

# Purposeful Partnering

How school-business partnering can make a difference for students

Part 2 excerpt on why it is important for schools and businesses to work together



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

The enabler for this piece is Origin Energy Foundation

## Saying thank you is one of the most rewarding tasks.

The people we thank are many. They come from different places and perspectives. We connected through formal and informal interactions. These include people with whom we did in-depth interviews (e.g. David Gonski) and those who we joined during workshops (e.g. the Rural Youth Ambassadors, Country Education Partnership), or at forums (e.g. the Australian Financial Review 2020 Business Summit; #Teachmeet online - #Leadmeet 2021).

To you all, thank you for being generous with your time, insights and examples.<sup>1</sup>

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## This document contains Part 2 of the full *Purposeful Partnering* paper.

Part 2 provides guidance on:

- What is 'your why' for school-business partnering?
- What are the reasons schools and businesses want to work together?
- What are seven key challenges and disruptors shaping why schools and businesses need to be engaging together?
- Why is working together not always easy to enact and sustain?
- How does addressing the challenges and disruptors look like in practice?

**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.<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup>**Disclaimer:** The full base paper lists names. 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.

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

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# 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.

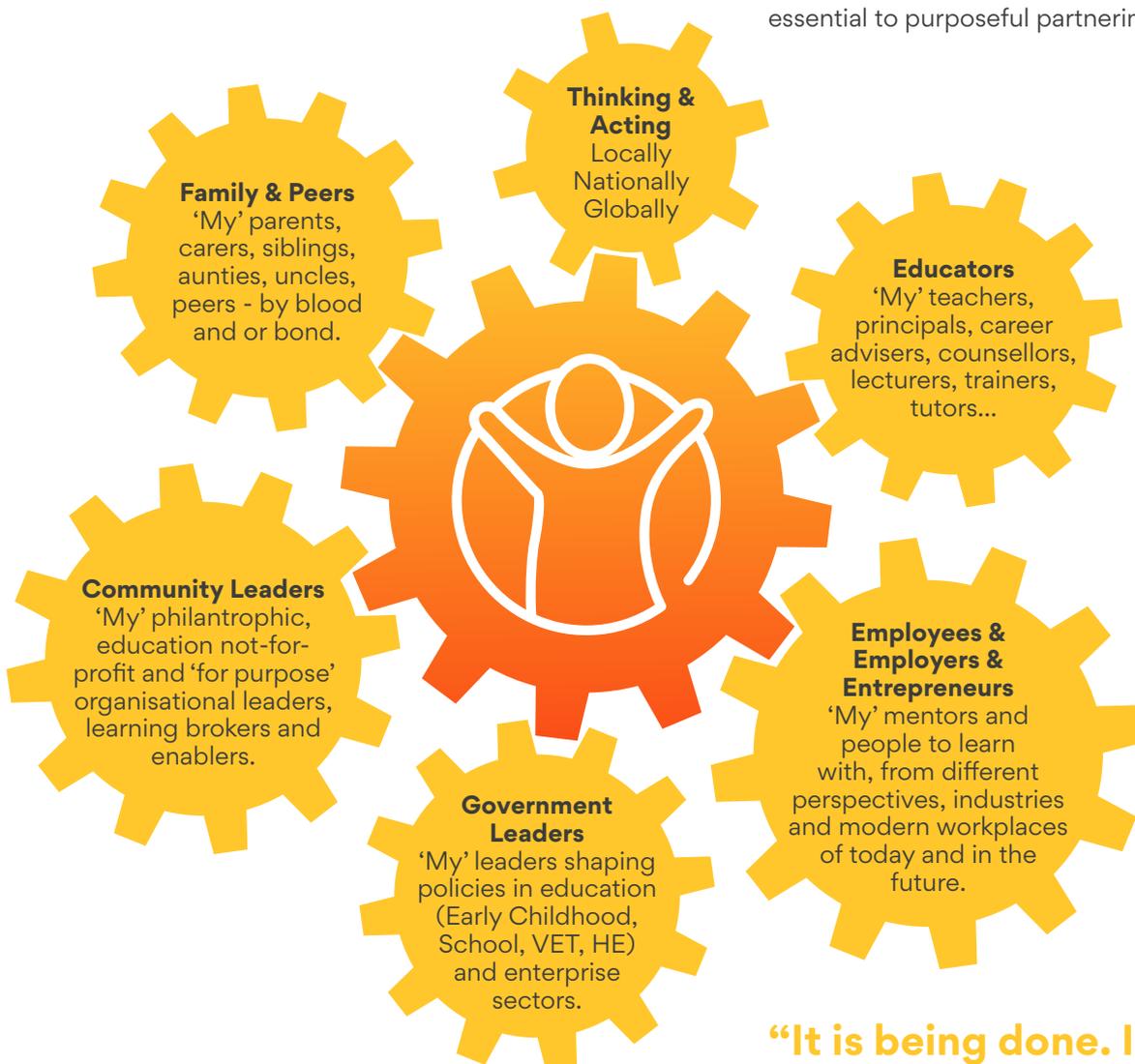
**#Lifelong and #Lifewide Learning with a suite of people directly and indirectly over time.**

