

CONSULTATIONS DISCUSSION PAPER

DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOL- BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

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INTRODUCTION

The Australian Government has commissioned PhillipsKPA, in partnership with the Australian Business Community Network (ABCN), to implement a stakeholder-driven process to develop guiding principles to encourage and guide relationships between the business sector and schools across Australia.

The project team appreciates your willingness to contribute to the development process. This paper gives some background to the consultation process and outlines a draft set of guiding principles drawn from a range of sources, including suggestions from the Business-School Connections Roundtable as well as examples from overseas.

We are inviting your views on the draft principles and supporting documentation to ensure that the guiding principles are a useful resource to promote and increase the number of successful school-business relationships, and to encourage good practice.

The remainder of this document covers three broad areas:

- background information to contextualise the guiding principles encompassing a brief discussion of the nature and scope of school-business relationships, an outline of the purpose of the guiding principles, the focus and criteria for selecting the principles and a description of the assumptions underlying the principles
- a presentation of the guiding principles encompassing, the principle, a description of what the principle means in practice and, where relevant, an outline of the principle in action
- two attachments
 - Attachment 1 – Examples of school business relationships and their alignment with the principles
 - Attachment 2 – Case study examples of school business relationships.

In relation to the attachments, it may be noted that while the case study examples provided in the text have been selected and written to illustrate elements of the principles, there is no suggestion that these relationships do not embed the other guiding principles as well. The attachments to this document are samples intended to illustrate examples of the types of support materials that schools and businesses might find useful.

NATURE AND SCOPE OF SCHOOL-BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

School-business relationships are entirely voluntary: they bring together interested parties that are motivated first and foremost by a mutual interest in improving educational opportunities and outcomes for students. Relationships characterised as 'significant' by business and school stakeholders have involved a sustained joint investment of time and resources to deliver tangible benefits to both the school and business involved.

The scope of school-business activities is broad. It can take diverse forms spanning the whole primary and secondary school curriculum. There is no limit to the possibilities of relationships aimed at improving educational outcomes for students and advancing the mission of the school.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles are being developed to assist businesses and schools in identifying appropriate opportunities for forming relationships and to guide them through the process of creating, implementing, sustaining and evaluating such relationships as they evolve.

A growing number of Australian schools have benefited from harnessing the support of business as a partner in education over the last twenty years. In 2011 the final report of the Business-School Connections Roundtable recommended that:

...the Australian Government initiate a stakeholder-driven process to develop guiding principles for school-business relationships that are voluntary and supportive, encourage good practice and emphasise mutual benefit.

Following a comprehensive canvassing of the views of stakeholders, the Roundtable concluded that school-business relationships work most effectively when the parameters are clearly understood by the stakeholders. It suggested that a set of guiding principles, rather than a regulatory framework, was preferable and that they should: be based on mutual respect between businesses and schools; encourage aspirational goals; provide guidance on best practice; and not add a new layer of compliance.

The guiding principles and support materials will be the culmination of a productive process of review, consultation and reflection over the last two years, which has prepared the groundwork for a significant increase in the opportunities for schools and business to work together to improve student outcomes.

Group consultation meetings to test the draft principles are being conducted in each State/Territory capital city as well as two regional locations: Gladstone in Queensland and Karratha in Western Australia. In addition, feedback is being sought by email and an on-line survey, and key stakeholder consultations.

FOCUS AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE PRINCIPLES

The Roundtable and the Australian Government agreed that the guiding principles should be voluntary and supportive, encourage good practice and emphasise mutual benefit. The guiding principles need to identify fundamental qualities or attributes that determine or influence the nature of effective school-business relationships. The guiding principles should not be seen as a set of prescribed elements: they are intended to be sufficiently flexible to encourage new and innovative approaches to the development of school-business relationships. The principles indicate an overarching set of conditions that generally characterise the most effective and sustainable relationships based on the experience of schools and businesses in a wide variety of contexts.

The key criteria for the selection and design of the principles are that they should:

- promote, inform and support school-business relationships
- emphasise mutual respect between businesses and schools
- enable all schools and businesses to benefit
- enhance existing relationships
- encourage new initiatives

- generate a sense of common purpose and ownership.

The principles should strike a balance between comprehensiveness, inclusiveness and accessibility. Each principle should be:

- clear, succinct and self-explanatory
- practical and obviously derived from evidence and experience
- positive, aspirational, encouraging and inspiring.

While no limit has been set for the number of principles, initial consultations with key stakeholders suggest there should be no more than ten.

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE PRINCIPLES

The draft principles are underpinned by three key assumptions about the value and impact of school-business relationships. Although there has been limited systematic study of the outcomes, the Baseline study of School-Business Relationships in Australia, and the consultations of the Business School-Connections Roundtable, identified numerous examples of programs and activities that, taken as a whole, clearly demonstrate widespread support amongst those involved and a range of positive outcomes, specifically:

1. School-business relationships improve student learning and development.

The accumulated experience of schools and businesses provides a highly positive picture of the impact of school-business relationships on student learning and development. While academic skills and vocational education figure prominently in partnerships, educators with first-hand experience of school-business relationships consider broader student development to be the most valuable outcome of partnerships. In particular they point to important gains coming from programs designed to improve student engagement, motivation and providing students with a sense of direction for their future education and employment.

2. School-business relationships improve school performance.

Evaluations and case studies of school-business relationships provide many examples of significant and sustained improvement to school performance on a range of dimensions, in addition to the immediate outcomes for students. The direct and indirect improvements are particularly evident in schools that systematically engage all staff in diverse ways with activities involving business partners. The positive impact of school-business relationships is seen, for example, in the development of school leadership and the expanded capability of teaching staff. As schools become more actively engaged with high profile business operations, particularly local employers, improved ties with the community are reported along with greater public awareness of the school. There is evidence from Australia and overseas that effective relationships with business can have a marked impact on the reputation and profile of the school as a leading partner in the community.

3. All types of schools and businesses can benefit from school-business relationships.

School-business relationships are suitable for and able to be accommodated by the full range of Australian businesses regardless of industry sector, size or geographical location. Likewise, all schools can be involved regardless of size, sector or location. Successful school-business relationships are not confined to schools focused on vocational outcomes, nor are they limited to connections with large corporate partners.

The national baseline survey of school-business relationships revealed a diverse range of innovative programs and activities across school types with multiple and overlapping purposes and objectives. The survey identified a wide range of business enterprises, large and small, local and international, that have worked successfully with schools to their mutual benefit.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: School-business relationships aim to improve student learning and enhance educational outcomes

Principle 1 makes it clear that school-business relationships should be focused first and foremost on students, and that the relationships should ultimately result in improved educational outcomes both for the benefit of individual students and for Australia's future. Business and community investment of time, energy and resources into the activities of schools is most likely to be successful and sustained if these core goals are unambiguously pursued.

What this means in practice

Improving student learning and the enhancement of educational outcomes will generally appear as a clear priority in written agreements between schools and businesses. These elements will also feature as the cornerstone of monitoring and evaluation plans. The areas for student improvement can take many forms, from skill development to engagement with learning. The activities directly focused on improving learning outcomes might include, for example: skills development (eg literacy, numeracy, information technology); broadening horizons and raising career aspirations; and leadership and teamwork skills. Other activities in a relationship can indirectly support improved educational outcomes, for example: principal mentoring; curriculum design; and community capacity-building.

Examples of Principle 1 in school-business relationships (see Attachments) include:

- **Footscray Primary School and Accenture.** The school identified the relatively limited life and career aspirations of its students and the community as an issue. The program involves Accenture volunteers working with teachers and students on developing 'habits of mind', speech writing and public speaking skills to prepare students for leadership in the school community, and to assist their transition to secondary school.
- **Ardoch Foundation.** The Literacy Buddies letter exchange program between a classroom of students (Little Buddies) and a group of corporate employees (Big Buddies) aimed at improving literacy, social and personal growth outcomes and expanded students' experience of the world.
- **Murray Mallee LLEN Schools-Community Water Resource Project (SCWRP).** The project reconnects young people with learning while strengthening community connectedness. SCWRP uses a partnership approach to deliver applied learning for secondary school students at risk of not finishing school. These young people follow a school-based curriculum but in a practical setting focusing on sustainable management of natural resources.

Principle 2: Successful school-business relationships add value to both schools and businesses

School-business relationships work best when both schools and businesses can see value added to their organisations and clear benefits from participation. This principle is

widely cited as a key factor for highly effective and dynamic successful school-business relationships.

What this means in practice

The expected benefits for all participants should be set out in any agreement from the outset. The value-added can range from immediate tangible outcomes to activities that provide long-term and indirect rewards — including broad social and economic benefits.

