

Purposeful Partnering

How school-business partnering can make a difference for students



The best thing businesses can do is provide the context of 'real-world' problems...

***Dr Alan Finkel, AC,
Australia's former Chief Scientist***

Produced by Interface2Learn for

 **origin energy
foundation**

Thank you

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¹**Disclaimer:** The purpose of listing names is to respectfully acknowledge those who have influenced the thinking so far. We note, however, listing names is not an indication that everyone in that list agrees with all or parts of this document's content.

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Cover photo: Students from Roma State College, Queensland engaging with Origin Energy volunteers.

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Term:

Throughout this paper, school-business **partnering** describes a dynamic suite of relations – networking, cooperating and collaborating. The type and combination of relations depicted are voluntary, intentional and change over time. Partnering interactions can come in different forms – mentoring, sharing career stories via Q&As and quizzes, hosting students or businesses on-site, learning challenges and career expos.

There is no 'right' model of a school business relationship.² Purpose is what drives why and how schools and businesses choose and need to engage together to provide benefits to students and create value beyond self-benefit.

²Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2012). *Evaluate to grow*.

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Executive summary

*I especially like the intent of this piece – **partnering with business**. To my mind, that is the future – genuine home-school-business-community partnering.*

Nathan Chisholm, Foundation Principal, Prahran High School, Victoria.

Value

Australian governments recognise “developing stronger partnerships” as pivotal to each Australian young person pursuing, “fulfilling, productive and responsible lives”. The importance of education, and business sectors working together has been high on the national agenda for at least the last 30 years. These sectors either *already* work together or they *want* to do so. A consistent finding from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is that working together reaps benefits to students (e.g. inspiration, confidence, learning, networks). But benefits can also extend to families, educators, employers and employees, and governments. A growing body of evidence from the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia sees the value of employee volunteering in education. Volunteering enhances employee ‘skills and competencies’, ‘motivation and mission’, with transferrable ‘productivity and career gains’.

Mandate

Students today are mixing in a complex and uncertain world. Recent challenges and disruptors have made the expectations of students a whole lot greater and the expectations on them a whole lot heavier.

Together, school and business expertise, and the expertise of those with whom they choose to work,

can drive change to build public trust and inform where governments should/might put the weight of policy. This mandate comes from young people, consumers and employees. The 2021 Global Trust Barometer (GTB) survey (involving 33,000 people aged 18 and over) found 86% agree that CEOs must lead on societal issues. Australia’s GTB report shows 76% of people trust in their employers at the local level.³ These new voices (young people, consumers and employees) expect to ‘have a seat at the table’, to learn about and be able to shape decisions around present and emerging opportunities and challenges.

Mindset

Nobel Laureate, Daniel Kahneman reminds us that, “Science, like many other systems, does not thrive on everybody being the same”. In preparing people for life, learning must relate closely to life and our uniqueness within it. Who gets to set the change agenda is a shared responsibility. Trust in schools and businesses to lead change together with other groups and expertise is key.³ To keep these considerations ‘front and centre’, a robust place to start is to ask three simple questions:⁴

- What strengths and skills do our young people bring and need to succeed?
- What does this community need from its young people, now and in the future?
- What do young people need from this community to succeed in life?

“There is a culture, behaviour piece we need to start with. Developing and valuing curiosity. I think a lot of workplace processes and systems get stuck just because we have engendered this habit of accepting, in many instances, the current way. Instead of taking up this opportunity to be curious and ask, ‘Could we explore ‘this’ in another way?’”

Alexandra Gartmann, former CEO, Rural Bank.

³Edelman Global Trust Barometer measures two trust attributes: competence and ethical behaviour. The 2022 report finds sharp declines in trust, for all institutions. Once again, 74% of employees trust their employers the most. See: [Trust Barometer 2022 Australia](#).

⁴Adapted from those shared by a rural government school’s former principal, combined with our analysis for this paper.

Measure:

To truly appreciate and value school-business partnering there is a need to measure it, over time, with a focus on ...

- **Intent:** Why are schools and businesses choosing to interact together? (The foundation for measuring impact and across the four stages of education)
- **Engagement:** How are schools and businesses interacting? (Directly/via others see which industry areas and types of interactions go in and out of focus)
- **Impact:** How well are school-business interactions translating into value beyond self-benefit?

"I learned that it does not matter how old you are at the beginning because if you actually learn with other people, you can become smarter than you were in solitary; because learning with other people can build your confidence and your collaboration skills and you can 'shoot like a rocket' in your learning."

Middle years student entrepreneurial education network panel member.⁵

Moves:

How can we make partnering a great choice for any school and any business? How can we be co-creating non-prescriptive experiences *with* students, families and their communities? Where can our actions be making a positive difference in the "entire environment around each young person"?⁶

Message 1: Get the excellence and equity settings right.

Framing what educational 'success' looks like and how to measure it is very important to the rest of the work schools and businesses choose to do together. It reduces the risk of students, educators and businesses simply doing 'busy work'. Every interaction has a curriculum and change agenda.

Message 2: Set a positive ambitious goal for businesses to engage with students and their schools.

There are strategic ways to bring together Australia's schools and businesses with students, to show how they are doing their part to meet learning, working and active citizenship goals in creative, innovative and measurable ways. Becoming entrepreneurial is everyone's business.

Message 3: Publicly recognise how both educational and business expertise is making a difference.

Strong and equitable partnering recognises and uses *both* educational *and* business expertise so every student is able to take increasing levels of control and experience success, in their learning, working and active citizenship.

Message 4: Sustaining equitable, trusting and mutually beneficial partnering is the benchmark.

Businesses partnering purposefully *with* students and their schools should be a normal educational experience for *each* student, *anywhere* in Australia, and starting early at *every* stage of education.

"The best thing businesses can do is provide the context of 'real-world' problems. If they are trying to do something collaboratively with schools, then they shouldn't think they are smarter than teachers because of their industry experience. The teachers are the ones who should be developing the curriculum, well-informed by the practical applications that the businesses can offer."

Dr Alan Finkel, AC, Australia's former Chief Scientist.

It takes a village. Working in each student's present and for all our futures. "It is being done. It can be done."⁷

⁵Anderson, M. & CESA Leading Learning Team. (2019). *CESA Entrepreneurial Education Inaugural 2019 Network - 'The Ideators'*.

⁶Drew Paten, former Australian Indigenous Mentoring Education, AIME student, then University mentor and at 24 years of age, Co-CEO of AIME. At the launch of Global Citizen's #EducationCannotWait campaign, 28 October 2021.

⁷Rooty Hill High School Submission to the Senior Secondary Pathways national review, December 2020.

Our position

‘It takes a village’

Partnering has always been important. In recent years it’s become a must for all.

It is our shared responsibility to ensure each young Australian is able to connect with those who they need, when they need, and in ways most useful to each of them in making their own learning, working and active citizenship choices.

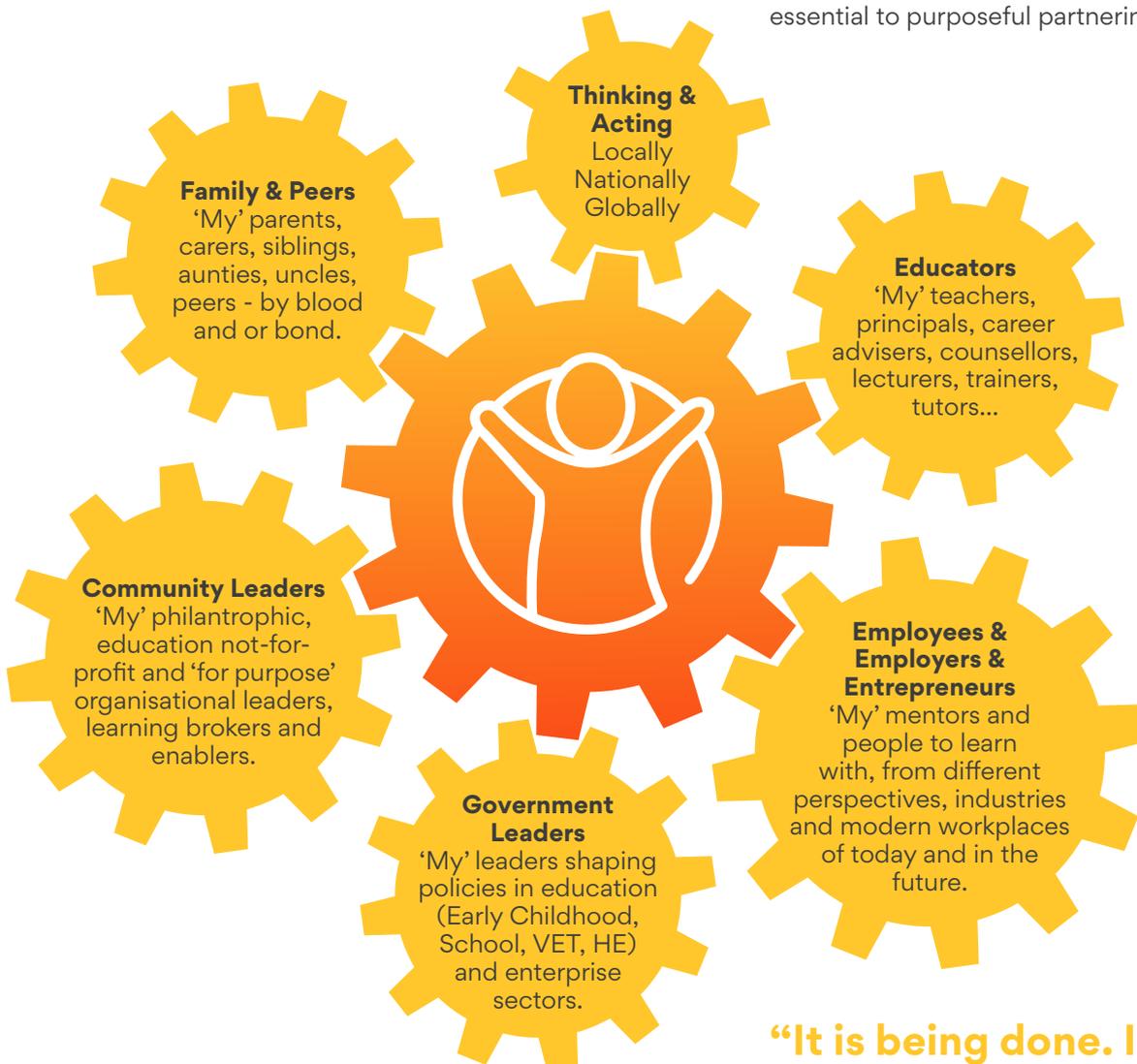
#Lifelong and #Lifewide Learning with a suite of people directly and indirectly over time.

Adults have an important responsibility to work *with* students to model and enact strategies of learning, respect for self, respect for others; and respect for the future.⁸

‘It takes a village’ is more than just a catchphrase⁹; it is a collective obligation.

Being open to exploring and experimenting and then acting to do things differently is key.

Together, school and business leaders are in really good positions to recognise and use their expertise for driving and building the trusting cultures essential to purposeful partnering.



“It is being done. It can be done.”¹⁰

⁸ Informed by Emeritus Professor John Hattie ‘The Art of Teaching Podcast’ interview with Mathew Green, 30 June 2021.

⁹ The Lancet. (2020). ‘A future for the world’s children?’

¹⁰ Western Sydney, Rooty Hill High School’s evidenced position. It is also our (author) evidenced position.

Two leaders, one message:

Partnering makes a difference for students

Two highly respected leaders, Christine Cawsey, AM and Frank Calabria, write directly to their peers in education and business. Together, Christine and Frank's messages urge educational and business leaders to engage in purposeful partnering because it makes a difference for students.



**Christine
Cawsey, AM**

Principal, Rooty Hill High School, western Sydney, New South Wales; Non-Executive Director, The Smith Family; and Immediate past Non-Executive Director, The Greater Western Sydney Giants, Australian Football League (AFL) Club.

We have learnt major lessons in the power of strategic partnering to promote student learning, agency, family engagement and opportunity.

“It is being done. It can be done.” These were the words used in our submission to ‘the Shergold’ review of senior secondary pathways to illustrate the impact of existing partnering work on student post-school transitions at Rooty Hill High School.¹¹

Our submission recognised that our students were using their engagement with business mentors, programs and initiatives to take greater agency over their own learning and transition pathways. We had replaced traditional notions of career education with multiple and deep entrepreneurial learning experiences across Years 7-12, encouraging students to explore School Based Traineeships, vocational certificate training, volunteering and part-time work for inclusion in their senior programs of study.

Schools can keep doing what they did in the past and will be forgiven if this makes little difference. At Rooty Hill High School we know that identifying and

implementing new ways of working and new practices *will* make a difference for students. Partnering makes a difference.

As part of the school's Strategic Plan, we identified key organisations whose values, mindsets and ways of working encouraged strategic partnering. The willingness of the leaders of those organisations to work with our staff and students to co-design and deliver innovative “work and enterprise” learning was one of the keys to our school making a shift towards next practice. In an annual review conversation with the leaders of each partner initiative, it became evident that the partnering relationship *itself* added value. Together we gained an understanding of each other's professional context and commitment, finding the best ways to work together and observing changes in student confidence, attitudes, knowledge, skills and transitions.

Students in western Sydney come from a diverse set of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including a large Aboriginal community. Many are bilingual and they all bring a diverse set of skills to their learning. These students rely (more than most) on the networks and opportunities created by their schools, their teachers and those who work with them. Many work hard to take up every one of those opportunities. When students plan to transition from school to employment, traineeships, apprenticeships or university pathways, many are “first in family”.

Rooty Hill High School now holds six years of post-school destination data to demonstrate that having the mentoring, support, expertise and encouragement of key business, not-for-profit and university partners makes a measurable difference.

¹¹Education Council. (2020). *Looking to the future*. Also known as the Shergold review - Professor Peter Shergold, AC, Chancellor of Western Sydney University chaired the senior secondary pathways national review.

“When businesses and schools engage constructively together, we can meet the challenges of a new world of work, and young people have the greatest opportunities to achieve their best.”



Frank Calabria

A message from Frank Calabria Chief Executive Officer, Origin Energy; Director of the Australian Energy Council and the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association; and Origin Energy Foundation Board member.

When working with young people and their schools, we are challenged by new thinking.

As the world takes action to combat climate change and transition to a lower-emissions future, we remain focused on our purpose to get energy right for our customers, communities and planet.

The challenges we face in our industry are not unique. Society is undergoing the most significant disruption in the world of work since the industrial revolution. Many of today’s school students will eventually be employed in jobs that have yet to be created.

Some young people and their families could see the emerging world of work as a threat rather than an opportunity.

These circumstances present shared challenges for both schools and businesses.

How do teachers enable young people to prepare for the unknown? What should be prioritised in the curriculum?

How does the business community learn to quickly and effectively share with young people and their schools the skills and behaviours needed for the roles that are only now emerging?

Working together makes sense.

At Origin we have seen how mutually beneficial relationships with schools can be.

Given the nature of our business, we have many employees across STEM disciplines. By volunteering, our employees are able to work with teachers, bringing alive the STEM curriculum with real-world examples. Our volunteers have worked with more than 20,000 school students.

When working with young people and their schools, we are challenged by new thinking. When we hosted an international gathering of entrepreneurs working on disruptive technologies, we invited members of the Young Entrepreneurs Program and their teachers from Rooty Hill High School in western Sydney to join. The result was a remarkable session bringing together entrepreneurs, industry experts and students; where age and experience were eclipsed by original thinking.

These activities have given us a new respect for the work of teachers and the capacity of young people.

I encourage other businesses to engage constructively with schools through purposeful partnering so together we can meet the challenges of a new world of work, and enable young people to achieve their best.

Preface

This preface introduces and sets the scene for the rest of the paper.

Who? The paper's primary audiences are school and business senior leaders (including the leaders of organisations with whom schools and businesses choose to engage). Philanthropists and philanthropy leaders may also find the paper's content informative for their own impact giving decisions. As the workplace context is schools, the paper refers to children and young people as 'students'.

What and how to use? *Purposeful Partnering* is a position paper, providing detailed content and examples to think through the case for purposeful partnering and the leadership it requires. People will be coming to this paper from different perspectives and with specific needs or areas of interest. With this in mind, readers can view each part as its own stand-alone document. People can read the paper or use it at the point that makes most sense to them and their need.

Organisation? After the Preface, the paper comprises five parts:

1. **Benefits:** Who benefits when schools and businesses engage purposefully?
2. **Importance:** Why do schools and businesses need to work together?
3. **Building a partnering culture:** Building cultures for high impact partnering
4. **Meaningful ways to engage with students:** Putting high impact partnering into place
5. **Four key messages ('ingredients') for making a difference:** From intent to action to impact

Some sections include specific illustrations of practice, as well as key reading lists.

The stories and quotations in the document come from individuals in schools, businesses and education-related organisations who have direct experience of the issues in some capacity.

How? Across mainly 2020-2021, this purposeful partnering project (referred to in this paper as 'the project or the analysis') involved a range of processes: interviews with 27 key Australian education and business leaders; insights from 15 educator-led forums and school-student-business interactions; a review of close to 200 reports and research documents; listening to key business and education leaders and researchers explain their thinking on podcasts;¹² and analysing recurrent themes and having our thinking tested in formal and informal ways.

Background? The people of Origin Energy chose education as the Foundation's focus in 2010. By 2020, QUT's Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies reported that 62,725 students had benefited. The Foundation facilitates Origin Energy volunteering through its long-term partnering with, for example, SolarBuddy. Origin Energy volunteers have worked with 20,000 young people across the education spectrum and from different locations around Australia. Some volunteers work directly with teachers to help bring the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) curriculum 'to life' and mentor students. The Foundation also works directly, in a school-led approach, with Rooty Hill High School in Western Sydney and the Foundation sees this collaboration as both "strategic" and a "privilege".

Origin Energy Foundation is committed to the purposeful partnering of schools and businesses. The Foundation initiated and enabled this position paper and work.

¹² Examples include: 'No Limitations: Blenheim Partners'; Singularity University, 'The Corporate Innovation Podcast'; 'The Art of Teaching Podcast: Mathew Green'; 'The Learning Future: Louka Parry'; 'The Knowledge Project'; 'Entrepreneurship & Ethics: Stanford Innovation Lab'; 'The Marketing Commute: Uni of Sydney'; 'How I work: Amantha Imber'; 'Work Life TED: Adam Grant'; 'Curious Minds: Gayle Allen'; 'Game Changers: Phillip Cummins and Adriano Di Prato'; and 'Fostering Creativity: Dublin City Uni'. 'Talking Teaching: The University of Melbourne'; 'Life's Lottery: Paul Ramsay Foundation'; 'InnovationAus Podcast'.

Part 1: Benefits

I learned that it does not matter how old you are at the beginning because if you actually learn with other people, you can become smarter than you were in solitary; because learning with other people can build your confidence and your collaboration skills and you can 'shoot like a rocket' in your learning.

Middle years student entrepreneurial education network panel member.¹³

Who benefits when schools and businesses work together? This section shows that multiple and mutual benefits are possible from businesses engaging with students and their schools (either directly or with or via others).

Partnering benefits students and adults

There is strong agreement around the need for partnering and the benefits it can reap for individuals (students *and* adults), sectors and the wider community. This agreement comes from different perspectives or lens, as shown in these examples:

Education lens: Partners in an Australia-wide, school-business-community multi-year, voluntary program found mutual value in these types of relationships. Key to a successful engagement was all partners benefiting from the collaboration. Importantly, from the 801 schools, 98% of reported partnerships benefited students (all students or small groups of students or individual students).¹⁴

Employee lens: Studies from the United Kingdom (UK) see the value of partnering in education, especially in terms of employee volunteering, in education. Volunteering enhances employee skills and competencies (learning), motivation and mission

(engagement), with transferrable productivity and career gains (potentially improving loyalty to an employer). The researchers noted:

"If we consider the productivity benefits flowing from well-being and motivation, as well as brand and CSR [Corporate Social Responsibility] value, volunteering may be one of the best investments an employer can make."¹⁵

Expansive lens: For students and business volunteers, contextualising the curriculum contributes to a sense of meaning, mission and purpose. The emotion that stems from having a sense of meaning is what we attach to our appraisal of our experiences, achievements or thoughts (e.g. 'joy', 'pride', which is the antithesis of negative emotions that work against bringing out our best, such as anxiety and fear).¹⁶

David Gonski, AC used the concept of 'growing' to illustrate the benefits *and* importance of 'growing' for individuals, sectors and society:

"The concept of growth for a human is vital. It is as good as breathing.

Growth means learning new things. Appreciating new people. Understanding things better. And, that's where education is so wonderful because it provides you with more and more opportunities for growth.

Growing, in my opinion, means having the boundaries of your thinking pushed a little bit. People need that excitement and I think they also need that mission.

Lack of broadness and narrowness of thinking is probably one of the most dangerous things to yourself. It is dangerous to society ...

I think that a business that isn't growing, usually dies."

David Gonski, AC.

¹³ Anderson, M. & CESA Leading Learning Team. (2019). *CESA Entrepreneurial Education Inaugural 2019 Network - 'The Ideators'*.

¹⁴ Lonsdale, M. (2011). *School community partnerships in Australian schools*.

¹⁵ Percy, C. & Rogers, M. (2021). *The value of volunteering*, p. 5. The report provides a number of informative figures, such as Figure 7 (p. 17), which shows the indicative average reported skills gain by type of volunteering.

¹⁶ Martela, F. & Steger, M.F. (2016). 'The three meanings of meaning in life'.

Seven benefits

Schools and businesses working together intentionally, either directly and/or indirectly (e.g. via working with teachers and/or families), will reap benefits for students.¹⁷

Benefiting students can also have a flow-on effect, creating mutual and multiple benefits for others involved in partnering, as shown below. For example, an employee acting as a student mentor might develop their own confidence and communication skills while helping students to do the same.

Benefit	Students	Families	Schools	Business
Improving learning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inspiring possibilities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Building confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enabling greater participation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Becoming empathetic	✓	✓	✓	✓
Broadening connections	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deepening engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓

We present these seven benefits as one list because what matters most is shared interpretations. Even if the language and context around the benefits varies for specific groups, the essence of a benefit tends to stay consistent. This becomes evident in exploring some examples of the desired changes or success criteria against these benefits.

Success criteria for each benefit

Each reaped benefit acts like a Lego block. Each block, when understood and combined, creates a new and potentially more valuable change. For example:

A Harvard study found, when we see and experience progress it creates small wins and can

fuel motivation. The same study also found, when employees view their work as interesting, enjoyable and challenging, the employees were also more creative. Simply getting tasks done is not enough. People had to attach to the work, a sense that the work being done mattered – it was meaningful. In addition, the study reported “small but consistent steps forward, shared by many people, can accumulate into excellent execution”.¹⁸

What follows are examples of success criteria and evidence aligned to each of the seven benefits, acknowledging that some may combine or overlap.

Benefit	Changes - success criteria
Improving learning	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New knowledge, skills, capabilities and dispositions, and understanding when and how to use these in different contexts for different purposes ● New attitudes, attainment and achievements ● New understandings of self (e.g. strengths, passions, interests)
	<p>Evidence: Young people in England who had three or more career talks were motivated to study harder, translating their efforts into higher grades in Science, English and Maths.¹⁹ Careers education can improve academic achievement.²⁰</p> <p>Evidence: Students deciding on and leading the creation of their own social enterprise connected to a cause the students care about, real audiences with whom to trade, and real social entrepreneurs from whom to ask questions and advice (e.g. primary student choosing to take on the role of an accountant and improving their numeracy skills through learning about budgeting and how to budget for the team’s chosen enterprise; or Year 11 students demonstrating vocational curriculum ‘Work Related Skills’ of planning, problem-solving, and working in teams).²¹</p>

¹⁷ A consistent finding in Australian Council for Educational Research’s (ACER) school partnering projects.

¹⁸ Amabile & Kramer (2011). *The Progress Principle*. While targeted to business, its focus on how to boost motivation to drive innovation in work life for creativity and performance has relevance for education audiences too.

¹⁹ Kashefpakdel, E. T., Percy, C., & Rehill, J. (2019). *Motivated to achieve*.

²⁰ Kashefpakdel, E. T., Percy, C., & Rehill, J. (2017). *Career education that works*.

²¹ See: [Social Enterprise Academy Australia](#).

Every time we've had some of our staff participate, for example in **mentoring** programs, or when we've had some **knowledge exchange** kinds of partnerships, our staff come out of these experiences almost **re-energised** because they too can see their **knowledge in use in a different way**.

The staff come back **feeling challenged**. It makes them **think differently** about what they do on a day-to-day basis. They are seeing **how they can share their knowledge** with that group of students or young professionals.

Alexandra Gartmann,
former CEO, Rural Bank.

career goals.²² The iTrack program and The Smith Family's other career programs have a measurable impact on student retention.

Evidence: Researchers found young Britons who remembered four or more activities with employer volunteers in their school were twice as likely to easily pursue their career ambitions. The young people were also less likely to be unemployed or outside the education system post-school. The same research found a correlation between young people who had participated in a program of 10 or more career talks and higher income levels at the age of 26.²³

Benefit	Changes - success criteria
<p>Inspiring possibilities</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Considering new choices and/or directions ● Goal setting ● Lifting ambitions
<p>Evidence: The Smith Family iTrack program provides students in Years 9 to 12 with someone to talk to outside of their networks who can give them advice and encourage them with their post-school plans. Many disadvantaged students are the first in their family to go on to tertiary studies. Many young people disengage from their education and drop out of school during their teenage years. The impact of growing up in disadvantage creates barriers that can make it even more difficult to see the benefit of completing Year 12. Leaving school early also affects the work choices available to young people. Many disadvantaged students lack access to positive role models and mentors who can support their expectations, build aspirations for the future and learn how to reach their</p>	

Benefit	Changes - success criteria
<p>Building confidence</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pursuing ideas, interests, passions, including leadership aspirations ● Leading a team or taking on a new leadership role ● Being able to explain to others (e.g. ideas, interests, passions, decisions) ● Each student has hope about their future
<p>Evidence: Polls from Future First, an education charity building alumni communities in more than 1,200 state schools across the UK, found young people living in low socio-economic conditions were more worried than more advantaged students about the job they would get in the future.²⁴ These young people were less likely to know someone in a job they would like to do, when compared to more affluent peers. These concerns increase as the children get older. The charity reports, using former students (alumni) of the school as relatable role models and mentors is a simple, yet effective idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 74% of schools said the alumni improved students' knowledge of post-school pathways (including exploring options outside of their own town). 	

²² See: The Smith Family iTrack program

²³ Mann, A., Kashefpakdel, E. T., Rehill, J. & Huddleston, P. (2017). *Contemporary transitions*.

²⁴ Future First. (2019). *Young people, their futures and access to relatable role models*.

- 81% of students said being part of the alumni workshops showed them that ‘people like me’ can be successful, and 73% said that from the workshops they were now more confident about their future.
- 72% of the alumni volunteers said they would have liked to have met alumni when they were at school.