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.<sup>8</sup>

‘It takes a village’ is more than just a catchphrase<sup>9</sup>; 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.”<sup>10</sup>**

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

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

<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

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.

<sup>11</sup>Education 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;<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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 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”.<sup>37</sup>

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.<sup>38</sup>

### 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.<sup>39</sup>

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.

<sup>37</sup> Education Council (2019). *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*.

<sup>38</sup> “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).

<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup>

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”.<sup>41</sup> 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.



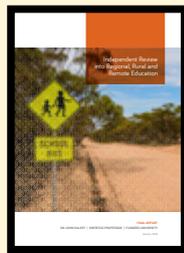
**Reasons to want to work together**

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 ...



<sup>40</sup> 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).

<sup>41</sup> 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’<sup>42</sup>).

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.<sup>43</sup> 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.**<sup>44</sup>

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.<sup>45</sup>

Reason	Changes - success criteria
<b>Talent</b>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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</li> <li>● Boosting innovation and shoring-up competencies in known and anticipated key areas</li> </ul>

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.**

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

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

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

<sup>45</sup> Shipley, B. & Stubley, 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
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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)</li> </ul>

Students need to discover and learn how to pair their interests or passions with the most current and emerging employment sector evidence.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup> 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
<b>Growth</b>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Economic and social capital and health and wellbeing purposes, such as building intergenerational relations, connecting, community renewal</li> </ul>

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.**

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

<sup>47</sup> 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.”**<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup>

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.<sup>50</sup> 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.**<sup>51</sup>

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.<sup>52</sup>

*“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.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup>

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

<sup>48</sup> 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.)

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

<sup>50</sup> 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](#).

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

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

<sup>53</sup> Cunningham, W.V. & Villaseñor, P. (2016). *Employer voices*.

<sup>54</sup> 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 perspective<sup>55</sup>



### 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.”<sup>56</sup>*

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

**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

<sup>55</sup> See: [Version 9.0](#).

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

<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> Addressing this complexity is critical.

### 2. Relentless fast pace: The timing from when an issue arises to addressing it is shrinking.<sup>59</sup>

*“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.”<sup>60</sup>*

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

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

<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup> In 2019-2020, 21% of innovation-active businesses in Australia collaborated with others for innovation, compared to 14% in 2018-19.<sup>62</sup>

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.<sup>63</sup> 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).”<sup>64 65</sup>

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).

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

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

<sup>63</sup> World Economic Forum. (2020). *Schools of the future*.

<sup>64</sup> See: [Oslo Manual 2018](#).

<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup>

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).<sup>67</sup> 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.<sup>68</sup> 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.<sup>69</sup>

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.<sup>70</sup>

Families got to witness teaching and learning happening in ways and at a scale not seen before in Australia or around the world.<sup>71</sup> 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?<sup>72</sup>

*"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.<sup>73</sup>**

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,

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

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

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

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

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

school principals, Jon Goh and Christine Cawsey.