Examples of benefits reported by schools include: increasing internal resources or access to external resources; enriching school curriculum and approaches to teaching; and building the capacity and social capital of school communities and school leaders.

Examples of benefits reported by business include: providing opportunities to contribute to the development of young people; adding value to local industry; and improving the community reputation of the business.

Examples of Principle 2 in school-business relationships (see Attachments) include:

- **Pilbara Pathways Partnership.** The partnership between Rio Tinto, Tom Price Senior High School, Apprenticeships Western Australia and Pilbara TAFE was established to tackle emerging educational challenges within the Pilbara community of Western Australia. The High School was supported in its efforts to address high levels of truancy, low student retention and poor academic performance, while Rio Tinto was able to improve the level of apprentice applications to support its skilled workforce.

Principle 3: Where the school-business relationships occur within a school system, they are consistent with the existing policies and protocols of the system.

Local initiative by individual businesses and individual schools is a key factor in expanding the number of school-business relationships. At the same time, if they are to be successful, the programs and activities need to be consistent with the existing policies and protocols of the school system.

What this means in practice

In most jurisdictions, a range of policies and protocols have implications for school-business relationships. Both schools and businesses have a responsibility to ensure that all parties are aware of the policies and procedures that apply to their activities. These include, for example, policies related to duty of care, visitors to schools, and regulations concerning work experience provided to students as part of their education.

Some states have also prepared policy statements and guidelines that set out clear expectations, for example:

- NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) (2004) Schools and businesses working together: A support document to assist principals and teachers to develop school–business relationships.
- Victoria: Statement of priorities for partnerships between business and Victorian Government Schools.

Principle 4: The school community supports the relationships.

School-business relationships are most effective when they have clear endorsement from teachers, students and parents. Principle 4 is a reminder to potential school-business relationships that the school community needs to be confident that the programs and activities do not compromise the core values and mission of the school.

What this means in practice

The first step in gaining in-principle support of the school community is ensuring that the community is aware of and understands the purpose of the relationship and the nature of the programs and activities. Although there is a recurring debate in the community about whether businesses should be permitted into school settings, this was not generally raised as an issue in the baseline research and Roundtable consultations. Both business and school stakeholders saw opportunities for promotion of products as secondary benefits for business.

Examples of Principle 4 in school-business relationships (see Attachments) include:

- **Castlemaine Secondary College: 'Our School, Our Community'**. In response to negative feedback from the school community and local government concern that inadequate employment opportunities were forcing large numbers of young people to leave the region after completing Year 12 the school arranged a series of consultations with the community. A shared vision was developed to create a community of enterprising students, teachers, business, industry and community groups and to develop Castlemaine as an international leader of enterprising communities. Since the program commenced, students have worked in partnership with more than 31 businesses, non-profit organisations and government agencies.

Principle 5: The relationships are clearly aimed at supporting and advancing the school mission.

Successful school-business relationships are built on a shared understanding that they contribute to advancing the school mission. Developing consistency between the purpose of the school-business relationships and the school mission also requires a clear understanding and appreciation of the culture and goals of the business partner that is contributing to the relationship.

What this means in practice

A clearly articulated statement of the core values and aspirations of the school is needed to provide the foundation for effective and sustainable school-business relationships. Open and frank discussions should address the potential of the business partner to contribute to those aspirations.

Examples of Principle 5 (see Attachments) include:

- **Smart Geelong Region LLEN**. An LLEN project (P729) in manufacturing encourages Year 7-9 students in the Greater Geelong Region to consider manufacturing as a career. Like many other parts of Victoria, this region has a shortage of skilled manufacturing workers. Schools with a strong mission to improve vocational outcomes for students are linked with local manufacturers to introduce students to the world of work early on. The project raises awareness amongst parents and

teachers of what occupations are available to young people and what education standards are required to support those options.

- **Aviation High School and Boeing.** Aviation High is a specialised state high school with a clear mission to provide innovative and interesting educational pathways for year 8-10 students that lead to a broad range of careers in the growing aerospace and aviation industries. Boeing Australia was a foundation partner of the school and views this relationship as assisting in creating and sustaining high-grade high value jobs in the Australian aerospace industry and wider economy. Boeing, as well as other aviation companies have pledged their support with curriculum development, work-place opportunities for students, staff professional development, awards and scholarships.

Principle 6: School-business activities are embedded in the school and business cultures and day-to-day operations.

Embedding school-business relationships into the organisational cultures of both schools and businesses is critical to the long-term impact and sustainability of the programs and activities. Explicitly including the relationship in the operational structures and processes is clear confirmation to all participants that the relationship is valued.

What this means in practice

Relationships that reflect this principle are underpinned by a clear management process and structure. School and business representatives with responsibility for the relationship meet frequently to build mutual respect and understanding of each other's cultures. A culture of partnering in schools and the business community is facilitated by ensuring high visibility in both the school and business organisation; designating and distributing roles and responsibilities across a range of key staff; and, where appropriate, formalising the partnership roles and objectives in formal documents such as partnership agreements or memorandums of understanding.

Examples of Principle 6 in school-business relationships (see Attachments) include:

- **Giant Steps Sydney.** The school was founded in 1995 to meet the needs of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. It has achieved highly effective synergies with business partner operations reflected in the daily operation of the school. The success of the partnerships is due in the first instance to the ongoing and collective commitment of the school board, leadership and staff to creating and sustaining partnership opportunities. Staff at all levels are committed to supporting fund-raising activities as a key element of their workload. For their part, the corporate sponsors have made significant commitments of staff time and energy in working hours. In some instances the work with the school forms a significant element of the company culture and operations, including professional development strategies, product testing, and volunteer programs all managed as part of core business.

Principle 7: Both schools and businesses commit to providing adequate and ongoing resources to support the relationship.

Both businesses and schools should contribute to the overall resources needed to ensure effective relationships over the long term. The provision of adequate ongoing resources is central to translating values and vision into action.

What this means in practice

The level and type of resources, and the relative contributions of the partners, will vary from program to program. The time commitment of partners is critical and in successful programs is specified to ensure sufficient capacity to support the program. Common issues that need to be addressed in the early stages of development include: providing time and resources for program coordination; specifying the administrative capacity available from both partners; and clearly articulated expectations concerning the availability and use of infrastructure. Where adequate resources cannot be assured to cover such requirements, serious consideration should be given to deciding whether or not to proceed.

Examples of Principle 7 in school-business relationships (see Attachments) include:

- **Coburg Senior High School and Apple Australia.** The relationship centres on Apple's contribution to the school's IT rich environment through the professional learning provided to staff. Teachers are given detailed training in how to use the technology to complement the school's approach to embedding highly effective teaching and learning across the school. For its part, the school commits to involving students and teachers in testing and providing advice to the company.

Principle 8: Effective relationships are supported by sustained commitment at the highest levels of leadership from within the schools and businesses, and accountability is clearly shared by all parties.

The impact and sustainability of school-business relationships is most likely to be assured where there is support from the top and both the schools and the businesses understand and take responsibility for the successful outcomes of the relationship.

What this means in practice

Successful programs have visionary and committed leadership on both sides and a high level of visibility supported by top-level engagement. The commitment is confirmed by the personal involvement of the leaders in the establishment of the relationship and hands-on participation in activities. All parties share accountability for the operation and outcomes of the relationships. Effective programs typically have documented goals and action plans, agreed risk management strategies, and the capacity to anticipate and prevent problems.

Examples of Principle 8 in school-business relationships (see Attachments) include:

- **Newport Lakes Primary School and Cadbury Schweppes.** This relationship relied for its success on the direct involvement of senior staff in Cadbury's planning and marketing department, and the school principal, in addressing declining enrolments — a major issue for the school. Through a series of meetings between the school principal and the finance director and subsequent school council

meetings, an agreement was forged to use the relationship to promote the school to its local community, build its profile and increase enrolments. A team of marketing and promotions staff from the company worked with students and staff to develop a communications plan and produce a school promotion kit, which was distributed at an information evening for local parents and to local kindergartens.

Principle 9: Relationships are built on clearly agreed definitions of success and effective program evaluation.

Strong school-business relationships start with a clear statement of what each partner sees as successful outcomes. Evaluation and monitoring should be built into programs and activities as an essential element of program quality.

What this means in practice

Expectations for successful school-business relationships need to be transparent and clearly delineated. Defining the criteria for success and setting up a systematic evaluation process provides a chance for partners to produce early results and build confidence with each successful task. Effective school-business relationships also evaluate the actual relationship as well as the programs that occur within it, and they commit to continuous improvement through flexible measurement and evaluation.

