsibility ends when a student leaves, yet local research shows that over one third of early school leavers had no known destination. To test the value of reorganising resources at the point of leaving school, the eight secondary schools in the City of Whittlesea applied to the Department of Education for funds to appoint a 'Transition Broker'. The submission demonstrated the collaboration between organisations, which is the essence of the Youth Commitment.

From July 1999, the project worker contacted those young people who had left school in term one 1999 without a known destination. Although some were working or in TAFE, others were not. The project worker provided valuable information and ongoing support to those who were not working or in training. By the end of the year, the results became clear. Of the 24 young people who participated in the trial, four returned to secondary school, eight actively sought work, six went on to further education, three commenced traineeships, one gained full-time employment and two obtained casual jobs.

As reported in the Peter Kellock review of the Whittlesea Youth Commitment, young people contacted and supported by the Transition Brokers, reported being very happy and positive about the assistance they were offered, particularly in relationship to providing accurate information, and developing options for the early school leavers.

Initially three Transition Brokers operated across the seven government schools in the City of Whittlesea according to the level of need and number of students at risk of leaving school before completing their VCE.

Through funding provided by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum in September 2000, full time brokers were employed to cover eight Whittlesea secondary schools. As of 2005, Transition Brokers are now based in six Whittlesea schools; Epping Secondary College, Lalor Secondary College, Lalor North Secondary, Mill Park Secondary College, Peter Lalor Secondary College and Thomastown Secondary College. Each school funds their Broker through the MIPs (Managed Individual Pathways) budget and provides them with an appropriate contract.

In 2003 Transition Brokers received laptops funded by the City of Whittlesea council. These laptops allow the Transition Brokers to work with the Active 8 Timepoint Pathways Database program developed by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum. The Timepoint Pathways program allows Transition Brokers to record all early school leavers and current client data, and can generate a variety of reports containing up-to-date information. The database program has been an ongoing development of the Transition Broker Program. The database itself has developed since 2003 and in the future we hope it will further allow Transition Brokers to produce a wider range of statistics. All statistics and Transition Brokers findings are regularly presented to the Whittlesea Youth Commitment

team, the Whittlesea Committee of Management and to individual school principals via their Broker.

**The Whittlesea Youth Commitment is an early intervention strategy designed to enhance opportunities for young people to live and work in a healthy and prosperous community**

**The overall objective of the Whittlesea Youth Commitment is to:**

- identify and meet the requirements of young people in their efforts to make a successful transition from secondary education to their chosen destination.

### **Inputs**

The Whittlesea Youth Commitment is to be realised by:

- providing all young people with the opportunity and support to complete Year 12 or its equivalent
- being flexible about the nature of this equivalence, which will be defined by the needs and aspirations of young people themselves
- providing new learning, training and further education options for young people to achieve these goals
- offering new work placement, work opportunities, skill development, and community support structures for young people to achieve these goals
- establishing a school and community based mediating structure that will assist young people, as teenagers and as young adults, to meet their needs in terms of knowledge, learning, the labour market and the transition to adulthood
- developing and adjusting the curriculum provision of schools to better support the aspirations of young people.

### **Outcomes**

- improved mobility by young people between education, training and work
- learning and training environments actively re-engaging disaffected young people
- improved curriculum, organisational arrangements and support options in schools and TAFE
- an informed community supporting the objectives of the WYC
- increased employment opportunities for young people
- better accessed and distributed part-time employment opportunities for young people while at school and in entry level employment
- pathways and options that enable casual and temporary work to be transformed into more stable employment where appropriate
- more comprehensive preparation for stable employment through schools and forms of work placement

- deeper and sustained employer commitment to structured training and workplace learning for younger people
- strengthened integration of community service, education and employment sectors ensuring clear, seamless and signposted provision of programs and services that meet the needs of young people
- individual case management, mentoring or other forms of direct support for each young person to enable them to realise their goals in terms of learning, work and citizenship

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Whittlesea Youth Commitment**

Stakeholders in the City of Whittlesea agree to collaborate to improve the social safety net for school leavers and young jobseekers in order to enhance the capacity of young people in the City to be active, independent citizens.

### **Case Management**

This term is used to describe individual support over time for young people to assist with meeting the employment, education and training goals established at the point of exit from school or in discussion with a WYC organisation.