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

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

<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup> 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.<sup>75</sup>

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".<sup>76</sup>

#### 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.<sup>77</sup> 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).<sup>78</sup>

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).<sup>79</sup>

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.<sup>80</sup> 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'.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>74</sup> 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?](#)

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

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

<sup>77</sup> 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).

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

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

<sup>80</sup> 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.

<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup> *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%,<sup>84</sup> a far cry from the highs of around 14% during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>85</sup> But youth unemployment remains more than double the overall unemployment rate of 3.4%.<sup>86</sup> In fact, youth unemployment and underemployment has remained around double the national rate for the past five years.<sup>87</sup>

The economy and employment market has rebounded. This rebound largely reflects an increase in casual (60%) and part-time work (57%).<sup>88</sup> 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.<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup>**

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”**.<sup>91</sup> 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.

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

<sup>83</sup> Australia Institute. Youth unemployment and the pandemic. April 2022.

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>89</sup> Australia Institute. Youth unemployment and the pandemic. April 2022.

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

<sup>91</sup> 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”.<sup>92</sup>

Young people *and* employees *and* employers are asking about a company’s purpose.<sup>93</sup> 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?”<sup>94</sup>

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.<sup>95</sup> 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.



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

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

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

<sup>95</sup> 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.”<sup>96</sup>*

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.<sup>97</sup> 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.<sup>98</sup>

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.<sup>99</sup>

## **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.<sup>100</sup> Economists in other contexts have argued this choice is *the* public policy responsibility to move on.<sup>101</sup>

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

<sup>97</sup>Note: 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.

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

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

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

<sup>101</sup>Ken 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.<sup>102</sup>

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.<sup>103</sup>

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."<sup>104</sup>

Staying in school to gain a secondary qualification still offers good protection against unemployment by age 34.<sup>105</sup> 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.<sup>106</sup>

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).<sup>107</sup> 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.<sup>108</sup> 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.<sup>109</sup>

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.<sup>110</sup>

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.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Mitchell Institute. (2020). Educational Opportunity Fact Sheet. *Successful lifelong learners*.

<sup>103</sup> 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.

<sup>104</sup> Education Council (2018). *Optimising STEM Industry-School Partnerships*.

<sup>105</sup> 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.)

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>111</sup> 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.<sup>112</sup>

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.<sup>113</sup> 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).<sup>114</sup> 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.

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

<sup>113</sup> 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.”

<sup>114</sup> 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+).<sup>115</sup>

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.<sup>116</sup> 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?”<sup>117</sup>
- **Deficits vs Strengths:** Both education and business have felt the brunt and burden of negative narratives.<sup>118</sup> 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,<sup>119</sup> and/or long-term, such as trying to attract passionate, highly capable people to the profession.<sup>120</sup> 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

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

<sup>116</sup> 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.

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

<sup>118</sup> 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”](#)

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

<sup>120</sup> 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.<sup>121</sup> 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.<sup>122</sup> 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).<sup>123</sup> When secondary students do a work placement, an employer often has to comply with school and VET system requirements, which increases the administrative load.<sup>124</sup> 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.<sup>125</sup>

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.<sup>126</sup> 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.

<sup>121</sup>This 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.

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

<sup>123</sup>For 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.

<sup>124</sup>VET p. 17

<sup>125</sup>Note, these protocols might have changed since the manager provided this story.

<sup>126</sup>Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Digital Ventures. (2019). *After the honeymoon ends*.

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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.<sup>127</sup>

### **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.<sup>128</sup>

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

<sup>128</sup> 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.<sup>129</sup>

### **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”.<sup>130</sup>

### **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.<sup>131</sup>

### **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.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>129</sup> 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.

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

<sup>131</sup> See: [AIME Mentoring](#)

<sup>132</sup> 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.<sup>133</sup>

## 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”.<sup>134</sup>

**‘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.<sup>135</sup>

### **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.<sup>136</sup>

### **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.<sup>137</sup>

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

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

<sup>134</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>137</sup> 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.**