Examples of Principle 9 in school-business relationships (see Attachments) include:

- **Castlemaine Secondary College - 'Our School –Our Community'**. Students work in partnership with local business and non-profit organisations such as the Golden Hope Foundation and Elliott Midland Express Newspaper. The school regularly evaluates the extent to which the various projects are achieving their objectives, including self-evaluation by the students and the use of survey instruments designed by La Trobe University. The data provides a 'compelling evidence base' for the effectiveness of the relationships.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

FOR EACH PRINCIPLE:

1. Is this principle a clear priority for inclusion in the list?
2. Is it expressed in a form that is:
 - a. clear, succinct and self-explanatory
 - b. practical and obviously derived from evidence and experience
 - c. positive, aspirational, encouraging and inspiring.
3. Does it meet the key criteria (listed on page 2), that is:
 - promote, inform and support school-business relationships
 - emphasise mutual respect between businesses and schools
 - enable all schools and businesses to benefit
 - enhance existing relationships
 - encourage new initiatives
 - generate a sense of common purpose and ownership.
4. Is the principle likely to be problematic for school-business relationships in any way?
5. Do you have any suggested amendments or alternative form of words?

FOR THE SET OF PRINCIPLES OVERALL:

6. Are there any key principles of school-business relationships that should be added?
7. How should the principles be promoted and disseminated?
8. What materials would usefully support the implementation?
9. Are there any barriers to using these guiding principles? How could these be overcome?
10. Are there any other issues on any aspect of the guiding principles that you wish to raise?

Attachment 1 – Examples of school-business relationships and their alignment with the principles

Note: The examples are taken from the Business-School Connections Roundtable Report (2011) and the Baseline Study of School-Business Relationships (2010). Given the timing of these documents, some of the relationships may no longer be operating. Additionally, the nomination of specific principles for each relationship is intended to illustrate the possible variations in emphasis, based on the descriptions of activities received from the participants and information gathered from secondary sources.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Successful school-business relationships:	Improve student outcomes	Add value to all partners	Consistent with policy & protocols	Engage school community	Advance school mission	Embedded in partner cultures	Adequately resourced & supported	Leadership committed accountable	Effective program evaluation
Ardoch Youth Foundation – Literacy Buddies	●		●		●				
Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) - 100 Faces, 100 Stories	●								
Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) – Partners in Learning Program		●						●	
Aviation High School and Boeing	●	●			●	●			
Beacon Foundation – No Dole Program	●			●	●				●
Castlemaine Secondary College	●	●		●		●			●
Coburg Senior High School and Apple Australia	●				●	●	●		
Coburg Senior High School and VECCI	●	●			●				

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Djarragun College and Cisco and Telstra	•	•	•			•	•		
Doveton College and The Colman Foundation	•			•			•	•	
Footscray Primary School and Accenture	•				•				
Giant Steps Sydney	•			•	•	•		•	
Macquarie Group Big Buddy Reading Program	•					•			
Microsoft's Partners in Learning	•					•	•		•
Murray Mallee LLEN	•		•	•	•		•	•	•
Newport Lakes Primary School and Cadbury Schweppes					•		•	•	
Smart Geelong Region LLEN	•	•	•		•		•		•
Tom Price Senior High School and the Pilbara Pathways Partnership	•	•	•	•	•	•			•
Unilever Australasia Foundation's Reading for Life	•				•				

Ardoch Youth Foundation	<p>Literacy Buddies - Various businesses</p> <p>Literacy Buddies is a letter exchange program between a classroom of students (Little Buddies) and a group of corporate employees (Big Buddies). In 2010 Ardoch facilitated 39 Literacy Buddies programs with almost 900 students and 900 corporate employees writing around 14,400 letters in total. A 2010 evaluation of the program found that all teachers agreed that Literacy Buddies helped to improve literacy, social and personal growth outcomes and expanded students' experience of the world.</p> <p>http://www.ardoch.asn.au</p>
Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN)	<p>100 Faces, 100 Stories - Various businesses</p> <p>Business professionals from member companies volunteered their time and skills for this unique opportunity by mentoring a range of high school students from across Australia to write their life story and create an innovative work of art.</p> <p>http://www.abcn.com.au/100faces/</p>
Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN)	<p>Partners in Learning Program – Various businesses</p> <p>The aim of <i>Partners in Learning</i> is to link business and educational professionals so that they can share experiences, solve problems and explore leadership challenges together. The program provides a unique opportunity to make a difference, not only to the individual partners, but also to the schools and businesses involved and the wider community.</p> <p>The program brings together principals and Chief Executive Officers and senior teachers and executives to meet for eight two hour sessions over a 12 month period to promote the sharing of expertise, develop management and leadership skills, enhance listening and feedback skills and explore solutions to challenges in a supportive and non-judgmental environment.</p> <p>http://www.abcn.com.au/what-we-do/109/</p>
Aviation High School	<p>Boeing</p> <p>In 2007 Aviation High was established aimed at providing students with innovative and interesting educational pathways that lead to a broad range of careers in the growing aerospace and aviation industries. Boeing Australia was a foundation partner of the school and views this relationship as assisting in creating and sustaining high-grade high value jobs in the Australian aerospace industry and wider economy.</p> <p>The school is a specialized state high school catering for year 8 – year 12 students who are interested in aviation and aerospace. It offers subjects that have been contextualized with aerospace and aviation content. Boeing, as well as other aviation companies have pledged their support with curriculum development, work-place opportunities for students, staff professional development, awards and scholarships. http://www.aviationhigh.eq.edu.au/wcms/</p>
Beacon Foundation	<p>No Dole Program – Various businesses and schools</p> <p>The <i>No Dole Program</i> aims to address the issue of youth unemployment and familial welfare dependence, as well as improve the school to work transition. No Dole predominately consists of businesses accepting students for work experience/apprenticeships. Through the core program activities, students gain a greater understanding of the world of work.</p>

	http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/funding/2000-04SFCS/Pages/sfsc-casestudies_youth_nodole.aspx
Castlemaine Secondary College	<p>Our School, Our Community – Various businesses</p> <p>In 2005 Castlemaine Secondary College was faced with negative feedback from students about their school experience, low teacher motivation and morale, and a local government concern that inadequate employment opportunities were forcing large numbers of young people to leave the region after completing Year 12. Following a series of consultations with the community, and investigations of possible strategies, Castlemaine Secondary College developed a shared vision amongst the community partners:</p> <p><i>To create a community of enterprising students, teachers, business, industry and community groups...to develop Castlemaine as an international leader of enterprising communities.</i> (See Attachment 2: Case studies) http://www.csc.vic.edu.au/</p>
Coburg Senior High School	<p>Apple Australia</p> <p>The relationship with Apple Australia centres on Apple’s contribution to the school’s IT rich environment through the professional learning provided to staff. Teachers are given detailed training in how to use the technology to complement the school’s approach to embedding highly effective teaching and learning across the school.</p> <p>For Apple, the relationship provides the opportunity to ‘road test’ its education resources with practitioners who are both skilled in the use of Apple applications and sufficiently sophisticated in their knowledge and pedagogical understanding (as they relate to use of ICTs in education) to provide highly valuable advice to the company – “... the school acts as a conduit of advice to Apple US as it is ‘at the edge’ of technological developments in education.” (See Attachment 2: Case studies)</p>
Coburg Senior High School	<p>Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI)</p> <p>Coburg Senior High School offers a senior school environment for students in Years 10-12 that provides diverse and flexible curriculum options and pathways to post school destinations. As part of the flexible curriculum delivery offered at the school, approximately 20 per cent of the students undertake a school based apprenticeship in Year 10. By their nature, school based apprenticeships require a close working relationship with employers, businesses and other enterprises.</p> <p>The school formed a close working relationship with VECCI. Through this relationship, VECCI has been particularly prominent in brokering relationships with employers to facilitate school based apprenticeships and access to structured work place learning in VET programs (See Attachment 2: Case studies).</p>
Djarragun College	<p>Cisco and Telstra</p> <p>The college has a significant number of students from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage with below average levels of literacy and numeracy. Cisco and Telstra committed substantial technical, financial and human resources to deploy a wireless broadband network throughout the college and install optic fibre, providing a virtual single learning environment that enables the sharing of information and collaboration by the school community. The provision of these technologies allows students and staff to connect with other students and teachers in Australia and around the world. http://www.djarragun.qld.edu.au/cms/</p>