Benefit	Changes - success criteria
<p>Enabling greater participation</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pursuing and achieving goals (e.g. career ambitions) ● Greater autonomy (e.g. informed advising, decision making; active voice; agency) ● Equity of opportunity ● Designing / Co-designing learning

Evidence: David, is a past student in Big Picture Education Australia. He is now studying Biomedicine after a winding path and two failed attempts. Important positive influences on David were Big Picture Education Australia’s student-centred way of doing education and the teacher who saw David’s interest and encouraged him to pursue it. As David explains: *“At school, you always see the kids who are doing well ... You just see their good marks, but not actually what’s happening because we all have struggles but some people just ‘hold it in’ ... it’s really important not to just base things on your marks. They’re important, but your determination to achieve your dreams is probably more important”*.²⁵

Evidence: A new career breakfast pilot program developed to address problems related to “lack of ownership” in career education. Staff at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and the university’s parent ambassadors (parents of university students from equity backgrounds, such as those of low socio-economic status) co-designed the program. The program participants of 88 parents from three western Sydney high schools and 63 parents/carers provided feedback (of these 63 parents, 75% had not completed a university course). The feedback

that 77% of parents now had a broader awareness of career options and ALL parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were now confident to support their children’s educational and career journeys. (UTS is part of an 18-month multi-university equity study.)²⁶

Evidence: A group of Rural Youth Ambassadors (RYA) in 2021 told state and federal government education ministers they want to see more “youth friendly” information and interactions within sites (e.g. how to budget for city living and learning costs). The RYA is an initiative of the Country Education Partnership (CEP). It began around 10 years ago with 13 Victorian Year 11 student members. It provides young people with a formal platform to voice issues affecting country students directly to key decision-makers in education. Each year the RYAs, mostly from government secondary schools, but also Catholic and independent schools identify a set of issues and ideas relevant to the needs and experiences of young people in rural and remote communities.

The 2019 *National Review of Education in Regional, Rural and Remote Education* named the RYA program as best practice. In 2020, Federal Government funding enabled CEP to scale the approach to more young people across Australia. It is now a network of more than 400 Year 11 and alumni young people from rural and remote communities across New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. Plans are underway for young people to also join in 2022 from Tasmania and Western Australia.²⁷

Benefit	Changes - success criteria
<p>Becoming empathetic</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New and deepening understandings ... and flow on effects (e.g. fueling connection, addressing stereotypes and other barriers to social cohesion, excellence and equity)

Note: Empathising has four features: Perspective taking, staying out of judgement, recognising emotion in other people, and then communicating that emotion.²⁸

²⁵ See David’s story on the [Origin Energy YouTube channel](#). For more stories from young people see: [Origin Energy Foundation](#).

²⁶ Austin, K., O’Shea, S., Groves, O., Lamanna, J. & Singh, S. (2021). *Careers breakfasts*.

²⁷ See: [Country Education Partnership](#) (CEP).

²⁸ See [Brené Brown on RSA](#) in 2021, applying nursing scholar Theresa Wiseman’s cross-sector research on the four attributes of empathy.

Evidence: Australian Catholic University (ACU) and the university’s student ambassadors (current students) partner with primary schools in low socio-economic areas in their widening participation program called, ‘Explore Your Future’. In 2021, working with a local school-teacher, ACU designed a new university student mentoring / student career development learning program with ‘hands-on’ learning experiences to suit the school’s community context and its 24 Year 6 students. According to an evaluation, the program successfully challenged gender stereotypes. Important to achieving this success criteria were the university student ambassadors, their recruitment and the choice of learning strategies to intentionally challenge career and gender stereotypes.²⁹

Evidence: The UK organisation, Education and Employers, has found that authentic employer engagement can help tackle stereotypes, encourage young people to imagine different futures and make stronger connections between their aspirations and the real world of work.³⁰

in the community. Educators also valued what business brings to their own learning (content, skills and greater awareness of the ‘world of work’).³²

Evidence: Forty-three different local businesses in the United States (US) provide community-based work experiences to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (typically aged 18 to 22). The students have a job transition coach (teachers with specific expertise and knowledge of the students). Students get to identify their strengths and interests and build personal relationships. Within the local organisations, business culture improved (e.g. by expanding workforce diversity). Four employers hired students directly from the program (due to being able to see students on the job and the students being well-trained, reducing training time associated with hiring.)³³

Benefit	Changes - success criteria
Broadening connections	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accessing new expertise ● Building new relationships and networks ... and flow on effects (e.g. for present and/or future employability and employment) ● Positive regard – respecting and understanding ‘the other’?

Evidence: CSIRO facilitates the ongoing engagement of teachers and skilled volunteer STEM professionals.³¹

Evidence: A survey of 256 primary and secondary Australian schools in three states (New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria) found when businesses willingly engage with schools to provide benefit to students, this builds a positive perception of business

We might look at opening up our centre for a whole-day workshop with, say 20 students. We could have a few delegates (from the business) to teach and learn with the students. Actually, this could even be an opportunity for us to proof our own ideas and get their [students’] unique perspectives.

Having different minds and eyes on our ideas, combined with people from our business who are willing to learn and provide their insights; that is, in itself, invaluable. It would be a great way for building up confidence, collaboration, communication and community.

Whether these young people end up coming into our business is irrelevant. The intention is to inspire, to learn and to embrace like-minded people with design and tech interests. I think we need to start collaborating more like this.

We don’t lose. We get to learn too.

Ben Cooper, Design Lead, Digital Innovation Team at DXC Technology.³⁴

²⁹ Austin, K., O’Shea, S., Groves, O. Lamanna, J., Cull, N., & Collins, R. (2021). *Explore your future*.

³⁰ See more of the UK [Education and Employers](#) group’s research findings.

³¹ See: [CSIRO STEM Professionals in Schools](#)

³² Rothman, S. (2019). *What do schools want from their engagement with business?*

³³ Valentini, B., Carter, E. W., Bumble, J., & Hill, E. (2019). Employer views on school-business partnerships involving students with severe disabilities. A US study.

³⁴ In the 2021 Top 100 Graduate Employers, it states, “DXC Technology, an IT services company, also rocketed up the ladder, slotting into the number eight slot after being 48 last year.”

Benefit	Changes - success criteria
<p>Deepening engagement</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive associations (e.g. likes learning, being at school / work, usefulness to future) ... and flow on effects (e.g. improved attendance, a reflection of a student's intention, improved wellbeing reported to include improved relationships with peers and family, and reduced staff turnover, increased staff promotion) ● Putting in effort (e.g. voluntarily choosing to work on a project, persisting through to a project's completion or intended change)
<p>Evidence: A survey of 1,026 volunteers in the UK found the more hours a volunteer gives, the greater the gains (e.g. mentoring assists with relationship building skills and becoming a school or college governor and decision-making). But, for more than half of those who were volunteering only two days a year or less, these volunteers still report benefit in at least one of five areas: work satisfaction, productivity, promotions, earnings or job applications.³⁵</p> <p>Evidence: A mathematics teacher in Queensland met with an airline pilot to co-plan and co-teach secondary school students the concept of 'vectors' and how this concept gets applied in real life.³⁶</p> <p>Evidence: Two large Australian corporates with staff who participate as mentors in the Australian Business Community Network (ABCN) programs looked at their attrition and promotion rates over multiple years (Business 1: 500 mentors over a 5-year period. Business 2: 800 mentors over a 3-year period). Both companies found favourable results. Business 1, for example, found they had a 30% lower attrition rate and twice the promotion rate amongst ABCN mentors compared to the rest of its workforce.</p>	

The seven benefits, success criteria and evidence provided in Part 1 show partnering is and can be making a positive difference to students *and* adults *and* communities. Part 2 draws attention to the challenges and disruptors shaping the context for Australian students and why schools and businesses *need* to work together.

³⁵ Percy, C. & Rogers, M. (2021). *The value of volunteering*.

³⁶ Tweet by Brisbane secondary school maths teacher, Head of Mathematics and creator on YouTube of Maths Videos Australia, MVA (over 1,000 teaching videos for students in grade 7-12); Joel Speranza January 2021.

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Building the case for partnering

Illustrations from practice

Shared responsibility. Mutual and multiple benefits.

Example: Open-minded and strategic

The Smith Family former CEO, Dr Lisa O'Brien gives the example of corporates engaging staff through a combination of volunteering as well as structured and focused workplace giving.

What's the core business of corporates in the communities in which they are operating? This is a social licence for operating together. An example is Orica working with The Smith Family in Gladstone. This relationship began with a feasibility study and led to the implementation of the 'Learning for Life' program within the community.

Being open to seeing a multiplicity of opportunities and benefits is important and strategic. It offers partners the opportunity to invest in something. If done collectively, this has the potential for real impact.

Reflecting on the success of the approach, Dr O'Brien remarked:

"This is not just simply because the business has to be seen to be 'doing good' in the community. The business chooses to do so because their people love it. It's good for staff engagement. It's a way staff can get involved in their own time and as a business. It helps to broaden the organisation's mission and in a whole lot of ways the opportunity to acquit against that mission."

Dr Lisa O'Brien

Example: Each student in context

A rural government school's former principal would openly and continuously ask three simple questions:

- What skills do our young people bring and need to succeed?
- What does this community need from its young people, now and in the future?
- What do young people need from this community to succeed in life?

These questions are timeless. They are student cohort and context sensitive. Together, the questions recognise that students becoming active participants and learners is a shared responsibility.

The questions provide an immediate and robust place to start exploring why engage and why together.

It takes a village. Working in each student's present for all our futures.

Part 2: Why it is important for schools and businesses to work together

Education is not only a fundamental human right. It is an enabling right with direct impact on the realization of all other human rights...

When education systems collapse, peace, prosperous and productive societies cannot be sustained.

United Nations, Policy Brief, August 2020.

This section explores the evidenced reasons why schools and businesses want to engage together. It also presents seven key challenges and disruptors shaping the context for Australian students **and shaping why schools and businesses need to be engaging together.**

Working together is an imperative

For more than 30 years, Australian governments have recognised “developing stronger partnerships” as an important shared responsibility for enabling all young Australians to pursue “fulfilling, productive and responsible lives”.³⁷

Every 10 years or so, governments review Australia’s aspirations for education and sign off on a declaration document with commitments to achieve those aspirations through two distinct and interconnected goals. The 2019 *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education*

Declaration provides an entry point to explore the useful work adults and students can do together, across the education stages and in every student’s transition to the further work of learning, careers and in becoming active citizens.³⁸

Two goals:

1. The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity.
2. All young Australians become confident, creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.

The 2019 Education Declaration signals a new type of working together *with* young people “at the centre”. It is a commitment mirrored in the annual reports and strategies of the business sector through such language as, ‘putting customers first’, ‘improving customer experience’, ‘user experience’, ‘human centred’.

Becoming confident, creative and innovative applies to every business, as it does to governments, families and communities, as it does to each student and their schools. The priorities of education, health, innovation, jobs and economic growth affect the lives of each person in Australia.³⁹

The four recommendations and calls to action shown on the following page reflect the essence of thinking from a comprehensive review of major state, sector, national or international education-related publications. Students and impactful partnerships lie at the heart. Working together is an imperative.

³⁷ Education Council (2019). *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*.

³⁸ “Mparntwe (pronounced M-ban tua) is the Arrernte name for Alice Springs. The Aboriginal Arrernte (pronounced arrunda) peoples are the traditional custodians of Alice Springs and the surrounding region”. Education Council (2019).

³⁹ Australian Government: Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. See: [Domestic Policy](#).

2018

Recommendation 8

Strengthen school-community engagement to enrich student learning through the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate quality partnerships ... mentoring, volunteering ... between schools, employers, members of the community, community organisations and tertiary institutions.



Student preparation for a life of learning, working and active citizenship has always been important, both in their present and for our future. **Former Secretary of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Dr Martin Parkinson** reinforces this point, emphasising that having opportunities in the ‘space’ of learning, networks, post-school transitions, and careers provides opportunities across the life-span and intergenerationally:

“If families are able to do more in this space for their children, it’s because they are able to do more in lots of spaces.”

But decades of evidence demonstrates that learning and preparation experiences are not equitable. Educational opportunities are not always available, neither are they attained by all.⁴⁰

The University of New South Wales, Gonski Institute did a detailed analysis of the progress Australia is making against its national aspiration and goals for every young person. “There can be no educational excellence for our nation without equity”.⁴¹ The authors point to a worsening equity problem over the last decade in Australia (discussed later in this section).

2018

Solving real-world problems students want to solve rather than focusing on careers in STEM.

Recommendation 6

Governments and industry should work together to focus the narrative for primary and secondary students on how STEM skills and knowledge can solve real-world problems ... There should be particular effort to engage student cohorts underrepresented in STEM fields.



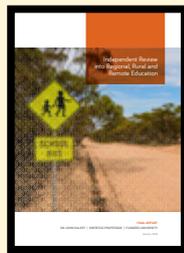
Reasons to want to work together

Partnering can start in a number of places and for a variety of motivations. It might begin by addressing growing areas of dissatisfaction (e.g. issues around ‘work readiness’, ‘forms of assessing and assessment’). Or it might stem from individuals and coalitions of people who can envision another way to solve persistent challenges and have the heft in policy, research and practice spaces to actually be heard and make change happen (e.g. the South Australian SACE Board working directly with schools to improve and innovate around the capabilities of the ‘whole student’). Partnering could result from exchanges between individuals in informal settings, such as CEOs, through to intentional settings, such as Social Venture Australia’s not-for-profit and philanthropic enabled voluntary school-leadership collaborative learning networks, or innovation labs. Or the starting point could relate to an existing track-record of partnering across sectors and seeing the need or opportunity to do something new or different (e.g. The Smith Family’s ongoing wraparound support provided to young

2018

Recommendation, page 72

Support RRR students to make successful transitions from school to university, training, employment and combinations of them.



2020

Recommendation 4

Students should leave school with a Learner Profile that incorporates not only their ATAR score (where relevant) together with their individual subject results, but that also captures the broader range of evidenced capabilities necessary for employment and active citizenship ...



⁴⁰ As evidenced in the results of Australian longitudinal data (e.g. ‘Life Patterns’, the University of Melbourne) and national research (e.g. ‘Educational Opportunity’, Victoria University).

⁴¹ Bonnor, C., Kidson, P., Piccoli, A., Sahlberg, P., Wilson, R (2021). *Structural Failure*.

people from school to tertiary to employment, such as ‘Cadetship to Career’⁴²).

Often, reasons for working together start from a focus on the world of work, looking at what employers want, and in more recent times, what educators want from business.⁴³ Both perspectives **seen together** are important: As a high-performance sport coach learnt, **when we continue to play one side, we can only see one side.**⁴⁴

Often, the reasons for working together will also rally around a particular stage of education. Historically, more attention has been on the senior secondary and early adult years than earlier stages of education (and it is easy to see why because it is at these stages where industry and education traditionally intersect, and in high stakes ways).

At other times, the reasons for working together will be more personal, aligning strongly to people, culture and/or place. Evidence suggests there are three broad reasons for engaging (talent, experience and growth), as discussed below.⁴⁵

Reason	Changes - success criteria
Talent	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Addressing existing and emerging knowledge, skill, capability gaps and needs, such as investing in and diversifying the potential mix of future employers, employees and entrepreneurs ● Boosting innovation and shoring-up competencies in known and anticipated key areas

There is strong agreement from policy and research, and on public career-related websites, on the need to start early in exposing students to clear and relevant information and possibilities. In the most practical sense, being able to source (easily) and interpret

(meaningfully) industry and occupation areas of demand and decline matters. COVID-19 has made this even more important.

“Due to the current climate, I believe knowing the impact of COVID-19 is important for understanding future employment outlooks. I believe that parents would wish to know the risk attached to the industry the student has chosen.”

Fernando Ianni, PSM, Principal Roxburgh College, Victoria.

Clearly, access to employment and employability information is important for students and families, but it is not necessarily easy to find, use and/or interpret. Both educational and business leaders acknowledge the source data for the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) has limitations and needs updating (see Appendix 1 for a summary of industry classifications). Others are concerned about how current tools can possibly promote innovation.

“How do we promote the absolute need for young people to embrace their capacity for forging their own paths and entrepreneurship? This is an area we are going to work hard on with our students because I believe the future will belong to those who can create their own paths. This is one of my concerns with some career tools’ focus on the jobs available now and how to get them. My wondering is: What about creating your own job? A small business? Becoming a thriving doughnut business at age 17? Making money out of gaming? Building an app to transform the way students’ hand in school work and selling it back to schools? What about embracing entrepreneurship/ freelancing/ co-work spaces?”

Nathan Chisholm, Principal Prahran High School, Victoria.

⁴² The Smith Family. See: [Cadetship to Career](#) (In 2021, 82 cadetships)

⁴³ Rothman, S. (2019). *What do schools want from their engagement with business?*

⁴⁴ Insights from American NRL Coach, Michael Lombardi on how he leads and coaches for the team to succeed. Interview via the Knowledge Project Podcast.

⁴⁵ Shipley, B. & Stublely, W. (2018). After the ATAR II; Australian Government, National Skills Commission and National Careers Institute. (2021) *Australian Jobs, 2021*; and Tech Council of Australia. (2021). *The economic contribution of Australia’s tech sector.*

Reason	Changes - success criteria
Experience	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reimagining how to break the cycle of inexperience or no experience, especially for students facing disadvantage, for informed thinking and acting in school and beyond (e.g. students pairing their interests and passions to post-school employment evidence, in-school and in-community decisions, and improving transitions)

Students need to discover and learn how to pair their interests or passions with the most current and emerging employment sector evidence.⁴⁶ This includes understanding the kind of subject choices they want and need to make to prepare themselves well for a variety of post-school options.

“...our number one issue comes down to how young people make decisions about their future and what information is available to them.”

Megan Kirchner former Head, Tertiary Education, Business Council of Australia.

A large-scale 2020 OECD study found that many young people are confused about what they need to know and do to work in a high-skilled occupation and there is a mismatch between the jobs they intend to pursue and market demands.⁴⁷ The same report also showed that students experiencing disadvantage are less likely to access information outside of school (e.g. about financing for university).

Reason	Changes - success criteria
Growth	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Economic and social capital and health and wellbeing purposes, such as building intergenerational relations, connecting, community renewal

This connects back to David Gonski’s concept of ‘growing’ for individuals, sectors and society, a notion that goes beyond economic growth to encompass learning, wellbeing and the building of social capital. (See also Gonski quote in Part 1: Benefits, page 8).

Seven challenges and disruptors

There are both broad and specific reasons for engaging with students and their schools. Students today are mixing in a global world, where complexity and uncertainty are a given. The expectations of students are a whole lot greater; and the expectations *on* them a whole lot heavier. In broad terms, seven interconnected challenges and disruptors are providing and shaping the context for Australian students:

- 1. Becoming capable:** A complex present and a future of uncertainties.
- 2. Relentless fast pace:** The timing from when an issue arises to addressing it is shrinking.
- 3. Crises:** Negative and positive effects.
- 4. Digital divide:** Limiting the equity of learning and growing the economy.
- 5. Uncertainty abounds:** Participation in employment.
- 6. New belongings:** Emerging voices and change makers.
- 7. Transitions:** Interrupted, flexible and complex.

Individually and collectively these seven challenges and disruptors provide arguments for why engaging with students and their schools goes beyond a charitable act. It is for the benefit of us all.

1. Becoming capable: A complex present and a future of uncertainties.

“What’s that ‘packet of skills’ we need our students to leave school with that will enable them to take any opportunity that comes along or create their own opportunities, and this could be as entrepreneurs?”

Mary Mulcahy, former Director, CSIRO Education and Outreach.

⁴⁶ Shipley, B. & Stublely, W. (2018). *After the ATAR II*.

⁴⁷ Mann, A. and colleagues (2020), *Dream jobs*. Data: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) questions to assess the knowledge and skills of over half a million 15-year-olds from across 79 countries, including participants from Australia. As relevant, the researchers also make use of other large datasets (e.g. Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), a survey of 1,000s of adults 16 to 65 years of age).

Nobel Laureate, Daniel Kahneman reminds us that, **“Science, like many other systems, does not thrive on everybody being the same.”**⁴⁸ As young people learn how to prepare for life, learning must relate closely to life and each young person’s uniqueness within it. Parents (and those people children see as their family) care about their children being able to attain educational *and* future occupational success.⁴⁹

Regardless of the setting, stage of life, or people involved, learning is continuous and the places where learning does and can occur are broader than ever before.

The trend for wider capabilities and dispositions (attributes/habits) is evident across the globe. It is evident in recent lists of Australia’s graduate employers. The Top 100 Employers 2021 list indicates employers are looking for graduate students who are well-rounded.⁵⁰ In commenting on the findings, Universities Australia Chief Executive notes:

“While some jobs, such as engineering, require specific skills, all jobs require students to be able to think laterally, work in teams, communicate confidently and assess big data sets”.

Catriona Jackson, Chief Executive, Universities Australia.

It is evident consistently in multiple studies. The World Bank’s analysis of 27 studies reveals that employers value all skill sets, technical and otherwise, but are perceiving the greatest gaps in socio-emotional and sophisticated thinking skills.

Becoming capable is a case of ‘and’, not ‘or’.

“I want my kids to be smart academically, but an equal part of it is that they work well with other people.”

Joe Brumm, Parent and creator of the acclaimed family show, Bluey.⁵¹

Every student requires a ‘balanced diet’ of foundation *and* enabling knowledge, capabilities *and* learning dispositions. Every student will need to anchor and cultivate these lifelong learning habits for building and

making connections to other content, concepts and contexts.⁵²

“There are some fundamental skills that everyone needs and these are in the maths and logical thinking areas. It does not matter what you are going to do. If you are going to become an artist, you will be having to work with technology. You are also living in a world where, if you are going to make a business out of your chosen activities, then you’ve got to be savvy about money and finances and technology.”

Catherine Livingstone, AO, Chair Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Chancellor of the University of Technology, Sydney.

Literacy and numeracy provide essential foundations for learning and life to every student. They are core to school curricula, are applicable across a wide range of professions and through partnering are and can be activated in equitable, effective and engaging ways with students (e.g. student social enterprises, mentoring and student challenges). Different longitudinal studies have also found a positive relationship from being numerate and literate and higher annual earnings.⁵³ Literacy and numeracy capabilities are an entry point for achieving educational excellence and equity. But they are not its end point.

Becoming capable in the present and emerging world requires a range of capabilities and dispositions for a life of learning and agility, and what the Foundation for Young Australians report as a life of changing careers (possibly seven), not just a change of employer.⁵⁴

Australia’s National Skills Commission points to 25 emerging occupations in the Australian labour market (e.g. “Agile Coaches”, “User Experience Analysts”; “Solar Installers”). Each occupation will require some level of digital literacy expertise, which is problematic from those caught in the digital divide (discussed later).

The next four examples illustrate the sorts of capabilities employers are looking for from young people and what teaching and learning focuses on in schools. Two are from Australian education

⁴⁸ See [Transcript](#). Tuesday 16 March 2021. (Daniel Kahneman is best known for his decades of work in the areas of psychology of judgement and decision-making.)

⁴⁹ ARACY. (2019). *Please just say you’re proud of me*.

⁵⁰ This finding is from a study that engaged with 70,385 unique users of the GradConnection website (mostly students finishing university). See: AFR article [Job security suddenly back in vogue](#).

⁵¹ Sydney Morning Herald. See: [Why experts say parents should follow Bluey](#). 10 May 2021.

⁵² Buchanan, J., Ryan, R., Anderson, M., Calvo, R.A. & Glozier, N. (2018). *Future Frontiers Analytical Report*.

⁵³ Cunningham, W.V. & Villaseñor, P. (2016). *Employer voices*.

⁵⁴ Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) 2016 reports: *The new work mindset and The new basics*.

and business perspectives; the other two are from international perspectives.

From an education and business Australian perspective⁵⁵



The Modern Worker, Business Council of Australia, p.2



Employers take as ‘a given’ that most occupations will require a qualification (vocational, education and training, or higher education), but as the Business Council for Australia (BCA) adds:

“A qualification is not enough and does not make up the whole person. Employers today expect the modern worker to have the technical skills and knowledge from their qualification, as well as a range of capabilities.”⁵⁶

In the *Modern Worker*, the BCA links six capability groupings to around 300 occupations:⁵⁷

Values - Continuous improvement; honesty; knowledge; respect; tolerance; work ethic.

Behavioural - Adaptable; authentic; flexible; self-aware; resilient.

Literacy and numeracy – Reading; writing; oral communication; numeracy; learning.

People - Accountable; collaborative; customer-focused; emotionally intelligent; globally aware.

Analytical – Business literacy; business-minded; critical analysis; data analysis; problem-solving.

Digital – Digital operation; digital identity and development; digital information and analysis; digital communication; digital innovation and creation.

From an international perspective

The World Economic Forum’s (WEF) 2015 and 2020 reports reflect similar thinking to emerging pictures

⁵⁵ See: [Version 9.0](#).

⁵⁶ BCA (2020, unpublished). *The modern worker: A guide to what employers want* (unpublished).

⁵⁷ The BCA organised occupations into three categories – trade and technical, professional and managerial, and all other occupations. Occupations align with the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO).

in Australia around what being ‘successful’ in modern times requires:

2015 WEF – 16 skills students require for the 21C

Foundation literacies

How students apply core skills to everyday tasks

1. Literacy
2. Numeracy
3. Scientific literacy
4. ICT literacy
5. Financial literacy
6. Cultural and civic literacy

Competencies

How students approach complex designs

7. Critical thinking / problem solving
8. Creativity
9. Communication
10. Collaboration

Character qualities

How students approach their changing environment

11. Curiosity
12. Initiative
13. Persistence / grit
14. Adaptability
15. Leadership
16. Social and cultural awareness.

New Visions in Education, p.3 from Exhibit 2.

2020 WEF– By 2025

What employers see as the top 15 skills rising in prominence

1. Analytical thinking and innovation
2. Active learning and learning strategies
3. Complex problem-solving
4. Critical thinking and analysis
5. Creativity, originality and initiative
6. Leadership and social influence
7. Technology use, monitoring and control
8. Technology design and programming
9. Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
10. Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation

11. Emotional Intelligence
12. Troubleshooting and user experience
13. Service orientation
14. Systems analysis and evaluation
15. Persuasion and negotiation

Future of Jobs Survey, p. 36 from Figure 27.

Researchers point to four groups of essential transferable employment skills for 2035:

- Analytical / creative skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Self-management skills
- Emotional intelligence skills.

Sitting in the first two skill groups, are five skills deemed most essential for 2035:

Employment skills most likely in demand – For 2035

- 1 = Problem solving/decision making
Critical thinking/analysis
Communication
- 4 Collaboration/cooperation/teamwork
- 5 Creativity/innovation/originality.

The Skills Imperative 2035, p. 29 from Figure C.

Students develop capabilities when they apply knowledge and skills confidently, effectively and appropriately in complex and changing circumstances, in their learning at school and in their lives outside school.⁵⁸ Addressing this complexity is critical.

2. Relentless fast pace: The timing from when an issue arises to addressing it is shrinking.⁵⁹

“We need to ensure that students everywhere leave school ready to continue to learn and adapt, ready to take responsibility for their own future learning and careers, ready to innovate with and for others, and to live in turbulent, diverse cities. We need perhaps the first truly global generation; a generation of individuals rooted in their own cultures but open to the world and confident of their ability to shape it.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Lucas, B. (2019). *Why we need to stop talking about 21st Century Skills*.

⁵⁹ Edmonson, A. (2013). See: Harvard Business Review [“The three pillars of a teaming culture”](#).