### **Year 12 or its equivalent**

It is the goal of the WYC to encourage development of a range of employment, education and training options for young people beyond the compulsory years of schooling in order to meet diverse needs and interests.

### **Transition Broker**

This role is assigned within schools to a person or a team to ensure that all school leavers, particularly those not completing Year 12, are aware of the employment, education and training options available to them once they leave school, and the support available through community, local Council and government agencies should they need it. Ideally a Transition Broker or team will follow up early school leavers over the course of a year to assist should there be a problem gaining access to employment and education some time after leaving school.

Whittlesea Youth Commitment schools, pool their Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) money to employ to Transition Brokers across the seven Government Schools in the City of Whittlesea.

### **WYC Community Team**

This comprises a staff member from each local WYC school and operational staff from agencies who are working directly with young people. It includes staff in the Jobs Pathway Programme, Centrelink, Kildonan Child and Family Services, Whittlesea Housing, Council youth staff, Job Network, Group Training and any other project staff whose focus is on transition from school to work.

The Community Team provides opportunities for the full range of agencies to work together to address the needs of particular young people with multiple barriers to employment, education and training. It identifies gaps in services and proposes to WYC agencies and the Management Group ways to improve collaboration and service delivery to provide seamless service to young people.

### **WYC Committee of Management**

The Committee of Management is the Local Planning Group for Whittlesea. Its role is to provide support and guidance to the Community Team and the Pathways Development Officers for Whittlesea.

## Meeting the HWLLEN's Strategic Plan in Whittlesea

### **Vision Statement**

The broad vision of the WYC is to enhance the capacity of young people in Whittlesea to be active and independent citizens. In partnership with young people, the WYC continues to strive to engage the community to provide real education and employment opportunities for young people.

### **Purpose of the document *Meeting the HWLLEN's Strategic Plan in Whittlesea***

The Whittlesea Youth Commitment is a long-term community based initiative, which promotes the desire of the community to secure real change for the benefit of the young people.

The work of the WYC aims to meet the outcomes and performance indicators of the VLESC LLEN Performance Agreement. The document *Meeting the HWLLEN Strategic Plan In Whittlesea* is updated regularly in accordance with the guidelines of the *VSC LLEN Performance Agreement Schedules*.

**Attached** are the current *VSC LLEN Performance Agreement* and *Meeting the HWLLEN Strategic Plan In Whittlesea* documents.



## Meeting the HWLLEN's Strategic Plan in Whittlesea 2008

\*Refer to *VLESC LLEN Performance Agreement 2006-2008 Hume Whittlesea LLEN Schedule 1 – 2008 Document*

HWLLEN Schedule 1 Related Performance Indicator*	TARGETS	PROJECTS / INITIATIVES	MEETING THE TARGETS
<b>Strategic Priority 1b</b>	To support and work collaboratively with LLENs in the Northern region.	<b>Northern LLEN Network</b>	Regular meetings are held throughout the year.
<b>Strategic Priority 2a</b>  Developing and sustaining current partnerships	Networking and sharing information between providers of education, training, welfare and employment organisations.	<b>WYC Community Team (CT)</b>	WYC CT meets regularly.  The WYC CT addresses the needs of young people in Whittlesea by developing and implementing projects/initiatives collaboratively to overcome multiple barriers to employment, education and training.
<b>Strategic Priority 2a</b>  Offering diverse programs  Developing partnerships to improve transition	Improving relationship between partners.  Increase in the number of local plans that are interconnected	<b>Whittlesea SRC Cluster Group</b>	The Cluster group meets once per term enabling students to have their voices heard, better themselves and ultimately make a difference in their schools and across the state.  Our aim is to provide assistance with the development of team-building and leadership skills, strategies for conducting effective meetings, ideas for fund raising and community projects and opportunities to meet with community leaders.
<b>Strategic Priority 2a</b>  Partnership	Improving relationship between partners.  Improved integration of youth participation activities.	<b>Youth Participation Network</b>	Meetings are held on a regular basis with representatives from the City of Whittlesea Youth Services, Kildonan UnitingCare and YAC, to discuss current youth participation activities and support the Whittlesea SRC