<p>Doveton College</p>	<p>The Colman Foundation</p> <p>The Colman Foundation was established in 2005 with an initial grant from Pam and Julius Colman and has grown since with donations received and investments made. The partnership, announced in 2009 by the Brumby government, is believed to be the first of its kind in Australia. The new prep to year 9 Doveton College, part of which opened at the beginning of 2012, has integrated prenatal, early childhood and welfare services on the site. The foundation pledged to provide \$6.8 million over 10 years on top of the state and federal government funds used to build and operate the school.</p> <p>As well as the early childhood to year nine school the Doveton College site will also be home to community facilities including a performing arts centre, a health and wellbeing centre and a resource centre.</p>
<p>Footscray Primary School</p>	<p>Accenture</p> <p>The school-business relationship at Footscray Primary School centres on developing 'habits of mind', speech writing and public speaking skills to prepare students for leadership in the school community, and to assist their transition to secondary school.</p> <p>The school identified the relatively limited life and career aspirations of its students and the community as an issue. Few have parents in the professions and corporate world. The school joined the Partners in Leadership Program and discussed a range of possibilities with the Melbourne office of Accenture, a management consulting and technology services company with a strong culture of volunteering and also related activities through the Accenture Australia Foundation.</p> <p>A senior executive of Accenture is responsible for the overall sponsorship of the partnership. The volunteer manager of the program is a management consultant. Accenture staff work with students at the school to develop the fundamentals of effective leadership skills through a specifically developed program for the school. (See Attachment 2: Case studies).</p>
<p>Giant Steps Sydney</p>	<p>Various businesses</p> <p>Giant Steps Sydney was founded in 1995 to meet the needs of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. It has achieved highly effective synergies between the school and business partner operations.</p> <p>The success of the partnerships is due in the first instance to the ongoing and collective commitment of the school board, leadership and staff to creating and sustaining partnership opportunities. Staff at all levels are committed to supporting fund-raising activities as a core part of their workload.</p> <p>The most obvious benefit for Giant Steps from its business connections is the direct financial support of \$2.5 million annually that enables the school to operate. Other notable benefits cited by the school include, for example, the wealth of experience and contacts that the business connection has generated for the school including a high level of professionalism in all aspects of its operation. (See Attachment 2: Case studies).</p>
<p>Macquarie Group</p>	<p>Big Buddy Reading</p> <p>In 2005 a small number of Sydney staff visited an inner-city school to read to students during their lunch hour. Since then, the Big</p>

	<p>Buddy reading program has expanded to two schools in Sydney as well as encompassing schools in Melbourne and Brisbane.</p> <p>The 'Little Buddies' (students) who take part are identified as requiring extra assistance with their reading and comprehension and are matched with two Macquarie 'Big Buddies'. Each week one of these Big Buddies attends the reading session at the school. The basis of the program is to not only assist students with their reading skills but also to foster in them a love of books and reading.</p> <p>http://www.macquarie.com/mgl/com/foundation/worldwide/aunz</p>
Microsoft	<p>Partners in Learning</p> <p><i>Partners in Learning</i> is a global program run by Microsoft dedicated to enabling access to technology, supporting leadership and building community in Australian schools. By giving schools and teachers ideas to help them use technology creatively, preparing schools and systems for 21st Century learning, the program aims to provide greater access to the technological tools necessary for a child to receive a quality education. The Australian program has trained more than 120,000 local teachers and education leaders, and will have invested \$15 million in cash and resources by 2013.</p> <p>http://www.microsoft.com/australia/education/schools/partners-in-learning/default.aspx</p>
Murray Mallee Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN)	<p>Schools-Community Water Resource Project (SCWRP)</p> <p>Murray Mallee LLEN has been a key player in the Schools-Community Water Resource Project (SCWRP), which reconnects young people with learning while strengthening community connectedness. SCWRP uses a partnership approach to deliver applied learning for secondary school students at risk of not finishing school. These young people follow a school-based curriculum but in a practical setting focusing on sustainable management of natural resources.</p> <p>SCWRP has been very successful. In its first three years, 94% of over 220 participants stayed in education, training or employment.</p> <p>Partners include the Northern District Community Health Service, education providers, natural resource managers, family and community service organisations, local government, indigenous communities and local industry. SCWRP has been sponsored by the North Central Catchment Management Authority, philanthropic organisations and MMLLEN. http://www.llen.vic.gov.au/</p>
Newport Lakes Primary School	<p>Cadbury Schweppes</p> <p>The partnership between Cadbury Schweppes and Newport Lakes Primary School began predominately in the area of marketing, with the company lending offering their expertise to assist the school to increase enrolments. Cadbury Schweppes viewed this as a way to provide sustainable assistance to Newport Lakes and to provide something behind that the school could utilise in the future.</p> <p>A relationship between Cadbury Schweppes and Newport Lakes Primary School (in a disadvantaged area of Melbourne) brought the strength of Cadbury's planning and marketing to bear on declining enrolments, which was a major issue for the school. Through a series of meetings between the school principal and the finance director and subsequent school council meetings, an agreement was forged to use the relationship to promote the school to its local community, build its profile and increase enrolments.</p> <p>A team of marketing and promotions staff from the company worked with students and staff to develop a communications plan and produce a school promotion kit, which was distributed at an information evening for local parents and to local kindergartens. The</p>

	<p>school subsequently received 40 new enrolments for the following year's intake and has significantly raised its community profile.</p>
<p>Smart Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN)</p>	<p>Opening up the world of work to younger students</p> <p>Smart Geelong Region LLEN was instrumental in setting up Project 729 in manufacturing, which encourages Year 7-9 students in the Greater Geelong Region to consider manufacturing as a career.</p> <p>By linking schools with local manufacturers, the P729 introduces students to the world of work early on, so they don't cut off their options by dropping crucial subjects in their senior years. It also raises awareness amongst parents and teachers of what occupations are available to young people and what education standards are required to support those options. http://www.llen.vic.gov.au/</p>
<p>Tom Price Senior High School</p>	<p>Pilbara Pathways Partnership - Rio Tinto Iron Ore, TAFEWA, Apprenticeships Australia</p> <p>The Pilbara Pathways Partnership was established to tackle emerging educational challenges within the Pilbara community of Western Australia. Tom Price Senior High School was facing high levels of truancy, low student retention and poor academic performance, while Rio Tinto was receiving a low level of apprentice applications.</p> <p>A partnership was formed between Rio Tinto, Tom Price Senior High School, Apprenticeships Western Australia and Pilbara TAFE.</p> <p>Through introducing vocational elements to the curriculum, the program has resulted in a 50 per cent reduction in truancy and behavioural problems, and has achieved a 100 per cent graduation rate for its final year students. By treating the students as 'virtual employees' the program has created a more mature learning environment and has improved the transition from education to employment. (Business-school connections roundtable report, 2011, p.13) http://www.tompriceshs.com.au/content/pathways.html</p>
<p>Unilever Australasia Foundation</p>	<p>Reading for Life</p> <p>Reading for Life came out of the Unilever Australasia Foundation's desire to make a greater social contribution in Australia and New Zealand and focus on issues that concerned their employees. The Unilever Australasia Foundation joined with children's charity and learning specialists Learning Links to realise this goal.</p> <p>Reading for Life was trialed in New South Wales and New Zealand in 2003. Results were impressive with children, teachers, parents and volunteer employees all reporting positive experiences. During the trial children improved an average of eight months in reading accuracy, nine months in reading comprehension and six months in reading fluency.</p> <p>By the end of 2006, 1,100 children had been helped by Reading for Life and the program brought together a range of corporates, trusts, registered clubs and other organisations to help children falling behind in reading at school. Programs have been run in NSW, Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and also in New Zealand.</p> <p>http://www.readingforlife.net.au/html/how_did_the_program_start.html</p>

Case Study

Castlemaine Secondary College

‘Our School, Our Community’

How a regional school addressed the challenges of significant student disengagement by building connections with more than 30 businesses, non-profit organisations and government agencies

The challenge and the response

Castlemaine Secondary College is the only government Secondary College in the rural town of Castlemaine, which is situated in central Victoria and has a population of 19,000. The school includes 900 students on three campuses and 95 teachers.

In 2005 the school was faced with negative feedback from students about their school experience, low teacher motivation and morale, and a local government concern that inadequate employment opportunities were forcing large numbers of young people to leave the region after completing Year 12.

Following a series of consultations with the community, and investigations of possible strategies, Castlemaine Secondary College adopted a whole of school approach to project based learning in 2005 titled ‘Our Enterprising Community’, which was later changed to ‘Our School, Our Community’, in which the Principal and leadership team provided clear leadership for a ‘whole of school’ commitment.

Key Steps to building the connections

1. Inviting the community into three two hour ‘conversations’ about what could be done to address the need.
2. Developing a shared vision amongst the initial 18 community partners:

To create a community of enterprising students, teachers, business, industry and community groups...to develop Castlemaine as an international leader of enterprising communities.

