



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

REPORT NO. 1

**Inquiry into the Incidence of Youth
Unemployment in Victoria**

ORDERED TO BE PRINTED

OCTOBER 2002

by Authority.

Government Printer for the State of Victoria

No. 179 – Session 1999-2002

Parliament of Victoria
Economic Development Committee

Report into the Incidence of Youth
Unemployment in Victoria

ISBN 0-7311-1217-2

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TERMS OF REFERENCE TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

INCIDENCE OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN VICTORIA AND OPTIONS FOR PROMOTING
EMPLOYMENT GROWTH OVER THE COMING DECADE

Pursuant to the **Parliamentary Committees Act 1968**, the Economic Development Committee is required to inquire into, consider and report on the incidence of youth unemployment in Victoria and options for promoting employment growth over the coming decade, with particular emphasis on:

- ◆ Youth unemployment frequency in metropolitan, outer growth, regional and rural areas;
- ◆ Youth employment needs in Victoria;
- ◆ The role of State and Local Governments in helping generate employment opportunities for young people;
- ◆ Innovative initiatives implemented in other jurisdictions to address youth unemployment and the effectiveness of such initiatives;
- ◆ Social, economic and industrial matters specific to unemployed young people;
- ◆ Differing incidence of unemployment amongst male and female young people; and
- ◆ Unemployment in migrant, Aboriginal and non-English speaking background communities.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 31 December 2002.

By resolution of the Legislative Council

Dated: 1 March 2000

Chairman's Foreword

This Inquiry into the Incidence of Youth Unemployment in Victoria has highlighted a range of issues confronting governments, education institutions, employers and other key stakeholders who have a responsibility to ensure that youth are gainfully participating in education, training or employment.

While some progress has been made in tackling youth unemployment, the Committee's Inquiry suggests further work is required to address problems in certain areas. For instance, unemployment levels are unacceptably high for Indigenous and migrant youth and other young people who are socially and economically disadvantaged. The Committee's evidence highlights the importance of vocational training and apprenticeships in assisting transitions from school to work and the importance of early intervention strategies commencing at primary school. In particular, the need for mentoring and personal assistance was raised consistently during the Inquiry as an important initiative.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to extend appreciation to the large number of interested parties who contributed to the Inquiry, including the authors of 69 written submissions and approximately 160 individuals representing over 100 organisations who attended public hearings in Melbourne, metropolitan centres and regional Victoria. The evidence provided by these people formed the basis of the Committee's report and was therefore invaluable. The Committee took the opportunity to meet a number of young people including students, unemployed youth and youth who are participating in innovative training initiatives. Such meetings were extremely worthwhile and provided members of the Committee with a clearer understanding of the employment needs of young people.

The Committee also conducted a three-week study tour in western Europe to examine innovative initiatives in other jurisdictions. Meetings took place with organisations such as the International Labour Organization, the OECD, the European Commission and

other individuals and organisations with expertise relating to youth unemployment. The Committee is grateful to the many participants who met with the Committee during the Study Tour and to the Australian Embassies who assisted the Committee in identifying key appointments and arranging a comprehensive program of meetings.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of all Members of the Economic Development Committee in terms of their participation in the numerous meetings and public hearings held throughout metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria. Most satisfying was the Committee's willingness to put aside party politics in an endeavour to achieve consensus on all findings and recommendations covering the full range of issues contained within the Report.

On behalf of the Committee, I conclude by thanking the staff of the Committee for their support and hard work, namely the Executive Officer, Mr. Richard Willis; Senior Research Officer, Ms. Karen Ellingford; Office Manager/Research Assistant, Ms. Tania Esposito; and part-time Research Assistant, Ms. Colleen Pardy.

Hon. Neil Lucas PSM MLC
Chairman

Executive Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction

This Report is in response to a Terms of Reference from the Legislative Council to *'investigate the incidence of youth unemployment in Victoria and options for promoting employment growth over the coming decade'*.

Particular attention was given to the importance of education and training in enhancing the transition to employment. The Committee's Reference also specifically required an examination of youth unemployment in Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The Committee's evidence was based on 69 written submissions and evidence received throughout a number of public hearings in metropolitan and regional Victoria. The Committee also conducted a three week study tour in Europe to examine innovative initiatives in tackling youth unemployment in other countries.

In order to report on substantial evidence already gathered, the Committee agreed to table this first Report and to present a second Report in 2003 on some outstanding matters that require further investigation.

Chapter 2: Labour Market Experiences of Youth in Victoria

In order to assess the extent of youth unemployment in Victoria, the Committee analysed data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census and the monthly Labour Force Survey.

The statistics reveal that between 1996 and 2001, Victoria experienced a decrease in the youth unemployment rate, from 16.1 per cent to 12.8 per cent, and a marginal increase in the youth labour force participation rate, from 63.2 per cent to 64.2 per cent. Within

these figures, the incidence of youth unemployment for males is higher than for females and further, there are lower youth unemployment rates in the metropolitan regions of Victoria compared to non-metropolitan regions. The highest levels of youth unemployment were present in the Gippsland region, Central Highlands-Wimmera and Barwon-Western District. Within metropolitan regions, North Western Melbourne experienced the highest youth unemployment rate, followed by Outer Western Melbourne and Inner Melbourne.

The 2001 Census also illustrates that there is a significant number of Victorian youth who could be classified as underemployed, that is, they are working part-time and are not engaged in formal education.

With respect to Indigenous and migrant youth, the statistics highlighted that significant barriers exist in these young people obtaining employment. The Victorian Indigenous youth unemployment rate in 2001 was 26.4 per cent, compared to 12.8 per cent for the overall Victorian youth unemployment rate. The unemployment rate for youth born in a non-main English speaking country was 22.5 per cent, while the unemployment rate for those youth who speak a language other than English at home was lower at 18.5 per cent. The labour force participation rates for Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse youth were significantly less than for the overall Victorian youth population.

Chapter 3: Youth Participation in Education and Training

There is a clear link between low levels of educational achievement and unemployment. Chapter 3 examines the strengths and weaknesses of the current education and training systems in the context of preparing young people for employment. Some of the key issues dealt with are the ability to engage and retain young people in schools, vocational education and training in schools, alternative schools and curriculum options, the apprenticeship and traineeship system and education for young migrant and Indigenous Victorians.

The Committee notes the importance of VCE completion in terms of entering tertiary education and achieving employment, but also highlights the need for alternative education and training systems to reduce the extent of students disengaging from the existing system. In particular, the Committee notes the benefits of State Government programs aimed at providing vocational education and training such as the new Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools.

The Committee notes that VCAL is being progressively introduced over 2002/2004. As part of the Government's ongoing evaluation of the program, the Committee recommends that consideration be given to extending the VCAL to Year 10 students and ensuring the program maximises the development of student skills for future career opportunities. The Committee has further recommended that the Government develop a promotional campaign aimed at students, schools, parents and business outlining the advantages of VCAL as a positive alternative to VCE, as well as a pathway to reverting back to VCE studies and entering university.

The Committee also considers the VET in schools programs to be an important and attractive option for many students, particularly those students who are at greatest risk of disengaging from school. The Committee has made several recommendations relating to the VET in schools program, including the need for consultation with schools and Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) in order to identify gaps in VET in schools programs. It is also recommended that schools adopt a code of practice for VET in schools programs that identifies students in danger of disengaging and guides these students through an application process through one-to-one mentoring. In order to strengthen the links to future employment opportunities, the Committee would encourage a work based component in VET in schools programs.

Evidence indicates there has been a decline in technical skills of young people that has had a significant negative impact on businesses and industry that require trade apprentices and accordingly, has serious implications for the future. The Committee aims to further examine the extent and causes of declining technical skills in its second

Report to Parliament, however, is recommending that the Government seek cross-party support for a more detailed examination of options for increasing skills through trade and vocational training.