⁶⁰ Rizvi, S., Donnelly, K., & Barber, M. (2012). *Oceans of Innovation*.

The quote above is a call to action for a system ‘revolution’. It came from a 2012 wide-reaching cross sector report, *Oceans of Innovation*. In it, the authors argue, even the best education systems in the world would need to radically rethink what education provides every student.

Ten years on and business leaders continue to ask, **‘How do we lift our innovation game?’** An Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and University of Sydney Business School study concluded that, at a governance level, **diversity, digital literacy and collaboration** are key to improving performance.⁶¹ In 2019-2020, 21% of innovation-active businesses in Australia collaborated with others for innovation, compared to 14% in 2018-19.⁶²

Australia’s former Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb, AC laid out the case for entrepreneurship in the 2015 research report, *Boosting High Impact Entrepreneurship in Australia*. Relevant to why schools and businesses would choose to work together, is a synthesis of three key reasons:

- Becoming entrepreneurial is teachable. Countries around the world (United States, Korea) are making it a national priority, through efforts and “shared understanding born of experience”.
- Entrepreneurship is an economic (business creation and growth) *and* human (attitudes, learning and the forming of social networks) endeavour. Education is the bridge between the two endeavours. It provides an opportunity to capitalise on STEM.
- Energies and investment in universities are important, but insufficient. Chubb wrote, **“we can work consciously to broaden our students’ opportunities – or we can narrow their choices by default to the well-trodden paths.”** Acting at all levels of education invites opportunities to see and welcome entrepreneurship and its possibilities.

Entrepreneurial education encourages students’ belief in their capabilities, to master key knowledge and skills and to make comparisons, not with their peers, but with their previous performance. In Australia, entrepreneurial education is fertile ground for sectors to be working together.... and with good reason.

The World Economic Forum 2020 estimates the potential displacement of 85 million jobs by 2025, with 97 million new roles emerging and adapting to this new division of labour.⁶³ Where industry demand is rising quickly (e.g. IT and health care), this can lead to an accelerator effect.

Industry leaders from across 15 industries and 26 advanced emerging countries, including Australia, expect the pace of technology adoption to persist and, in some areas, accelerate as 2025 approaches (e.g. non-humanoid robots and artificial intelligence).

New technologies present new job creator *and* job seeker entrepreneurial and enterprise opportunities and, with them, significant shifts in the division of labour between humans and machines.

The World Economic Forum 2020 authors predict that without proactive joint efforts, the combined impact of technology and the pandemic is likely to deepen existing inequalities (most impacted: women, younger workers and jobs held by lower wage workers).

Within the wider global and changing nature of work, context, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship will take on greater importance.

Innovation: Policy and business

The OECD and Eurostat Oslo Manual distinguishes between innovation as an outcome (an innovation) and the activities by which innovations come about (innovation activities). The manual is a tool. Its target audience is policy makers concerned with innovation. The 2018 edition defines innovation as “a new or improved product or process (or combination thereof) that differs significantly from the unit’s previous products or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process).”^{64 65}

Creativity and innovation interconnect. New ideas generally evolve from creative thinking and innovation takes those ideas and turns them into something tangible and useful. Creating value is central to being entrepreneurial (creative *and* innovative).

⁶¹ AICD & University of Sydney Business School (2019). ‘How do we lift our innovation game?’

⁶² Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). See: [Characteristics of Australian Business](#).

⁶³ World Economic Forum. (2020). *Schools of the future*.

⁶⁴ See: [Oslo Manual 2018](#).

⁶⁵ The ABS draws on the Oslo Manual to measure innovation in the Australian Business Characteristics Survey.

Entrepreneurial: Education and wider perspectives

Being and exercising entrepreneurial dispositions and skills reflects an individual's and team's or community's "capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas to create value for others" (social, cultural or financial). The European EntreComp 2020 publication indicates being entrepreneurial can occur in any situation. That is, it can occur in school curriculum through to innovating in the workplace, and from community initiatives to applied learning at university.⁶⁶

Researchers argue, "The VET sector needs to increase its participation in the entrepreneurial ecosystem" (e.g. with enterprise skills a key component in most courses and entrepreneurship skills in at least some courses, such as IT-related qualifications).⁶⁷ Doing so would be an enabling policy for students and the VET sector (value creation and equity).

3. Crises: Negative and positive effects.

"There are six of us children. I am the oldest (Year 12). The youngest is three years old. Then there is my mother and father... At the start of the year, I was extremely excited and ambitious to do my work better than last year... It's a bit difficult to focus in an environment like this. I need a teacher to push me to do my best. I usually try to push myself, but it's pretty difficult... because of the pandemic... maybe I'll have to change my (post-school) path."

Cooped Up Families, Insight SBS special episode, 2020.

In the last two decades, major financial crises have hit a generation of people around the world and at home.⁶⁸ Paralleling this, droughts and floods have had a significant impact on our own population, along with the devastating bushfires of 2019-20, which saw the burning of 12.6 million hectares of land, plus 3,000 homes and 33 lives lost.⁶⁹

In 2019, a world-wide pandemic hit our shores. The widespread and felt experiences and impacts of COVID-19 have come into our homes (literally) affecting people of all ages.⁷⁰

Families got to witness teaching and learning happening in ways and at a scale not seen before in Australia or around the world.⁷¹ From this has come a new-found appreciation of teachers *and* questions - What are we teaching students or raising our children for? What to teach? How to teach? Where and when to teach?⁷²

"We believe a child educated only at school is an uneducated child. So, we try to remove those mental barriers about where learning occurs."

Rita O'Brien, Principal, Mypolonga Primary School, South Australia.⁷³

Another positive effect of COVID-19 has been businesses being able to see and rethink how to work with young people for whom distance had limited experiences of the world of work. For example, as one CEO observed:

"Very rarely would you get the corporate saying, 'I'm going to take four people out of the office and they are going to drive four hours to spend a day with the students in their place'. So, the expense, particularly for schools, to have meaningful engagement with a corporate is often one-way. It becomes a bit different, if it's a regional and rural based company, because you can have regional teams engaging. But, COVID means we are all much more open to using this sort of medium (e.g. video calls)... So, this horrible circumstance has actually been a great opportunity to show that you actually can connect this way."

Alexandra Gartmann, former CEO, Rural Bank.

COVID-19 has also exposed many harsh realities, bringing to a wider audience a new-found understanding of the differing circumstances of families and children. In pre-pandemic 'normal' times,

⁶⁶ McCallum, E., McMullan, L., Weicht, R. & Kluzer, S. (2020). *EntreComp at Work*.

⁶⁷ Scott-Kemmis, D., Griffin, T., & Fowler, C. (2017). *VET and entrepreneurship*.

⁶⁸ OECD. (2020). *Chapter 2: Empowering youth to succeed: A call to action*.

⁶⁹ Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (2020). *Small Business Counts*, p. 31.

⁷⁰ See: 'Cooped Up Families' Insight, Season 2020 Episode 13 (52 mins) with public

school principals, Jon Goh and Christine Cawsey.

⁷¹ See, for example, Brown, N., te Riele, K., Shelley, B., & Woodroffe, J. (2020). *Learning at home during COVID-19*.

⁷² See, for example, Zhao, Y. & Watterson, J. (2021). *The changes we need: Education post COVID-19*.

⁷³ Quoted in a case study video: [Case study: Mypolonga Primary School - MoneySmart Teaching](#)

many young people's experiences of learning and living may have been hidden from view. For example, one in 11 carers in Australia is under the age of 25 years.⁷⁴ That's 235,000 young people who are providing unpaid care and support to family members or friends due to circumstances, health and/or age.

Research from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2020 'Kids Helpline' indicates COVID-19 is negatively affecting young people through job losses, disrupted education, reduced social connection and increased anxiety about the future. The researchers cite:

"Young people are concerned about how their aspirations for the future are going to play out given they don't know what this future is going to look like – for them, or their families."

These sorts of concerns are most felt in Australia's least advantaged families, with families most economically disadvantaged the hardest hit by the pandemic.⁷⁵

As Mission Australia's CEO in 2020 reports:

"At a time where youth unemployment has increased due to COVID-19, young people told us they most need flexible working hours, more jobs in their area, more work experience as well as access to training and skill development programs. This points to the critical need to create a national approach to supporting youth employment that provides meaningful and secure work for every young Australian."

In 2019, around 50,000 young Australians were already "detached entirely from the education system".⁷⁶

4. Digital divide: Limiting the equity of learning and growing the economy.

Digital technology is a double-edged sword. Recent Microsoft commissioned research indicates the "messy hybrid" onsite and digital way of working is here to stay.⁷⁷ But COVID-19 has shown us how acute the digital divide is for many Australian young people. There is a moral imperative to address the structural barriers to each student's continuity of learning and future success. Increasingly, internet access is crucial to accessing information *and* taking part in education, employment, and life in general. The 2016 Census found more than 1.2 million households in Australia (13.6%) had no internet connection (indicative of a level of disadvantage).⁷⁸

The early experiences of COVID-19 showed three conditions help or hinder students in their remote learning: access to digital technology and the internet; a conducive home learning environment and family support; *and* teacher and student readiness and capability. Students who were already at particular risk of poorer learning outcomes were also at risk of fairing worse because of COVID-19 (low socio-economic backgrounds, those with English as a second language, those with special learning needs, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students).⁷⁹

For families experiencing disadvantage in the home and/or in under-served communities, the switch to remote and hybrid/blended learning has been difficult to make on their own. The Smith Family's data of more than 57,000 students from their decade old 'Learning for Life' program saw one in five students negatively affected.⁸⁰ This led to families having to share one device among a whole family and/or not having enough data due to finances and/or geography.

5. Uncertainty abounds: Participation in employment.

A strong enduring rationale for getting a 'good education' is to access 'decent work'.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Carers Australia defines carers as providing unpaid care and support to family members or friends due to circumstances, health and/or age. Accessed 19 February 2021. See: [Who is a carer?](#)

⁷⁵ Medical Journal of Australia. Accessed 22 February 2021 See: [Low socio-economic status and the impact of COVID-19 in Victoria.](#)

⁷⁶ Watterson, J. & O'Connell, M. (2019). *Those who disappear.*

⁷⁷ Microsoft (2021). *Work Trend Index: Annual Report.* (Survey among 31,092 full-time employed or self-employed workers across 31 markets [including Australia] between 12 and 25 January 2021).

⁷⁸ Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016. See: [Australia Internet connection](#) (Note the latest [ABS Census](#) was on 10 August 2021.)

⁷⁹ Rapid Research Information Forum. (2020). Differential learning outcomes for online versus in-class education. (Australian academics rapid review for the Australian government.)

⁸⁰ The [Learning for Life](#) program provides financial and relational support for individual children and young people with their education. This support is long-term, from the early years all the way through to post-school years and targeted to student and family needs (e.g. literacy, numeracy, work experience, mentoring, learning clubs, parental financial programs). In 2020, The Smith Family supported 57,847 students through its 'Learning for Life' sponsorships.

⁸¹ Johanna Wyn and Jim Watterson 2021, 'Gen X, Y & Z: Facing the challenges of the 21st century'. See: [Talking Teaching](#)

Decent Work: The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines this to mean dignity, equality, a fair income and safe working conditions. Decent work puts people at the centre, providing them with a voice in what they do and a future that is inclusive and sustainable, and protected from exploitation.

Decent work for young people is not a ‘given’. Many face longer or less direct routes (e.g. via part-time work or unpaid internships) to gain full-time work. Many only have access to low paid or low skilled work and non-career path positions. This can make it difficult to escape a cycle of unemployment (or underemployment) and insecurity.⁸³ *Poverty in Australia 2020* confirms being unemployed and of working age remain the greatest risk factors for living in poverty.

Australia’s youth (aged 15 to 24) unemployment rate has reduced to 7.0%,⁸⁴ a far cry from the highs of around 14% during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸⁵ But youth unemployment remains more than double the overall unemployment rate of 3.4%.⁸⁶ In fact, youth unemployment and underemployment has remained around double the national rate for the past five years.⁸⁷

The economy and employment market has rebounded. This rebound largely reflects an increase in casual (60%) and part-time work (57%).⁸⁸ While this may benefit some younger workers looking for flexibility, it is often their only employment choice.

So, although the data points to recovery, past economic crises have shown that young people may feel the impact for years, affecting their career prospects, earning potential and wellbeing.⁸⁹ It is in

everyone’s interest to find ways to help young people, providing them with a variety of opportunities (at their point of need) to maintain their motivation, confidence and skills on their journey to ‘decent’ work.

6. New belongings: Emerging voices and change makers.

“Students are the missing actors in educational reform. In all the reforms we’ve changed the curriculum. We’ve changed teaching. We’ve changed testing. We’ve played with a lot of things, but students have not been the owners of their own learning or partners in the changes to education.”

Professor, Yong Zhao, University of Kansas and Melbourne Graduate School of Education, at the University of Melbourne.⁹⁰

Students need time to develop ownership and be responsible for their own learning. Yong Zhao, from his research around the world, finds **students need the time and the right experiences to understand how to use their learning for different purposes**, such as creating value for self, to others, to the world.

UNICEF Australia 2020 reports, **“we are talking ‘about’ young people, but not always ‘with’ them”**.⁹¹ The emerging voices and change makers of students/ young people, families, consumers and employees rightly expect to have ‘a seat at the table’, to learn about and be confident and able to shape decisions around present and emerging opportunities and challenges.

⁸² See: [ILO website](#). Decent work is also an explicit focus in [UN Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) Number 8](#)

⁸³ Australia Institute. Youth unemployment and the pandemic. April 2022.

⁸⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). [Labour Force, Australia, July 2022](#).

⁸⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). [Labour Force, Australia](#), December 2020.

⁸⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). [Labour Force, Australia](#), July 2022.

⁸⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). [Labour Force, Australia](#), December 2020.

⁸⁸ Australia Institute, Centre for Future Work, 2021 and PwC Consulting. (2021). *What Will It Take?*

⁸⁹ Australia Institute. Youth unemployment and the pandemic. April 2022.

⁹⁰ In-conversation with October 2021. In reference to his co-authored book, *Teaching students to become self-determined learners, 2020*

⁹¹ UNICEF Australia. (2020). *‘Swimming with sandbags’: The views and experiences of young people in Australia five months into the COVID-19 pandemic*. (A national representative survey of over 1,200 13–17-year-olds and online forums by UNICEF staff and Young Ambassadors with 167 children and young people from NSW, NT, QLD, VIC and WA).

Today’s students are making their own observations and assessments. Students are asking what new things the world needs to create or needs to change. Students are wondering and discovering how to make the world a better place in which to live, learn and work. As students do so, they are not only learning, and learning how to “get a job”, they also want to be “learning how to live”.⁹²

Young people *and* employees *and* employers are asking about a company’s purpose.⁹³ The 2021 Global Trust Barometer (GTB) survey (33,000 people, aged 18 and over) found 86% agree that CEOs must lead on societal issues. *The Economist* 2021 (October) reported, “Today consumers want to buy more sustainable products, employees want to work for firms that share their values, and in the investment world, ESG funds are all the rage. How are companies responding to these shifting demands and can businesses really do well by doing good?”⁹⁴

It is important to bring students ‘to the table’ as active participants, learning from their perspective and experiences.

“These students are your [business’s] future customers and employees and so on. So, surely it makes strategic sense to tap into these voices early?”

**Kate Kennerson, Year 12 teacher,
Rooty Hill High School.**

In 2020, a Mission Australia survey of 25,800 young people (aged 15 to 19) found that 40.2% of young Australians felt that equity and discrimination was one of the most important issues facing young people (an increase of more than 60% from 2019). Of particular concern to young people were issues related to discrimination based on gender, race and/or cultural background. Next in line were concerns relating to COVID-19 (38.8%), mental health (30.6%), the environment (29.8%), and the economy and financial matters (5.3%).

A PwC survey of more than 1,500 CEOs from around the world, found climate change and environmental damage were of “extreme concern” for 24% of CEOs

(up from 19% the previous year). These CEOs see acting on these issues as good for the world *and* good for the business (new growth areas in products and services; reputational advantage).

All of these issues feature throughout the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by governments across the world in 2015 for achievement by 2030.⁹⁵ These goals centre on a vision of both protecting the planet and ensuring safe and healthy lives for future generations. Young people are at the heart of these goals.



⁹² From the newly established Student Council. Students had a key piece of feedback for the NSW Education Minister, Minister. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

⁹³ See, for example, Atlassian. (2020). *Return on action: The new social contract for business*.

⁹⁴ *The Economist*, 23 October 2021. See: [‘Business: go woke or go broke?’](#)

⁹⁵ See: The [Australian Sustainable Development Goals website](#).

Authors of 2020 *Lancet* argue that:

“In light of the large gaps in information on children, we need transformative approaches to monitoring, including community-collected information ... grounded in lived experiences, for credible and valid decision making on local policies and programmes. This opens the opportunity for a new role for children and youth in measuring and monitoring their own wellbeing—as active participants.”⁹⁶

In Australia, the calls and case for greater student participation and ownership in their learning is coming from educational and business perspectives, and the students themselves.

“We know young people can do a lot of things and we know young people know a lot of things and they’ve learned inside or outside of school; in their families, in their clubs and wherever they’ve learned.

We know young people are so much better than they look at the moment on the bits of paper that flow around the education system.”

Professor Sandra Milligan, Director and Enterprise Professor, Assessment Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

Improving how to assess and report on student learning is an important strategic need. There is a shared interest and practical value to young people, school and tertiary educators, employers and recruiters.⁹⁷ It raises an interesting opportunity for school-business partnering to contribute: ***How much and how well is student assessment and ways of assessing part of school-business partnering?***

There are different, more equitable and relevant ways to convey achievements that are meaningful and more

easily understood by students, families, employers and recruiters:

“I’d like to see students show how they are using feedback from others and how they are discerning key lessons that they have learned, combined with some sort of portfolio piece and enabled with some technology.”

Ben Cooper, Design Lead, Digital Innovation Team at DXC Technology.

Work is well-underway across senior secondary school, tertiary and industry sectors to create a shared language and measurement of ‘success’ (e.g. University of Melbourne; South Australian Certificate of Education Board). In the US, enabling young people to add and demonstrate mastery (know and do) is changing the whole learner ecosystem.⁹⁸

The idea that young people are simply ‘adults in waiting’, unaware of their surroundings and incapable of taking action, is out-of-step with what is actually happening in schools and in life.⁹⁹

7. Transitions: Interrupted, flexible and complex.

“There is a danger that everybody thinks that everybody should go to university. Now, I don’t agree with that. People who want to go to uni, should be able to go to uni. Those who don’t want to go to Uni and instead want to learn skills, should be as revered. And, if you learn a skill, you should be able to go back to improve and increase your skills at any age. Even at 90 years of age”.

David Gonski, AC.

All students and families, especially those living and working in under-served communities, need to *believe* they have options and *be able* to choose the ‘right’ option to create their own life of value.¹⁰⁰ Economists in other contexts have argued this choice is *the* public policy responsibility to move on.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶The Lancet (2020). ‘A future for the world’s children?’

⁹⁷Note: While efforts at the senior secondary years are a priority, educators’ interest in a student’s voice and agency in their learning and capturing their learning starts earlier than at the point of transition between school and beyond.

⁹⁸See for example Blivin, J. & Mayo, M. (2019). *SHIFT HAPPENS 2*, particularly, Tables 3 and 4, p. 33.

⁹⁹Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2016). *United Nations World Youth Report on Youth Civic Engagement*.

¹⁰⁰The Education Council. (2020). *Looking to the Future* makes a similar argument: Education should be ‘acknowledged as the stepping-stone to a fair society’.

¹⁰¹Ken Henry called this expectation out as a public policy responsibility in his address to the Crawford School of Public Policy and in reference to the pioneer thinking of economist-philosopher, Amartya Sen.

The reality is student educational opportunity does not distribute equally in Australia. All five key findings from Mitchell Institute's 2020 *Educational Opportunity* national report confirm this as the case: "Where you grow up and your family's resources strongly influence your access to critical educational opportunities and services from early childhood through to adulthood." Large gaps in attainment and achievement link to student socio-economic background, Indigeneity and location.¹⁰²

Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely than the national average to 1) participate in pre-school, 2) finish school, and/ or 3) gain or be working towards a post-school qualification.¹⁰³

Three successive recent national education reviews all recommend, in their own words, prioritising and accelerating, "a more sophisticated analysis and understanding of student pathways and progress in Australia."¹⁰⁴

Staying in school to gain a secondary qualification still offers good protection against unemployment by age 34.¹⁰⁵ But the impact of staying in school (or not) goes beyond the individual. Mitchell Institute estimates the **cost to communities and government is around \$1.5 million for each person who is not engaged** in any education or employment for more than half of their life.¹⁰⁶

Students start forming their ideas of whether they intend to stay or leave school from a young age (e.g. before the age of 13).¹⁰⁷ A child's understandings of self-worth, working with others, work and careers begins early. Children aged three to eight years are gathering passive understandings of the world of work [and their place in it]. It is the case even before children have learned to read. At this stage of development, children do not necessarily have the vocabulary to explain what their family members do for work (occupations) and the essence of why adults work at all, without help, but they can identify

certain occupations in pictures.¹⁰⁸ An international survey exploring the career aspirations and dreams of primary-age children found, for example, less than 1% of children stated they had heard about 'the job' from a volunteer from the world of work coming into school.¹⁰⁹

From a world of work lens, The Smith Family's Head of Research and Advocacy explains the intent of an earlier start in education:

"It's not saying, 'Will Michelle become an astronaut?' Instead, the purpose is to start with Michelle's interests and passions, linked to a post-school world."

Dr Anne Hampshire, The Smith Family.

A student's stated intention has a strong influence on their actual likelihood to stay or leave school. Low and soft expectations of students (or families) can have a negative impact on motivation and feelings of self-worth: *"Why bother continuing to learn? I can tell others don't think I will amount to much."*

The reasons why a student may stay or leave school will be specific to each student. The simple act of asking students, *"When do you plan to leave school?"* can be revealing.¹¹⁰

One recent South Australian study found the reasons students leave or plan to leave school include:

- Having a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to, or aspirational intent to get one of these.
- Disliking school or believing it to be of little value.
- School work and environment (e.g. work and/or teacher/peer relationships being too hard)
- Mental health and other health/illness/disability reasons.
- Other personal and family reasons.¹¹¹

¹⁰² Mitchell Institute. (2020). Educational Opportunity Fact Sheet. *Successful lifelong learners*.

¹⁰³ Lamb, S. et al. (2020). *Educational opportunity in Australia 2020*. In reference to Finding 1 - About 18% or 58,452 young Australians will not attain Year 12 or equivalent qualification.

¹⁰⁴ Education Council (2018). *Optimising STEM Industry-School Partnerships*.

¹⁰⁵ OECD. (2020). Education at a Glance. (On average, 61% of 25-34-year-olds without upper secondary education are employed, compared with 78% of those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education as their highest attainment.) OECD. (2020). Education at a Glance. (On average, 61% of 25-34-year-olds without upper secondary education are employed, compared with 78% of those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education as their highest attainment.)

¹⁰⁶ Lamb, S. & Huo, S. (2017). *Counting the costs of lost opportunity in Australian education*.

¹⁰⁷ See [John Hattie Learning Intentions & Success Criteria](#). 28 February 2015; Lamb, S. et al. (2004). *Staying on at school: Improving student retention in Australia*.

¹⁰⁸ See for example, Cinamon, R. L. & Yeshayahu, M. (2020). 'Children's occupational knowledge'.

¹⁰⁹ Chambers, N., Kashefpakdel, E. T., Rehill, J., & Percy, C. (2018). *Drawing the future*.

¹¹⁰ Lamb, S. et al. (2004). *Staying on at school: Improving student retention in Australia*. [Since 2009, the leaving age for all schools increased.]

¹¹¹ This list has been adapted from McMillan, J., Sniedze-Gregory, S., Felgate, R., & Lietz, P. (2020). [Earning and Learning Research Project: Report to the Department for Education, South Australia](#). Government of South Australia Department for Education.

Positive influences on students staying at school were (From 580 student ‘stayers’ and ‘leavers’):

- Encouraging friends and nice teachers.
- Recognising school is useful to a student’s future.
- Students like learning at school and studying.
- Family encouragement.
- Socialising with friends – get along well with peers.

Other work highlights some specific concerns and misconceptions about Vocational Education and Training (VET) and TAFE in the general public. Beliefs build up and influence intentions, even when the views “do not reflect contemporary realities.” Beliefs that VET ‘lacks prestige’, ‘does not provide a competitive edge’, or ‘university is more likely to lead to success’, still prevail. In addition, influences, such as ‘parental disapproval’ and ‘affordability’ (having to pay fees up-front is a barrier to access) all start to reinforce deficit type narratives and profiles of young people. These types of “negative views can strengthen in the latter years of schooling.”

The need for coherent policy and interactions: At

Rooty Hill High School, a school identified as ‘high equity’, up to 60% of its students start high school below grade average and with little understanding of business. Some have never travelled the 53 kilometres to the CBD and have had few opportunities to engage with business leaders and decision-makers. Others come from families that own small businesses and some come from families with professional backgrounds in other countries, not Australia.

From 2013 to 2019, the number of students at Rooty Hill High School studying post-school with TAFE and other vocational providers dropped from over 40% to 23% (in 2018). The drop was due to a combination of changes in government policy and a lack of coherence about how business is working with vocational providers. It was also because of significantly increased up-front costs, which in turn, present a challenge to families who are “debt averse” and encourages students to seek options they can afford.¹¹²

Students from across Years 9 to 12 told researchers conducting a Victorian state-based review they would have liked to have more applied learning in their middle secondary years and might have remained more connected to their school if this were available. Specifically, opportunities for exposure to the world of work, including work experience, provide students with ways to make links between learning and work, and to develop work-related knowledge.

A mistaken assumption is to presume all students lack ambition or aspiration. What can be missing is opportunities and capacity to act.¹¹³ In other cases, for some young people, the school and those the school partners with *is* the difference. School has an important role to play in making a difference to each student’s intentions. Students need “high quality provision, effective school services, positive learning environments, combined with effective family support ... regardless of a student’s background or circumstances.” Opportunity is also each student being able to access relatable role models and a broad and diverse set of learning experiences, over time.

Student intentions provide a robust entry point for signals of what students hope for their future (a student’s aspirations) and what students believe will actually happen (a student’s expectations).¹¹⁴ Both perspectives are relevant to why and how businesses engage with students and their schools.

Interactions with business can heighten student aspirations, inspiring possibilities and such associated success criteria as student goal setting. Educational expectations, via discovering a student’s intentions, are a gateway to seeing equity of opportunity issues, such as financial concerns, achievement gaps or mismatches between a student’s aspiration and expected reality, or the influences and expectations of others. Understanding these issues can help direct or focus first partnering interaction efforts.

Recent science results from the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment show patterns of inequity still appearing, but also a trend for Australian students’ educational expectations to increase in line with their achievements. This highlights the importance and significance of prevention and early intervention around educational expectations.

¹¹² Box content drawn from Rooty Hill High School 2019 Submission to Australia’s Senior Secondary Pathways Review.

¹¹³ Harwood, V., McMahon, S., O’Shea, S., Bodkin-Andrews, G. & Priestly, A. (2015). *Recognising aspiration*. “Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth framework, both of which privilege the knowledges students have, actively working against educational/aspirational deficit framings of indigenous students, p.230.”