development			Cluster group.
<b>Strategic Priority 2a</b>  Increase in diversity of programs  Developing partnerships	Increase the number of young people re-engaged to education and training.  Improving relationship between partners.	<b>Finding MY Place</b>	The program, Finding MY Place, is facilitated by the collaborative partnership of Yarra Plenty Regional Library and WYC/HWLLLEN. The program is designed to provide better career guidance and preparation for employment by offering a valuable alternative learning environment for disengaged students.
<b>Strategic Priority 2a</b>  Development of cross regional partnerships	Re-signing of the Spirit of Co-operation Agreement becomes the new Memorandum of Understanding between WYC stakeholders.	<b>Spirit of Co-operation Re-signing Agreement</b>	The Spirit of Co-operation Agreement is revisited and revised every three years.  All WYC documentation is updated annually in accordance with the review requirements of the WYC Spirit of Co-operation Agreement, and in accordance with the VLESC LLEN Performance Agreement.
<b>Strategic Priority 2a</b>  Developing & sustaining partnerships	Provides current information regarding the options and issues that may be experienced as a result of leaving or finishing school.  Provides information and contact details (specifically for young people in the Whittlesea region) for assistance in obtaining further education, training and/or employment.	<b>School Leavers' Guide</b>	The WYC School Leavers' Guide is produced on an annual basis.  3000 copies are printed and distributed to all students attending secondary schools in Whittlesea and to all WYC Stakeholders.
<b>Strategic Priority 2a</b>  Partnership Development	Improve and maintain good communications with stakeholders.	<b>E-Bulletin</b>	The E-Bulletin is updated and distributed to members on a regular basis.
<b>Strategic Priority 2a &amp; 3</b>	Facilitate processes to improve career advice and transition support for school leavers.	<b>Transition Brokers</b>	The Transition Broker Manual is updated every three years and includes a mission

<p>Increase of re-engaged young people</p> <p>Data collection</p>	<p>Increase in number of young people re-engaged to education and training.</p>		<p>statement.</p> <p>The WYC provides ongoing support and assistance such as regular debriefing sessions and professional development, and supplies the Brokers with facilities/resources as required.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Priority 2a &amp; 3</b></p> <p>Increase in diversity of programs</p> <p>Increase in number of young people re-engaged in education, training and employment</p> <p>Developing partnerships to improve transition</p> <p>Re-engagement programs.</p> <p>Increase the number of young people re-engaged in education, training and employment.</p>	<p>Expand pathways and options for school-aged youth.</p> <p>Provide support for young people disengaged or at risk of disengagement from education and training.</p> <p>Provide more opportunities for parents of school-aged youth to gain first-hand information regarding future employment prospects and local support services.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for all young people including, school leavers and/or exit students to obtain information regarding education and training options and pathways and to explore possible employment.</p> <p>Improving the integration of local career and transition planning.</p>	<p><b>Employment &amp; Training Opportunities &amp; Employability Workshops</b></p>	<p>Throughout the year the WYC facilitates a number of events to assist and equip young people with employment &amp; training skills/options.</p> <p>The <i>WYC Employment Opportunities Fair</i> is held on an annual basis. The Fair aims to bring together representatives from local businesses, organisations and agencies in our region with young people who are seeking work in apprenticeships, traineeships and open employment.</p> <p>Young people will also have the opportunity to participate in a series of 'Work Readiness' workshops during the event.</p> <p><i>Leading Youth to Employment</i> is an information evening for parents of school-aged youth.</p> <p>The WYC/HWLLLEN supports the Northern Careers Network with the Careers Expo.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Priority 2a &amp; 3</b></p> <p>Developing</p>	<p>Improving relationship between partners.</p> <p>Increase in the number of local plans that are</p>	<p><b>YAC (Youth &amp; Community)</b></p>	<p>Member of the YAC Working Group.</p> <p>Liaise between WYC/HWLLLEN and YAC partners.</p>