Chapter 3 also highlights the range of education and training barriers facing Indigenous youth and newly arrived migrants. A number of recommendations have been made for the Government to enhance the participation of these groups in education and training.

Chapter 4: School to Work Transitions

The Committee heard strong evidence that improving the level of guidance and support for young people during school to work transitions should be a key focus of education and training. Chapter 4 deals with the nature of school to work transitions and the roles of the State Government, schools and industry in supporting these transitions.

The Committee has examined important State Government initiatives such as Local Learning and Employment Networks and Managed Individual Pathways and finds that both programs have significant potential to enhance the school to work transitions of young Victorians. With respect to the accountability of LLENs, the Committee believes the outcomes of their work need to be measurable through job creation for young people and school retention rates. The Committee also considers that the MIPs model could be extended to include all young people aged 15-19 years who are in engaged education or training.

Chapter 4 highlights the importance of one-to-one mentoring, particularly for those young people who do not have strong family or social networks. The Committee notes that such personalised assistance can be very expensive, however it recommends the Government enhance the mentoring programs aimed at youth currently available through the Local Learning and Employment Networks and the Managed Individual Pathways program.

The role of careers teachers is also considered to be an important component of improving a young person's transition from school to work. The Committee finds the existing careers function in Victorian schools could be improved and makes recommendations regarding the development of a State-wide policy that addresses appropriate training or qualifications for careers teachers and the clear roles and responsibilities for the position of careers teacher. The Committee has also made recommendations seeking more structured work experience programs.

Chapter 4 also highlights barriers facing Indigenous youth and young migrants in making a successful transition from school to work and has made a number of recommendations aimed at reducing these barriers.

Chapter 5: Labour Market Assistance Programs

The Committee's Reference required an examination of the role of governments in helping generate employment opportunities for young people. Chapter 5 examines the range of labour market assistance programs available to young people. These include employment placement programs, training programs and initiatives targeted specifically at the young Indigenous community, available at either the Commonwealth or State level. As well as the multitude of Commonwealth and State Government labour market assistance programs, the Committee observed many examples of innovative initiatives undertaken at the local level, often in partnership with local governments. In particular, the Committee details the success of several programs aimed at assisting 'at risk' youth and other programs aimed at developing entrepreneurial and enterprise skills.

The Committee finds that the role for local and State governments in generating employment opportunities for young people should include the development of economic and employment policy, the provision of incentives and rebates to employers, the provision of appropriate education and training programs and the engaging of industry in the development of employment opportunities for young people.

The Committee also finds that local governments can play a direct role in addressing youth unemployment by providing mainstream employment opportunities at the entry level, offering traineeships and participating in relevant employment initiatives of the State and Commonwealth Governments as well as offering opportunities for young people to participate in work experience and work placements.

The Committee's investigations revealed that there is a high level of duplication in the delivery of government employment related services. Despite this duplication, some major gaps exist in delivering services to young people who require more intensive assistance, including young people aged under 15 years who have disengaged from school. The Committee finds that consideration should be given to integrating some employment and training programs targeted at youth so as to make them more relevant and more sustainable over a longer period of time.

The Committee also finds that monitoring, measurement and reporting of employment outcomes is an important part of all government programs at the State and Commonwealth level and should be strengthened wherever possible.

Chapter 6: Youth Employment Policy Initiatives Overseas

In order to examine innovative initiatives implemented in other jurisdictions, and as a means of broadly examining labour market policies overseas, the Committee undertook a three week study tour of western Europe from 28 June to 18 July 2002.

The Committee examined broad policy initiatives and directions of key international organisations including the International Labour Organization, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development and the European Commission's Employment and Social Affairs Directorate. Specific employment initiatives were also reviewed in various countries including Italy, Belgium, Germany, Britain and Ireland. In particular, the Committee finds the European Commission's four employment strategy pillars (employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities) are a useful

guide in policy development and can be used as an overall direction or set of objectives for reducing youth unemployment.

In summary, the key issues arising out of the Committee's overseas study tour were:

- the need for specific programs aimed at disadvantaged youth including early school leavers, young people from low socio-economic communities, migrant youth and young Koories;
- the importance of vocational training and apprenticeships in assisting the transitions from school-to-work;
- the importance of early intervention strategies commencing at primary school;
- the importance of mentoring and personal assistance, particularly for 'at risk' youth;
- the need for locally based projects targeting local needs;
- the need to obtain employer commitment to programs; and
- the importance of pathways and flexible approaches.

The Committee has applied the above principals when making recommendations in other chapters throughout this Report.

Chapter 7: Issues for Further Investigations

As noted in Chapter 1, during deliberations on this Report, the Committee agreed to present a first Report to Parliament at the end of October 2002 and to table a second Report in 2003. This was considered necessary so that a substantial report could be tabled based on evidence collected to date, while new issues and evidence could continue to be examined and be included in a second Report.

This chapter briefly highlights issues to be covered in a detailed Second Report, including social, economic and industrial issues specific to unemployed young people and some additional issues pertaining to youth participation in education.

Findings and Recommendations

Chapter 2: Labour Market Experience of Youth in Victoria

FINDING 2.1 (page 15)

The Committee finds that based on an analysis of ABS Census data:

- *the incidence of youth unemployment for males is higher than for females across both the 15-19 and 20-24 age cohorts; and*
- *between 1996 and 2001, Victoria experienced a decrease in the youth unemployment rate from 16.1 per cent (1996) to 12.8 per cent (2001) and a marginal increase in the youth labour force participation rate from 63.2 per cent (1996) to 64.2 per cent (2001).*

The Committee further finds that based on ABS Labour Force Survey data, the percentage of 20-24 year olds unemployed over the short-term or medium-term increased between 1999 and 2001, while long-term unemployment has declined in this cohort. There has been a decrease in the percentage of 15-19 year olds unemployed over the short-term, while long-term unemployment has worsened for this group.

FINDING 2.2 (page 18)

The Committee finds that according to 2001 Census data, there is a significant number of Victorian youth who could be classified as underemployed, that is, they are working part-time and are not engaged in education.

FINDING 2.3 (page 28)

The Committee finds that youth located in metropolitan Melbourne have lower unemployment rates in each age cohort than non-metropolitan youth. At the time of the 2001 Census, youth (15-24), in metropolitan regions experienced an average unemployment rate of 12.2 per cent compared to 14.7 per cent for non-metropolitan youth. The participation rate for 15-24 year olds was 64.4 per cent for metropolitan youth and 63.7 per cent for non-metropolitan youth.

However, there are also significant differences within both the metropolitan area and non-metropolitan area. The highest youth unemployment rates were experienced in Gippsland region (16.7%), Central-Highlands-Wimmera (15.7%) and Barwon-Western District (14.8%). Within metropolitan regions, North Western Melbourne experienced the highest youth unemployment rate (15.2%), followed by Outer Western Melbourne (14.4%) and Inner Melbourne (13.5%). This suggests that structural inequalities exist between non-metropolitan and metropolitan areas as well as within these areas.

FINDING 2.4 (page 33)

The Committee finds that the unemployment rate for youth born in a non-main English speaking country was 22.5 per cent compared to the State average of 12.8 per cent. The unemployment rate for those youth who speak a language other than English at home was better, at 18.5 per cent. The Committee further finds that new refugee and humanitarian arrivals are more vulnerable to long-term unemployment than other categories of migrants.