3. Engaging external consultants to assist the school in facilitating the project design.
 4. Developing a plan to realize the vision with the support of students, parents and community partners.
-

5. Establishing clear goals in the school’s strategic plan for:
 - the development of a community of enterprising thinkers and operators
 - the establishment of project based learning as a core component of the curriculum in years 7-10.
6. Providing guidelines to provide clarity around the need for the project, the objectives, deliverables and implementation plan.

EXAMPLES OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES	
Objective	Deliverable
To enrich student’s capabilities as enterprising learners connected with their community.	To design, implement and evaluate ten ‘partnership projects’ where students complete work on a project in partnership with a local organisation.
To inspire students by exposing them to deep subject matter knowledge and demonstration of exemplary skills in community projects.	To ensure that each school and community project attracts at least two highly skilled volunteers who are passionate about the subject matter underpinning the project.

7. Developing a pilot program ‘Our Enterprising Community’ to trial the significance of enterprise education in the middle years of schooling and develop the school as a centre of excellence.
8. Securing funds from government sources to develop and document the work of the school with local community and global partners.
9. Researching other ‘enterprising’ communities around the world and developing relationships with schools, businesses and governments in those countries, including:
 - leading an action research team, including volunteers from Bendigo Bank, to Finland, Sweden, Denmark and the UK to seek out evidence based, global best practice in designing opportunities for students to learn through partnership
 - providing Teacher Professional Leave for a key member of staff to visit national leaders (schools and partners) in enterprising education.
10. Creating the position of ‘Assistant Principal Community Partnerships’.
11. Facilitating nine major school and community partnerships to improve student learning in the first twelve months of implementation.

EXAMPLES OF START-UP PROJECTS

Viticulture Project — Students grew, produced, marketed and sold their own wine.

Communications Project — Students developed a promotional video and induction pack for the town's largest employer, KR Castlemaine Foods.

Sculpture Festival — Based at the Eddy Street Campus, run during the Castlemaine Garden Festival.

The partners

Since the program commenced, students have worked in partnership with 31 businesses, non-profit organisations and government agencies. The following examples provided by the school illustrate the range of partners and activities that contributed to the winning of a Schools First Award.

Golden Hope Foundation & Elliot Midland Express Newspaper

Golden Hope Foundation developed a newspaper lift-out, "The Poly Times" with students and local newspaper, Elliot Midland Express. Students secured more than \$100,000 in-kind support from the paper, (editorial, coaching and printing space). Golden Hope provides expertise in project management, stakeholder engagement and communications. Golden Hope founder Max Lesser, emphasises that the Foundation does not have a business home or secretariat: 'The partnership is unusual in that the school is the base for the organisation...'

Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre

The school works jointly with the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre to operate a dedicated workshop for the inspection and certification of all types of modified vehicles to approved engineer standards for full Victorian registration, or for compliance with the Club Permit scheme administered by the Victorian Transport Accident Commission. The prime movers in establishing the partnership were the VET automotive teacher, Anthony Van Emmerik, Project Officer for the Goldfields LLEN, Gary Griffin, and Larry O'Toole, publisher and Chairman of the Hot Rod Centre.

It is a whole of school project growing from a pilot of 13 students, with mentors from the Hot Rod Association and input from the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC). Anthony Van Emmerik says that other related projects are emerging, including the *Elevate Dragcar Project*, which commenced in 2010. It involves students from years 7 to 9 developing mechanical and generic life skill working on a vehicle provided by a Holden dealer: 'Students find the talents they didn't know they had.' The Hot Rod Centre recently completed a regional partnership program and is now shifting into a cluster program with a full-time employee.

Steps are underway to apply for funding to support a full trade training centre to be established in conjunction with the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre. Larry O'Toole identifies the broad nature of the benefits:

There is huge value being connected with the school; it is all linked with enormous crossover. Local employers find that young people are missing key technical skills when employed by automotive companies. The project will have an impact from junior secondary to tertiary level.

Beacon Foundation Program

In 2010 Castlemaine formally joined the Beacon Foundation Program. Beacon provides students with opportunities, services and supports by linking them with local businesses and community organisations. with a particular focus on students "...who are 'falling between the cracks', typically from low socio economic status schools, by engaging the student in practical, solution focused programs that mobilise the school, parents and businesses in the community."¹

From the Beacon perspective, the State Manager Anthony Garnham was impressed with the initial enthusiasm of the school. In many cases schools have difficulty knowing where to start, but Castlemaine was '...tuned in to the benefits of building the reputation of the school in the community and the relevance of vocational education.' In the process of signing up with Beacon the school conducted a due diligence process, including sending a senior staff member to the Beacon annual conference. Getting principal and whole of school commitment is a critical success factor.

With support from a Beacon professional co-ordinator, Castlemaine selected a small group of student ambassadors in year 10 to take a leadership role in organising events and facilitating the development of partnerships. Beacon provides an induction program to equip the ambassadors for their roles. The program encourages students to make a formal commit to future full-time work or study. Businesses provide support in a wide variety of ways from career advice to mentoring. The Beacon co-ordinator, Annie Hinton reports that everyone in the year 10 cohort can be involved: 'the enthusiasm is incredible'.

In 2011 the school developed a database of local businesses with the potential to advise and support students. The first major event was a Business Breakfast with invitations to more than 120 local organisations.

A critical element in sustaining the program is the direct link to the curriculum. The school has mapped out a systematic alignment of the Beacon Program with English, and VCE Business Management, Accounting and Legal Studies.

¹ <http://www.beaconfoundation.net/aboutus>

New project — Rural Environmental Learning Centre

A staged implementation plan is underway for curriculum and programs focused on environmental sustainability at a new school site, Yapeen. The project commenced in Semester 2, 2010 with initial research to develop the concept and options, and gain feedback from possible partners, students and staff. The program will be trialled in 2011 with Middle and Senior School students. It will be firmly embedded in the curriculum and involve a significant ICT online element. The potential partners include: Mt Alexander Sustainability Group; Water watch; Landcare; and Solar Sun City. The school will partner with an RTO/TAFE regarding auspice arrangements, module development, industry placements and workplace arrangements for the development of a Rural Operations Certificate.

Key success factors

Creating a clear vision shared by all partners

The highly active school board and school leadership set the agenda for change. Facilitating a shared understanding of the unique role and talent of each partner organisation in bringing the project to life. The school also emphasised the importance of formal commitment to the vision from the outset, for example, it ensured that the goals of the partnership were written into the Strategic Plan of the Mount Alexander Shire Council. The school provided support for teachers through the change process, assisting teachers to understand the need for the project and build 'buy-in' to the new approach.

Celebrating the achievements

The local community celebrates the achievements of students in partnership with the school. Partners involved in project-based learning attend an annual awards night and present students with awards for excellence in a partnership project. School VCAL students have designed, planned and hosted the annual Business Awards held in the Town Hall. A team of students presented the outcomes of partnership projects to the Shire Council.

Establishing an evidence base

The school regularly evaluates the extent to which the various projects are achieving the objectives of the partnership program.

Three key questions are put to the students:

- How does this opportunity extend your capabilities as a learner?
- Does the opportunity to learn in the community add value to your experience of school?
- In what ways?

Survey instruments, designed by La Trobe University, were incorporated into the ongoing evaluation. The school reports that the qualitative and quantitative data collected provides, ‘...a compelling evidence base for the effectiveness of school and community partnerships in improving student’s motivation towards school, connectedness to their local community and pride in their diverse capabilities.’ For the Assistant Principal (Community Partnerships and ICT) Graeme Forrester, the most important outcome from evaluations is the way the community sees the school and the extent of their ‘buy in’ which transfers to the attitudes and aspirations of the students.

Embedding the partnership programs in the curriculum

The school has identified three core elements of the curriculum that guide all aspects of the partnership activities: personalized curriculum; relationships; and community. Partnerships are not an ‘add-on’, they are firmly based on the core elements. For example, the NAB grant has enabled the school to work the Golden Hope activities through the curriculum. The significance of partnerships permeates all curriculum design and delivery. Ongoing professional development has enabled staff to move from a ‘teaching’ focus to ‘facilitation’ focus in guiding and supporting projects, and assessment tools have been designed to measure success in student learning within projects. Graeme Forrester emphasises that, ‘None of these partnerships will work unless they are embedded in the curriculum—it won’t go anywhere.’

Summary of the Benefits

The school reports that the partnership strategy has improved student motivation toward school, evident in school level data. It has also:

- developed new employment pathways into the local food, wine and hospitality industry
- improved student’s sense of connection to school, to each other and to their home
- improved literacy, numeracy, proficiency in IT, improved health and wellbeing.

More broadly, the school believes it has modeled what a small rural community can achieve, when a diverse group of organisations and individuals share a common vision and shared purpose.