partnerships	interconnected		<p>Liaise between Whittlesea SRC Cluster and YAC.</p> <p>Liaise between Youth Participation Network and YAC.</p> <p>WYC/HWLLLEN supports the YAC by providing links with the WYC Community Team to meet the needs of young people in preparation and during their transition from school to further study, training and employment.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Priority 2a &amp; 3</b></p> <p>Increase in diversity of programs</p>	<p>Improve and maintain relationship between WYC and secondary school VCAL teachers.</p> <p>Providing support for VCAL programs in local secondary schools.</p>	<p><b>Whittlesea VCAL Cluster Group</b></p>	<p>Whittlesea VCAL Cluster group meet on a regular basis to discuss VCAL issues, share resources &amp; develop strategies to assist the implementation of VCAL programs in Whittlesea Schools.</p> <p>Professional development provided for Whittlesea VCAL staff as required.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Priority 2a &amp; 3</b></p> <p>Developing partnerships</p>	<p>Improve and maintain relationship between stakeholders and partners.</p> <p>Increase in the number of young people engaged to further training and employment.</p>	<p><b>Whittlesea Employment Brokerage Model</b></p>	<p>This project is currently being reviewed.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Priority 2a &amp; 4</b></p> <p>Improve data collection</p>	<p>Increase in the number of young people supported to achieve their education and training pathway.</p> <p>Improved integration of education and welfare planning and advice processes.</p>	<p><b>Research – Education Provision in Whittlesea</b></p>	<p>A Committee of Management sub-group meets on a regular basis to research and develop strategies to address issues relating to education provision in Whittlesea, enabling community agencies and schools to work collaboratively.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Priority 2a &amp; 4</b></p>	<p>Provide integrated planning identifying possible gaps in education.</p>	<p><b>Forums</b></p>	<p>The WYC facilitates a number of forums held annually to address a variety of issues in education &amp; training in Whittlesea.</p>

<p>Increase of re-engaged young people</p>	<p>Provide support for young people disengaged or at risk of disengagement from education and training.</p> <p>To engage all Whittlesea schools in a positive and helpful dialogue to support ways for further engaging young people in education.</p>		<p>These forums are conducted on a needs base as a result of discussions emerging from WYC Community Team &amp; Committee of Management meetings.</p> <p>Focus for the forums include:  <i>Post Compulsory School Issues</i>  <i>VCAL Professional Development</i>  <i>Community Team Strategies</i>  <i>Education Provision In Whittlesea schools</i></p>
<p><b>Strategic Priority</b></p> <p><b>3 &amp; 4</b></p> <p>Partnership development</p>	<p>Improve and maintain relationship between partners.</p> <p>Increase in the number of local plans that are interconnected.</p>	<p><b>Community &amp; Industry Development</b></p>	<p>PDO is part of the <i>School Focused Youth Services (SFY)</i> Local Advisory Group.</p> <p>PDO attends meetings and provides representation of WYC/HWLLLEN on the <i>Whittlesea Community Futures (WCF) Partnership</i></p> <p>Meetings with <i>Local Community Partnerships (LCPs)</i>, <i>Regional Industry Career Adviser (RICA)</i> are held on a regular basis. LCP Project Officer attends Community Team meetings and provides reports and updates.</p> <p>The PDO attends meetings as required and provides representation of the WYC/HWLLLEN on the <i>Support for Young People that Really Counts</i> Reference Group.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Priority 3</b></p> <p>Improve data collection</p> <p>Skilling of all stakeholders in use of data</p>	<p>Increase in the number of young people supported to achieve their education and training pathway.</p> <p>Improved integration of local career and transition planning and advice processes.</p>	<p><b>Data Collection</b></p>	<p><i>On Track 2008</i></p> <p>Each year early school leavers in Whittlesea are contacted by Project workers and surveyed and linked in with appropriate services. A report is then sent to the HWLLLEN Office.</p> <p><i>Transition Broker</i></p>

			Information regarding the tracking of early schools leavers is collated by the Brokers and distributed to Principals, The WYC & HWLLEN Committees of Managements, and the WYC Community Team & Stakeholders.
<p><b>Strategic Priority 3</b></p> <p>Developing partnerships</p> <p>Increase in diversity of programs</p>	<p>Developing and improving relationship between partners.</p> <p>Expand pathways and options for re-engaging school-aged youth.</p> <p>Provide support for young people disengaged or at risk of disengagement from education and training.</p>	<p><b>Mill Park Alternative Setting</b></p>	<p>The WYC is working in conjunction with community agencies to help facilitate an alternative program for young people between the ages of 12 to 15.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Priority 5</b></p> <p>Effective Governance</p>	<p>All members of the CoM are aware of and adhere to Good Governance principles.</p>	<p><b>WYC Committee of Management (CoM)</b></p>	<p>An induction process is run for new members.</p> <p>The HWLLEN EO is a member of the WYC CoM.</p> <p>Regular reporting from the PDO to the HWLLEN CoM</p> <p>Representatives from the WYC CoM are also members of the LLEN CoM</p>