FINDING 2.5 (page 35)

The Committee finds that based on 2001 Census data:

- *the Victorian Indigenous youth unemployment rate was 26.4 per cent, compared to 12.8 per cent for the overall Victorian youth population;*
- *the labour force participation rate for Victorian Indigenous youth was 52.7 per cent, compared to 64.2 per cent for all Victorian youth; and*
- *Indigenous youth unemployment rates and labour force participation rates are worse in non-metropolitan Victoria compared to metropolitan Melbourne.*

Chapter 3: Youth Participation in Education and Training

FINDING 3.1 (page 47)

The Committee finds that VET in schools programs are an important and attractive option for many students, including those intending to pursue an academic pathway. The Committee further finds that for some students, VET in schools programs may encourage them to stay in school when they otherwise may disengage from education.

FINDING 3.2 (page 47)

The Committee finds that those students who are at greatest risk of disengaging from school benefit the most from access to VET in schools programs. However, there are some emerging issues regarding VET in schools that the Government should note including:

- *in some regions there is a shortage of VET in schools places;*
- *the need to enhance linkages between schools and employers; and*
- *the need to enhance public transport to facilitate travel to work places.*

FINDING 3.3 (page 47)

The Committee finds that VET in schools programs offer students an opportunity to develop job search skills, however, the Committee notes that some students require additional support in writing résumés and preparing for interviews.

FINDING 3.4 (page 55)

The Committee finds that the initial trial of the VCAL has been positively received by participating students and teachers as a means of providing a vocational alternative to VCE, however, there is scope for further promotion of VCAL to students, parents, schools and business as a positive alternative to VCE.

FINDING 3.5 (page 55)

The Committee finds that there are some early issues regarding VCAL that the Government should note including:

- *the need for a greater level of resourcing;*
- *the need for VCAL programs to maximise the development of industry specific and employability skills for future career opportunities;*
- *the limitation to expansion of VCAL (and VET in schools and school-based apprenticeships) in rural areas, due to the smaller number of employers being able to offer appropriate work placements;*
- *the need to consider making VCAL available to students from Years 9 & 10; and*
- *the need to enhance public transport to facilitate travel to TAFE, ACE and employment components of the program.*

The Committee further finds that the ability of students to transfer between the VCAL and VCE is absolutely critical and should be facilitated.

FINDING 3.6 (page 58)

The Committee finds that low levels of literacy and numeracy are a serious barrier to undertaking further education and training and finding employment for large numbers of young people in metropolitan, rural and regional areas.

FINDING 3.7 (page 68)

The Committee finds that school retention to Year 12 greatly enhances future employment opportunities for young people and accordingly, encouraging young people to complete Year 12 should continue to be a key focus of Government education policy, strategy and practice. However, the Committee further finds that for many students, the emphasis on completion of VCE is an unrealistic expectation that often leads to young people leaving school early and becoming unemployed.

FINDING 3.8 (page 69)

The Committee finds that an inclusive and expansive school curriculum that provides for and values a choice between an academic or vocational focus is essential to maintain and increase school retention rates.

FINDING 3.9 (page 74)

The Committee finds that there has been a decline in technical skills of young people that has had a significant negative impact on businesses and industry that require trade apprentices. The Committee further finds that the decline in technical skills has arisen as a result of a decreased focus on teaching technical skills in schools and the lack of vocationally orientated role models.

FINDING 3.10 (page 79)

The Committee finds that greater access to alternative curricula, aimed at students at risk and those outside of the education system, is required to assist the students to gain self-confidence in learning, improve their self-esteem and to start to develop some of

the employability skills, such as a positive attitude to learning and having the motivation to show up and participate in a structured environment.

FINDING 3.11 (page 91)

The Committee finds that skills shortages in trades and low apprenticeship take-ups have also resulted in skill shortages at the middle management level in many industries. This is partly attributed to:

- *lack of promotion to students and parents by both schools and industry; and*
- *the decline in technical skills and role models in schools (which is now being addressed by VET in schools and VCAL).*

FINDING 3.12 (page 91)

The Committee finds that a best practice apprenticeship and traineeship model for Group Training Companies and employers of young apprentices should incorporate the following components:

- *a focused marketing effort aimed at promoting trades entry and career pathways to students, parents and teachers;*
- *a high level of support provided to apprentices that includes a mentoring component;*
- *security of employment and a supportive, youth friendly work environment over the term of the apprenticeship;*
- *accelerated training where appropriate; and*
- *assistance to youth in purchasing equipment or accessing the workplace.*

FINDING 3.13 (page 95)

The Committee finds that the ACE sector is fulfilling an important role in offering opportunities for keeping significant numbers of young people connected to education, training and the broader community.

FINDING 3.14 (page 103)

The Committee finds that the lower participation in education and training among Koorie youth is attributable to a range of factors including:

- *many schools do not recognise and respond to the cultural needs of Koorie students;*
- *many young Koories do not have access to mentoring support and role models that would assist them to value education and develop aspirations; and*
- *young Koories are not being adequately supported to pursue education and training options that are linked to local employment opportunities.*

FINDING 3.15 (page 105)

The Committee finds that while proficiency in using computers and the Internet is increasingly essential for success at school or employment, Indigenous youth do not have the same level of access to computers and the Internet as non-Indigenous youth.

FINDING 3.16 (page 112)

The Committee finds that the range of issues affecting participation in education by young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds varies both within

and between communities as well as according to the circumstances surrounding their arrival in Australia and their socio-economic position following settlement.

FINDING 3.17 (page 113)

The Committee finds that newly arrived migrants often have difficulty accessing the mainstream education and training system due to one or more of the following factors:

- they may not have the required level of English language to participate in mainstream education;*
- they may have had a disrupted education which impacts on their ability to learn;*
- they may not have an adequate understanding of the education and training structures in Victoria and the opportunities and supports available to them; and/or*
- they may be suffering from trauma or stress as a result of circumstances in their country of origin.*

FINDING 3.18 (page 113)

The Committee finds that increased school retention and school completion rates are unlikely to be achieved within sub-groups of the culturally and linguistically diverse community without necessary interventions and programs to assist them in remaining in the school system.

FINDING 3.19 (page 113)

The Committee finds that newly arrived young migrants require special language programs that cater for their language skills, cultural needs and settlement needs and that are sensitive to special circumstances such as experiences of trauma.

FINDING 3.20 (page 113)

The Committee finds that TAFE and other adult learning environments are more suited to the needs of many young newly arrived migrants when addressing their English language requirements. The Committee further finds that these environments offer the added advantage of facilitating the link between language courses and vocational courses.

RECOMMENDATION 3.1 (page 48)

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training consult with schools and Local Learning and Employment Networks in order to identify gaps in VET in schools programs and to ensure that students do not miss out on these opportunities. Information to be collected by the Department should include:

- how many students missed out on a place in their preferred VET program;**
- what the key areas of shortage were and why these shortages occurred;**
- what alternatives were offered to and taken up by the student;**
- how schools are engaging with employers; and**
- how the current gaps in the VET in schools program can be filled.**

RECOMMENDATION 3.2 (page 48)

The Committee recommends that schools adopt a code of practice for VET in schools programs that:

- identifies students in danger of disengaging from school;
- identifies how VET in schools programs can assist these students; and
- guides these students through an application process through one-to-one mentoring.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3 (page 48)

The Committee recommends that in order to encourage a work based component in VET in schools programs, students who successfully complete the program should receive a certificate that includes the name of the employer where they received training.

RECOMMENDATION 3.4 (page 56)

The Committee recommends that strategies to ensure continued interest in schooling, including vocational related curriculum, be implemented in Victorian schools from Year 8 onwards.

RECOMMENDATION 3.5 (page 56)

The Committee recommends the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) be evaluated to determine:

- its success in terms of educational attainment and school retention;
- the level of participation by disadvantaged young people including young people in care, those with a mental or physical disability and those currently disengaged from education;
- any barriers to access for these people; and
- the benefits of extending VCAL to Year 10 students.