✳ Contacts and resources

Graeme Forrester, Assistant Principal Community Partnerships & ICT

School website: <http://www.csc.vic.edu.au/>

Case Study

Coburg Senior High School

How a newly established senior secondary college is using its relationship with a major multinational corporation and other businesses to 'enable' its approach to teaching and learning to flourish.

The challenge and the response

Coburg Senior High School was established in 2007 on the site of the former Moreland P-12 College, which closed in 2005. The previous school was troubled by declining enrolments and limited opportunities for students. Prior to the reorganisation of education within the City of Moreland, a number of small secondary schools in the local area were all delivering a narrow, largely academic program to an increasingly smaller cohort of students. The declining numbers across many of the secondary schools was due in part to community perceptions of a lower standard of education compared to that offered by independent and government schools in neighbouring suburbs.

In contrast, the transformed Coburg Senior High School prides itself on being able to offer a senior school environment for students in Years 10-12 that provides diverse and flexible curriculum options and pathways to post school destinations. While still retaining strong academic credentials, particularly in Maths and Science, the school also offers specialised programs in the Visual and Performing Arts and in vocational education and training. Within this broad diversity, a major strength centres on the provision of school-based apprenticeships, which are usually taken up by approximately 20 per cent of the student cohort at any one time.

As a Years 10-12 school, Coburg Senior High goes to great lengths to foster a learning environment that is more akin to university or TAFE than that which may be considered typical of secondary school education. For example: the school opens for students from 7.30 am to 5.30 pm each day; classes are timetabled but there are no bells; and while items for clothing carrying the school logo may be purchased, there is no requirement to wear a school uniform. Although such arrangements may be typical of senior secondary schools in other settings (including other senior secondary colleges in Victoria), three points differentiate Coburg Senior High School from other providers:

the physical layout and facilities; the approach to teaching and learning; and the school's ICT rich learning environment.

A key element in the emergence of the school as a high profile example of innovative practice has been its partnership with the Apple Corporation. It is reflected not only in the rich IT resources but also in the physical work environment, and more generally in the aspirations of the school.

Physical layout and facilities

Visually, the most striking feature of the school is its open plan layout where one teaching and learning space often merges with another. While there are designated/purpose built facilities for curriculum areas such as science, dance and music, the majority of the learning environment features open and interconnected spaces or 'commons' with smaller conference or withdrawal spaces being available for small group activity and independent work. Portable modular furniture, bean bags and minimal shelving within the learning spaces add to the corporate feel of the learning environment and its flexibility and further contrast to what may be generally evident in most schools. As observed elsewhere:

Far from producing laxity, [the learning environment has] created an enthusiasm for learning, an appreciation of teamwork and a self-disciplined, creative student body. Though no walls separate classes, the noise level is low and nobody is disruptive or mucking around.²

Approach to teaching and learning

This physical layout complements and fosters an approach to teaching and learning which is consistent with adult learning styles. Whole class, small group and individual/independent work operate within a climate of trust and negotiated learning. Resources are drawn from online portals and the wider internet and teachers act as mentors and co-learners within the learning process:

[Coburg Senior High] runs parallel with the workplace. It is not like a school but a 'workplace of learning' because with the teachers, the authority is still there but they're more like colleagues. (Student)

At the same time, information and communication technologies are fully utilised and integrated within program delivery to enable the approach to teaching and learning to function effectively underpinned by a comprehensive approach to professional learning for all staff: "... technology is totally embedded in our environment."

² An Apple a Day *The Age* 30 July 2009

ITC rich environment

Key features of the ICT rich Apple environment include:

- all students have an Apple Macbook for their personal use with links to a wireless network to access resources and facilitate online collaboration
- networked digital projectors hang from the ceilings in the main teaching areas so that students and teachers can show work and reference pages from their computers, call up information online or show a video or slideshow
- additional ranks of 20-inch and 24-inch iMacs set on small tables around the walls of the main building that run on an ethernet network
- a rack of Apple servers and seven terabytes of hard drive storage to support and sustain network speed.

Additionally, the school's teaching and learning program is geared around the use of Studywiz³ and Apple based wikis.

Studywiz, an Australian based software suite, has been specifically developed for use with Macintosh computers within educational settings. The software acts as a network gateway, management tool and resource repository. Through secure log-in, teachers and students are able to interact and collaborate in their learning. Parents too have access to the network which enables them to contact teachers, see subject and school calendars and interact with their children and their learning.

Each student has their own wiki which serves as a multifunctional tool for note taking, collaboration and presentation of work as well as each student's digital portfolio (which provides a longitudinal record of learning that shares works in progress, work that did not proceed to completion and resume). The wiki becomes a student's workbook and reporting tool where notes, ideas and works in progress and finished pieces are loaded. Parents, teachers and school leaders are able to access student wikis, which fosters a level of transparency not normally experienced in Australian schools thereby enabling ongoing monitoring and support for students and their work. In effect, the digital media created by students operates under the same notion as social networking sites - more people than just the student and the teacher can see, enjoy and provide feedback on the content.

Wikis have also been created for each subject area within the school website. These wikis provide prospective students with insights into pre-requisites, course content and assessment requirements for each subject. Students provide a podcast voiceover that enables prospective students to evaluate whether the subject is 'for them.'

³ Etech Group <http://www.apac.studywiz.com/>

Key steps to building the connections

The relationship with Apple emerged in parallel with the refurbishment of the school site. That is, while school personnel, state education department representatives, consultants, university and TAFE personnel, local government representatives, architects and builders engaged in detailed discussion and planning around the design for the new school, it was informed by an equally thorough, parallel process around the nature of teaching and learning.

Out of these conversations came a desire to work closely with a major IT company to fully embed technology into every aspect of the school's day to day operations. While interactions occurred with a number of major corporations, Apple Australia proved to be the most closely aligned with the unfolding vision for the new school.

Conversations were held with a range of companies who were considered to be key players in the ICT field, the challenge was to get multinationals such including Cisco and Telstra to see the possibilities of what we were about to do. Apple was the only company that was able to perceive what a school with a mandate to create a 21st Century school would look like while at the same time not paying lip service to what the concept might mean for the company.

Relationship with Apple Australia

For Coburg Senior High School, the relationship with Apple Australia centres on Apple's contribution to the school's IT rich environment through the professional learning provided to staff. Teachers are given detailed training in how to use the technology to complement the school's approach to embedding highly effective teaching and learning across the school.

In return, Apple receives feedback on the ways in which the software applications are being used by students and staff. The school positions this aspect of the relationship as a form of action research where teachers and Apple representatives collaborate on the development, refinement and integration of educational software and use of Apple resources.

In addition, the relationship contributes to the efficient operation of the school where podcasts, wikis and blogs enable access to information, data transfer and communication in a paperless and streamlined manner. For example, the business manager's presentation of the finance report to the school's Governing Board is delivered via podcast in advance of the Board meeting. This enlivenment of the finance report enables Board members to be alerted to key points in the report and assists in maintaining a streamlined and strategic focus to Board meetings.

Through its relationship with Apple, Coburg Senior High School is connected to a diverse network of schools and practitioners who are engaged in a similar journey in the integrated use of Apple resources within education. This network provides ongoing opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of good practice that further enriches the program at the school.

Key success factors

Mutuality

The critical success factor in the relationship between Apple and Coburg Senior High School centres on the mutual benefits derived from the relationship. For the school, the relationship enables the desired approach to teaching and learning to be fully integrated with the use of technology in every facet of each student's day to day life at school. The relationship with Apple also makes a significant contribution to the professional learning for staff. The knowledge and skills they have acquired through the relationship with Apple are deeply embedded in the pedagogy: "... living and breathing the way we work." Through the relationship with Apple, the school has a connection to practitioners in ICT embedded schools throughout the world.

For Apple, the relationship provides the opportunity to 'road test' its education resources with practitioners who are both skilled in the use of Apple applications and sufficiently sophisticated in their knowledge and pedagogical understanding (as they relate to use of ICTs in education) to provide highly valuable advice to the company – "... the school acts as a conduit of advice to Apple US as it is 'at the edge' of technological developments in education."

The school is mindful that it could be seen as promoting Apple and its products. In this regard, school personnel are explicit in stating that they do not see this role as 'selling Apple' to the many interested parties who visit the school (both from within Australia as well as regular international visitors). Rather, the school focuses on its approach to teaching and learning in the tours and seminars it conducts but within these activities, reinforces the complementary and enabling features of the Apple products and resources.

Establishing an evidence base

VCE results and the success of the school based apprenticeships are used as evidence of the impact of the school's approach to teaching and learning, its ICT infrastructure and the school environment.