¹¹⁴ Australian Council for Education Research (ACER). (2018). *PISA Australia in Focus Number 2: Educational expectations*.

An obvious but important point: Partnering is with people

“Our practice is to share. You don’t question it.

If we create or experience something that has been fantastic for us – our students, teachers, families – why wouldn’t we want to put it ‘out there’ for other students, teachers, families or business partners to see, use, adapt or connect with us about?”

Kathryn Short, Teacher, Rooty Hill High School, western Sydney, NSW.

It is true, schools and businesses do not *have* to work together. It is a choice people within schools and businesses make or want to make. The context for Australian students also makes it a choice we *need* to make together.

It is also true that working together is not always easy to enact and sustain. From 100s of written review submissions and 100s of consultations with experts from education and industry a common theme emerges: It can be a challenge to partner purposefully.

In numbers, there is no shortage of people to be engaging with from schools and businesses. There are more than four million students aged 5 to 19 enrolled in 9,581 schools. As at 30 June 2022, there were **2,569,900** actively trading businesses of differing employment size (Small 0-19, Medium 20-199, Large 200+).¹¹⁵

Despite these numbers, it was common to hear and read of partnering relationships as being “patchy”, “pockets”, “ink-spots”, “ad hoc”, “piecemeal” and “disconnected”.

There are cultural, structural, equity, and practical matters to acknowledge and address. These include:

- **Connecting:** Schools and businesses sit in different sectors and places. In turn, this can make it difficult to initiate connections. It can make it difficult to know *who* to connect with, *how* to connect, and to do so by making informed choices. A recent Australian survey

of 256 schools (NSW, QLD and VIC) found over 90% want to increase their current engagement with business. One quarter of those schools who already engage with business (in their own-right and through the Australian Business Community Network [ABCN]) mentioned it was, “important to let businesses know that schools are willing to engage with them.”

- **Apprehensions:** How to work with young people. How to engage with the students ‘in front of me’. How interesting and valuable to students is my story. How to engage ethically and transparently to show partners are ‘in it’ for the right reasons. How to engage respectfully, for example, around such issues as acknowledging origins of work in any use of materials, and cultural safety.¹¹⁶ How to navigate, especially big companies, to find the right entry point for a conversation. How to know if working together is making a positive difference for students. How much time and other resourcing could engaging together need?
- **Competition vs Collaboration:** “When the cultural intent and rhetoric says ‘partner’, ‘collaborate’, but the individual organisation and/or the system says, ‘win’, ‘compete’ through its rewards and incentives then this can inadvertently create rivalry with incentive systems. You have to think quite carefully about, “Where are these sources of competition coming from, and what can I do to make it advantageous for people to help each other rather than compete with each other?”¹¹⁷
- **Deficits vs Strengths:** Both education and business have felt the brunt and burden of negative narratives.¹¹⁸ There is a noted sense of weariness of others *telling* those within schools they are doing a poor job and *telling* them what and how they should be doing their job. The implications can be immediate, such as on teacher wellbeing,¹¹⁹ and/or long-term, such as trying to attract passionate, highly capable people to the profession.¹²⁰ Between 2006 to 2019 enrolments in initial teacher education rose by 4%, compared to a rise of 37% in all tertiary course enrolments in Australia. The impact is potentially far-reaching with teacher shortages

¹¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistic, released 25 August 2022. *Counts of Australian Businesses*, including entries and exits.

¹¹⁶ This relates to respect for identity, culture and acting in culturally appropriate ways: “Cultural safety in organisations requires an environment that is free from discrimination or denial of culture. ... The right of children and young people to enjoy and practice their culture.” Commission for Children & Young People. (2021). *Empowerment and participation*, p. 13.

¹¹⁷ Excerpt from, Heffernan, M. (2015). *Beyond Measure: The big impact of small changes*.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, the [Business Council of Australia story](#); and Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA). (2019). *Company Pulse*; and The Conversation. (2019). [‘Don’t blame the teacher’](#)

¹¹⁹ See, for example, Dabrowski, A. (2020). *Teacher wellbeing during a pandemic: Surviving or Thriving?*

¹²⁰ See, for example, [Teachers ditching school...](#) (2021) and [What’s being done to address teacher shortages?](#) (2021)

and the knock-on effects on equitable student educational opportunities.¹²¹ Such negativity can act against people *wanting* to work together or adapt and try new ways of interacting. But it is a mistaken assumption that schools and businesses are at odds with each other.

- **Dependency vs Inter-dependency:** The thought of one partner being overly dependent on another partner can be a concern or put people off from committing to work together. Common ‘pitfalls’ include an imbalance of responsibilities, unclear purpose, a lack of clarity around the intended partnering scope and duration, and/or different or misaligned values and strategic priorities.¹²² Each business, as with each student and school, is unique. The starting point for engaging, and the capability and capacity to engage together, can vary.
- **Language:** Schools and businesses each have their own institutional and sector language. In the Australian Curriculum it is an expectation for students to develop, practice, demonstrate and deploy, ‘personal and social capability’, but how well do employers or families understand or use this language in their life and workplaces? These differences are not an argument for spending 1,000s of hours finessing the language. What *is* important is getting agreement on shared interpretations of the language used as a foundational reference point for measuring and monitoring progress and impact.
- **Requirements:** Both schools and businesses are workplaces with different accountabilities and different legislative and regulatory frameworks (e.g. annual reporting requirements; Acts governing rights and responsibilities of each sector).¹²³ When secondary students do a work placement, an employer often has to comply with school and VET system requirements, which increases the administrative load.¹²⁴ The rhythms of these workplaces are different (e.g. schools operate across a calendar year; businesses, a financial year). Good will to engage and good intentions to ‘give-back’ can only get a culture for partnering so far.
- **Safeguarding protocols:** Protecting students is absolutely paramount. It is also an ever-present

challenge in digital, and hybrid working environments. Leaders see there is room to improve efficiencies *and* effectiveness *without* compromise to student safety. One such identified area requiring efficiencies, especially for national businesses with lots of volunteers or capacity issues for smaller businesses, related to the working with children clearance procedures and paperwork. These vary across Australia, which in turn may present implications for locally-determined partnering with different types and sizes of business and schools.

A story from one national business: The volunteer manager reported there has been some improvement in recent years with these checks. South Australia and Queensland have implemented online systems and in these two states if a volunteer is undertaking supervised activities in the classroom fewer than seven days in any given year, the volunteer does not need a working with children clearance, but a school’s policy may still require a volunteer to provide the Clearance. New South Wales also has an online process, often with same day turnaround. In their experience, the Northern Territory process is perhaps the most complex. All of the clearances are based on national Police Checks, but to accept a clearance from another state or territory is rare.¹²⁵

Developing strong trusting and transparent *relationships with people*, and different people, over time may not be the easy choice, but it is the right choice.¹²⁶ Australia’s 2021 Global Trust Barometer (GTB) report shows 76% of people trust in their employers at the local level. Partnering is good for individuals, communities and the country. It can create value for all (as the benefits in Part 1 attest).

How to develop the capability and capacity for partnering then is a modern-day must for all. There is a need to acknowledge and recognise that working together takes effort and resourcing. These issues and building cultures for high impact partnering, form the focus for Part 3.

¹²¹This relates to attracting teachers in hard to staff locations and subject areas. See: Australian Education, ‘[Everyones bailing](#)’: Australian teachers speak on stress and uncertainty of increasing casual contracts’. Teachers tell Guardian Australia contract work and poor conditions are driving people away from classrooms. The Guardian, Naaman Zhou, 4 July 2021.

¹²²Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Digital Ventures. (2019). *After the honeymoon ends*.

¹²³For example, see the ‘[Australian Education Act 2013](#)’ and ‘[Higher Education Support Act 2003 and Guidelines](#)’ for both Vocational Education and Training, VET providers and Higher Education HE providers.

¹²⁴VET p. 17

¹²⁵Note, these protocols might have changed since the manager provided this story.

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Addressing the challenges and disruptors

Illustrations from practice

Embracing entrepreneurial learning. It is being done. It can be done.

In schools: In Australia, primary and secondary schools (across school sectors) have been embracing entrepreneurial learning strategies with students (e.g. voluntary school-led, cross-state, multi-year collaborative learning and research networks, such as ‘The Paradigm Shifters’, with 21 schools, teacher, principal, student teams with principal associations and global and local researchers. In South Australia, a whole of system endorsed entrepreneurship education strategy. Among, and sometimes embedded within these initiatives are suites of responsive and targeted entrepreneurship student-centred approaches. Some are pioneering, such as Victorian Templestowe College’s ‘Take Control’ student enterprises. Others, more recent, such as Queensland teacher turned entrepreneur, Nicole Dyson’s founding of the national student and teacher program, ‘[Future Anything](#)’, as well as the voluntary school-led ‘[Future Schools](#).’)

In universities: At the university education stage, the entrepreneurial sets of relationships are diversifying, widening and increasing in their sophistication. Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is reflecting these changes at global and local levels. QUT and MIT Sloan’s five-year strategic collaboration focused on academic exchange, an innovative immersion program for QUT MBA and EMBA students, and enhancing QUT’s entrepreneurship program with access to MIT’s global entrepreneurial networks. QUT’s strategic relationship with key school student programs and awards with ‘Future Anything’.

From a place-based perspective: In the 2018 *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education*, a key recommendation was to improve opportunities for regional, rural and remote (RRR) schools to implement entrepreneurship in education through curriculum, teaching, system and cultural changes and building on good practice (the review included 340 submissions,

cross-sector consultations and an extensive review of the literature). The review report states this recommendation has the potential for “shifting the focus of education from primarily preparation for employment to creation of employment.”

Addressing the digital divide. It is being done. It can be done.

During COVID-19, principals in some communities saw the digital divide as an immediate threat to the continuity of learning for the student community, whether for all students or targeted groups.

The Australian Business Community Network (ABCN) found 50% of students in some of its 200 partner schools had inadequate data or devices. In response, the ABCN put the call out for assistance through its network of 43 partner companies. It resulted in donations of 1,700 devices and Optus gave more than 1,000 data plans to those students most in need.¹²⁷

Connecting volunteers from the world of work to students and their schools. It is being done. It can be done.

Inspiring the Future Australia is a national campaign that aims to broaden the horizons and lift aspirations of students. There is a platform and process for connecting volunteers with primary and secondary schools to engage students with industry. A volunteer signs-up to the platform, committing to at least one hour per year to volunteering. Volunteers provide their geographic work location; career route to-date, and what they can talk about. Teachers sign up to the platform and decide which volunteers best fit their students’ needs. Teachers send an invitation to the volunteer. The UK Education & Employers group have licensed the not-for-profit organisation, Schools Industry Partnership, to run Inspiring the Future in Australia.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ ABCN former CEO’s Message. See: [ABCN Annual Report 2020](#) (p. 4).

¹²⁸ See: [Inspiring the future Australia](#)

Listening to emerging voices: Students in the ‘driver’s seat’. It is being done. It can be done.

From education: Student social enterprise

Primary and secondary students and young adults have been achieving social good through doing business, enabled by @SocialEnterpriseSchools Australia working alongside the students and their schools. For example, 23-year-old Brady, from a small town in Gippsland, Victoria is building a market to reduce nutrient surplus on dairy farms. Oscar, a 13-year-old, is the former CEO of his school-based Country Drone Aerial Photography social enterprise, developed by a student team from Myrree Primary, a small remote school in Victoria’s north-east. Lyndsey, a Year 9 student from Wangaratta, set up her own social enterprise with classmates making and selling wheat bag hand warmers. Profits go to support Drought Angels.¹²⁹

From life: Campbell’s social good – family enabled

Campbell Remess lives in Tasmania. He is one of nine siblings. When he was nine, he taught himself how to sew, creating what he called ‘comfort bears’ for parents with a child in hospital or for people experiencing trauma overseas. When he came up with this idea, the first person he turned to was his mum. He asked to use her sewing machine. What his mum said and did next might have been pivotal to how Campbell felt about his idea and the choices he made next. Campbell’s mum said, “Yep, knock yourself out”. Campbell did, sewing a bear a day. He admits this took six hours at first. Now it takes one hour. Campbell’s mum set up a Facebook group called ‘Project365 by Campbell’. She did this to help “track her son’s progress”. This action drew in other people wanting to help Campbell. At first, the help on offer (more fabric) was a mismatch to what Campbell really needed (storage space). His mum was ‘by his side’ as a go-between to sort out any issues. At 12 years of age, Campbell launched his charity. In 2020, amongst COVID-19’s induced online school lessons, Campbell thought other kids might like to make bears too. He began livestreaming on Facebook how

to make bears. Campbell is still making the bears “because I love it”. He finds “it pretty fun”. He gets positive reactions and that’s “motivating me to still do it”.¹³⁰

From First nations: IMAGI-NATION (University)

This AIME initiative promotes student agency, providing a path for new kinds of leadership and community change. The vision of IMAGI-NATION (University) is to “to build together a system of higher education that sees the good in us all and drives focused action for the collective good of humanity and the planet”. The university provides free courses for school students to be “entrepreneurs and master storytellers, teachers to teach with imagination, university students to build mentoring bridges, executives to level the playing field in the boardroom and citizens to organise change”. The university focuses on six knowledge fields: imagination, building bridges, flipping the script, mentoring, organising change and hoodie economics. By 2024, this initiative hopes to have created connections designed to alleviate educational inequity for approximately 100,000 marginalised high school students a year.¹³¹

From philanthropy: Youth in Philanthropy

Since 2002, the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation, Melbourne has been enabling and evolving Youth in Philanthropy (YIP) with an aim to “inspire young people to use their enthusiasm, creativity and energy to begin a lifelong engagement in philanthropy and social change, and to develop the necessary skills and abilities to work with a diverse range of people from all cultures and social groups”. Student teams from Years 10, 11 or 12 across 20 schools participate with charities, and the Foundation draws in other not-for-profit sector expertise.¹³²

¹²⁹ How can we help young people have a voice post COVID-19? Peter Sacco, Director of Programs at ACRE – Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise Academy, 28 August 2020, via LinkedIn.

¹³⁰ See: ‘Bear boy’ Campbell Remess shares his skills during coronavirus self-isolation’ by Manika Dadson, 1 April 2020, ABC NEWS.

¹³¹ See: [AIME Mentoring](#)

¹³² See: Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation, [‘Youth in Philanthropy’](#).

Impact measurement. It is being done. It can be done.

From philanthropy: Using the Sustainable Development Goals to help measure impact

In Australia, Perpetual has begun tracking and analysing the alignment of not-for-profits they support to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). This provides insight on impact measurement and is designed to improve family social investment strategies.¹³³

New transitions and ways to assess. It is being done. It can be done.

One school, two campuses: Centenary Heights State High School (CHSHS) in Queensland and Flexi School are one school with two campuses. The Flexi School campus caters to 55 young people in Years 10 to 12 (aged 15 to 18) who, “through no fault of their own cannot make a success of their education in a mainstream setting”. The campus setting is a house. Students choose their study program and use their own needs and what they want to do in the future to inform their decisions. The education provides students with a path to university, further study, jobs and/or full-time apprenticeships. Teaching expertise for all Flexi School staff (who are also CHSHS staff) develops through a practical Berry Street Education Model. From the moment a young person comes through the door, staff meet each with “unconditional positive regard”. Staff start with where a young person is ‘at’ and work with them to set and achieve their goals. Every young person connects weekly with their own mentor through the school’s intergenerational mentor program, developing social and emotional skills and wellbeing. The Flexi School Campus Principal states, “in the end, it is about that whole person and what he or she thinks of him or herself”.¹³⁴

‘The Big Red Truck’ is an Outback College of Hospitality Trade Training Centre in Queensland providing Year 10-12 students with the opportunity

to work towards their Certificate II in Kitchen Operations. Longreach State High School hosts the ‘Truck’ and maintains the budget, while four other schools self-fund the remaining on-going costs. Training events across the school cluster expose students to real-world hospitality experiences and industrial-standard workplaces.¹³⁵

A school with a commitment to Inspire. Explore.

Create: Dapto High School has 62% of students doing vocational education, a very important part of the school’s curriculum choices. “Getting industries to be contactable and talk with our students and let them see what is available and possible is an opening to the ‘real world’”. School alumni come to the school to share their experiences. Many bringing non-traditional career ideas to the school’s senior female students through trade or STEM career opportunities, particularly in the local Energy Development company. This company is part of the local community. Their employees live here. Their children go to school here. Since 2007, 20 apprentices have come from the school to the company, seven of whom were women through mechanical and electrical pathways.¹³⁶

From a currency and assessment perspective:

South Australia is implementing a system-wide strategy to enable school leavers an alternative way to show universities, TAFE, industry and employers their capabilities beyond ATAR. The driving purpose behind the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board decision is **equity**. By introducing ‘learner profiles’ it is a way for students to communicate a more holistic view of themselves. It could lead to greater student participation rates in tertiary and employment.¹³⁷

At the University of Melbourne, Assessment Research Centre (ARC), the team have also been working on a ‘learner profile’. The team, led by Professor Milligan, is working currently with more than 80 schools from across Australia. These schools want to try and figure out what the assessment for a ‘learner profile’ might look like and

¹³³ Perpetual is a global financial services organisation. Among what it provides are advisory services to high-net-worth philanthropic families in Australia.

¹³⁴ A member of the senior secondary pathways review team recommended learning at the Toowoomba Flexi School, from a site visit during the review. See also: ‘[Learning at Toowoomba Flexi School](#)’ 2020.

¹³⁵ See: ‘[Big Red Truck – Outback College of Hospitality Trade Training Centre](#)’ and ‘[Longreach State High students to cook with gas in upgraded facilities](#)’.

¹³⁶ See: ‘[Dapto High School](#)’ video on skills1ne™tv.

¹³⁷ Julie Hare, Education Editor, 18 July 2021 Financial Review. See: ‘[Learner profiles prove that the ATAR is not everything](#)’.

be used. The University's Dean of Education chairs an industry board as part of the initiative. Professor Milligan remarks, "A distinct feature of the profile is it does not rely on or tie to end-of-year exams, and it is not age graded, or time bound. The team wants to reinforce the practices of teaching and assessment across contexts. We argue, it only makes sense to assess and credential a capability if transferability is possible. **Importantly**, a learner profile is an opportunity for students to highlight and comment on *what they see* as their major achievements and for a wide group of adults (e.g. entrepreneurs, employers) to add their views and observations.

It takes a village. Working in each student's present for all our futures.

Part 3: Building a partnering culture

... there needs to be a mix of committing to **best practice** (existing practices that already have a good degree of widely agreed effectiveness) and having the freedom, space and resources to create next practice (innovative approaches that often begin with teachers themselves and that will sometimes turn out to be the best practices in the future). Best practice without **next practice** just drives teachers through implementing and fine-tuning what already exists. Next practice without best practice has no way of sorting out the strong emerging ideas from the weak ones.¹³⁸

Professors Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan.

Those committed to high impact partnering cultures prepare for improving (best practices) and innovating (next practices). Being open to exploring and experimenting and then acting to do things differently is key. This section comprises key capability and capacity preparation features.

Partnering requires capability and capacity

Capability refers to an individual's or team's *ability* to know what and how to do what you want and need to do *and* be able to do it. This might include, for example, having the expertise to design and evaluate effective ways to engage with students.¹³⁹

Capacity is the *actual* ability that exists at present, such as resourcing, time, or 'head-space'. Becoming 'partnering fit' requires both capability and capacity.¹⁴⁰

Once schools and businesses decide to engage, their capability and capacity to do so can vary. There can be knowledge and skill gaps, such as how and where to find the right people at the right time. Addressing these gaps can remove barriers to starting or prevent falling at the first hurdle. Cracks can also appear when people do not try to understand each sector and/or each other's purposes, goals, operating and regulatory contexts and rhythms; or acknowledge the expertise people already bring to the relationship or could be developing as a result of collaborating. Addressing these gaps can assist with the preparations and shaping of initial approaches and conversations, as well as in evaluating *if* the relationship and ways of engaging are making the intended difference for students.

Looking back over the last 12 years or so, national initiatives have sought to lift student learning, engagement and achievement. There have been government-led initiatives, such as Prime Ministerial partnerships and partnership brokers. Business too has backed multi-year school and community partnership initiatives, such as National Australia Bank's 'NAB Schools First', with good work and evidence of impact reported.¹⁴¹ Each initiative has come and gone or lays dormant.

In today's context for Australian students, new and greater self-determined ways of partnering to make a difference are emerging in communities. These include teachers and business volunteers co-designing *with* students, tailored interactions, projects or programs, and/or being enabled to do so through choosing to work others (see also Parts 1 and 4 of this paper). Building student capability through business and other enabling groups working together can also develop teacher capability.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Professors, Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan's research examined issues of leading school and system change and, within this focus, the profession's agency. This quote is from Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital*.

¹³⁹ Commonwealth of Australia. (2012). *Evaluate to grow*.

¹⁴⁰ See: The international NGO, [The Partnering Initiative](#) (TPI), has been researching and producing guides and papers on cross-sector partnering for nearly 20 years. TPI coined the phrase, 'becoming partnering fit'.

¹⁴¹ Clerke, S. (2013). *Partnering for school improvement*.

¹⁴² See, for example, Flynn, M. C., Pillay, H., & Watters, J. (2016). *Industry-school partnerships*.

“Breakthroughs need a strong culture and excitement for innovation and doing new things, differently. Students need to be able to identify and look at projects they can do and problems they can identify and or solve. Governments need to bring an innovative culture to underline that for each student and the school, the employer and the country. This is where we should be headed.”

Bill Ferris, AC, Co-founder CPE Capital.¹⁴³

The kind of partnering cultures referred to in this paper build capability and capacity through the voluntary, but intentional efforts and acts of people (formal and informal).¹⁴⁴ They demonstrate an understanding of why and how to use a range of discrete or overlapping and complementary sets of learning relations, as shown below.¹⁴⁵ These are dynamic and might change in the partnering process. All require a degree of coordination.

	Some examples
Networking: exchanging, exposing, connecting people, ideas, information and/or insights.	Youth Summit ‘YES’ ¹⁴⁶
Cooperating: pooling and combining complementary or similar resources to do more, do better around a common area of interest and/or dissatisfaction, and do so more effectively, efficiently, innovatively or at greater scale.	Searchable free platforms, such as the ‘STARportal’ comprehensive collection of STEM activities and providers ¹⁴⁷
Collaborating: bringing essential and complementary capabilities and capacity for shaping, resourcing, actioning and sustaining the interactions together to deliver on an intended impact together, that by working alone could not be achieved or achieved as fast or achieved to inform and make transformative changes.	‘Learning Creates Australia’ ¹⁴⁸ and Social Ventures Australia, ‘The Connection’ ¹⁴⁹

One CEO interviewed for this project saw leaders as the most important catalyst for building cultures for high impact partnering. They could also be a key blocker:

“The leader has lost interest. So, it’s a ‘flat duck’ at the moment”.

This also connects to the idea of ‘mindset’, which is important for creating a foundation for partnering with intent. Building a culture for partnering begins in the mind.

Partnering is a mindset

“There is a culture, behaviour piece we need to start with. Developing and valuing curiosity. I think a lot of workplace processes and systems get stuck just because we have engendered this habit of accepting, in many instances, the current way. Instead of taking up this opportunity to be curious and ask, ‘Could we explore ‘this’ in another way?’”

Alexandra Gartmann, CEO, Rural Bank.

Partnering cultures extend beyond the boundaries of organisations. There may be intent to serve those ‘in front of you’ while also having a public interest in mind.

Some interviewed for this project drew lessons from such countries as Singapore to emphasise the need for leaders to bring **“next iteration and investment in the nation” mindsets** to help solve issues affecting us all. The following example illustrates growth from an open or changed mindset:

From business: A business saying, for example, “What would happen if we didn’t train up all these people?” instead of saying, “We trained up all these people and they left”. One leader interviewed for this paper pointed out, “Westpac is a good example, at the graduate end. They take in their graduates and commit to training them, with a view of, ‘if we lose them, that’s fine.’”

¹⁴³ Interview with Bill Ferris, AC, in reference to *Australia 2030. Prosperity through innovation*.

¹⁴⁴ “Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain” Volunteering Australia. Partnering with intent, see for example, Commonwealth of Australia. (2012). *Evaluate to grow*. See also, VicHealth’s *The partnership analysis tool*. (2016)

¹⁴⁵ These categories draw on those in Stibbe, D. & Prescott, D. (2020). *The SDG partnership guidebook*.

¹⁴⁶ See: [Youth Engagement Summit 2020](#).

¹⁴⁷ See: [Starportal](#).

¹⁴⁸ See: [Learning Creates Australia](#).

¹⁴⁹ Social Ventures Australia. See: [The Connection: Collaborative Leadership Network lifts education outcomes](#).

A robust place to start in shaping mindset and ensuring partners keep students at the core, is to ask three simple questions:¹⁵⁰

- What strengths and skills do our young people bring and need to succeed?
- What does this community need from its young people, now and in the future?
- What do young people need from this community to succeed in life?

Another key to ensuring a partnering initiative is developing for the ‘right’ reasons and toward specific intended outcomes for the benefit of students is measurement.

Measuring your partnering¹⁵¹

In the inaugural philanthropy enabled Australian Learning Lecture (ALL), **Sir Michael Barber argued that the gathering of detailed student data is a must.** But, he added, **it is how we choose to use this data, both ethically and statistically, that is really important.** Barber emphasised that **if we recognise that people are in control of the data, we can focus on making good use of it.** The ethical perspective is key and “trying to work out the story it [the data] tells”, he argues “can truly be joyful”.

The following three metrics (intent, engagement and impact) can help determine the type of data to gather in a school-business partnering interaction and how to use it. These metrics are applicable also at **system / ecosystem levels.**

Intent: *Why are schools and businesses choosing to interact together?*

- See the purpose and success criteria for partnering (the foundations for measuring impact).
- Understand who is being provided with opportunities (across the four stages of education).

Engagement: *How are schools and businesses interacting?*

- Show industry areas in and out of focus.
- Show types of interactions in and out of focus. (e.g. mentoring, hosting, challenges, expos)
- Show how partnering combines strengths and assets.

Impact: *How well are school-business interactions translating into value beyond self-benefit?*

- Identify the contributions to an individual, community, organisation or wider economy, society, environment from the interaction/s or exchange of data or information or insights.
- Identify ways to mobilise highly effective and well-integrated collaborative approaches to school-business partnering at every stage of education.

Gathering data can also help **clarify** and **inform**:

- The type and amount of partnering pursuits (priorities, scope and volume).
- The strengths and assets each bring to an interaction (understanding shared responsibilities).
- How well the partnering is going (insights for action).
- What difference the relationship is making (evidence of benefit and impact, and for whom).

Underpinning the three metrics of intent, engagement and impact are some key guiding principles.

Three core partnering principles

Three core principles emerge from the analysis of partnering research and practice: Equity; Trust and transparency; and Mutual benefit.

The graphic on the next page comes from the international NGO, The Partnering Initiative (TPI), and provides some definitions for those principles.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ These questions are adapted from those shared by a rural government school's former principal in combination with findings from our analysis.