RECOMMENDATION 3.6 (page 56)

The Committee recommends that the State Government develop a promotional campaign aimed at students, schools, parents and business outlining the advantages of VCAL as a positive alternative to VCE as well as a pathway to reverting back to VCE studies and entering university. The Committee further recommends that resources produced as part of this campaign be available in a range of community languages.

RECOMMENDATION 3.7 (page 58)

The Committee recognises the range of existing Government literacy and numeracy programs and recommends that the State Government evaluate these programs and introduce new programs where necessary to ensure that the needs of the following target groups are met:

- secondary school students whose current level of achievement is being hindered by inadequate literacy and numeracy standards;

-
- early school leavers who may benefit from additional literacy support to enable them to successfully return to further study or training programs to gain employment;
 - recent migrants and others from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who may have had disrupted schooling or require additional English language training;
 - young Indigenous Victorians who are disadvantaged in the mainstream education system;
 - young people who are in care, and
 - young people involved in the juvenile justice system.

RECOMMENDATION 3.8 (page 69)

The Committee recommends that the State Government adopt and promote a broader range of performance indicators that include not only retention to Year 12, VCE ENTER scores and the number of tertiary offers, but also other successful student outcomes such as employment linked to training, apprenticeships and traineeships, vocational studies and continued student connections to learning and local community networks.

RECOMMENDATION 3.9 (page 69)

The Committee recommends that the State Government increase resources for VCAL and VET in schools and examine the need for increased assistance for non-school based registered training organisations.

RECOMMENDATION 3.10 (page 74)

The Committee recommends that the Government seek cross party support for more detailed examination of options for increasing skills through trade and vocational training, including consideration of the production school model.

RECOMMENDATION 3.11 (page 74)

The Committee recommends that the State Government, in partnership with the South East LLEN, pilot an optional Year 9 vocational curriculum and pathway at the regional, sub-regional or cluster level.

RECOMMENDATION 3.12 (page 79)

The Committee recommends the development and expansion of a diverse curriculum and where appropriate, alternate schools that cover a broader range of needs, including for example, preparation for entry into trades, engineering and manufacturing; preparation for the agricultural sector; preparation for entry into tourism, hospitality and other service industries; and development of artistic skills.

RECOMMENDATION 3.13 (page 79)

The Committee recommends that the State Government conduct an information campaign in schools, communities and social and welfare organisations to ensure that those supporting young people with barriers to mainstream education, training and/or employment are aware of alternatives available and how to access them.

RECOMMENDATION 3.14 (page 92)

The Committee recommends that the State Government liaise with the LLENs to ensure that in each region public vocational monies are directed towards training in growth industries or industries with identified skill shortages and therefore provide greater security of employment.

RECOMMENDATION 3.15 (page 92)

The Committee recommends that the State Government offer a range of incentives to young people to encourage them to enter apprenticeships in priority industries with identified skill shortages or growth industries.

RECOMMENDATION 3.16 (page 92)

The Committee recommends that employers, including Group Training Companies, be encouraged to offer job security as part of offering apprenticeships to young people. The Committee further recommends that the State Government investigate the effectiveness of offering employer subsidies with a requirement that ties apprenticeships and traineeships to more secure employment outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 3.17 (page 92)

The Committee recommends that the State Government investigate the low retention rates from traineeships and apprenticeships and the reasons they occur, including the reasons some Group Training Companies and TAFE institutes achieve better retention rates than others. The Committee further recommends that the State Government further promote successes in the apprenticeship and traineeship system, including effective employer and Group Training Company models and young people experiencing success in the workplace.

RECOMMENDATION 3.18 (page 95)

The Committee recommends that the State Government continue to monitor the participation of the youth cohort in adult and community education and provide adequate levels of funding to reflect any increases in participation.

RECOMMENDATION 3.19 (page 104)

The Committee recommends that a special VET in schools program, linked to local employment opportunities, be made available to young Koories in the early as well as later years of secondary school. The Committee further

recommends that schools identify young Koorie students at risk of disengaging and be proactive in assisting them to access work experience placements and part-time employment.

RECOMMENDATION 3.20 (page 105)

The Committee recommends that the Government investigate ways of increasing computer skills and access to the Internet for Indigenous youth.

RECOMMENDATION 3.21 (page 114)

The Committee recommends that the State Government examine whether in certain circumstances, relevant adult learning environments such as Adult Multicultural Education Services could become eligible to receive ACE funding to provide English language training to new arrivals aged under 18 years.

RECOMMENDATION 3.22 (page 114)

The Committee recommends that the State Government provide additional support to employers employing young newly arrived migrants or refugees as trainees or apprentices to assist them to provide the necessary language and literacy support.

RECOMMENDATION 3.23 (page 114)

The Committee recommends that the State and Federal Governments seek an agreement to extend access to training and employment programs for new arrivals in some visa categories.

RECOMMENDATION 3.24 (page 114)

The Committee recommends that English as a Second Language courses be linked to vocational and practical skills and be more widely available at a range of levels.

RECOMMENDATION 3.25 (page 114)

The Committee recommends that when undertaking education and marketing campaigns promoting the full range of education, training, employment and career opportunities to students and parents, the State Government ensure that information is conveyed through culturally appropriate media and that materials are translated into relevant community languages.

Chapter 4: School to Work Transitions

FINDING 4.1 (page 119)

The Committee finds that the most critical transitions in any young person's life are the transitions primary school to secondary school, from childhood into adolescence, from adolescence to adulthood, from education to the workforce, and from dependence to independence and responsibility. The Committee finds that failure to make these

transitions successfully will increase a young person's likelihood of long periods of unemployment either now or in the future.

FINDING 4.2 (page 119)

The Committee finds that all forms of education, training and employment should be equally valued and that there is a need for greater recognition of the benefits of commencing employment via an apprenticeship or traineeship.

FINDING 4.3 (page 122)

The Committee finds that the Local Learning and Employment Networks have significant potential to enhance the school to work transitions of young Victorians and believes that in terms of accountability, the outcomes of the LLENs' work need to be measurable through job creation for young people and school retention rates. The Committee further finds that linkages with industry and employers need to be strengthened.

FINDING 4.4 (page 128)

The Committee finds that the Managed Individual Pathways program is an important and widely supported initiative but has been implemented at varying levels of success in different schools and could be improved further through cross-sectoral collaborations and co-operative approaches with other State and Commonwealth Government initiatives.

FINDING 4.5 (page 129)

The Committee finds that a Year 13 'Gap Year' may be a practical solution for a number of young people who are not yet ready to make a successful transition from education into employment if it is accompanied by adequate mentoring and engagement with education or training institutions.

FINDING 4.6 (page 133)

The Committee finds that a comprehensive, coordinated approach to tracking young people will increase the likelihood of successful transitions, will assist in the early identification of those who have failed to make a successful transition and will contribute valuable knowledge about the effectiveness of government assistance programs.

FINDING 4.7 (page 138)

The Committee finds that responsibility for effective transitions is shared between the student, teachers and trainers, parents and families, industry, the community and governments. Successful transitions depend on the effectiveness of these parties as well as the individual family, locality and socio-economic circumstances of students.

FINDING 4.8 (page 138)

The Committee finds that although very costly, transition support through one-to-one mentoring is particularly important for those young people who do not have strong family or social networks. In addition, many young people and their families are unaware of the supports available to them and where to go for advice on education, training and career choices. The Committee therefore finds that transitional support for

young people, including careers counselling, post-school options and post-school support services must be strengthened.

FINDING 4.9 (page 143)

The Committee finds that in many cases, young people who have undertaken work experience, part-time or casual employment or a pre-apprenticeship course are more likely to make a successful transition into employment. Conversely, many of those who do not access these programs are leaving the education system with inadequate vocational skills, unrealistic expectations of the type of work they may obtain and a poor attitude to work in general.