In relation to the school based apprenticeships, the consistently high performance of students in the workplace attests to the strength of the program. The school receives regular feedback from employers about the high standard of soft skills (punctuality,

reliability, initiative etc) combined with recognition of students' capacity for independent and group/team work which reinforces the workplace attributes that the school's approach to teaching and learning delivers.

An additional emerging piece of evidence, which is not quantifiable, but nevertheless readily observable, is the changing nature of young people's interactions with IT and the capacity of Apple resources to accommodate this transition. That is, while young people are generally regarded as being voracious consumers of technology and the content it yields, in the school's experience its students are more interested in using technology to 'produce' content and sharing what they have developed and learned with others. The school's approach to negotiating curriculum fosters this way of working, whereby through the process of negotiation, students have freedom within defined boundaries "... to explore, to create and to innovate..." using Apple applications such as GarageBand, iMovie, Final Cut Pro, Safari and Filemaker.

Summary of the benefits

The relationship with Apple creates a dynamic and powerful learning environment, but this technology rich environment does not replace the role of teachers. Rather, teachers use these resources to innovate and inspire students. IT facilitates collaboration and independence and interdependence in learning, but it is the teachers and students working together that ultimately enables the learning outcomes to be achieved.

Other relationships

Rotary Club of Coburg

The school has an ongoing relationship with Rotary Club of Coburg that provides support to its students in the form of academic and achievement scholarships. Rotary also supports the school's Food for Thought program. This program makes available fresh fruit and other nutritious snacks throughout the extended school day to "*... keep the inquiring body and mind brimming with capacity for thinking.*"

School based apprenticeships – connecting students with industry

As part of the flexible curriculum delivery offered at the school, approximately 20 per cent of the students undertake a school based apprenticeship in Year 10. By their nature, school based apprenticeships require a close working relationship with employers, businesses and other enterprises.

For example, Coburg Senior High School students undertaking a school based apprenticeship in Laboratory Skills (delivered through a relationship with Swinburne University VET) participate in structured workplace learning at the University of Melbourne's \$140m Bio21 Molecular Science and Biotechnology Institute (Bio21 Institute), a multidisciplinary research centre, specialising in medical, agricultural and environmental biotechnology.

Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry

In endeavouring to establish a broad based curriculum, Coburg Senior High School formed a close working relationship with the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) from the outset. Through this relationship, VECCI has been particularly prominent in brokering relationships with employers to facilitate school based apprenticeships and access to structured work place learning in VET programs.

Over time, these connections have fostered deeper relationships with a number of businesses and organisations. For example, in the initial period of interaction with VECCI, a strong working relationship was established with Transfield Services that included students' involvement in school based apprenticeships with the company and staff participation in professional learning activity at Transfield head office.

City of Moreland

Coburg Senior High School has a strong working relationship with local government through the City of Moreland. Following council concern over the declining number of secondary schools within the municipality, it engaged in extensive liaison with the state government to establish the school on its current site. Since that time, the City of Moreland has retained an active interest in the school, including until recently, representation of the CEO on Coburg Senior High School's Governing Board.

*** Contacts and resources**

Don Collins, Principal

School website: <http://www.cshs.vic.edu.au/>

Case Study

Footscray Primary School & Accenture

'High Performers Leadership Program'

How a school works with a global consulting firm to develop students as learners and leaders.

The challenge and the response

Footscray Primary School is one of the oldest schools in Melbourne and located in the inner western suburbs, a low socio-economic area. The students come from diverse cultural backgrounds: most speak English as a second language. A large number of students are from Vietnamese families and since 1984 the school has supported a bi-lingual Vietnamese-English program. More recently the school established a relationship with a partner school in Vietnam.

The school identified the relatively limited life and career aspirations of its students and the community as an issue. Few have parents in the professions and corporate world. The school joined the Partners in Leadership Program and discussed a range of possibilities with the Melbourne office of Accenture, a management consulting and technology services company with a strong culture of volunteering and also related activities through the Accenture Australia Foundation.

The Accenture Volunteer Program at Footscray Primary School began in 2007. It is focused on a Leadership Program to encourage and enable Grades 5 and 6 students to develop a deeper understanding of themselves as learners and future leaders. Accenture plays a major part in exposing students to the possibilities of professional life and motivating them to strive for high performance.

Accenture staff work with students at the school to develop the fundamentals of effective leadership skills through a specifically developed program for the school. The program centres on developing 'habits of mind', speech writing and public speaking skills to prepare students for leadership in the school community, and to assist their transition to secondary school. Students form committees, prepare agendas and meet on a regular basis. They get to unpack the skills they have developed with the Accenture volunteers and reflect on their abilities and their personal growth.

A highlight of the program is a visit to the Accenture office in Term 3 to see how the corporate world works. This is particularly valuable for children who do not have parents working in the business sector and has the potential to shape their aspirations.

A major element of the Accenture contribution involves supporting two students each year to visit the partner school in Vietnam for 10 days. This requires a 'massive' fund-raising effort by volunteers to provide \$6000 as well as helping with the interview process to select candidates:

This is a life changing experience for the students, it opens their eyes to the bigger picture.

The program has been such a success that there is talk of extending it further to run for the whole year long, ensuring that all children get an opportunity to develop leadership skills.

Key Steps to building the connections

1. Identifying a clear need of the students and the community. The school reflected on ways it could provide students with new opportunities to prepare them for adult life.
2. Initiating a meeting with Accenture.
3. Being open to the possibilities that would match the needs of the students and the potential contributions of the volunteers.
4. Developing a shared vision of a program with clear outcomes.
5. Working collaboratively on a detailed program.
6. Integrating the program into the curriculum from the outset.
7. Establishing clear roles and responsibilities for program sponsorship and management.
8. Organising regular meetings and communications.
9. Planning for the future. The partnership is a growing enterprise with new ideas under development. The partners are also discussing ways in which the program might be evaluated, including tracking students as they go through to secondary school to monitor the impact of the program.

The partnership with Accenture

A senior executive of Accenture is responsible for the overall sponsorship of the partnership. The volunteer manager of the program is a management consultant. She has a base of around 20 Accenture volunteers from all levels of the company operations.

Being involved in the Footscray Program requires a high level of commitment and reliability on the part of Accenture staff. The volunteers are not necessarily specialists in leadership, the focus is on utilising their generic skills: for example, all volunteers have experience working with teams. A key part of the Accenture program is the

requirement that volunteers work through an induction pack to ensure they understand the school and the context.

The Accenture staff find the program challenging: 'None are trained in education and (for some) it is hard to switch from adults to kids. It's an eye-opener to see how different it is for kids to learn.' They see the teachers as guides since the biggest challenge is 'to be able to relate to the kids at their level. A lot of us come from advantaged backgrounds and we don't understand what the children are going through at home and at school.'

The impact on the volunteer staff is significant:

We all learn skills from each other and it helps us build up our own leadership skills. We all get something out of it ... it is really rewarding for everybody involved.

From the school perspective the partnership has created new opportunities beyond the original program. Students get to see how large corporations work, an experience they are unlikely to get otherwise.

The school project is not seen as an add on to the curriculum but integral to the broader goals of education hence it is embedded in the teaching and learning, for example, writing and preparing speeches directly complements the enquiry based approach of the school.

The school also sees the benefits of learning directly from corporate business ways of doing things. The direct and regular connection to the business world provides new dimensions of professional development opportunities for teachers and the principal.

The relationship fits with the core values of both Footscray Primary School and Accenture. Both attach significance to the international understanding and perspectives that the program brings, especially the relationship with the Vietnamese partner school.

More generally, the strong thread of teamwork embedded in the partnership activities permeates the whole school climate to the advantage of everyone.

Key success factors

- enthusiasm for an innovative approach with direct benefits for students
- mutual respect between the partners for their respective professional skills and experience
- clear goal setting and lines of communication
- program plans are clearly laid out each year in advance
- relationships are built directly between the people involved
- both parties are open to new ideas and willing to give them a go.

Summary of the benefits

The school reports that the students, community and school have benefited in a number of significant ways from their exposure to the professional world of Accenture:

- student leadership skill development
- enhanced aspirations and motivation to strive for high performance
- professional development for staff
- strong teamwork ethos across the school.

Accenture has benefited in terms of the impact on staff understanding of diverse cultures and the needs of children.

* Contacts and resources

Philip Fox, Principal

School website: <http://www.footscrayps.vic.edu.au>

Case Study

Giant Steps Sydney

'Passion, commitment and professionalism'

Attracting business support as an integral element of the school values

The challenge and the response

Giant Steps Sydney was founded in 1995 to meet the needs of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. The school provides intensive education programs for 60 students ranging in age from 2-18 years. As the only non-fee-paying independent school in Australia, the most obvious challenge for the school is to support itself financially. The Australian and New South Wales governments provide approximately 40 per cent of the school's operating costs and 55 per cent of the cost of some capital works, which means that the remaining funds must be raised through corporate and individual donations and fund-raising events.