¹⁵¹ We found a useful starting point were the metrics in the Australian Research Council (2019). *Engagement and impact assessment 2018-19 National Report.*

¹⁵² Prescott, D. & Stibbe, D. (The Partnering Initiative). (2017). *Better together.* p. 14. Use of graphic with permission from [The Partnering Initiative.](#)

EQUITY

Building respect

Equity is not equality – partnerships often bring together organisations with vastly different status, scope and resources. Equity is recognising that each partner has a vital contribution it brings to the table for which it should be valued and which earns it the right to have a respected voice in decision-making.



TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST

Developing strong relationships

Strong working relationships are at the core of effective partnering, and transparency is essential in order to build and maintain trust. Trust is the oil in the collaboration engine, allowing partners to make commitments with belief that the other partners will fulfil their own commitments.



MUTUAL BENEFIT

Creating value for all

Partnerships are based on shared risks and shared benefits. A healthy partnership will recognise that each partner needs to achieve specific value – over and above any common benefits – and all partners should help to ensure each partner achieves its goals.



These principles inform both ‘the what’ (focus) and ‘the how’ (the relationship) of partnering capability and capacity.

What follows is an elaboration of those definitions, with particular relevance to capability and capacity.

Principle: Equity

“The best thing businesses can do is provide the context of ‘real-world’ problems. If they are trying to do something collaboratively with schools, then they shouldn’t think they are smarter than teachers because of their industry experience. The teachers are the ones who should be developing the curriculum, well-informed by the practical applications that the businesses can offer.”

Dr Alan Finkel, AC, Australia’s former Chief Scientist.

Partnering (as framed in this paper) is a conscious and voluntary choice. It recognises and uses both educational and business expertise to provide benefits to students. ‘Showing-up’ to work together **equitably**, leaders from school, business and enabling organisations or individuals come with an **open-mind** (e.g. seeing beyond one way to contribute), and the goal to play **roles** informed by each other’s **strengths**, **expertise**, and **understandings** of the students and what each needs and expects.

Expertise: University of Melbourne academics define expertise as knowing the limits of your knowledge and being able to seek help and continually learn and collaborate with others to diagnose, problem-solve, and evaluate the impact of the chosen solution.¹⁵³

Businesses engaging with students and their schools can be enabled through another individual, group or organisation. Enablers can bring additional capability and capacity ‘to the table’.¹⁵⁴

Enablers can assist by make connecting easier and more effective than doing something on your own. Enablers can bring new connections, distinct expertise (understanding of specific groups of students and their communities, learning designs and strategies), and/or ways of deepening work or seeing the potential for work at scale. An enabler can be individuals, groups and/or organisations that combine different roles and behaviours, such as a ‘warm hand-shake’, ‘a cheer-squad’, ‘an advocate’, ‘an advisor’, ‘a challenger’.

What attributes are associated with enablers?

¹⁵³ See Dunn, R. & Hattie, J. (2021) *Developing Teaching Expertise*, p. 8. They provide this definition as it relates to teaching expertise. Our analysis suggests the definition also translates well to expertise more generally.

¹⁵⁴ Most documents reference these ‘third parties’ as intermediaries and brokers.

Six attributes of an effective enabler:

1. Purpose and content driven by an evidenced student need (opportunities or gaps; not duplicating what already exists).
2. Being open about who comes up with an idea (the school, business, intermediary).
3. Meaningful interactions designed with or by schools and industry (as opposed to 'to or for').
4. Evolves the brokering, connecting and/or coordinating as the evidenced student needs evolve (this shifts the thinking and approach from one of 'collecting a partnership' to 'infinite partnering' with whoever is the 'right' partner at that point in time for the students).
5. Removes or alleviates a tangible problem or risk preventing schools and businesses being able to interact easily (e.g. lower the administrative burden with education departments around, for example, working with children checks or the relational aspects of finding appropriate volunteers).
6. Brings additional capacity and capability to scale the learning (e.g. because of the enabler's reputational standing across policy, education and/or business; systems and processes in place to facilitate and document interactions; or embedded evaluation of value to all the partners).

Valuing and actioning the strengths of many people and organisations is an intentional leadership behaviour.

Example: Cool Australia platform¹⁵⁵

How (and if) to use and combine different resource and initiative offerings to improve student learning and or improve teaching is a school-based decision. Enablers can and do play a shared role with schools to scale high impact student learning. Cool Australia is mediating, in explicit and deliberate ways, the expertise and

assets of many to provide educators and families with teacher validated units of inquiry and lessons from Early Learning to Year 12. All learning maps to the curriculum or the early years framework. There are around 1,700 free multi-media searchable offerings on the platform (e.g. social enterprise). Available too is online professional learning with teachers. The Cool Australia team proactively seeks ways to partner across industries to enrich student real-world learning (e.g. With Ludo Studio, each Bluey episode is available as set of 17 value-themed learning offerings. For example, team work, responsibility, curiosity, finding your voice. The offerings are for early learning and primary school educators). Cool Australia reports 90% of schools in Australia are using the platform's educational resources.

Principle: Transparency and trust

"If you really believe that the value of collaboration lies in the aggregation or compounding of talent and creativity, then you have to have an environment in which people are really prepared to help each other."

Margaret Heffernan¹⁵⁶

Building and deepening trust requires continuous attention. Margaret Heffernan argues that people are far more likely to help each other if they share a level of trust and a purpose. Sharing their work will help organisations connect, identify what already 'works' and avoid duplicating what has already been done.

From health: In a Ted Talk, Margaret Heffernan spoke about the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). One of her key points was that epidemic responsiveness depends enormously on people trusting each other, but trust takes time to develop. CEPI develops relationships *now/present*, so they are prepared for if and when they need to call on those relationships in future epidemics.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ See: [Cool Australia](#)

¹⁵⁶ Margaret Heffernan is an author, international speaker and entrepreneur. As Margaret set up and ran five businesses, she became more and more intrigued by the value of collaborative cultures. Heffernan, M. (2015). *Beyond Measure*.

¹⁵⁷ See: [The human skills we need in an unpredictable world](#), (2019) TED Talk.

What are signals of trust?

Policy perspective ¹⁵⁸	Research perspective ¹⁵⁹
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Competence<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsive to needs• Reliability/consistency● Values-based<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrity• Transparency• Fairness and inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Competence<ul style="list-style-type: none">– delivering on promises● Ethical behaviour<ul style="list-style-type: none">– doing the right thing and working to improve society

Child safe (and family safe) engaging is non-negotiable and fundamental to trust and transparency, whether face-to-face or online. Best practice protocols and behaviours guide student learning and how to interact online.

Framework for Online Safety Education, 2021.
This includes five elements with a list of effective practices:

- 1. Students' rights and responsibilities in the digital age** (e.g. 1.1 focus on students in the context of their relationships with, and responsibilities to, others. 1.4 empower all students to participate meaningfully in the design, development, and implementation of their online safety education.)
- 2. Resilience and risk**, positively frames the use of technology ... (e.g. 2.4 Develop and implement digital environment learning experiences and opportunities that are accessible to and relevant for all students.)
- 3. Effective whole-school approaches ...** promoting student wellbeing and preventing student harm (e.g. 3.5 Set clear goals, regularly assess and provide feedback on students' knowledge and skills.)
- 4. Integrated and specific curriculum ...** use what students have learned in practice (e.g. 4.4 Promote effective help-seeking, teach where and how to obtain guidance and support.)

5. Continuous improvement through review and evaluation (e.g. Schools and teachers share good practice and learning to improve online safety education.)¹⁶⁰

Culturally, safety is also critical, ensuring respect for identity, culture and acting in culturally appropriate ways. Cultural safety is key when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and in respecting the ways these communities also choose to work with others.¹⁶¹

Emotions can also influence our sense of safety and, by association, trust. This resonates both for students and partners working to benefit students. Research from psychologists and social cognitive neuroscientists identifies a strong relationship between emotions and actions and performance.¹⁶²

"We want the environment to be extremely safe and where students do feel comfortable asking questions, where people are willing to make mistakes, because that's how you learn."

Associate Professor Michael Kasumovic, University of New South Wales, Founder of Arludo.

A safe environment is where people feel they belong as active contributors. In a safe environment anyone *believes* and *is able* to voice an idea, comment, question, concern or mistake.

A **high learning** and **low anxiety** inducing environment builds trust.¹⁶³ It encourages informed risk-taking.

Principle: Mutual benefit

This principle connects well with the benefits discussed in Part 1, connecting principles and practicalities to ensure the embedding of these benefits into policy and strategic priorities. Schools bring a good policy base for partnering. Each school in Australia will have partnering (if not this exact term) as a strategy to provide benefit to students. Partnering, sometimes expressed as 'partners in learning', is part of a school's strategic plan document, planning cycle and system reporting requirements.

¹⁵⁸ What drives public trust? Identifying the policy levers, 2017.

¹⁵⁹ Dempsey, S. (2020). 'Mind the gap'.

¹⁶⁰ Best Practice Framework for Online Safety Education (Stage 2) Expert Review and Stakeholder Consultation Report July 2021 Professor Kerryann Walsh and Elizabeth Wallace Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Technology.

¹⁶¹ Seek to find out, rather than make assumptions. See, for example: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, [Indigenous Australians: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#).

¹⁶² How to create psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation and growth is central to what Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmonson calls, 'The fearless organisation' (2018).

¹⁶³ Edmonson, A. (2018). *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth*.

School-developed policy:

Rooty Hill High School embeds their strategic partnering document and processes with their business and community partners. The document is the school's 'Partnering Care Pack'.

- Document: The Partnering Care pack aligns to the school's strategic priorities, curriculum planning and system reporting cycles.
- Commitment: A strong indication of leadership commitment, the principal has conversations with each CEO or Chair of the school's partners.
- Evaluative: Each conversation combines a set of structured questions and deeper elaboration on the responses. It provides a consistent, timely and sustainable process to gather feedback (i.e. identify the degree of achievement against intended outcomes ('the what') and how well the partners are working together ('the how') and track and report on the partnering and its impact.

As part of the decision making when initially scoping and in the reviewing phases, the school considers:

- Aligning – The purpose for working together appears to align well to key values, principles and priorities.
- Addressing – There is potential to address a key challenge or need.
- Assessing – Partnering brings new ways for people to be developing, practising, demonstrating and or deploying knowledge, skills, capabilities, dispositions.
- Adapting – Enabling young people and the partners to adapt and respond to changing needs or circumstances.
- Growing – There is an openness to seek out a new growth pathway.

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Businesses too have strategic priorities around partnering and volunteering.

Business-developed policy:

Origin Energy employees are offered unlimited volunteer leave.*

Origin's policy provides employees with the flexibility to commit to different skilled volunteering opportunities. Employees can potentially choose to volunteer at any given point in time. They can do so as a 'once-off, or part-time over several months, or even years.

Influential on Origin's approach was The City of London's 2010 business case research for corporates volunteering in education. This research found, for example, that corporates need to take the end-to-end process seriously, to value volunteering as a path to learning and development.

What signals commitment to volunteering at Origin?

For example, Origin:

- **Invests:** It has developed an 'in-house' designed platform to monitor and measure the impact of employee volunteering.
- **Measures:** It continuously tracks volunteer hours, participation, and feedback. Key measures include - Employee wellbeing; Employee awareness of wider social issues; Employee pride at working at Origin. In 2022, Origin has two new measures: Number of students reached through its school outreach programs and the Increase in connection for employees volunteering as a team.
- **Models from 'the top':** The CEO volunteers.**

* If a business has a volunteering policy, it is common to see an annual hour limit (e.g. up to 40 hours).

** When leaders actively endorse and encourage volunteering, then culturally this sends a message that volunteering is of VALUE to the individual AND the business.

(For more information on shared impact measures, benchmarking, and networking, see, for example: [Workplace Giving Australia](#) and the partner site, [One Million Donors](#).)

¹⁶⁴ For templates for evaluating see: Commonwealth of Australia. (2012). *Evaluate to Grow*. For 40 evidence-informed adaptable policy templates for teachers and school leaders, by 70 policy and research experts, on such topics as 'Embedded careers education' and 'Feedback for learning' see: [Building Better Schools with Evidence-based Policy](#). For an example of how to communicate and review working relationships with partners see: [Vic Health's Stakeholder Engagement Framework 2018-2023](#).

Developing capability *and* capacity

Partnering and learning is social. It is with people. Getting better at partnering makes us more capable. And, as with any skill, up-skilling or re-skilling require preparations and deliberate practice.

Those with a partnering mindset and expertise know how to lead and develop coherent learning cultures (the ‘why, how, who, what’, with well-defined, research-informed goals). This is the opposite to leading with a short-game mindset, with partnering framed as isolated events, activities, experiences, projects or programs.

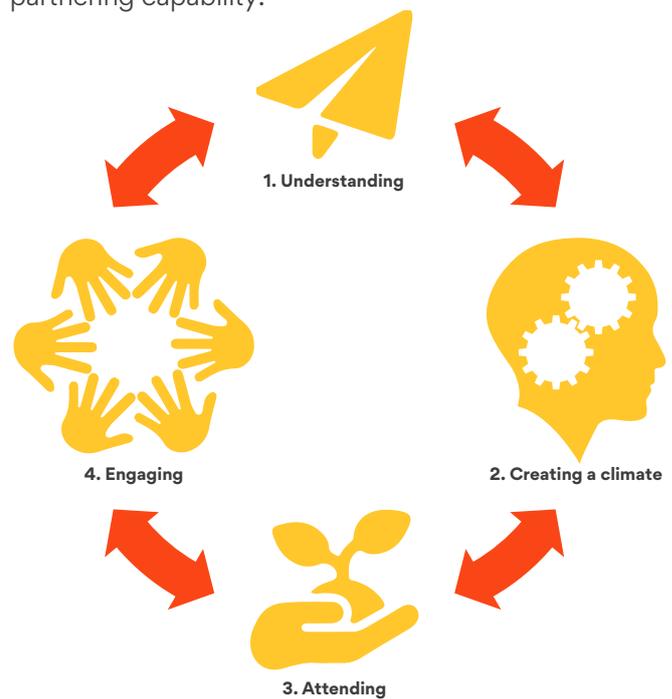
What makes an ‘outstanding’ partnership?

Below is a checklist for effective school partnering with business and or community.

The checklist reflects the selection criteria in the 2009 to 2013 NAB Schools First initiative. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) did the research and ran the national initiative with such key partners as the Foundation for Young Australians, FYA.

Our partnering ...	Yes	No
1. Is addressing a specific identified student need or educational opportunity		
2. Is well-planned		
3. Is sustainable		
4. Is collaborative (e.g. mutual sharing of expertise, knowledge, resources)		
5. Has clearly assigned roles and responsibilities (e.g. explicit processes in place to ensure ongoing effective communication and documented plans)		
6. Shows commitment from the highest level in each partner organisation		
7. Pursuits closely align to the partner’s goals for working together		
8. Provides tangible evidence to show the impact of our partnering on student learning outcomes		
See case studies in <i>Partnering for school improvement</i> , 2013.		

UK researchers, Bill Lucas and Ellen Spencer provide a helpful four-step process for cultivating capabilities (and capacity). These can apply to both cultivating capabilities in students and in creating and assessing partnering capability:¹⁶⁵



Step 1: Understanding ‘it’ – Understand the shared purpose for partnering and what ‘success’ looks like when learners (students *and* adults) do ‘it’ and do ‘it’ well.

Step 2: Creating a climate for ‘it’ – People bring a positive mindset to the practice of partnering and its benefits to students and others. People apply a positive partnering mindset by giving intentional and explicit visible signals to model and communicate how to cultivate trust and the benefits of partnering.

Step 3: Attending to ‘it’ – Together, people identify and apply respectfully and thoughtfully the resources required to deliver on the intent for engaging. Leaders embed partnering visibly in their respective organisation policies and processes.

Step 4: Engaging to own ‘it’ – Partners use their respective expertise in designing all school-business interactions around how to activate greater student autonomy and agency in learning.

These learning steps can map neatly against most partnering life-cycle phases (i.e. just starting out=emerging; moving forward in initial partnering initiatives, monitoring as you go = executing; or seeing partnering as part of normal practice = embedding).

¹⁶⁵ We adopt and adapt with permission the Centre for Real World Learning’s four-step process for cultivating capabilities in young people by Bill Lucas and Ellen Spencer (2017). *Teaching creative thinking*.

Leading and embedding a culture for school-business partnering?

Phase*	Process and Objective	Tasks
Emerging Scoping and building	Step 1: Understanding	<p>Know your why and why together:**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student need and opportunity? (See: Two leaders, one message: Partnering makes a difference for students. See Part 2: Why it is important for schools and businesses to work together. See Part 4: Addressing students' questions) ● Which students? (See Part 4: Meaningful ways to engage with students) ● What are student's interests, passions, and what do they care about? (See Parts 2 and 4) ● Who does and can benefit? (See Part 1: Partnering benefits students and adults and Seven benefits for students, families, schools, business) ● What changes do we want to see? (See Part 1: Success criteria for each benefit. See Appendix 2: The Partnering Wheel for a school-business program example) ● Do our values and priorities align? (Tip: Look at websites, annual reports, strategy plans, their news and media stories or phone) <p>Know who you do or can potentially engage with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have we mapped our: Existing strong and well-developed relationships? Existing, but under-developed relationships? Or untapped possible relationships? (Tip: Former students? Families? Local council websites? Against key industry areas? Using LinkedIn?) ● Do we understand the type of relationships we <i>need</i> to delivery on our 'why'? (See examples of building capability – Connections; Intellectual; Financial; 'In-kind time, space, 'thing'; Advocacy) ● Do we communicate publicly why and how we choose to partner? (See, for example: VicHealth's Stakeholder Engagement Framework 2018-23)
	Step 2: Creating a climate for 'it'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share: Do we share what works (or has not worked) with others, beyond our organisation? ● Model: Is there a visible commitment from 'the top' that partnering is valued? (e.g. the principal/CEO volunteers; stories shared with families. Also see: Two leaders, one message: Partnering makes a difference for students.) ● Measure: What are our agreed principles for partnering? (See Part 3: Three core partnering principles)

* In practice, the phases and processes will overlap.

**School/s and business/es directly or via another group's program / organisation or network.

Phase*	Process and Objective	Tasks
<p>Executing</p> <p>Managing and maintaining; and reviewing and revising</p>	<p>Step 3: Attending to 'it'</p>	<p>Make the value of partnering visible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we have a visible documented policy and process for working with schools/business/community? (See Part 3 for a school-developed policy and business-developed policy approach. See also the VicHealth example in Step 2 above) <p>Track 'the what' and 'the how':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we apply key principles to monitor 'the what' and 'the how' of our partnering? (See Part 3: Three core partnering principles) Do we gather feedback from the students / their families? From the partners? (Tip: Not every piece of feedback requires a new questionnaire. Also see Part 3 for a school-developed policy and business-developed policy approach)
<p>Embedding</p> <p>Making sense of and finding value in working together for improving and innovating</p>	<p>Step 4: Engaging to own 'it' and revisiting</p> <p>Step 1: Understanding</p>	<p>Review 'the what' and 'the how':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are we using key principles to review 'the what' and 'the how' of our partnering? (See Part 3: Three core partnering principles) Do we debrief and offer / gather feedback after an engagement? (e.g. Conduct an intentional feedback conversation post a Q&A talk with students) What evidence have we been gathering of what works, for whom, in what circumstances? (i.e. against our intended purpose and success criteria from Step 1 above) How are we using the evidence gathered to inform our next steps? <p>Recognise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we celebrate visibly at key moments, not just at the end? (e.g. 'a thank you'; a LinkedIn or Facebook or YouTube post; school or business newsletter; share a visual infographic)

* In practice, the phases and processes will overlap.

It is important to note here that, as discussed in Part 1, people will be coming from different starting points and partnering relationships may change over time to meet a variety of needs. The steps may not necessarily be linear, and some might visit specific steps multiple times. There is no prescription, neither is there an endpoint. Nonetheless, creating a culture of partnering will minimise the pitfalls, particularly the over-reliance on a single 'champion'. Partnering is a verb and will require action and adaptability to address changing student needs and expectations. Fluidity and agility provides the high potential for a 'fertile' partnering culture that has impact.

Part 3 has shown what to focus on when building coherent partnering cultures (capability, capacity and commitment). Part 4 focuses on how high impact partnering is being done and can be done at every stage of education, providing some illustrative examples of practice.

Documents referred to in Part 3

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- VicHealth. (2016). *The partnerships analysis tool: A resource for establishing, developing and maintaining partnerships for health promotion*. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Victoria.

Developing the capability and capacity for partnering

Illustrations from practice

Equity, Trust and Transparency, Mutual benefit

Strategic partnering. It is being done. It can be done.

In a complex world where the idea of traditional career education and employment pathways no longer prevail this generation of students rightly expect adults will ask them directly what they want and need.

Rooty Hill High School's purpose is for every student to *learn how to make informed decisions and choices*, about their learning and lives in and post school. A commitment to equity and excellence through greater student agency underpins the school's choices in decision making, documenting and reporting. Specifically:

The school promotes **greater student agency** through explicit teacher and school expertise and agency.

"We define agency as the capacity of individuals to think for themselves, make and act independently on decisions, work independently and interdependently, taking responsibility for their own actions and making informed choices for their own present and their own future."

Christine Cawsey, AM, Principal Rooty Hill High School.

Strategic **partnering begins with students and their families**. Teachers design a personalised student learning plan *with* each of the school's 1,100 students. A teacher meets with a family member at their child's point of enrolment. The plan accompanies the student, and with each student, we update the plan every six months (i.e. learning goals,

strengths and capabilities, career interests and plans, transitions plans and finally, exit plans).

Reviewing student plans enables the staff to **understand the students from different perspectives** (universal: school or year-level cohort; targeted: group; intensive: individual). The process also enables **students to see and understand their evolving selves and their learning journey**.

Every student has a personalised Learning Portfolio. The school has created a digital portfolio called #MyLearningHub.¹⁶⁶ From Year 7, each student is responsible for identifying and annotating work samples from their learning experiences and opportunities (e.g. curriculum, community or business). Students annotate their work sample to demonstrate their progress towards or achievement of curriculum capabilities. A teacher, student, peer or community or business partner validates each student's entry.

The school keeps **track of its students' pathways in and beyond school and has done so for over 20 years**. Alongside, investment in **teachers' continuous learning is a priority**. The school uses its evidence and learning to encourage innovative designs of student learning tasks, assessment design, special programs and, where required, specialised career advice and preparation for transitions.

The leadership chooses to work together with academic, school, business and not-for-profit leaders in the design of learning to meet students' needs. The school uses **existing and new networks** to identify partnering opportunities. The school has worked with 27 partners over the last seven years. The **partnering choices align** to the school's values and purpose,

¹⁶⁶ #MyLearningHub is a feature case study in Australia's 2020 Senior Secondary Pathways Into work, further education and training: Review Final Report, p. 51.

in the school's partnering policy, strategic plan, and in reference to every student in their present and in pursuit of their future.

Partnering starts early. To wait until the senior secondary years is too late. For example, teachers co-designed with partners two key pillar programs for all 230 Year 8 students and all 150 Year 10 students.

- Year 8 'The Explorers': Using the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) job cluster report, a cross-subject teacher team co-designs with the Origin Energy staff, through the Origin Energy Foundation, and a researcher, 7 interactive workshop and student-led Q&A learning experiences (face-to-face and blended). Students participate in the sessions prior to making their subject selections for Years 9 and 10.
- Year 10 'Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP)': Students form their own teams as social entrepreneurs. The program redefines and provides students with an alternative work experience option. Teachers led the approach and worked with academics and as part of a voluntary school-to-school collaborative entrepreneurial development and research program.
- Within each program, teachers enmesh explicit targeted or intensive opportunities for students from other year levels to practice, demonstrate or deploy each student's strengths, knowledge, skills, capabilities and dispositions. Over the last three years, teachers and Year 8 students have met at Origin's Sydney office with Origin volunteers. The intent for meeting is to co-design the next version of 'The Explorers' program. In 2020, two Year 10 students from the school's media team were present. These two students were able, through the Origin Energy Foundation, to work with two filmmakers doing meaningful tasks. This included students interviewing workshop participants, both students and adults, and offering the filmmakers suggestions and feedback on content and set direction.

The school monitors and measures the intent and outcomes of its partnering. For example:

- **Whole-school level** – The principal meets with each partner to review how the 'why, how and how well' interactions are working for the school *and* the partner. The school measures competence, importance and satisfaction. They also use their

analysis to inform system reporting requirements and future resourcing and next practice decisions.

- **Program-level** – outcomes from 'The Explorers' include better informed choices by students, improved family understanding of the new directions in curriculum, and a shift in the electives the school will offer in response to student choices. Longer term tracking continues for these students through Years 9 to 12. There are teacher and Origin Energy volunteer co-leads for 'The Explorers'. Together, they review and share responsibilities for coordinating and communicating at their respective workplaces. Origin volunteers also do the recruiting of new volunteers. The 2020 program saw the number of volunteers expand from seven to 20, in part because of COVID-19. The team adapted the program to combine face-to-face and online interactions. Teachers, volunteers and the students provide feedback (e.g. keep, stop, start).
- **Learning interaction level** – In 'The Explorers' program, teachers work in pairs and liaise directly with the Origin volunteers. Together, the teachers and volunteers use the co-design workshop feedback to further prepare how they will co-teach an interactive student learning workshop around one of the FYA's job clusters, such as, 'The Artisans', 'The Technologists' or 'The Carers'.

Critical success features of the school-business partnering co-design of 'The Explorers':

- It is a collaboration. The partners shape high quality, interactive learning together. They value both business expertise and teaching expertise, and active student participation and feedback.
- The learning can scale to other parts of Australia where Origin Energy has offices and staffing hubs.
- They use and build on the success of school-led programs in Year 10 (the Young Entrepreneurs Program) and connections between Rooty Hill High School and the international Origin Energy Innovators program.
- The program is research informed and the partners continue to gather evidence of its impact to make iterative improvements to the program.
- It has potential to extend the school's role in advising and partnering with the Western Sydney Business Connection (WSBC) to let students

from other secondary schools explore emerging industries in western and south-western Sydney in a program co-designed between teachers and WSBC members.

“In 2019, the School Captain summed up our school’s culture to an external education validation panel as, ‘Staff drive the car, but we [students] navigate.’”

About: Rooty Hill High School is an “average” co-educational, comprehensive, Years 7-12 government secondary school in western Sydney.

Examples of building capability

Five ways to frame what individuals and groups bring to working together:

Capability	Example
Connections	e.g. Mentoring (ABCN connects business volunteers with school students to provide workplace mentoring programs ¹⁶⁷). e.g. Curating (‘Year13’ career and life advice platform ¹⁶⁸).
Intellectual	Teaming-up to exchange, develop and deepen knowledge and understanding (e.g. CSIRO facilitates the ongoing engagement of teachers and skilled volunteer STEM professionals ¹⁶⁹).
Financial	Sponsoring e.g. Recognition (The Teaching Awards, Schools Plus and Commonwealth Bank). More broadly, Australian Schools Plus is also the practical realisation of Recommendation 41 from the Gonski 2014 national funding review, “the Australian government should create a fund to provide national leadership in philanthropy in schooling to support schools in need of assistance to develop philanthropic partnerships” ¹⁷⁰).

In-kind time/ space/’thing’	A business CEO and employees visit a school each week for 30 minutes as part of the school’s K-6 reading program (e.g. Gawura Volunteer Morning Reading program ¹⁷¹).
Advocacy	Targeted campaigns (Boost public awareness of the benefits to mentoring young people and how to become a mentor: e.g. Raise ‘Letters to my mentor’ multi-media 2020 campaign ¹⁷²).