FINDING 4.10 (page 143)

The Committee finds that existing work experience programs lack structure and in many cases do not provide appropriate links between school and future employment opportunities.

FINDING 4.11 (page 151)

The Committee finds that the existing careers function in Victorian schools is generally unstructured and under-resourced, and lacks the necessary human resource skills and necessary industry links to provide effective advice to students on a range of career options.

FINDING 4.12 (page 153)

The Committee finds that Bendigo Senior Secondary College has achieved considerable success in terms of academic results, school retention rates and successful student transitions as a result of a number of integrated programs that provide personal support and advice to students in their education and pathways to employment. The Committee notes that it has achieved this success within its current funding allocations.

FINDING 4.13 (page 155)

The Committee finds that a significant number of young people do not have the necessary skills to conduct an effective job search including the ability to identify appropriate vacancies, approach employers in the required manner, write job applications and résumés and prepare and present well for interviews. The Committee further finds that the inability to conduct an effective job search spans the full spectrum of young people, including early school leavers and graduates of tertiary institutions.

FINDING 4.14 (page 160)

The Committee finds that the reasons many employers may not find the employment of young people attractive include:

- *young people often do not present as job ready;*
- *past experiences employing young people have revealed that many do not exhibit a sound work ethic, enthusiasm, and a willingness and desire to learn;*
- *young people are often not competitive in the labour market due to a lack of job experience and industry specific skills; and*
- *the high costs associated with training and supervising young inexperienced people.*

FINDING 4.15 (page 161)

The Committee finds that regional specificity and direct contact at the local level between industry, schools and the general community is important in bridging gaps between these sectors and in overcoming skills shortages. The Committee further finds that parents and employers should be encouraged to take greater responsibility for informing young people about their education, training, employment and career options.

FINDING 4.16 (page 161)

The Committee finds that industry can and needs to play an active role in overcoming skills shortages by ensuring attractive conditions in the industry, by communicating in innovative ways the availability and benefits of completing an apprenticeship and by directly engaging with schools, students and parents.

FINDING 4.17 (page 166)

The Committee finds that many young Indigenous Victorians are disadvantaged in the labour market due to a number of factors including:

- *experiences of social disadvantage, including lower socio-economic status, poor health and family breakdown;*
- *low school retention rates and levels of educational attainment;*
- *inadequate or inappropriate vocational education and training;*
- *intergenerational unemployment and high levels of welfare dependency;*
- *lack of family and work role models;*
- *low level of self-confidence and self-esteem;*
- *lack of networks to employers; and*
- *discrimination and lack of cultural understanding in the workforce.*

FINDING 4.18 (page 169)

The Committee finds that building a positive image and creating positive role models for Indigenous young people is an important step in improving employment prospects for young Indigenous people. The Committee further finds that increased access to and participation in vocational training and education will have a positive impact on the opportunities for young Indigenous Victorians to achieve a successful school to work transition.

FINDING 4.19 (page 174)

The Committee finds that many newly arrived young migrants and refugees face considerable employment barriers including:

- *lower levels of oral and written communication skills in English required for effective job search, written applications and job interviews;*
- *the reduced likelihood of having local work experience (linked to school, university or part-time employment);*
- *lack of knowledge of Australian workplace culture and systems, including OHS requirements, EEO and work-based relationships; and*
- *lack of understanding within the workplace of the extent of post trauma stress.*

FINDING 4.20 (page 179)

The Committee finds that culturally and linguistically diverse youth, particularly newly arrived migrants and refugees require access to a range of specialist settlement services, in addition to participating in a range of mainstream education, vocational and employment services or programs.

RECOMMENDATION 4.1 (page 128)

The Committee recommends that individual employment portfolios that include a résumé, personal skills profile and research on relevant industries and employment opportunities, as well as an identified mentoring opportunity, be a component of all students' Managed Individual Pathways Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2 (page 128)

The Committee recommends that the Managed Individual Pathways model be extended to include all young people aged between 15-19 years engaged in education or training.

RECOMMENDATION 4.3 (page 129)

The Committee recommends that the State Government further examine the concept of a structured and planned 'Gap Year' as a potential practical solution for a number of young people who are not yet ready to make a successful transition from education into employment.

RECOMMENDATION 4.4 (page 133)

The Committee recommends that the State Government, in partnership with local government, develop policies and procedures to ensure that an identified local organisation, such as the Local Learning and Employment Network, be responsible for measuring and reporting the success rate of school to work transitions and the outcomes of young people participating in public labour market and training initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 4.5 (page 134)

The Committee recommends that the State Government develop a comprehensive, universal tracking process to follow the experience of school leavers and young people entering and exiting the education and training systems.

RECOMMENDATION 4.6 (page 138)

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training, in partnership with schools, ensure that parents in all schools are appropriately informed regarding student transition issues, including the value and benefits of the full range of post-compulsory pathways, methods of career planning and the changing world of work.

RECOMMENDATION 4.7 (page 138)

The Committee recommends that the State Government improve the mentoring programs aimed at youth currently available through the Local Learning and Employment Networks and the Managed Individual Pathways program. Mentors should be able to assist young people to consider appropriate pathways between education, training and employment. Mentors should provide a positive role model appropriate to the individual youth and may come from industry backgrounds, small business and the sports, recreation and entertainment industries.

RECOMMENDATION 4.8 (page 144)

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training aim to enhance students' exposure to the workforce and a variety of career options during secondary schooling, training and further education. This should be achieved through a combination of work experience placements, part-time employment, presentations by industry and local business people and a focus on developing work readiness skills including organisational skills, teamwork, problem solving and communication skills.

RECOMMENDATION 4.9 (page 144)

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training develop a policy for a structured work experience program in all Victorian schools that includes:

- guidelines for an appropriate amount of time that students should spend in work experience;
- a brokerage role for external agencies where appropriate;
- provision for students to undertake work experience in block release format and at times most appropriate to meet the needs of both the student and the employer;
- a supported student application process to enhance job search and interview skills;
- a reduction in the current restrictions on the duration of work experience for Year 10 students; and
- provision for students, at the discretion of the school principal, to undertake work experience in industries currently declared 'high risk', where that placement is deemed relevant to local employment opportunities and a true reflection of the student's interests and aspirations and where that placement can be reasonably supervised.

RECOMMENDATION 4.10 (page 151)

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training develop a policy for a structured careers education and advice function in all Victorian schools that includes:

- clear roles and responsibilities for the position of careers advisers;
- appropriate training or qualifications for careers advisers;

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- sufficient funds to enable schools to employ the appropriate number of careers teachers for the size of their school;
 - mechanisms to encourage and support linkages with industry and employers;
 - strategies to meet the information needs of students and parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
 - strategies for refocusing young people and their families on the reality that VCE completion is only one of a number of valuable options and that successful employment and career opportunities can be achieved through alternative pathways.

RECOMMENDATION 4.11 (page 155)

The Committee recommends that the development of an employment portfolio be offered to all students at VCE or its equivalent and that all young people in Years 10, 11 and 12 are given preparation for work, including interview techniques and the range of skills that an employer looks for both in the interview and the job situation.

RECOMMENDATION 4.12 (page 161)

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training aim to further strengthen the Local Learning and Employment Network to:

- develop stronger links between employers and the education and training system;
- enhance young people's attitudes and awareness of work;
- improve employers' understanding of young people's attitudes and capabilities; and
- promote positive career paths in a wide range of industry sectors.

RECOMMENDATION 4.13 (page 170)

The Committee recommends that the State Government assist young Indigenous Victorians to achieve a successful school to work transition and become more competitive in the labour market by providing an increased number of pre-apprenticeships and other vocationally oriented training programs, linked to local employment opportunities and assisting Indigenous youth to access these opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 4.14 (page 170)

The Committee recommends that the State Government improve existing training and employment programs available to Indigenous youth by supporting employers to implement formal mentoring structures that meet the specific needs of Indigenous youth.