The school understands the significant effort needed to engage and sustain cornerstone corporate sponsors. Staff at all levels are committed to supporting fund-raising activities as a core part of their workload.

Giant Steps Sydney raises \$2.5 million dollars annually from its intensive fund-raising efforts supported by a well-established foundation of connections with business on many levels. It has a group of parents with an exceptionally high level of commitment to helping the school provide the best possible environment for their children, and also for their families. From the time it commenced operation the school strategically fostered a strong, interconnected and growing set of relationships with a range of major businesses. It has wide support for its fundraising programs from major corporations.

Key Steps to building the connections

1. Setting a school values framework that underpins partnerships generally as well as business connections, for example:
 - 'Adopt collaborative approaches to challenges'.
 - 'Promote constructive reciprocal involvement within the community'.
2. Defining roles and responsibilities for business connections with clear lines of communication between the School Board, professional staff, and parents:

- The School Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the school.
 - The Executive Staff, (Principal and Administrative Director), report to the Board.
 - The School Board and parents run the fund-raising committees: the executive staff do not sit on the committees.
 - The school employs a part-time fund-raising co-ordinator.
3. Developing a systematic and targeted approach to attracting potential partners, including:
- making personal contacts with potential partners and sponsors
 - following up initial contacts with a personal tour of the school
 - creating connections with business across multiple levels of the school operations
 - identifying 'cornerstone' corporate sponsors to ensure a base of significant and sustainable relationships.
4. Developing and presenting detailed plans of action to prospective partners.
5. Fostering long-term commitments through a range of high profile and well-organised community activities such as:
- an annual fund-raising ball
 - fund-raising events (bike rides, golf days) supported by corporate sponsor
 - an annual program of corporate working bees.

The partners

Work experience programs

The vocational education and work experience program is a distinctive element of the school's approach. Most Giant Steps students have few options for employment or study after leaving school. Many have significant difficulties coping with the basic everyday demands of the workplace. The school responded to this challenge by developing a program of partnerships that would enable students in years 7 to 12 to experience the work environment.

Nestle was the first business the school approached. The school prepared a detailed plan and took it to the company for consideration. The class teacher meets with the contact person at Nestle 2-3 times a term.

The program currently has two students placed at the Nestle head office. Students are provided with a safe environment and tasks that enable them to respond to

directions involving more than one step. They work on routine administrative tasks such as emptying recycling boxes, stuffing envelopes, filing, photocopying and boxing up sample bags.

The students also gain experience in dressing for work, safely travelling to the office on public transport, greeting Nestle staff and participating in the work schedule. They learn appropriate social behaviours, including opportunities to recognise and use money to purchase food from the Nestle café and to eat lunch in this setting using appropriate table manners.

In 2009 the program won a NAB Schools First Award.

Giant Steps also arranges work experience with local companies, for example:

- **Gladesville Motel** is a long-standing partner of the school. It currently provides work experience for four Giant Steps students whose jobs centre on house-keeping tasks.
- **Video Ezy** employs students in processing and scanning DVDs. The connection was the result of a staff member who noted the potential and approached the store manager.

Other work experiences include:

- pamphlet collating and delivery in the local community
- assisting meals on wheels deliveries
- delivering the local newspaper
- housekeeping in a local aged care residence.

Hasbro is a US-based leading supplier of children's and family games, toys and media entertainment products. It has a long-standing commitment to corporate social responsibility with a strong track record of philanthropy initiatives and community relations. Hasbro (Australia) is located in Sydney and has worked with Giant Steps for almost six years.

The CEO of the Hasbro Australian operation, David Peattie, sees the close connection with Giant Steps school reflecting the company's preferred approach to supporting specific organisations rather than simply donating to large charities: '...as a small company we have a culture of giving back to the community' and in this case there is a natural link to the market that has proven mutually beneficial.

The initial steps in the relationship involved supplying prizes for the Giant Steps annual fund-raising ball. The company then decided to supply toys for the 'bull-pit' play area, and to keep it filled, in consultation with the teachers and support staff.

The relationship developed further over the last three years with the introduction of a regular working bee with participation from a significant proportion of the 80 Hasbro staff. Company executives also work with students directly in 'playdates'.

This provides them with the opportunity to observe first-hand the everyday realities of student lives at the school and to also see how children access and adapt the toys to their own use.

The considerable mutual benefit of the relationship is illustrated by the advice the occupational therapist and teachers are able to provide the company. The OT works alongside the teachers to support student engagement in the program. School staff test new toys and games and provide valuable feedback to Hasbro on their suitability or the ways in which autistic children respond to and adapt the resources to their needs.

The fostering of long-term personal commitments through these experiences has increased the motivation of both partners to sustain the relationship. It has the added advantage of incidental or 'spinoff' benefits, for example, when Hasbro was in the process of upgrading its office furniture it donated major second-hand items to the school.

There are broader benefits to the company that derive directly and indirectly from the relationship: 'The effort is more than paid back...there is great benefit in exposing staff to a diverse range of people...they see the challenges that others face.' David Peattie sees the relationship with Giant Steps continuing since it is now built into the company culture as one of the key community links it supports.

MAKING THE WORKING BEE WORK

Giant Steps Sydney runs 4-6 working bees throughout the year that typically involve 15-30 volunteers from a single corporation at a time. Personal networks are developed with corporate executives through the school's annual fund-raising ball to promote and sustain the working bees.

A parent has responsibility for the overall organisation of the working bees.

The current co-ordinator, Ian Morris, defines his job as project manager and on-site foreman to get as much done as possible on a given day. It takes 2-3 months of lead-time to prepare for the working bee. Ian aims to provide volunteers with tasks that can be completed in a single day.

Considerable preparation work is done by parents: for example, if painting is involved, undercoating is done in advance so that volunteers on the day can feel a stronger sense of completion of what is generally a major task with a tangible outcome: 'everyone gets a feeling of satisfaction that it's been a productive day.' Participants report that they like giving time to the school because the day is so well organised.

Importantly, the working bees are run on school days, and usually mid-week. This has the advantage of volunteers seeing the school in action and engaging with the students. It also meets the needs of companies keen to develop a sense of corporate responsibility amongst employees, and an opportunity for team bonding.

Key success factors

A shared commitment

The success of the connections is due in the first instance to the ongoing and collective commitment of the school board, leadership and staff to creating and sustaining partnership opportunities. The positive attitude of teaching staff and parents observed by visitors is a major factor in creating interest in the work of the school.

The school has cultivated a strong sense of community across a diverse range of parents who recognise and fully embrace the value of the relationships with business sponsors. Parents are seen as a powerful resource to open up new gateways for business relationships. A core group of 7-8 parents has responsibility for corporate fund-raising.

Investing in professional development and training

In addition to the primary outcome of capability improvement, the investment the school makes in the professional development and training of staff has a tangible impact on the perceptions of business partners. The Board Chair, Barry Irvin, emphasises that dedicating funds to the quality of service provision ensures the longevity of programs. It also appeals to business:

...when we talk to corporate donors about this, they get it, they understand because that's what works for them.

Investing in good quality infrastructure

The school aims to demonstrate its quality as a service provider on all fronts. The School Board and executive staff take considerable and justified pride in the physical environment of the school and the major initiatives they have undertaken to improve every aspect of the infrastructure:

Giant Steps has to be a beautiful place where we are proud to bring people....

Maintaining the quality of the infrastructure is critical to maintaining the enthusiasm of the parents. The school includes a mix of parents with diverse experiences and skills to enhance and support a wide range of aspects critical to the school operation.

Sustaining the support base

The challenge for Giant Steps is to continually motivate and invigorate its relationships with business. Since its foundation the school has been remarkably

successful at maintaining high levels of support both financial and in-kind. The positive atmosphere encourages visitors when they see first hand that the school is faced with an enormous task to stay afloat.

The school is also careful to ensure it garners support from a diverse range of sponsors, including major corporate 'cornerstone' sponsors as well as smaller companies, organisations and individuals.

Summary of the Benefits

The most obvious benefit for Giant Steps from its business connections is the direct financial support of \$2.5 million annually that enables the school to operate. Other notable benefits cited by the school include, for example:

- the wealth of experience and contacts that the business connection has generated for the school including a high level of professionalism in all aspects of its operation
- the positive outlook of the businesses connected with the school complements and reinforces the high aspirations of staff and parents.

*** Contacts and resources**

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Claire Allen, Administrative Director

School website: <http://www.giantsteps.net.au/>