¹⁶⁷ See: [Australian Business Community Network, ABCN](#)

¹⁶⁸ See: [Year 13](#)

¹⁶⁹ See: [CSIRO STEM Professionals in Schools](#)

¹⁷⁰ See: [Australian Schools Plus](#)

¹⁷¹ See: [Gawura school](#)

¹⁷² See: [RAISE](#)

Examples of building capacity

Capacity	Example
Program	<i>Big Picture Education Australia's</i> project-based way of learning enables Year 9 students onwards, while still at school, to 'test out' their interests through internships in workplaces, community organisations or universities with mentors who share the student's interest. ¹⁷³
Pilot or trial	Hunter River High School has a post-school path to Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering and Aviation in the Skilling Australia P-Tech model. ¹⁷⁴
Platform	TikTok (three farmers, ages 21, 22 and 30, have more than 1M followers leading to new interest in Agriculture #farm) ¹⁷⁵ or Twitter (#AussieEd) or LinkedIn ('Real Time Learning' Monash University Engineer undergraduates and industry partners use of experiential learning with primary <i>and</i> secondary school students ¹⁷⁶ or The Australian Industry and Skills Committee's Industry Directory provides access to industry clusters and their sectors, such as Agriculture. The Directory includes the forecasted priority skills and skills and occupations in demand for each industry cluster. See: Industry Directory).

Place	Ecosystem orchestrators ¹⁷⁷ (Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship ; Country Education Partnership ; Latrobe Valley micro-credential project ; Social Ventures Australia ; Country Universities Centre).
Governance	A state school council with a diversity of members inclusive of business. ¹⁷⁸

It takes a village. Working in each student's present for all our futures.

¹⁷³ See: [Big Picture Education Australia](#)

¹⁷⁴ See: [Hunter River High School](#)

¹⁷⁵ AgProperty A special AgJournal Advertising Feature pp 1-40, March 2021, 'Ag can tik that box', p. 6.

¹⁷⁶ See: [Real Time Learning](#) and example of a [LinkedIn](#) update.

¹⁷⁷ See: [ACRE](#); [CEP](#); The University of Melbourne, [Microcredentialling Project for the LaTrobe Valley Authority](#); [SVA](#), [Country Universities Centre](#).

¹⁷⁸ For example, see: [School Council Handbook in Queensland state schools](#).

Part 4: Meaningful ways to engage with students

“Being able to express what I love doing ... I found that really good, and now I’ve got a better idea of what I actually want to do for my future ... I definitely want to open my own business with growing produce.”

Secondary student reporting on her entrepreneurial learning experience.¹⁷⁹

Presented in this section are five effective ways businesses engage with students and their schools. It shows how high impact partnering is being done and can be done at every stage of education.

Ways businesses engage with students

Students expect and need greater ownership in their learning. When students engage with business, the experience for students and adults should be of value and create value.

Ways businesses engage with students:¹⁸⁰

1. Mentoring ∞	● Types of interaction and their specific intent may overlap or combine in different ways.
2. Hosting 📍	● Every interaction has a curriculum.
3. Challenges 💡	● Any interaction must provide benefit to students (even when the audience for an interaction is, for example, a business volunteer or principal or teacher or family member).
4. Talks /Q&As 🗣️	● Without clarity of purpose and the use of educational <i>and</i> business expertise, partners cannot assume designing and implementing an interaction is either best practice (improve) or next practice (innovative).
5. Expos 🚀	● Interactions can occur and start early across education stages in different spaces and places.

It is a mistake to assume schools want businesses to engage with all students or all students at once.¹⁸¹ Participation of students will vary at any given point in time and over time.

¹⁷⁹Anderson, M., Hinz, B. & Matus, H. (2017). *The Paradigm Shifters*, p. 34. Initiator and mentor, Professor Yong Zhao.

¹⁸⁰The UK charity, Education and Employers, research is one of the most comprehensive and detailed we came across with respect to type of interaction and impact (we adapted and organised the UK categories to align with Australian practices and research from ‘the analysis’). The UK research also includes governing as a ‘type of activity’.

¹⁸¹Lonsdale, M. (2011). School community partnerships in Australian schools and Rothman, S. (2019). What do schools want from engagement with business?

Learning and development stage

Early years
(Age 0-8)

Middle Primary and
Secondary Years
(Age 9-14)

Senior Secondary
(Age 15-19)

Early adulthood
(Age 20--24)

Student scope

- Universal – every student in a class, year level, school / tertiary or community
- Targeted – a small group or groups of students around the students' interest or point of need
- Intensive – one-to-one relationships around a very specific intent

There is a growing evidence base of schools and businesses engaging at every stage of education.¹⁸²

Mentoring¹⁸³ ∞

“One of the favourite questions I get asked whenever I give a speech is, ‘Did you have a mentor?’ And, my answer is, ‘No. I had more than one mentor.’”

David Gonski, AC.

Purposes: Mentoring reflects a variety of learning and life purposes. These range from personal development and social and emotional purposes through to inspiring possibilities and career development learning purposes. The learning purposes for students can be very task specific, for example, how to prepare a CV or business plan or present yourself in an interview. The purposes can also be broad, such as reassuring students about transitions from school to further learning and working and/or students learning how to develop and use networks for achieving their own goals.

Practices: Mentoring is a sustained relationship, often with students around key transition points in and beyond school. Practices include mentors sharing stories of why and how they chose subjects, chose employment, chose where to study post-school, and/or made transitions or switches while in school, in university, in further education and training or employment, and/or in a mentor's past or current work.

In practice: Australian Business Community Network (ABCN)

*Q: How do you know if, as a mentor, you are providing value for a student or small group of students? Allegra Spender, former CEO ABCN responds: “The question of timing and timeliness of mentoring talks to why we structure our program offerings around specific purposes and processes. Bringing young people together with business volunteers is more than simply saying, ‘Okay, so you’re my mentor and off we go.’ What ABCN provides is a structure and focus for the mentoring, for example, ‘Today, we’ll be focusing on goal setting.’ This is a very relevant topic to both students *and* the business mentor.*

Goal setting is an important competency for employability *and* in life. Through guided processes, we invite the business mentor and students to share how they use goal setting in their contexts. We invite, for example, mentors to talk with students about a goal they set and did achieve. We also invite the mentor to talk about a goal they set but did not achieve and what they took away from the experience to inform what they did next. We invite mentors to use their personal experiences to personalise the learning around these different skills and mindsets.

It is a school's choice to partner with us. What the school's leadership puts around our offering is really, really important. The school understands which students to target and why. The school's leaders give visibility to the school-business relationship and its value to students.”

People: Students need opportunities to connect with different mentors and mentoring experiences for different education and life purposes.

“Everyone needs to find their own personal ‘board of directors’... A diverse group of people who can give you advice across a spectrum of topics. ... That ‘board of directors’ is going to change over time.”

Susan Coghill, Chief Marketing Officer, CMO, Tourism Australia.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² The OECD's research concludes engaging together should start early; it can start early at each stage of education.

¹⁸³ We give more focus to mentoring here because our analysis identified it as having high impact. **Not sure where or how to start? Look at [‘Together 4 Youth’](#).** A cooperative network of organisations with expertise in volunteer mentoring with young people (secondary through to early adult).

¹⁸⁴ See: [‘The Marketing Commute’](#) Podcast, 12 December 2020, Season 3, 22 minutes.

Teachers and/or students engage with volunteer mentors from tertiary (e.g. university students) and/or business. Mentors can advise in specific curriculum areas to develop and deepen knowledge or specific skills; and/or co-design curriculum. Mentors can also promote positive associations with cultural identity and ways of knowing through, for example, the power of storytelling.

In practice: Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)¹⁸⁵

AIME is a nationwide mentoring program that began in 2005. By 2015, researchers reported the program as operating in 23 universities across Australia, with 1,066 university student mentors and offering the AIME curriculum to secondary schools. There are 2,789 Year 9 to 12 student mentee participants. Schools are within a two-hour drive of a university campus. AIME also offers a Tutor Squad approach. In this approach, AIME deploys groups of university student mentors directly into schools for additional one-to-one tutoring of AIME student mentees.

Over the past nine years AIME has commissioned large-scale evaluation and research. Both the consulting firm, KPMG, and university academics have established a positive economic impact of the program for mentees and the Australian economy.

A research partnership between AIME and researchers from two Australian universities examined the program's educational and life impact on mentees. From across 15 universities, 89% of the students (mentees) aspired to complete Year 12, 44% aspired to go to university and 79% had clear post-school aspirations. AIME's approach, noted the researchers, privileges the knowledges students bring to the mentoring experience and actively rejects deficit framing of students. AIME, "perpetually links the past, present and future in aspirational terms, and in doing so, recognises the navigational capacity the young people already possess."

Sharing her story to inspire other students and families, Sherice was the first in her family to

complete her school education. Sherice paid credit to AIME:

"My AIME mentor in Year 9 said I could go to any university I wanted to because she really believed in me and how smart I was. By the time I hit Year 11, I was going to go to university no matter how I got there." Sherice is studying primary school teaching after taking an alternative path to university and, in her own words, she's been, "smashing uni ever since."

Sherice.¹⁸⁶

Mode: Typically, there will be one or more volunteer mentors with a small group of school students in the presence of another adult (usually teacher and/or intermediary coordinator, such as in ABCN's career learning or the Raise organisation's social and emotional mentoring¹⁸⁷).

Require: How to connect a mentor with students is very important.

- All adult mentors when working with school-age students require an up-to-date working with children check. Teachers as mentors meet this requirement as a condition of employment.
- Whether mentoring is a core program offering or embedded within another program (e.g. enterprise and entrepreneurship education), best practice tells us mentors will participate in explicit training and/or on-boarding processes.
- You can expect big businesses to have a volunteering policy to make it easier for people to have a number of days per year to volunteer. You can expect education to have a policy. The New South Wales Department of Education website, for example, has a clear 'Mentoring Students Policy' (e.g. student mentoring is to achieve planned outcomes; it is the responsibility of principals to ensure student mentoring programs conducted in schools and as part of a school activity are planned and implemented in accordance with the Department's mentoring students' policy).

¹⁸⁵ Harwood, V., McMahon, S., O'Shea, S., Bodkin-Andrews, G. & Priestly, A. (2015). *Recognising aspiration*.

¹⁸⁶ Origin Energy Foundation, 2020, video story series. See: [Sherice urges people to "shoot for the moon..."](#)

¹⁸⁷ Raise. See: [Mentor with us](#).

Research: Mentoring tends to reflect a type of volunteering in schools and colleges that involves high-commitment and leads to greater gains than low commitment practices (e.g. a one-off Q&A). UK researchers found mentor volunteers in schools or colleges reported a positive high impact on their relationship building skills. It also had positive medium impacts on a range of other skills - improving communication, problem solving, planning, prioritising, people management and leadership).¹⁸⁸

Insight: Most important is a shared understanding of purpose and language. In a school context, the language of mentor or adviser may sometimes interchange. At early adulthood points of transition, the term sponsoring may be a more appropriate term to use. Sponsors take proactive steps beyond mentor advice and feedback. For example, sponsors may use their own platforms and reputation to advocate and provide a young person with visible and meaningful exposure to the sponsor's own network connections.¹⁸⁹

Insight: How well is each student's uniqueness and unique situation understood? Context and timing matters. **Even with the best of intentions, multiple mentors and mentoring experiences may not be in the best interests of all students or what each student wants or needs ... at that moment.**

*"In a world where we have coaches for fitness, mentors for professionals, nutritionists for our diet and lifestyle; we can surround ourselves, if you have the means and capacity, to access a lot of support. **Mentoring, though, is very, very, very contextual.** If you're a young person sitting in a traumatised situation or in a community that does not have that sort of mindset for asking for 'help' beyond your teacher, then start with one mentor or a coach and build up over time a range of opportunities and people. Five different people straight off can be too overwhelming."*

**Jan Owen, AM Co-Founder,
Learning Creates Australia.¹⁹⁰**

Insight: Mentor might not be the right or only term to use. Instead, a school's primary intent may be to **build a community** around each student. Importantly, students want to connect with relatable people, perhaps people who went to their school and/or people "like me" or from "around here".¹⁹¹

In practice: Ourschool

"I didn't have a clue what I wanted to do when I was in Year 9 and 10." An alumnus offered these words of reassurance to a class of secondary students in the Ourschool network. Established in 2019, Ourschool builds sustainable alumni communities in government secondary schools across Victoria.

In 2021, the network comprised 24 rural and metropolitan secondary schools. More than 29,600 students have participated in Ourschool's alumni career pathways sessions, with 7,620 alumni connected to their schools and the program. The Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals (VASSP) auspiced a two-and-a-half-year pilot of the program and maintain a close relationship with the Ourschool not-for-profit organisation. Philanthropy is also a key partner. The service finds former government school students and enables the school's leadership executive to set up and co-construct forums of interaction between alumni, students and staff. An independent evaluation of Ourschool indicates that students find connecting with former students meaningful and relatable. Students get to hear how former students are navigating post-school life (often these are stories of 'non-linear' pathways and self-discovery). Ourschool's approach has a team member working with and at the school each week. The approach enables and builds the capacity of the school team to lead and do its alumni program on their own in the future. The model also encourages and facilitates networks of schools to create connections. The time commitment for a volunteer is about three hours annually, but Ourschool's data shows these 'touchpoints' give the alumnus an 'in' to the network and other opportunities and benefits flow as a result. For example, the alumnus offers students work experience or an annual scholarship for current students to "chase their dreams".¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Percy, C. and Rogers, M. (2021). *The value of volunteering*.

¹⁸⁹ Emphasis: Mentors advise you. Sponsors advocate for you. Harvard Business Review Press, Hewlett, 2013.

¹⁹⁰ Jan Owen is also the immediate past CEO of the Foundation for Young Australians.

¹⁹¹ Future First. (2019). *Young people, their futures and access to relatable role models*.

¹⁹² Ourschool reconnected Western Sydney University Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Barney Glover AO and his siblings to their old high school, Newcomb Secondary College. See: The experience led to an [act of generosity](#) - an annual scholarship.

Hosting students

Purposes: Hosting reflects a range of immersions/experiences to provide students with the opportunities to improve their learning, build employability skills, develop and clarify future learning and working aspirations, and gain awareness of post-school possibilities for employability. Hosting can enable students to develop new and different networks, through to actual employment.

Practices: Immersions come in different forms. Practices include, ‘maker taster’ sessions, workshops, and work-based work experience. They can also include: ‘In-residence’ school-based programs with, for example, artists, architects, or scientists. When contributing to a qualification, the umbrella term, ‘work integrated learning’ refers to contextualised student learning experiences through such processes as apprenticeships, internships (which can include senior secondary students), work placements or industry-based learning and practicums.

As one CEO pointed out:

“A lot of businesses do internships. They do these over the summer break with the universities. With an internship, the business can carve out a specific piece of work for the student to come in and work on. The business can pay the student, while at the same time, giving the student a real-world experience.”

People: Hosting is led or enabled by a school or network of schools, and/or employer, and/or entrepreneur; and/or a third-party (e.g. university). Secondary students, for example, can participate as volunteers or in part-time work through career education and work exploration and/or work-related curriculum (vocational learning), or training and accredited courses or school-based apprenticeships and traineeships (vocational learning and Vocational Education and Training [VET]).¹⁹³ Primary students, for example, can participate in and benefit from the direct engagement with various ‘X’ In-residents.

Mode: Immersions reflect different workspaces – onsite, hybrid/blended, and/or remote.

Research: For more than a decade, multiple studies in Australia have found “that senior secondary students who undertake school-based assessment tasks or VET combined with work-based learning in senior secondary programs are more likely to complete school and find secure full-time employment”.¹⁹⁴ Secondary student Year 9 survey results indicate most students were, as a result, “better informed”.

Require: Hosting will have different requirements depending on the hosting purpose and education stage of a young person, such as occupational health and safety.

Challenges

Purposes: Challenges are a flexible learning strategy for diverse purposes. For example, improving learning of a key attribute and/or knowledge or skill, through to students becoming more capable and confident in demonstrating and deploying their learning from one context to another. A challenge can serve a stand-alone purpose or embed within the purposes and approaches of mentoring and/or hosting.

Practices: These are hands-on and often collaborative student team-based. Challenges can range from one-off student prizes, awards and local or global competitions, through to sustained and deep learning models of student-led and student interest-led project-based learning, problem-based learning, and enterprise and entrepreneurship approaches. Best practice challenge strategies promote greater student voice and agency. For example, providing students with a ‘choice menu’ of options or ways to approach the challenge or for student teams to co-create the parameters and ‘success criteria’ of the challenge. Best practice challenges will have some sort of visible student performance and/or authentic assessment and/or recognition for all or parts of the challenge’s components and capabilities. Best practice ensures students (and the partners) understand the intent for doing the challenge.

¹⁹³ Education Council. (2014). Preparing Secondary Students for Work. Appendix A, p. 20. Creating Clarity – Vocational Learning and VET chart.

¹⁹⁴ Department of Education and Training, Victoria. (2020). Review into vocational and applied learning pathways in senior secondary school; and Misko, J., Chew, E. & Korbel, P. (2020). VET for secondary school students, p. 169.

In practice: World of Work (WOW) 100-hour Challenge

Government school students in South Australia, from Year 7 onwards, can access a new South Australian government-initiated careers education platform, launched in September 2021. Students can use the platform to begin clarifying their passions and interests and link these interests to meaningful career options post school. Included through the platform is the 100-hour World of Work (WOW) Challenge. Students can take up the challenge to discover different careers and participate in their own self-led career exploration experiences posted by employers and industry on the (login) website portal.

People: Different groups or sectors can initiate, lead or enable a challenge, such as philanthropy, education, business and students themselves.

Mode: People conduct challenges in different workspaces – onsite, hybrid/blended, and/or remote.

Research: Challenge interactions often embed within enterprise and entrepreneurship. UK research indicates that enterprise type interactions have a high positive impact on volunteers' prioritising, influence, leadership and teamwork; and a medium positive impact on building relationships, communications, decision-making, problem-solving, planning, organising, and people management. The same UK 2021 research on the value of volunteering found, "By practicing the skill in an environment which the volunteer values, by seeing the impact on young people or in the education system, volunteers feel the time is well spent and the skill more fully internalised."¹⁹⁵

Talks /Q&As

Purposes: These have lots of intended purposes, depending on the identified audience and need. Purposes include improving learning, such as new knowledge and new understandings; inspiring possibilities, such as considering new choices and/or directions; building confidence and enabling greater participation, such as pursuing an interest or passion;

becoming empathetic, such as tackling stereotypes; and broadening connections, such as exposing students *and* families to new people and possibilities, through diverse stories and tips. Talks and Q&As can serve a stand-alone purpose or embed within the purposes and approaches of mentoring and/or hosting.

"What I needed as a student was people talking with me about their career stories and experiences. What I wanted was exposure to the diversity of opportunities 'out there' and for people to expose me to things that maybe I had not even thought about before. Exposure to a rolling suite of professionals, with all sorts of different jobs, would have been really, really useful."

Sally-Ann Williams, CEO Cicada Innovations.

Practices: Best practice is to create a conversational atmosphere and format with students *and/or* families. For example, students might ask their own questions 'on the spot', or students (with their teachers) creating and prioritising the student questions before the session, or the school's or tertiary parent ambassadors doing something similar with families.

People: The most important selection criterion is for the person to be 'relatable' to the students in front of them. The person might have been an alumnus of the school or have deep family roots in the community. At other times, the driver will be an alignment between what people are creating and changing and what the students care about, are curious about, or are themselves exploring. While at other times, there will be a deliberate intention to widen and diversify with whom students engage.

Mode: People conduct talks / Q&As in different workspaces – onsite, hybrid/blended, and/or remote.

Research: Talks /Q&As (and fairs¹⁹⁶) are important and viewed in the research as offering a "well-rounded", short and flexible interaction for students and volunteers. Talks link to a lot of skills for volunteers (for example, organising, decision-making, communications, prioritising and leadership). The UK volunteering research indicates the highest impact is

¹⁹⁵ Percy, C. & Rogers, M. (2021). *The value of volunteering*, p. 9.

¹⁹⁶ UK researchers use the term 'fairs' in their research. We noted the term 'expos' also in use in Australia.

on planning skills (due in part to the nature of what's involved around planning the content and processes for a talk).¹⁹⁷

Insight: UK research indicates sequencing is a factor on the degree of a talk's impact. "The impact of the extra career talks was larger for young people who had previously attended more short-duration career activities (such as career talks or careers fairs)".

Expos ↗

Purposes: Expos (or fairs) can serve a stand-alone purpose or embed within the purposes and approaches of hosting or talk / launch events. An expo serves to expose, inspire, educate and connect people around a mutual topic of interest.

Practices: Expos tend to be larger-scale cooperative forums than fairs.

People: Instigators or hosts of an expo can come from community, business, education, or be young people.

Mode: People can join an expo remotely or in person or both. For example, in 2021, Year13 ran a free online careers expo open to all schools. The timing of the Expo aligned with National Careers Week in May.¹⁹⁸

Research: The UK research viewed expos positively (as noted above in the Talks /Q&A section).

Promoting student voice, autonomy and agency

How can adults be promoting student voice, autonomy and agency when engaging with students?

"It's time to recognize that the potential for greatness lies in a unique form within each child – and that the goal of education should be to encourage and develop it."

Professor, Yong Zhao, University of Kansas and Melbourne Graduate School of Education, at the University of Melbourne.¹⁹⁹

In an interview by Year13's founder Saxon Phipps with **Atlassian's co-founder and CEO, Scott Farquhar**, Scott offered four pieces of advice or 'tips' to young people on how to be "engineering a fulfilling future": **know yourself, improve yourself, match your passion and make the world a better place.**²⁰⁰

Scott's advice is deceptively simple. How students put the advice in to practice, has been less simple.

Historically, it is the concerns of adults that direct the conversation. More than four decades of research (here and overseas) indicate that initiatives and interactions can subvert (consciously and unconsciously) adults genuinely seeing, hearing and listening to students/ young people.²⁰¹

"All children have a right to speak out and be heard on all matters affecting their education."²⁰² Students expect 'a seat at the table' ('table' meaning 'in school', 'on country', 'in community', and 'in the world').²⁰³

Participation is a human right. It provides a useful lens to frame and understand how adults do and can promote every student's greater active participation. The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Children has a bundle of four rights most relevant to student voice and the exercising of their voices in all aspects of their education and life. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child reports, Article 12 as the most important to take on board as a general principle:²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁷ Percy, C. & Rogers, M. (2021). *The value of volunteering*, p. 18.

¹⁹⁸ See: [Year 13 2021 Digital Careers Expo](#).

¹⁹⁹ Zhao, Y. (2018). *Reach for Greatness*.

²⁰⁰ See: Business: [Atlassian's Scott Farquhar's top career tips for Gen Zs](#). 10 October 2021.

²⁰¹ See for example, Shier, H. (2019). 'Student voice and children's rights: Power, empowerment, and "Protagonismo"' in Peters, M. A. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of teacher education; Commission for Children and Young People. (2021). Empowerment and participation*; and Vukovic, R. (2020). 'How student voice has evolved over time', *Teacher*.

²⁰² Shier, H. (2019). 'Student voice and children's rights: Power, empowerment, and "Protagonismo"', p. 1

²⁰³ It is important to note, 'participation rights' do not automatically equate to doing as students / young people say.

²⁰⁴ See also Part 2 on the context for Australian students.

“Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

Key concepts

Understanding a student’s developmental ‘journey’ to greater participation has practical design and measurement relevance for the five ways of engaging (e.g. mentoring, hosting, challenges). Partners can be intentional in the ways they engage and what indicators of success from engaging with students they might explicitly expect or want to see. It is important to note, however, that the student’s journey is not necessarily linear.

A student’s journey begins with **how students feel** about themselves. It is a judgement a student develops about their self-worth (researchers call this ‘self-concept’). The journey continues as a **student develops the personal belief** that they are capable of doing something or carrying out some course of action. It is a judgement a student develops about their ability to accomplish a task (researchers call this ‘self-efficacy’).

When a student has agency, they not only believe they can act, **they do and can learn to act**. At the core of student agency is the capacity to exercise control (researchers call this ‘personal agency’). A student acts with intention, planning and reflection. Researchers also refer to ‘collective agency’ or ‘connected agency’ or ‘creative agency’, which requires coordination, cooperation and collaboration with others.

Ways of engaging, such as mentoring, can influence a student’s beliefs and judgements and whether they take an increasing level of responsibility in their learning.

Key influences: A student’s experience of success (most important); seeing others like themselves succeed, such as their peers; the encouragement or persuasion of others, as well as reducing stress associated with completing a task, such as each student understanding key concepts or terms.

Key indicators: A student with high levels of self-efficacy is likely to choose to participate actively in their learning, such as giving something new a try or seeking more challenging learning experiences; or being interested in personal goal setting toward academic attainments and personal aspirations. A student is likely to want to put more effort in to their learning (not because they ‘have to’); persist longer when faced with difficulty and not be ‘put-off’ in the face of a set-back; as well as recover more quickly from a mistake or failing.

Models

No model is perfect, but different models can provide insights for planning and reviewing student participation. For example:²⁰⁵

Is student participation genuine or fake? (Hart’s ‘Ladder of Child Participation’ eight rungs: e.g. 1. Manipulation – do as adults say. 2. Decoration – take part in someone else’s event but not understand why. 3. Tokenism – asked for a view but little or no choice over expressing their view or scope.)

How committed are adults to student participation? (Shier’s ‘Pathways to Participation’ from children being listened to through to children sharing power and responsibility for decision-making; and every point in the path also explores an adult’s readiness and ability to commit and work in new ways with children and what this looks like when it becomes a habit embedded in an agreed policy.)

Is the environment enabling for student participation? (Lundy’s ‘Space, Voice, Audience and Influence’ - each of these elements must be in place to fully realise student participation, such as a student believing and being able to express a view because the space is safe and supported, and there is an audience listening to their views.)²⁰⁶

What level of engagement is student participation? (Lansdown’s ‘Three Modes of Participation’, a simple model students can use themselves with each other or adults with students. Consultation – adults ask students for their views, but that is all; Collaboration – working together, sharing roles and responsibilities in key aspects of an engagement’s planning and actioning; Child-led – children and young people self-organise to initiate, act and deliver ‘something’, which may or may not require adult support.)

²⁰⁵ Shier, H. (2019). ‘Student voice and children’s rights: Power, empowerment, and “Protagonismo”’.

²⁰⁶ The Commission for Children and Young People partnered with the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian and the Australian Centre for Child Protection at the University of South Australia to develop the *Empowerment and participation* guide. This is comprehensive, practical and draws heavily on the views and experiences of children and young people themselves. The guide makes reference and use of the 2007 Lundy model, see p. 28.