RECOMMENDATION 4.15 (page 170)

The Committee recommends that State and Federal Governments, together with key employer and Aboriginal groups, consider affirmative action policies for young Indigenous people seeking employment.

RECOMMENDATION 4.16 (page 175)

The Committee recommends that the State Government seek to negotiate an agreement with the Commonwealth Government that allows young migrants on Temporary Protection Visas access to settlement services available through the Migrant Resource Centres.

RECOMMENDATION 4.17 (page 179)

The Committee recommends that the State Government, in partnership with relevant community organisations, develop a mentoring model relevant to the needs of newly arrived and refugees in accessing relevant education, training and employment pathways and provide access to this model through existing Government programs such as LLEN, MIP and VET in schools.

Chapter 5: Labour Market Assistance and Programs

FINDING 5.1 (page 191)

The Committee finds that current eligibility criteria for Youth Allowance may act as a barrier to some young people registering as unemployed or accessing Centrelink services. The Committee further finds that employment outcomes could be enhanced by linking young people with Centrelink services while they are still in education.

FINDING 5.2 (page 196)

The Committee recognises that the introduction of a Training Credit system for Work for the Dole participants should improve the scheme and finds that the benefits of Work for the Dole could be enhanced by a new name for the Program and by providing a certificate of participation which outlines key activities and skills obtained.

FINDING 5.3 (page 199)

The Committee finds that the Jobs Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) program has been successful in providing assistance to young people aged 15-21 and may form the basis of assisting at risk young people as young as 13 and 14 years old.

FINDING 5.4 (page 208)

The Committee recognises that the refinements arising from the State Government's review of the CBE Program should improve the Program and finds that the benefits of CBE could be further enhanced through greater marketing of the Program and greater integration with other employment initiatives.

FINDING 5.5 (page 212)

The Committee finds that local communities have embraced the Community Jobs Program as a positive step in providing young disadvantaged job seekers with appropriate local work experience and skill development. However, the Committee notes that some significantly disadvantaged job seekers may require further assistance in preparing them to participate effectively in the Program.

FINDING 5.6 (page 214)

The Committee finds that the State Government's Youth Employment Scheme, which is currently available to State departments and agencies, could achieve further benefits, particularly in regional and rural Victoria, if the program was available to local government.

FINDING 5.7 (page 215)

The Committee finds that the Youth Pathways Program provides essential assistance to young people 'at risk' and that more young people in the TAFE and ACE sectors could potentially benefit through an expansion of the Program.

FINDING 5.8 (page 217)

The Committee finds that innovative, localised programs are more likely to monitor, measure and report outcomes from their activities than labour market programs operating at the State or Federal level. The Committee further finds that a greater level of scrutiny and pressure to access limited resources contributes to a stronger focus on achieving and demonstrating sustainable outcomes.

FINDING 5.9 (page 221)

The Committee finds that there is a high level of duplication in the delivery of government employment related services. However, some major gaps exist in delivering services to young people who perhaps require more intensive assistance, including young people aged under 15 years who have disengaged from school.

FINDING 5.10 (page 221)

The Committee finds that there is a need to integrate some employment and training programs targeted at youth so as to make them more relevant and more sustainable over a longer period of time and that the State Government has a significant role to play in encouraging aggregation of services, peer review and synergies.

FINDING 5.11 (page 222)

The Committee finds that youth friendly 'one-stop-shops' should be considered an effective way of ensuring the effective participation of young people in the education, training and employment service system.

FINDING 5.12 (page 225)

The Committee finds that current government service provision could be improved through increased access to case management, more personal development programs and longer-term assistance to support young people in self-employment and enterprise initiatives.

FINDING 5.13 (page 225)

The Committee finds that support services offered to youth should respond to the needs of all sub-groups of youth at risk of not engaging with education and employment, including:

- *young people who are moderately 'at risk' and who mainly require broader educational options than are currently available and less traditional modes of delivery to remain in education and training and gain long-term employment; and*
- *young people who have very disadvantaged or dysfunctional backgrounds, suffer depression or use drugs, and who do not currently see themselves as part of mainstream society.*

FINDING 5.14 (page 229)

The Committee finds that there needs to be a stronger link between labour market programs, industry and employers and that young people who have completed VET in schools programs should not be disadvantaged by potential employers receiving lower subsidies for young people who have completed a certificate course.

FINDING 5.15 (page 229)

The Committee finds that employer subsidies alone are not effective as a means of creating sustainable employment opportunities for young people and that of more relevance are strategies that stimulate economic development and strategies that provide support to employers to provide a youth friendly workplace.

FINDING 5.16 (page 230)

The Committee finds that there is a need to collate more current, comprehensive, reliable data to assist organisations in delivering appropriate education, training and employment programs and services.

FINDING 5.17 (page 234)

The Committee finds that a key role for local governments is in forming partnerships with agencies whose prime target group is young people who are unemployed. This is achieved through funding support and resources, advocacy and advice.

FINDING 5.18 (page 238)

The Committee finds that local governments can play a direct role in addressing youth unemployment by providing mainstream employment opportunities at the entry level, running a youth traineeship program and participating in relevant employment initiatives of the State and Federal Governments as well as offering opportunities for young people to participate in work experience and work placements.

FINDING 5.19 (page 240)

The Committee finds that the role of local councils in addressing youth unemployment may include one or more of the following: advocate, planner, purchaser, provider or facilitator and that the responsibility for addressing youth unemployment at the local government level spans across the functions of councils, including Youth Services, Social Planning, Economic Development, Community Services and Corporate Services.

FINDING 5.20 (page 241)

The Committee finds that local government must form active partnerships with a range of local organisations in order to effectively address youth unemployment at the local level, including relevant government departments and agencies at the State and Federal levels, local secondary schools, employment and training providers, Regional Youth Committees, Local Learning and Employment Networks and community service agencies.

FINDING 5.21 (page 246)

The Committee finds that the success of innovative programs such as Hand Brake Turn and The Cook Shop is based on:

- *the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff;*
- *the one-on-one support provided to young people in addressing a range of issues in their lives; and*
- *the ability to engage young people through a 'hands on', interesting, yet practical activity.*

The Committee further finds that the issuing of a certificate to successful program participants gives the young people a sense of achievement, has a positive impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence and will assist them in their future education, training or employment pathway by providing a record of their skills and achievement.

FINDING 5.22 (page 251)

The Committee finds that the successful enterprise model used by GippSK8 is based on:

- *the development of real, local employment opportunities;*
- *the success in negotiating a flexible, relevant training package with the local TAFE institute;*
- *the holistic approach taken that addresses the young participants' employment, training and social needs; and*
- *the ability to access a substantial financial grant that was delivered over an extended period of time.*

FINDING 5.23 (page 253)

The Committee finds that Lead On has achieved success in engaging young people in a range of projects that have provided them with various skills, personal development, community connections, employment, direction and confidence. The projects success is demonstrated by:

- *expansion into four additional locations within the first three years of operation;*
- *the steady stream of business partners ready and willing to provide projects or other opportunities for young people in their communities; and*
- *the fact that it has never been required to advertise for young participants.*

FINDING 5.24 (page 255)

The Committee finds that the C.R.E.A.T.E program is consistent with the International Labour Organization and European Commission's policy directions that encourage and

incorporate entrepreneurial and mentoring components into education and employment programs.

FINDING 5.25 (page 255)

The Committee finds that the youth enterprise model is effective in addressing youth unemployment in rural areas where mainstream employment opportunities are limited.

FINDING 5.26 (page 257)

The Committee finds that the roles for State and local governments in generating employment opportunities for young people include:

- *economic and employment policy;*
- *incentives and rebates to employers;*
- *provision of appropriate education and training programs;*
- *direct generation of employment opportunities;*
- *collecting and reporting data; and*
- *engaging industry in the development of employment opportunities for young people.*

FINDING 5.27 (page 257)

The Committee finds that programs addressing youth unemployment are most effective when:

- *the response comes from the local community and reflects the needs of that community;*
- *programs are tailored to the needs of individuals rather than applying generic solutions;*
- *there is follow up beyond the date of completion; and*
- *early intervention prevents the cycle of unemployment becoming entrenched.*

RECOMMENDATION 5.1 (page 192)

The Committee recommends that Centrelink improve the marketing and promotion of its services to ensure all young people are accessing appropriate services and further, that as part of the Youth Servicing Strategy, it explore opportunities to expand visiting services to a wide range of environments attended by young people, including educational institutions.

RECOMMENDATION 5.2 (page 204)

The Committee recommends that the State Government introduce more flexibility into the Youth Development Program so that young people who are disengaged from education can participate in an appropriate program.

RECOMMENDATION 5.3 (page 208)

The Committee recommends that the pre-placement support provided under the Community Business Employment Program be retained. However, the Committee recommends that the Government consider integrating this

Program into a more inclusive pathways and transition support service that is available to all young people in Victoria.

RECOMMENDATION 5.4 (page 217)

The Committee recommends that the State Government develop a more rigorous set of measures for its employment programs that include a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures to assess the skills dividends and long-term employment outcomes as well as benchmarks against best practice programs in other jurisdictions.

RECOMMENDATION 5.5 (page 222)

The Committee recommends that the Government consider amalgamating the CBE Program and the MIP initiative to deliver a coordinated pathways and transition support program to all young people, whether they are currently engaged in education or training or currently unemployed.

RECOMMENDATION 5.6 (page 222)

The Committee recommends that the State Government establish an Interdepartmental Committee to:

- develop cooperative arrangements that allow greater flexibility for young people to access programs based on their need at any point in time rather than on rigid, pre-determined eligibility criteria that create gaps in the market and;**
- investigate the feasibility of each LLEN establishing local youth access points, or 'one-stop-shops' in conjunction with relevant government and community agencies.**

RECOMMENDATION 5.7 (page 226)

The Committee recommends that the need for a greater capacity for case management be addressed through the development of a comprehensive pathways, transition and tracking service, building on current initiatives such as LLENs, MIPs and CBE, that is available to young people between the ages of 15 and 25 years.

RECOMMENDATION 5.8 (page 229)

The Committee recommends that the State Government review and adjust the system of wage subsidies paid to employers to remove any disincentive for young people to undertake vocational education and training.

RECOMMENDATION 5.9 (page 232)

The Committee recommends that the State Government, following extensive consultation, consider legislating a State-sponsored opportunity for young people to participate in schooling, training or the labour market up to the age of at least 17 years.

RECOMMENDATION 5.10 (page 253)

The Committee recommends that the State Government assist the expansion of Lead On to other rural and regional communities in Victoria.

RECOMMENDATION 5.11 (page 255)

The Committee recommends that the State Government develop a cross-portfolio policy approach that encourages and assists young people into self-employment opportunities. The Committee recommends that this approach include:

- **the promotion of young people succeeding in business to other young people, their parents and the community;**
- **the inclusion of entrepreneurial and enterprise skills and activities in education and employment programs; and**
- **a mentoring component.**

RECOMMENDATION 5.12 (page 257)

The Committee recommends that when addressing the issue of youth unemployment that the State Government:

- **adopt a regional and community approach;**
- **adopt a whole of Government approach; and**
- **ensure vocational learning and employment skills underpin education and training aimed at young people.**

Chapter 6: Youth Employment Policy Initiatives Overseas

FINDING 6.1 (page 266)

The Committee finds that the European Commission's four employment strategy pillars (employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities) are a useful guide in policy development and can be used as an overall direction or set of objectives for reducing youth unemployment.

FINDING 6.2 (page 276)

The Committee finds that there are a number of key elements in the British Government's New Deal for Young policy initiative that should be noted by the Victorian Government in future policy development to address youth unemployment. Key aspects of New Deal are:

- *the need to persevere with young people considered 'at risk' or disadvantaged;*
- *the importance of personal advisers particularly for 'at risk' youth; and*
- *the promotion of vocational education as a positive choice for students.*

FINDING 6.3 (page 276)

The Committee finds that while New Deal initiatives have achieved success in reducing Britain's youth unemployment levels, particularly in relation to long-term young

unemployed. Less success has been achieved in economically disadvantaged regions, with young people who are considered to be at greatest risk of unemployment and with ethnic minority groups. The Committee received no information to suggest a cost benefit analysis of these programs has been carried out to identify whether they deliver value in terms of results for the expenditure outlaid.

FINDING 6.4 (page 278)

The Committee finds that Germany's dual education and training system has been largely successful in lowering youth unemployment levels and is supported both practically and financially by employers, employee organisations and the government. The system has resulted in very low teenage unemployment rates except in the eastern states.

FINDING 6.5 (page 278)

The Committee finds that the concept of vocational training and apprenticeships as part of secondary education would greatly assist the school-to-work transitions in Australia and may even assist some students who ultimately pursue a university education. However, the Committee notes that the German dual system is highly structured and generally considered inflexible as young people's career paths are often decided very early on in life.

FINDING 6.6 (page 280)

The Committee finds that Germany's Immediate Action Program (JUMP) is a high cost program that has achieved some success in reducing youth unemployment levels to date, however, the Committee sees benefits in regionally based training and skill upgrading measures specifically targeted at early school leavers, disadvantaged youth and young migrants.

FINDING 6.7 (page 284)

The Committee finds that while the Rosetta Plan has proved successful in many respects, it also illustrates that those young people that are most disadvantaged and most in need of help, are the ones who are not benefiting from policy initiatives aimed at reducing youth unemployment and increasing school retention rates.

FINDING 6.8 (page 288)

The Committee finds that the Irish Government has been particularly proactive in addressing the needs of disadvantaged youth and early school leavers through personal mentoring, community training workshops and vocational training and education. The Committee believes this personalised, targeted approach can also be used with success in Victoria.

FINDING 6.9 (page 290)

The Committee finds the Italian example illustrates that extremes in economic development in the same country are reflected in youth unemployment and further, that some cultural aspects such as young people living at home may be major factors in sustaining what should otherwise be an unacceptable level of youth unemployment.

FINDING 6.10 (page 291)

The Committee finds that the following issues arising out of its overseas study tour are of particular relevance to youth unemployment solutions in Victoria:

- *the need for specific programs aimed at disadvantaged youth including early school leavers, young people from socio-economically deprived communities, migrant youth and young Koories;*
- *the importance of vocational training and apprenticeships in assisting transitions from school-to-work;*
- *the importance of early intervention strategies commencing at primary school;*
- *the importance of mentoring and personal assistance, particularly for 'at risk' youth;*
- *the need for locally based projects targeting local needs;*
- *the need to obtain employer commitment to programs; and*
- *the importance of pathways and flexible approaches.*

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference

On the 1st March 2000, the Economic Development Committee received a Reference by resolution of the Legislative Council, to inquire into, consider and report on the incidence of youth unemployment in Victoria and options for promoting employment growth over the coming decade. The Terms of Reference included a particular emphasis on:

- ◆ youth unemployment frequency in metropolitan, outer growth, regional and rural areas;
- ◆ youth employment needs in Victoria;
- ◆ the role of State and Local Governments in helping generate employment opportunities for young people;
- ◆ innovative initiatives implemented in other jurisdictions to address youth unemployment and the effectiveness of such initiatives;
- ◆ social, economic and industrial matters specific to unemployed young people;
- ◆ differing incidence of unemployment amongst male and female young people; and
- ◆ unemployment in migrant, Aboriginal and non-English speaking background communities.