Adults can be enabling students to take increasing control. As an example, a group of students (41 rural students in Years 5 and 6 and Years 8 and 9) were part of a collaborative project between Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (ACRE) and Cisco’s ‘Global Problem Solvers’. Within this project, students devised their own ‘success’ criteria for implementing Social Enterprise Schools. For the purposes of this paper, the student success criteria align with what researchers in the US define as the four elements that create meaning to guide designing experiences for impact:²⁰⁷

Student: The students’ success criteria for implementing Social Enterprise Schools.	Research: How to design experiences for positive ‘peak’ moments and impact.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Has ‘real-life’ application (e.g. for their social enterprise now or in their life now or later on) 	Insight: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Generate new understandings about our world and ourselves ● Make us ‘stretch’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Active ● Fun (enjoyable and challenging and competitive) 	Elevation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rise above the everyday ● Provoke memorable joy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doing with peers (in small groups) 	Connection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen relationships to create shared meaning and deepen ties ● Strengthen relationships to reconnect people with the mutual purpose of their efforts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can notice if getting better at ... ‘X’ (e.g. being a good team member, or getting good at delivering a pitch, or getting better at gathering and using feedback etc.) 	Pride: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capture us at our best to recognise achievement and courage ● Capture us at our best to build belief, commitment and to persist

Stories across education stages

There will be stories of schools partnering with and through others to provide benefits to students across Australia’s 9,500-plus schools, in more than 500 local government areas or on country in 100s of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.²⁰⁸ The intent of sharing the following stories is to illustrate ‘the what’ ‘the how’ in direct response to the question: *How does promoting student voice, autonomy and agency look in practice across education stages?*

“Young people don’t respond to talking about jobs or skills or occupations. They respond to dreams and aspirations and problems.”

Dr Martin Parkinson, AC, Former Secretary of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Students want meaningful opportunities to interact in ‘hands-on’ direct ways with people from business, not-for-profits and the community.

Early and primary years

Story: The children decided

Princess Hill Primary school had a plan to hold a fundraising film night to buy toys for asylum seeker children. Year 1 students, however, decided that it would be better to design and make the toys themselves. Children making their own decisions is not a new concept for this primary school, neither is an inter-generational approach to learning. Year 5 and 6 students had already designed the school playground, working collaboratively with the school council and an architect. The school’s philosophy is to partner with students, enabling them to help shape the world and participate in it with purpose. The school gives equal weight to collaboration, creativity and critical thinking as it does to literacy and numeracy. To this end, the school has joined around 80 schools in a project with the University of Melbourne called ‘New Metrics for Success’, looking at ways to measure and recognise in valid and appropriate ways, such as with badges and/or micro-credentials for student development in these important areas.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Heath, C. & Heath, D. (2017). *The power of moments*.

²⁰⁸ For example, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. See: [‘Whose Country am I on?’](#)

²⁰⁹ Summarised from Adam Carey, “‘The children decided’: Schools join quest for better gauge of student progress”, *The Age*, 22 February 2021. The project lead, Professor Milligan, indicated there are now around 80 schools participating.

Story: The Students run ‘The Shop’²¹⁰

Mypolonga Primary School is a small rural school in South Australia. ‘The Shop’ was set up in 1994 in a disused post office across the road from the school, run by students and originally selling student-made goods. In 1994, a local tour operator who ran Proud Mary Nature Tours offered to put The Shop on their weekly tour itinerary. Fast forward to 2020 and The Shop’s annual turnover is \$18,000, with 20% retained to reinvest into the school community. The school fully integrates The Shop in its curriculum, with students completing a Certificate of Financial Management. Students get multiple opportunities to develop, practice, demonstrate and deploy their financial literacy, leadership (e.g. mentoring their younger peers), people capabilities (e.g. customer-focused) and behavioural capabilities (e.g. being self-aware). Teachers supervise, ensuring customers receive the correct change. Students as young as reception age are part of the program. The ‘kid friendly’, ‘real life’, successful approach to student learning has attracted attention internationally and across Australia (e.g. in 2012, it inspired the Australian Securities and Investment Commission’s (ASIC) nation-wide MoneySmart Primary Teaching Package and teacher workshops).

Story: Boosting ambitious equitable and creative thinking workspaces

Merrylands East Public School in western Sydney comprises a diverse population of students. One of the school’s partners is the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA). Since 2014, students from the school have been engaging annually in a four-day workplace immersion. The student experience connects the workspaces of school and the MCA together, along with meaningful family engagement. The students write a resume, apply for a job at the MCA and attend an interview. The students have also worked on redesigning the museum’s website to make it more ‘kid-friendly.’

How did it begin? Many students’ families could not afford excursions to Canberra’s National Gallery or other places of significance. The school team turned to local alternatives. To remove the barriers for

students and their families, the teachers and the principal paid for students to attend the MCA and Parliament House in Sydney. This story of addressing ‘inaccessibility’ would lead to the MCA developing a subsidy to improve access to creative learning for public school students in western and south-west Sydney. The MCA would go on to work closely with more schools.²¹¹

Merrylands is also an alumnus of the inaugural Social Ventures Australia (SVA) collaborative learning network, The Connection™ @Connection_SVA.²¹² Independent evaluations consistently highlight that SVA’s approach, alongside the expertise and direct understanding of students located in communities experiencing disadvantage, creates “safe spaces to share”, improving student educational outcomes.²¹³

Students want to ask the questions that matter to them now *and* as they think ahead.

Early secondary

Story: The Explorers

Rooty Hill High School’s Entrepreneurial Education, involving all 200 Year 8s, is known as ‘The Explorers’. The offering is a co-designed school-led entrepreneurial education program. Introduced in 2019, it involves a face-to-face series of teacher-student conversations, teacher team-Origin Energy volunteer conversations, and student, teacher, Origin Energy volunteer co-design workshops. This culminates in a full day of explorer hands-on workshops, co-facilitated by a teacher and an Origin Energy volunteer. (Note: In 2020, due to COVID-19, the partners adapted the offering to create a blended-learning model, running over four weeks of interactions with Origin Energy).

Students decide with their Entrepreneurial Education teacher team what **questions** they want to ask Origin’s employees during ‘The Explorers’. The school uses the Foundation for Young Australian’s seven job clusters²¹⁴ to frame and assist with the design of the offering. It is one of the pillars within a wider whole school change model around student subject selection, work experience and future learning and work decisions.

²¹⁰ Drawn from Principal, Rita O’Brien who spoke at the Social Ventures Australia’s The Connection, September 2021; and video see: [Case study: Mypolonga Primary School – MoneySmart Teaching](#).

²¹¹ Adapted from The ARTS hub, news by Brooke Boland, 9 May 2018. See: [‘How Artist-led creative learning breaks access barriers for children.’](#)

²¹² Principal, John Goh spoke at the Social Ventures Australia’s The Connection, September 2021; #LeadMeet, October 2021.

²¹³ SVA. See: RMIT evaluation of [The Connection](#).

²¹⁴ AlphaBeta. (2017). *The new work mindset*.

The other pillar is the school's Year 10 Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP). These pillars connect to the school's key approaches in Year 7 (e.g. discovering my strengths) and a strong focus on creativity and a capability-driven curriculum across the school.

Student questions:

- What is the most interesting problem you get to work on?
- What was the first day of work like at Origin?
- What are the main skills required to do your job?
- Which strategies do you use to manage your time well? How do you prioritise your tasks?
- How do you manage different personalities when they want to do things a different way?
- What is the best way to handle getting instructions from a boss?
- How do you explain or show others what you do?

Questions asked during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- How has your work changed because of COVID-19?
- How has your role changed because of COVID-19?
- Have requests in your work changed because of COVID-19?
- What is the biggest challenge in your role at the moment?
- How are you dealing with the current pandemic in your jobs?

Students want equitable opportunities to engage in meaningful work experience.

Secondary

Story: Example: Secondary Years Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP) and Free Electron Start-up Program

The Rooty Hill High School Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP) provides students with an entrepreneurial learning alternative to traditional Year 10 work experience. The school's own data for over three years was indicating that work experience was not working. Often, students would be doing lower-level entry jobs, such as stacking shelves.

In 2017, the YEP social entrepreneurs participated, as equals, in a half-day session with entrepreneurs (15 international energy-based start-ups in a program called Free Electrons). A student and teacher team went onsite to Origin Energy's head office.

The student entrepreneurs shared their ideas with the 15 energy companies from around the world. The collaborative processes across the session gave the start-up teams opportunities to explain their ideas to the new Year 10 YEP and former ('alumni') YEP Year 11 students. After the session, a number of entrepreneurs found working with the students made them realise they need to work on how to explain what their enterprise is and the problem it seeks to solve.

The session's processes were relevant to people across ages (intergenerational). They reflected what the World Economic Forum sees as five key approaches to drive innovation in education systems:

- **Experiential** (integrating content into real-world applications);
- **Computational** – problem solving and understanding how computers solve problems (via some of the start-ups entrepreneurs were developing through the Free Electrons program);
- **Embodied** (incorporating the physical body into learning through movement (mixing and matching of people, spaces and tasks); and
- **Multiliteracies** focusing on diversity and the way people use and share language (adults explaining to students what their start-up is about and the problem it seeks to address);
- **Playful** (creating joyful experiences) through 'hands-on' and 'playful' tasks.²¹⁵

The environment created was an authentic place of work for the entrepreneurs, the students, and their teachers. The experience led to unprompted additional support to the school and the beginning of a new co-designed growth pathway of entrepreneurial learning for all of RHHS's Year 8 students.

Lara credits doing the school's YEP as a boost to her ambitions. Lara works part-time at Rooty Hill High

²¹⁵ World Economic Forum. (2020). *Schools of the future*.

School while also studying Law and Criminal and Community Justice. Lara says:

***Believe** is the advice I would give to my younger self. You can do things you never thought you'd be able to do.... When I graduate from Law, I really don't know where the future is going to take me, being an activist, maybe politics, but I am excited to see where I do end up.*²¹⁶

Story: Doing work experience differently through Virtual Work Experience²¹⁷

Each year, thousands of students contact CSIRO wanting to do work experience. However, the CSIRO can only accept a small number (and the analysis shows this is not uncommon for many businesses, especially for SMEs). In the CSIRO's case, the reasons why they have had difficulty responding to the large number of student requests include: 1) Only a few CSIRO staff might put their hand up to be work experience volunteers; 2) Coming on site can be difficult, especially for rural and remote students, and involves a lot of processes (e.g. a two-day induction); 3) Some spaces are not designed for, or appropriate to allow students on site; and 4) Scientists need to be educated about what constitutes meaningful student work experience. The CSIRO wanted to address the challenges listed above, while simultaneously responding to the Commonwealth Government's national career education strategy call for innovative approaches to work experience. They tackled this by asking a range of questions: What if we could put teams of students together, working with each remotely? What if we could get these teams of students from around Australia, working with a STEM industry supervisor, without actually physically seeing each other and the students never actually setting foot in a CSIRO building? What if these student teams could work on a *real* project with the STEM supervisor, which means they get something out of the experience at the end, but also learn teamwork, communication and negotiation skills along the way?

The CSIRO piloted different approaches (e.g. one week work experience; one day per week for five weeks, blended delivery approaches [with groups of students meeting together and also working remotely], to other approaches where students *only* worked remotely). In all the approaches, none of the

teams ever met their STEM supervisor in person. The CSIRO STEM supervisor shared what projects they had on the go and the CSIRO advertised those projects. Students chose the project that interested them, as well as their preferred approach (i.e. blended or remote). The CSIRO did not build a new platform for the remote sessions. Instead, they looked at what platforms they already had in use.

Each student knew the projects they were working on were vitally important. They knew what they were doing was real work experience.

Typically, five students worked as a team. One group of students, for example, took control of the Parkes radio telescope. They searched for specific stars called pulsars and contributed to the CSIRO Scientist team's existing research and to the international body of scientific knowledge. Another group of students in the Northern Territory, who had never seen video conferencing before this experience, worked on brain scans with a medical researcher and came up with analyses to contribute to this research. Another student group worked on an App for pregnant women to monitor their glucose levels.

The successful models from the approaches were the ones in which there was no adult intervention, apart from that of the STEM professional supervisor. The students just got on with doing 'their stuff'.

The CSIRO wrapped an evaluation around the pilot. Sometimes things did not work (e.g. the IT system 'broke'). Initially, the workload increased for the supervisor, but then this diminished. The exception was the supervisor who had set the teams four different projects and found he was on the chat function with students all the time; the other supervisors had designed only one project per team.

Ultimately, the evaluation showed Virtual Work Experience is 'a gamechanger' for regional and remote students, who would otherwise never have got that experience. Meeting CSIRO staff, even remotely, provided students with opportunities to imagine themselves in similar roles.

The Virtual Work Experience model is not just about doing work experience in a place, it is also about doing work experience in a team of students and actually developing enterprise skills. The work experience

²¹⁶ Origin Energy Foundation. See: [Lara's story](#).

²¹⁷ Another case of a virtual work experience also features in Education Council. (2020). *Looking to the future*, p. 81.

impacts on students' decision-making, as well as their ability to make the connection between themselves, what they do in class, and what happens after their school years.

COVID-19 and the repeated lockdowns increased the urgency and importance of developing new practices in remote and blended learning, as the Rooty Hill High School 'The Explorers' and the CSIRO stories show.

Families are also members of our communities, of our schools, of our businesses. Herein lies opportunities to continue creating bridges between the school and business sectors. And, continue advancing learning as a holistic endeavour, inclusive of but not exclusive to future careers.

"When I think about businesses, I think about parents. 'Captains' of industries are sitting there asking me, what should I do as a parent? I speak also to a lot of school parent bodies as well and I get the same sort of question.

Parents are sitting in all these organisations we want to be partnering and connecting with. They are already going through the changes in their own jobs. These changes are in roles and teams and upskilling and reskilling and a shift to more of a customer focus. I feel like the children and the parents are going to 'meet' on this road."

**Jan Owen, AM Co-Founder,
Learning Creates Australia.**

Promoting family agency is another important path for family engagement and student agency.

Senior secondary

Story: Career breakfasts for career education ownership with families to enable their children

In 2020, the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) partnered with their parent ambassadors (parents of university students from equity backgrounds) to create the 'Careers Breakfasts' pilot program (three sessions attended by 88 parents from three western Sydney high schools). Its ultimate aim is to support aspiring students from low SES backgrounds, at a key decision point of their lives, by empowering their parents/carers. By raising awareness about post-school

options for their children, these sessions demystify university processes and provide parents/carers with the confidence to know what questions to ask of schools and universities in support of their children.

Initially, UTS designed the 'Careers Breakfast' sessions to be face-to-face, with parents/carers enjoying breakfast while listening to a variety of speakers. Due to COVID-19, however, UTS delivered the sessions online. Sessions included such topics as the benefits of university, course selection, and pathways into university. An evaluation of the pilot program showed that the majority of parents/carers felt they had a greater understanding of education and training options for their children, as well as more confidence in supporting them with their career choices. Participants also valued the opportunity to have parent voices heard (both through parent ambassador delivery and the ability to ask questions). The collaborative approach in the design and delivery of the program had a compound effect, benefiting students, schools, parents/carers, and the university.²¹⁸

Diverse, 'real-world' industry experiences provide contexts and new avenues for partnering and promoting student-led learning and problem solving; and doing so at any stage across the education spectrum.²¹⁹

Senior secondary

Story: Swinburne Youth Space Innovation Challenge²²⁰

Annually, Swinburne University of Technology offers a 'Youth Space Innovation Challenge'. Swinburne works with the Australian Space Agency and is part of a wider network of university, research, and industry partners. Student mentors, in micro-gravity, work with teams of senior secondary students for 11-weeks. The students learn how to research and design their own experiment on important astronaut issues. Student concepts are pitched to a panel of experts, with the top three getting the opportunity to launch their experiment to the International Space Station. How to improve astronaut health and wellbeing was the 2021 design challenge, with learning more about growing yoghurt in space the winning pitch.²²¹

²¹⁸ For more information see Austin, K., O'Shea, S., Groves, O., Lamanna, J. & Singh, S. (2021). *Careers breakfasts*.

²¹⁹ See the story of Princess Hill Primary school students working directly with an architect: Adam Carey, "The children decided": Schools join quest for better gauge of student progress', *The Age*, 22 February 2021.

²²⁰ Swinburne University of Technology. Astrophysics school programs. See: [Swinburne Youth Space Innovation Challenge](#).

²²¹ Startup daily, 21 December 2021. See: '[Victorian high schoolers are trying to grow yoghurt in space.](#)'

The messages in the challenge example on the previous page and below relate equally well to other education stages. They reflect what researchers identify as important for promoting transferrable learning (e.g. use of examples and students gaining multiple opportunities to study these examples in multiple contexts). This allows students to recognise the value of learning *and* be able to apply it when learning something new (in situations that may be similar or different).²²²

Early adulthood

Story: The crop challenge

A farming group works with rural students, together with a couple of corporate sponsors to create a crop challenge. This challenge is very practical, centred on the real business of agriculture experienced by farmers on a daily basis and exposing students to its realities, irrespective of whether they are from a farm or not. The challenge involves students working with experienced farmers to deal with a crop through an entire season, competing against others to determine who can grow the most crops and the best quality. Students make decisions and interact with the farmers and agribusiness suppliers, as well as getting involved in financial matters with the farm banker. As a consequence, their learning and interactions run deep, extending beyond a single ‘event’. The approach involves Southern Farming Systems and the Birchip Cropping Group in the Wimmera and Mallee Regions of Victoria.

From sharing and critiquing their own stories, business volunteers too can model how they learned to see and make connections between an interest and future career areas.

“The funny thing is I never took gaming seriously. Gaming was an activity ‘on the side’. I chose to study psychology. I did that for one year, but noticed I wasn’t applying myself as much as I could. So, I figured I may as well take on something that I was interested in, apply myself and see if it works, and it did because there is so much opportunity ‘out there’ in the game technology and emerging technology space. And, as long as you have the mindset and the willingness to learn, you can make it in this space.”

Ben Cooper, Design Lead, Digital Innovation Team at DXC Technology.

In summary, when designing the type of learning experience and goals, who gets to set the learning agenda is key. The evidence points to three learning design principles to keep at the forefront:²²³

Learning design principles	Partnering watchwords
Self-determination – keep judgements and decisions with the people who best understand the students and their strengths, circumstances and community.	Make ‘it’ ‘with and by’, not ‘to and for’.
Transferrable – provide each student with a range of opportunities over time, in a variety of contexts, to learn and learn how to use their strategies of learning to make informed choices in and beyond school.	Make ‘it’ relevant. Make ‘it’ meaningful.
Impactful – show how to measure accurately and value school-business partnering, providing benefits equitably to all students.	Make ‘it’ visible. Make ‘it’ count.

²²² Anderson, M. & Beavis, A. (2017). *Evaluation Report: Social Enterprise in Schools pilot program in North-East Victoria.*

²²³The principles reflect what our analysis shows is already happening in organisations. The principles give partners choice and flexibility and a lens to see what’s working, when and for whom. Inherent are the UK Education and Employers’ four generic principles (effective, efficient, equitable and evidenced).

The evidence also suggests four key features of **best and next practice**:

- a) **Embed** ways to promote student goal setting, effective feedback and high expectations for learning.
- b) **Discover** what students are bringing to the school-business interaction (their prior experiences, strengths, interests, knowledge, skills, capabilities) as they begin their learning (that is, recognising prior learning). This is key for enabling students to see and make connections (e.g. from past to future; familiar to unfamiliar contexts or situations).
- c) **Recognise** students as active partners in their learning. This does not mean undirected learning; student want and expect adults to play enabling roles. Studies show that government secondary school students need and value their teachers. For example, students from 27 New South Wales and Victorian schools in an entrepreneurial learning initiative said they wanted their teachers to *“Step back. Not sit back.”*²²⁴
- d) **Ensure** opportunities align to a clear learning purpose (intent and success criteria) and application (e.g. for use in a student’s learning portfolio or to help them learn how to pair their interests to their subject choices and current and emerging post-school learning or employment areas).

Part 4 has shown ‘how to’ execute purposeful partnering and do so in ways that promote greater student voice, autonomy and agency. Part 5 puts forward four key actionable leadership messages to promote continuing and new ways of working together.

²²⁴Anderson, M., Hinz, B. & Matus, H. (2017). *The Paradigm Shifters*.

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Engaging with students.

Addressing their questions.

The processes and analysis for this paper led to the development of the following key questions. The questions expose areas that might be holding students back from *believing* they can and *are able* to chart a learning and employability path that best fits them. Addressing these questions can help lower the burden on students.

Students are wondering and asking	
Striving for educational excellence and equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do I discover what my strengths, interests and passions are at present? ● How do I make decisions based on what I really want to do and not just what I'm good at? ● How can I become more confident about what I'd like to do as I get older?
No educational excellence for our nation without equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why aren't we able to get the kinds of opportunities we need that we see or hear other students in other schools are getting? ● Why am I putting-off what I do next? ● Who was your inspiration? Do you love what you do? ● How can I learn how to change courses or jobs?
Excellence and equity through opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can it be easier for me (and students like me) to connect with business and not miss out? ● How do you develop your skills to a high degree? ● How do I develop key capabilities for jobs that don't even exist yet? ● How can I, as a 13-year-old, develop technology skills?

Becoming both entrepreneurial and employable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can (or why can't) I see that what I am doing in school links to the 'real world'? ● How much do I see my future self as being a job seeker or a job creator? ● How do I/we solve problems in the world, in my community? ● What are your [business volunteer] future goals and future career goals?
Currency of assessment and assessing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What if my interests change over time? ● What do employers expect of a new employee? ● How do I teach myself how to make 'good moves' in life? ● If you could change your job, would you? How? ● How do you get to use your skills?
Currency of industry information and advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What if I don't know yet what I want to do in the future? What's the best advice you could give me? ● How can I learn to make decisions now to keep my future choices open? ● Why did you [business volunteer] choose 'x' company over other companies?

**It takes a village.
Working in each
student's present
for all our futures.**

Part 5: Four key messages for making a difference

I always say I got where I am today through a little bit of luck and lots of hard work. Whereas, I think I should have also been able to get 'here' by design.

By design I mean making opportunities accessible to students, no matter where they are and through experiences that expose students to a 'bigger world' of possibilities and in ways that are actually meaningful for the student; and make these experiences a lot more integrated at the local community level, but understanding that interacting with business is a 'two-way street'.

**Sally-Ann Williams, CEO,
Cicada Innovations.**

This section presents four key messages ('ingredients') and practical opportunities for how together, schools and businesses could be progressing creative and impactful ways of partnering.

From intent to action to impact

The world is a complex and uncertain place, with our young people facing a range of challenges, both shared and individual (discussed in Part 2). How shall we open-up new ways of working together in the context of each student's uniqueness?

Behavioural research tells us three things need to happen to go **from intent to action to impact**:

- Motivation (high/low).
- Ability (easy/difficult).
- Prompts (add/subtract value).²²⁵

To the first issue, motivation, the case is strong for why schools and businesses should and *need* to be partnering (see Parts 1 and 2). To the issues of ability (capability and capacity) and prompts (#hacks), it is also clear schools and businesses either do already or *want* to engage together, but it is not always an easy choice to enact with impact (see Parts 3 and 4).

How can we make partnering a great choice for any school and any business? How can we be co-creating non-prescriptive experiences *with* students, families and their communities? Where can our actions be making a positive difference in the "entire environment around each young person"?²²⁶

"It is being done. It can be done."²²⁷

The challenges and disruptors discussed in Part 2 offer new insights for rethinking and reimagining how to action equitable, trusting, transparent, and mutually beneficial purposes and ways of working together.

Building richer pictures of partnering provides a new lens in the progress Australia is making toward its national aspirations and goals for every young person. As a recent policy report concluded: "There can be no educational excellence for our nation without equity".²²⁸ #ItTakesAVillage.

The following messages focus attention on key areas at individual partnering and system / eco-system levels.

Message 1: Get the excellence and equity settings right

Framing what educational 'success' looks like and how to measure it is very important to the rest of the work schools and businesses choose to do together. It reduces the risk of students, educators and businesses simply doing 'busy work'. Every engagement has a curriculum and change agenda.

²²⁵ Fogg, B. J. (2020). *Tiny habits: The small changes that change everything*. Mariner Books.

²²⁶ Drew Paten, former Australian Indigenous Mentoring Education, AIME student, then University mentor and now, at 24 years of age, Co-CEO of AIME. At the launch of Global Citizen's #EducationCannotWait campaign.

²²⁷ Rooty Hill High School Submission to the Senior Secondary Pathways national review, December 2020.

²²⁸ Bonnor, C., Kidson, P., Piccoli, A., Sahlberg, P., Wilson, R (2021). *Structural Failure*.

Message 2: Set a positive ambitious goal for businesses engaging *with* students and their schools

There are strategic ways to show how, together, Australia's schools and businesses with students are doing their part to meet learning, working and active citizenship goals in creative, innovative and measurable ways. Becoming entrepreneurial is everyone's business.

Message 3: Publicly recognise how *both* educational and business expertise *is* making a difference

Strong and equitable partnering recognises and uses *both* educational *and* business expertise, so every student is able to take increasing levels of control and experience success, in their learning, working and active citizenship.

Message 4: Sustaining equitable, trusting and mutually beneficial partnering is the benchmark

Businesses partnering purposefully *with* students and their schools should be a normal educational experience for *each* student, *anywhere* in Australia, and starting early at *every* stage of education.

There are policy benefits to be had. The focus of the messages and practical ways to action these provide a visible way to connect to various **recommendations** (R) in or across multiple national education review reports, including:

Through growth to achievement, 2018 March:

- **R3:** Ensure all students have the opportunity within schools to be partners in their own learning.
- **R8:** Strengthen school-community engagement to enrich student learning through the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate quality partnerships, including engagement in mentoring, volunteering and extra-curricular activities, between schools, employers, members of the community, community organisations and tertiary institutions.
- **R10:** Accelerate the development of contemporary pedagogy through the use of collaboration, mentoring, observation and

feedback, including from colleagues and students, by incorporating these practices into the core role of teachers and creating the conditions to enable teachers to engage in them.

Optimising STEM, 2018: Solving real-world problems students want to solve rather than focusing on careers in STEM:

- **R6:** Governments and industry should work together to focus the narrative for primary and secondary students on how STEM skills and knowledge can solve real world problems. Having been motivated by real world problems, students should be introduced to the applicable subjects, skills and jobs that will afford them career flexibility as they contribute to meeting the needs of our future society. There should be particular effort to engage student cohorts underrepresented in STEM fields.
- **R8:** Education Council should establish a national online resource and provide a toolkit that brings together material to support schools and industry in designing, implementing and evaluating partnerships.

Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education, 2018 January:

- **R (p. 72):** Support RRR students to make successful transitions from school to university, training, employment and combinations of these.
- **R (p. 77):** Improve opportunities for RRR schools to implement entrepreneurship in education through curriculum, teaching, system and cultural changes and building on good practice.
- **R (p. 73):** Support RRR communities to implement innovative approaches to education delivery designed to improve education access and outcomes for students living in remote communities.

Looking to the future, 2020 June:

- **R4:** Students should leave school with a Learner Profile that incorporates not only their ATAR score (where relevant) together with their individual subject results, but that also captures the broader range of evidenced capabilities

necessary for employment and active citizenship that they have acquired in senior secondary schooling.

- **R11:** Education authorities and industry bodies should formalise their working relationship in order to facilitate the engagement of industry in senior secondary schooling in a systematic and comprehensive manner.
- **R12:** Education authorities need to facilitate and encourage partnerships between schools and employers at the local level in order to help students make choices and gain experience in the diverse career pathways that different industries can offer.
- **R17:** All senior secondary students with disability should have access to work exploration in school, and in collaboration with disability support groups have an individual post-school transition plan put in place prior to leaving school.
- **R20:** Data integration projects across sectors and states and territories should be leveraged to provide insights into how and why people move through different parts of the education system and labour market across their lifetimes and, to this end, the Education Council should accelerate the development of a Unique Student Identifier to understand better the routes by which students, from Year 10 onwards, move into tertiary education, training and employment.

What strategic partnering actions might we choose to take or continue taking together?

The entry point for a suite of phased-in actions and products (e.g. platforms for sharing and fostering connections) is a flexible but coherent frame to underpin the building and exchange of evidence.

Measure, gather and aggregate impact over time around three key metrics.²²⁹

- **Intent:** *Why are schools and businesses choosing to interact together?* (The foundation for measuring impact)

- **Engagement:** *How are schools and businesses interacting?* (Directly/via others see which industry areas and types of interactions go in and out of focus)
- **Impact:** *How well are school-business interactions translating into value beyond self-benefit?*

A starting point for taking action would be to work through existing and established networks and programs *and* expertise where, in self-determined ways, there is mutual benefit to participating in the project (e.g. it aligns to an evidenced student need).

The UK's Educator and Employers group has more than 10 years of robust research and practice-informed strategies for education and employer engagement that can inform the ongoing 'work'. The group recommends organising campaigns to show people, a lot of people, about what is happening. ... and how to join in. Similarly, the World Economic Forum used a crowd-sourcing campaign to identify case studies that were 'paving the way'. Partners might choose to adopt a similar approach to identify work already underway, but 'under the radar'.

Action 1: Evidence-informed partnering for learning what works, in what ways and for whom.

David Gonski, AC said practice-led research could play a role in instigating, spreading and promoting new insights for action. Reporting at smaller, more 'local' personalised levels can show results that may otherwise remain masked by results for the whole of Australia, or for states and territories—allowing a better understanding for the schools and the local community, policymakers and researchers; and importantly, the student. Schools already gather student data at the local level.

A recommended focus for a phased-in program of research is where issues of equity and excellence and decent work intersect. As one leader interviewed said:

"There is no room for young people to 'fall out' of the education system. When young people 'fall out' of full-time education or training or work, then getting them re-engaged is very, very difficult."

Megan Kirchner former Head, Tertiary Education, Business Council of Australia.

Complementary to practice-led evidence, an important role for governments is investment in large-scale base

²²⁹ Metrics informed by the Australian Research Council (2019). *Engagement and Impact Assessment 2018-19. National Report.* Australian Research Council, Canberra.

longitudinal data, such as with internationally renowned poverty experts at the [University of New South Wales](#) who are using OECD measures of poverty with a suite of organisations, including The Smith Family.

A special case study project: Frame a STEM-related ambitious target around the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). The SDG goals have currency with schools and businesses / industries. The goals provide a real-world context of problems. Goal 4's focus on education aggregates across so many issues. It is inclusive of education and wellbeing outcomes. A focus on STEM provides an opportunity to bridge and value equally students' vocational and university education intentions and expectations. It recognises the wider imperative of all young people becoming both entrepreneurial and employable. It also draws a clear line to an employment area the [Tech Council for Australia](#) reports employs 861,000 across cities, suburbs and regions and has a target of employing one million Australians by 2025.²³⁰

A partnering project with this focus and alignment can provide schools and businesses with a visible way to report and acquit on the benefits and outcomes from working together. It can provide students with a tangible case to use and comment on in their learner profiles. The cases can provide content for collaborative learning and research. The timeline of 2030 to achieve the 17 SDGs gives an end-date. A national platform for the SDGs exists. On a global stage, cases of Australia's schools and businesses working together shows others, here and around the world, how we are doing our part to meet these goals. As a result, there is the potential for learning, innovation and reputational benefits.

Action 2: Build an online knowledge-bank of partnering purpose statements (learning intentions and success criteria).

A simple, doable idea is to prototype a searchable and publicly available bank of purpose statements on an existing platform. A host would have the capability

(or resourced capability) to manage the content. It is an idea that puts the focus on outcomes and impact. It is a practice familiar to teachers. It values teaching expertise, develops and deepens their capabilities to improve student learning. How to construct and co-design purpose statements with others is a transferrable capability. It offers a new avenue to inspire possibilities, invite new connections and provide feedback to inform and complement Action 1. Schools can have the option to include a link to their own webpage for further details about the specific curriculum alignment, tools and/or multi-media stories and cases of 'the work' and its impacts to-date. **'The Partnering Wheel' in Appendix 2** could help with purpose statement development.

The advantage of the times we live in is that we can (*and should*) do more than post purpose statements and links to stories of school-business partnering. We can compound the evidence gathered and shared. With machine learning assistance, the online-bank could provide a way to profile and track patterns over time, creating real-time data.²³¹

● We would expect:

- An effective algorithm set of instructions to focus on four areas: 1) Intent of opportunities (a real-time ticker of intent statements at program, project or interaction level); and using the full intent statement to identify 2) Who's getting opportunities; 3) Breadth of opportunities (with indicative links to ANZSCO categories and emerging occupations); and 4) Scope of opportunities (mentoring; hosting; challenges; talks / Q&As or expos).²³² A name for this online bank might be the 'Index of School-Business Partnering Opportunity'.
- There is a role for teaching expertise to create and co-create the purpose statement content with others who best understand the students and their strengths, circumstances and community. There is a role for business expertise with school educators, through education departments authorising support, to create the algorithms for the real-time exchange of information.

²³⁰ Tech Council of Australia. (2021). *The economic contribution of Australia's tech sector*.

²³¹ Brookings policy research institute, 6 May 2021. See: [How can real-time performance data lead to better education outcomes?](#)

²³² UK research on volunteering in schools and colleges concludes, "Our research affords a tantalising opportunity to investigate the types of volunteering activity which respondents were most commonly doing when they reported skills gains in particular areas." (p. 17).

As noted, this approach could accelerate the exchange of real-time data. Publications are still essential to see interpretations, but publications are time-bound and, consequently, the reliability of content or interpretations may diminish over time. By contrast, real-time data will allow us to see the size of change as we experience change in real-life. In a complex and fast-paced changing labour market, schools and families need access to this kind of real-time information.

Based on the evidence gathered for this paper, a phased-in approach could focus first on building the bank with examples from schools in under-served communities and students and families living in disadvantage.

Action 3: Ensure consistency and currency of student occupational information.

A whole market-place of different diagnostic career-related learning platforms (products) is emerging for students, schools, families. We explored nine of these. The platforms included commercial fee-paying, as well as login free or freely accessible options (but not necessarily easily discoverable). These are an important resource for helping students, their families, and their advisors to pair interests to current and emerging employment and inform subject choices.

There is an important role for governments to play in ensuring visibility and promoting the base source market information on the various diagnostic platforms. The classification system for occupational information needs to be relevant to the Australian economy.

Given the relentless pace of change, bringing together current and emerging industry and occupation data will also be vital.

How students, their families and schools use this source of information opens a new perspective for reviewing platforms and evidencing what partners use to promote greater student participation and in what ways or combinations of ways:

- Students and principals indicated they would expect to see ‘student friendly’ #hacks include:
 - **Quizzes:** Enabling students to: 1) Deepen understandings of themselves (interests, passions

and strengths) *“Whenever I’m having trouble figuring out what I want to do, I’d go to the website and re-do the quizzes.”* (Year 9 student);

2) Make connections from their interests to different subjects (learn about, learn to do), and to current and emerging industries and occupations (e.g. starting salaries, who works in each, rise or decline opportunities or risks); 3) See vocational and university offerings together in the one place (e.g. sortable by geography, fees, scholarship or other financial assistance, accommodation etc.).

- **Expectations:** All industry, university, and vocational providers, plus government to articulate and publish the skills, capabilities and dispositions that are fundamental to vocational readiness for that industry, written in language students can understand.
- **Stories:** Enabling students to see ‘people like me’ in the context of their workspaces. Hear about their decisions and choices and goals from student-driven questions.
- **Tracking:** Students being able to save their quiz results to see patterns or shifts, year on year. Students being able to explain whether this helped them make informed choices. A principal said, *“It would be good to start at Year 7. To begin Career Action Plans”.*
- **Aggregate:** Students being able to see what other students are interested in. *“I would like to see, and I also wouldn’t mind anyone seeing what people who are my age are interested in.”* (Year 9 student).
- **Share:** Students being able to share and use the tool with a parent / family member. *“It would be good for parents because they could get to know what job option is good for their child and children could also show their parent what they want to do.”* (Year 9 student).

Action 4: Deepen and strengthen shared responsibilities by seeking out intentional opportunities for mixing.

To make the most of school-business partnering, we need to find strategic and authentic forums and ways to engage together. To offer *one* illustrative example of putting strategic thinking in to action:

The Australian Financial Review (AFR), Business Summit is a practical way for business leaders to interact routinely with school principals, students and teachers. It has a wide-reach.²³³ It is big-picture and solution-focused. It is a space in which business, policy and tertiary audiences already gather.²³⁴

The Summit's issues and 'calls to action' directly affect young people and families. For example:

- 2018: How network platforms reshape business and society? Digital disruption. Lessons from Australia's start-up culture. Key ingredients for success.
- 2019: What is business for? How can business sharpen its sense of purpose and restore its reputation? Technology trends and the future of society. Young entrepreneurs under 40. Global success stories of corporate Australia.
- 2020: Risk in uncertain complex times; digital disruption, transforming Australian companies from the inside; nurturing and scaling-up deep tech start-ups to bring them to the world. How the nation's best young entrepreneurs turn fresh ideas into successful enterprises. Climate change.
- 2021: The future of work and equity (e.g. The Smith Family Chairman and CEO) and new practices for digital future; green economic imperative.
- 2022: Panel - Riding out Australia's skills and labor shortage (e.g. Kate Pounder, CEO, Tech Council of Australia; Dominic Price, Work Futurist, Atlassian).

Young people belong in conversations and forums directly affecting their present and our future. Young people are the seekers and creators of jobs. Young people are our current and future citizens. There are roles for sponsoring the active participation of students and the organisations working with them at the summit.

A phased-in approach might be around the theme, **"Striving for educational excellence and equity through partnering":**

1. **A (standing) session** each year to inspire possibilities and recognise school-business partnering expertise, to make it easier to see why and how to connect with purpose. It can be done. We recommend prioritising:
 - *How are student learner profiles changing the way recruiters, employers and tertiaries do or could do business?*²³⁵ Reason: Currency of assessment and assessing.
 - *How are students with VET or university intentions becoming both entrepreneurial and employable through enterprise and entrepreneurship strategies and place-based approaches?* (Middle Primary and Secondary Years (Age 9 to14) and Senior Secondary Years (Age 15 to 19).) Reason: Becoming entrepreneurial and employable. Start early.
 - *How are we learning to learn and collaborate in complex "messy hybrid" times?* (Leadership lessons from remote and blended learning practice and research.) Reason: Excellence and equity through opportunity.
 - *Mentoring is a high impact practice. The problem is how to volunteer?* Coordinate an annual expo at the Summit. For example, through the network, 'Together4Youth' and schools.²³⁶ Reason: Excellence and equity through opportunity.
2. **Create an annual innovation in school-business partnering award.** Governed and judged by a panel of students with educator and business leaders and entrepreneurs. Reason: Striving for educational excellence and equity through partnering. Make visible and reward the kinds of partnering behaviours we want to see more of in the system. The Rural Youth Ambassadors is an example of an existing authentic young-people led group with which to partner. It can be done.

²³³ Advancing Regional Innovation Program (ARIP) funded more than 100 innovative business leaders from regional Queensland to attend the Myriad Technology Conference.

²³⁴ The AFR Business Summit 2021 website states: "Bringing together the nation's highest level of political, business and expert leadership to work out how Australia can come out of the crisis stronger than most."

²³⁵ The Summit also holds a breakfast session.

²³⁶ In 2020, around 25 organisations formed a cooperative network called, "Together4Youth". Each organisation has expertise in volunteer mentoring with young people (secondary through to early adult). The Centre for Social Impact brings an evaluative frame to the network's cooperative learning together.

²³⁷ Science & Technology Australia. See: [Science meets Parliament 2022](#). "Australia's most powerful vehicle for deep engagement between STEM sector and policymakers."

3. **Look for opportunities to strategically connect and compound the learning** from significant cross-sector forums, such as the AFR Business Summit (but also with such events as, ‘Science meets Parliament 2022’²³⁷). For example, organisations such as Cool Australia, with their track record of partnering and their reach to 90% of schools in Australia, seem well-placed to enable practical and strategic benefit to students and their schools. These important and significant forums are ‘out of reach’ to most young people, their families and their schools. It does not have to stay this way.

Discovering new ways for business to engage with students and their schools and scaling the learning of what works can take us beyond pockets of good work. It can take us to *systemic* good work.

We need a cultural mindset change. Teachers are part of this cultural change, but business also needs to engage earlier, and not just firm by firm, but as a collective; because firm by firm is good, but it’s not a ‘game changer’.

Dr Heather Smith, PSM, Former Secretary of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

Appendix 1: Industries

It is important to summarise what the industry classifications are to help in our shared understanding and to inform the measuring and tracking of student destinations.

The Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) organises industries in the following categories.²³⁸

A Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	K Financial and Insurance Services
B Mining	L Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
C Manufacturing	M Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
D Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	N Administrative and Support Services
E Construction	O Public Administration and Safety
F Wholesale Trade	P Education and Training
G Retail Trade (10% of workers; 31% aged 15-24 years)	Q Health Care and Social Assistance
H Accommodation and Food Services	R Arts and Recreation Services
I Transport, Postal and Warehousing	S Other Services
J Information Media and Telecommunications	

- Employment is projected to increase across all 19 broad industries (to November 2026).²³⁹
- As at 30 June 2022, there were **2,569,900** actively trading businesses of differing employment size (Small 0-19, Medium 20-199, Large 200+).²⁴⁰
- Small businesses by employees (not turnover) account for 97.5% of Australian businesses.²⁴¹
- Post-school education is projected to be a requirement of 9 in 10 new jobs (to November 2026).²⁴²

The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) is based on the skills level needed to perform tasks in specific organisations. These align to eight major groups:²⁴³

1 Managers	5 Clerical and Administrative Workers
2 Professionals	6 Sales Workers
3 Technicians and Trades Workers	7 Machinery Operators and Drivers
4 Community and Personal Service Workers	8 Labourers

- In 2021, ANZSCO had more than 1,200 jobs in it.²⁴⁴ (“Most people could probably name 50.”)
- The National Skills Commission is acting to identify and validate emerging occupations. (“There are a whole range of jobs we don’t know about that do exist.”).

Teachers also use seven job clusters from an analyses of job advertisements:

Generators	Informers
Artisans	Carers
Designers	Technologists
Coordinators	(Published by Foundation for Young Australians, FYA)

²³⁸ ABS. See: [ANZSIC](#) and its purpose and classifications. (Latest release 26 June 2013)

²³⁹ See National Skills Commission [Labour Market Insights](#)

²⁴⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, released 25 August 2022. See: [Counts of Australian Businesses, including entries and exits](#). Data cube 2.

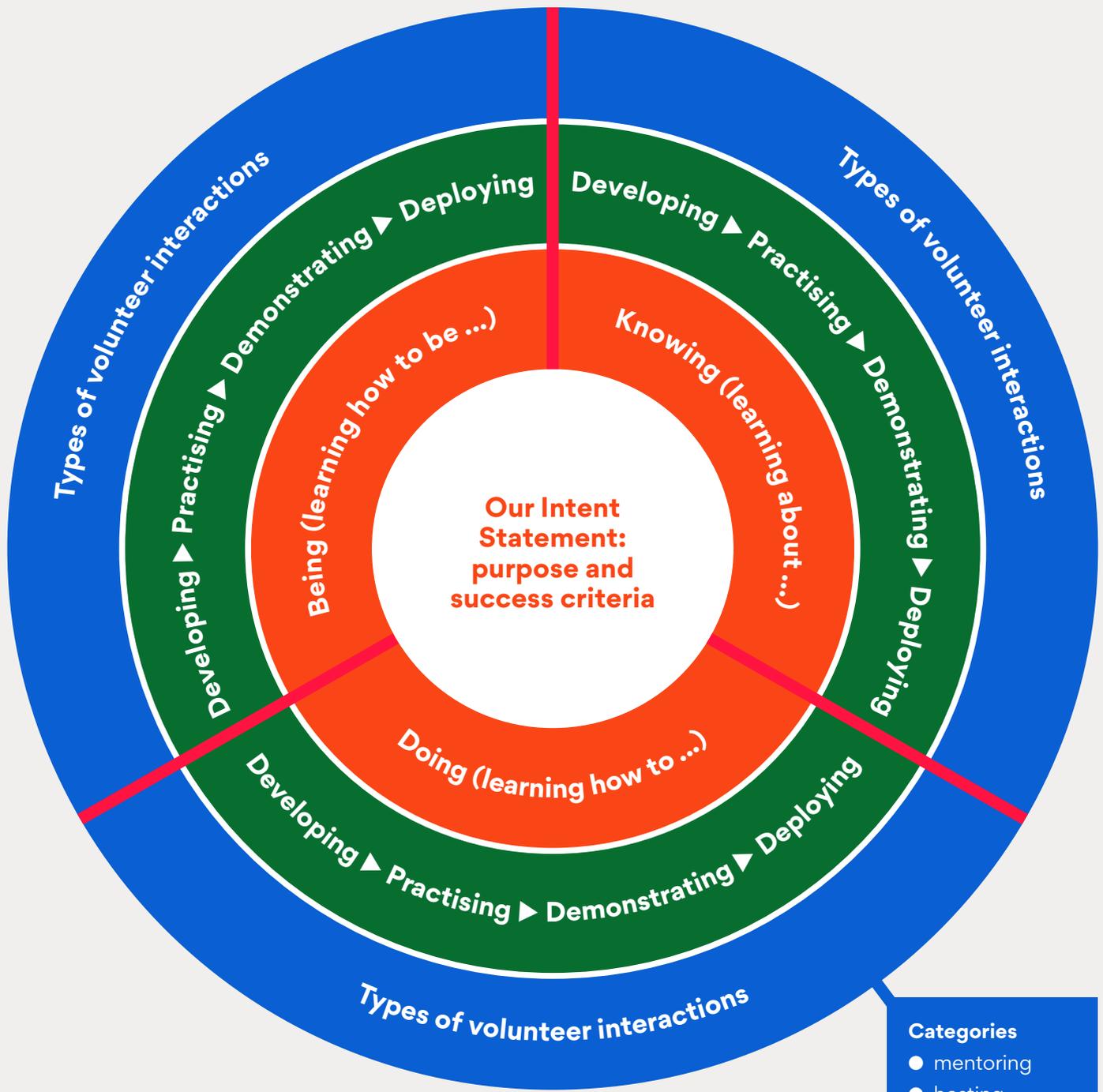
²⁴¹ Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman [Small Business Data Portal](#) (accessed August 2022).

²⁴² See National Skills Commission [Labour Market Insights](#).

²⁴³ [ANZSCO](#) major groups are broadly similar to the 10 International Labour Organization (ILO) groups, providing a basis for making international comparisons and a frame for developing national classifications.

²⁴⁴ **Job** = person does a set of tasks for an employer (includes self-employment) in return for payment or profit. **Occupation** = a category for a set of jobs where people are doing similar or identical sets of tasks.

Appendix 2: 'The Partnering Wheel'²⁴⁵



Categories

- mentoring
- hosting
- challenges
- talks / Q&As
- expos

Connecting

● **Why:** We can explain in a purpose statement our intent and why it relates to the success of students in the school's community.

● **How:** We can show how to co-design learning, in our programs and practices, for greater student autonomy and agency in their learning and life decisions.

● **What:** We can show how we are matching and combining types of student interactions to the partnering's intent and learning experience design.

Rooty Hill High School and Origin Energy ‘The Explorers’ with All Year 8 students ‘The Partnering Wheel’: Mapping, Measuring and Embedding

Why: Program-level purpose statement: Rooty Hill High School and Origin Energy employees are designing business and school work-place hosting workshops and hands-on challenges, and student-led Q&A experiences together. These will expose all the school’s Year 8 students to new and diverse networks and future diverse employment possibilities. From doing ‘The Explorers’, each student will be able to:

- Name their interests or passions (real or possible).
- Write what strengths or skills they got to practice (improving learning).
- Use the experience to help (re-)make their Year 9 subject selections (informed decision-making).
- Explain how the experience has got them thinking about post-school possibilities (intentions).

How:

- Every student has a personalised ‘Explorer Passport’ to record and review their decisions.



- Students choose which four job clusters are of interest to them (face-to-face workshops).
- Students ask what questions matter to them (online Q&A).
- Evidence of students engaging in self-reflection and goal setting –
 - Something new I discovered about this job cluster.
 - A strength or skill I got to practise in this workshop.
 - Something I still want to know more about or how to do.

What: We use a combination of work-place hosting learning strategies at school, at Origin Energy and blended learning. *Challenges* - hands-on-learning strategies that students co-develop with the teachers and business volunteers. A teacher and Origin business volunteer co-facilitate each challenge workshop. *In-person and remote real-time Q&As* - student-led, teacher enabled Q&As with Origin business volunteers.

²⁴⁵The Partnering Wheel was a prototype created in 2019 with the school’s two co-leader teachers and one of the school’s academic partners, Dr M. Anderson.

Appendix 3: Literature synthesis of educator-employer related literature

We took a broad approach to the literature synthesis (i.e. a mix of literature types and perspectives) and created a set of questions to guide our reviewing (e.g. What is the key argument presented? What do partners contribute to interactions? etc.). Most of the sources we reviewed date from 2010 to November 2021. Several came from the 1990s. These earlier sources illustrate that, while times have changed, many of the questions and challenges remain the same (e.g. students' future job competence). Often the reviewed sources also synthesised or reviewed other studies.²⁴⁶

The reviewed materials connect the idea of partnering, indirectly and directly, within the context of what being educated means for young people, or what employers want, or what educators want. It was more common to see direct references to industry and education interactions in policy-related reviews, especially in the senior secondary and post-school pathway transitions, than it was in the earlier stages of education. It was not common to see definitions (or consistent definitions) of education and business engagement or the term partnering (i.e. as a verb.).

Initially, we organised the literature by its main type and emphasis (i.e. policy, business, research etc.). We then re-organised the reviews into categories to help identify commonalities and gaps (noting of course that often the focus and target groups cross multiple categories). Below are the categories (in orange text) with some examples of the sources we reviewed:

Becoming contemporary learners

Atlassian. (2020). *Return on action: The new social contract for business*. Atlassian.

Australian Department of Education and Training. (2018). *Through growth to achievement: Report of the review to achieve educational excellence in Australian schools*. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.

Barber, M. (2015). *Joy and data: The inaugural Australian Learning Lecture*. Presented in Melbourne, Australia, 21 May 2015.

Business Council of Australia (BCA). (Unpublished). *The modern worker: A guide to what employers want*. Melbourne: Business Council of Australia.

Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA). (2019). *Company Pulse: A nationwide survey of general public and business leaders on expectations of business and business priorities*. Melbourne: CEDA.

Commonwealth Bank. (2018). *The Commonwealth Bank jobs and skills of the future report*. Commonwealth Bank.

Education Council. (2018). *Optimising STEM industry-school partnerships: Inspiring Australia's next generation*. Carlton: Education Council.

Foundation for Young Australians. (2018). *The new work reality*. Foundation for Young Australians.

Milligan, S. K., Luo, R., Hassim, E., & Johnston, J. (2020). *Future-proofing students: What they need to know and how to assess and credential them*. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne Graduate School of Education, the University of Melbourne: Melbourne.

Lamb, S., Jackson, J., Walstab, A., & Huo, S. (2015). *Educational opportunity in Australia 2015: Who succeeds and who misses out*. Melbourne: The Mitchell Institute.

World Economic Forum. (2020). *The Future Of Jobs Report 2020*. New York: Centre for the New Economy and Society, World Economic Forum.

²⁴⁶ For example, Hughes, D., Mann, A., Barnes, S-A., Baldauf, B., & McKeown, R. (2017). *Careers education: International literature review*. London: Education and Employers Research. This review examined 73 studies focused on careers education approaches undertaken within OECD countries since 1996, as well as 23 studies exploring the impact of part-time employment.

Early learning years and primary school

Cinamon, R. L. & Yeshayahu, M. (2020). Children's occupational knowledge: A conceptual framework and measure. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*. [Online]. doi.org/10.1007/s10775-020-09425-4

Chambers, N., Kashefpakdel, E. T., Rehill, J., & Percy, C. (2018). *Drawing the future: Exploring the career aspirations of primary school children from around the world*. London: Education and Employers Research.

Tytler, R., Symington, D., Williams, G., White, P., Campbell, C., Chittleborough, G., Upstill, G., Roper, E., & Dziadkiewicz, N. (2016). *Building productive partnerships for STEM education: Evaluating the model and outcomes of the SMiS program 2015*. Melbourne: Deakin University.

Secondary school and early adulthood (generally up to 26 years²⁴⁷)

Austin, K., O'Shea, S., Groves, O. & Lamanna, J. (2021). *Best-practice principles for career development learning for students from low socioeconomic (LSES) backgrounds*. Retrieved from: University of Wollongong and National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Australia.

Education Council. (2020). *Looking to the future. Report of the review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training*. Canberra: Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (Including a review of the 2019 Background paper)

Future First. (2019). *Young people, their futures and access to relatable role models*. Future First.

Misko, J., Chew, E. & Korbel, P. (2020). *VET for secondary school students: Post-school employment and further training destinations*. Adelaide, NCVET.

Rusten, G., & Hermelin, B. (2017). Cross-sector collaboration in upper secondary school vocational education: experiences from two industrial towns in Sweden and Norway. *Journal of Education and Work*, 30(8), 813-826.

Shiple, B. & Stuble, W. (2018). *After the ATAR II: Understanding how Gen Z make decisions about their future*. Sydney NSW: Year 13 and YouthSense.

Valentini, B., Carter, E. W., Bumble, J., & Hill, E. (2019). Employer Views on School-business Partnerships Involving Students with Severe Disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 50(3) 365-377.

General partnering

ARACY. (2019). *Please Just Say You're Proud of Me: Perspectives of Young People on Parent Engagement and Doing Well at School*. Canberra: ARACY.

Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Digital Ventures. (2019). *After the honeymoon ends: Making corporate-startup relationships work*. Melbourne: Boston Consulting Group.

Commonwealth of Australia. (2012). *Evaluate to grow: A guide to getting the most out of your school-business relationship through evaluation*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Lonsdale, M. (2011). *School community partnerships in Australian schools*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Tennyson, R. (2011). *The partnering toolkit: An essential guide to cross-sector partnering*. International Business Leaders Forum.

NOTE: In addition to the reviews we did, for those interested in exploring more material, the UK based organisation, Education and Employers, has an excellent (and freely accessible) searchable online repository of national and international research. You can also sign-up to receive their research digest. See: www.educationandemployers.org/research-type/research-library

²⁴⁷We include 'up to 26 years' as several sources use this parameter (e.g. Kashefpakdel, E. T., & Percy, C. (2017). Career education that works: An economic analysis using the British Cohort Study. *Journal of Education and Work*, 30(3), 217-234).