The Committee was required to table a report in Parliament by the 31st December 2001. The Legislative Council subsequently resolved to extend the reporting date to 31st December 2002.

1.2 Inquiry Methodology

1.2.1 Process for Gathering Evidence

This report is based on evidence received through written submissions and an extensive series of public hearings held in metropolitan and regional Victoria, together with information gathered on various youth employment initiatives in Europe.

The Terms of Reference was advertised in the major daily newspapers on the 6th April 2002 and in regional newspapers during the week commencing 8th April 2002. A mail-out to nearly 500 government, private and community organisations was also conducted advising them of the Terms of Reference and inviting written submissions. A further advertisement appeared in the major daily newspapers on the 3rd August 2002, advising of the Committee's public hearing program and inviting interested persons to appear before the Committee.

Sixty-nine written submissions were received from a wide range of interested parties, including government departments, local councils, Local Learning and Employment Networks, Area Consultative Committees, education and training providers, Regional Youth Committees and young unemployed people. A list of written submissions is contained at Appendix 3.

In July 2002, the Committee conducted a three week study tour in Europe to examine innovative initiatives in tackling youth unemployment in a number of European countries. The Committee met with key organisations such as the International Labour Organisation, the OECD and the European Commission as well as relevant Government departments and individuals with expertise in youth employment policy. The Committee conducted meetings in Rome, Geneva, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, London and Dublin. A written report detailing the Committee's program of meetings was presented to Parliament on 12th September 2002, a copy of which is provided in Appendix 5. Chapter 6 of this Report deals with the Committee's findings in relation to its overseas study tour.

Following the Committee's overseas study tour, the Committee commenced a series of formal hearings in metropolitan and regional Victoria in August 2002. Hearings were held in Melbourne, Dandenong, Morwell, Sale and Bairnsdale in August, with further hearings held in Melbourne, Darebin, Maribyrnong, Bendigo and Shepparton in September 2002. The locations of public hearings were largely determined by the issues raised in written submissions identifying areas where youth unemployment is a major concern. A list of witnesses appearing before the Committee is presented in Appendix 4.

1.2.2 Methodology for Analysing Evidence

The Committee's first step in analysing the issue of youth unemployment was to examine youth labour market trends over recent years using the ABS's Labour Force Survey data set. In September 2002, the Committee requested from the ABS a special data set of the 2001 Census, containing variables such as the number of employed and unemployed youth separated into gender, geographic regions (Labour Force region and local government area), Indigenous and migrant youth, and the teenage versus young adult cohort. The results of this analysis are contained in Chapter 2.

As mentioned above, the Committee received a large volume of evidence from a wide range of organisations and individuals. In addition to the 69 written submissions, the Committee met with 163 individuals representing over 100 organisations appearing in public hearings.

The issues covered in the evidence were therefore extensive and required the Committee to adopt a far broader approach to the Inquiry. This was necessary to ensure that the Committee adequately considered all issues affecting young people who are more marginally attached to the labour force and are therefore at risk of ongoing labour market disadvantage.

The Committee also adopted a two-pronged approach, considering both the causes and effects of youth unemployment among those young people currently experiencing the reality of unemployment as well as considering and advocating for early intervention to prevent young people from becoming unemployed in the first place.

1.3 Definition of Youth Unemployment

The Committee encountered some early definitional challenges when determining the scope of its Inquiry, and more importantly, determining the extent of youth unemployment levels.

It is widely accepted that persons aged 15-24 years are classified as youth in terms of unemployment levels and youth needs. The standard ILO definition of youth is used by the Committee throughout this Inquiry. The ILO classifies youth as those between 15 and 19 years (teenagers) and 20 and 24 years (young adults).

For the purpose of this Report, the Committee accepts this classification of youth, however it recognises that the years prior to 15 are formative years in the social and education environment and importantly can have a significant impact on the post-15 years.

The Committee acknowledges that the 15-24 category is very broad and that the needs and experiences within this age group vary greatly. Therefore, wherever necessary, the Committee has discussed the special needs of teens aged 15-19 years separately to those of young adults aged 20-24 years.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines the labour force as those people aged 15 and over who are either employed or unemployed. By ABS definition¹, those considered to be employed are those aged 15 and over who during the reference week:

- ◆ worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers); or
- ◆ worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (ie. contributing family workers); or
- ◆ were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:
 - away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week; or
 - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week; or
 - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement; or
 - on strike or locked out; or
 - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job; or

- were employers or own account workers, who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

People are considered unemployed if they satisfy three criteria:²

- ◆ had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and;
- ◆ were available for work in the reference week; or
- ◆ were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week, and could have started in the reference week had the job been available then.

The Committee received much evidence to suggest that the above definitions do not provide for an accurate or adequate picture of youth unemployment. First, the definition of 'unemployed' is extremely narrow, with those obtaining only a small amount of part-time or casual work (one hour) considered to be employed, regardless of whether they are seeking full-time employment. Furthermore, the concept of the youth labour force is affected by the various transitions of young people into employment, which often involve periods of study, job search, involuntary unemployment and time off for leisure and travel.³ As past commentators have noted:

“the complexity of what is happening, therefore cannot be captured in a single statistic such as the youth unemployment rate. Indeed, over reliance on this measure has hampered a deeper understanding of the nature of the difficulties experienced by young people.”⁴

Several witnesses gave anecdotal evidence that youth unemployment rates in some areas and for some groups, such as Koorie youth, are considerably higher than the official statistics. The Committee also received evidence on the issue of underemployment which gives a misleading picture of youth employment and unemployment. Finally, when examining youth unemployment rates overseas, it was clear that comparisons are often unreliable due to each country having a different definition of unemployment and different system for receiving unemployment benefits.

¹ ABS, Labour Force Selected Summary Australia – 6291.0.40.001.

² ABS, *Labour Force Selected Summary Australia*, Catalogue No. 6291.0.40.001.

³ Written Submission No. 51, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2 July 2002, p4.

The ILO definition of unemployed comprises all persons above a specified age who during the reference period were:

- ◆ without work- i.e. were not in paid employment or self-employment;
- ◆ currently available for work - i.e. were available for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and
- ◆ seeking work - i.e. had taken specific steps in the relevant period to seek paid employment or self-employment.

The ILO also defines various characteristics of youth labour markets as follows:

- ◆ A disproportionate number of young people are unemployed compared to all unemployed persons. Young workers are, on average, twice as likely to be unemployed as the overall average.
- ◆ Youth unemployment is highly sensitive to variations in the labour market and overall economic conditions.
- ◆ In most countries, teenagers experience higher unemployment rates than those in their early twenties. This emphasises the importance of school retention.
- ◆ Disadvantaged youth are more likely to become unemployed. These young people are therefore in need of greater individualised assistance to seek employment opportunities.
- ◆ Underemployment is a growing problem. A disproportionately large number of young people are working fewer hours than they would like.

The Committee notes that these internationally recognised characteristics are evident in Victoria and throughout Australia.

1.4 Basis of First Report

During deliberations on this Report, the Committee agreed to present a first Report to Parliament at the end of October 2002 and to table a second Report in 2003. This was considered necessary in order to provide a substantial report on the Committee's work to date, based on a number of related issues identified as a consequence of initial

⁴ Curtin, R., *How Young People are Faring 2001: Learning work and in between*, 2001, cited in Written Submission No. 51, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 28 June 2002, p4.

investigations, including the Committee's overseas meetings while allowing for further investigations leading to a second Report.

In determining which aspects of the Terms of Reference to report on in Report No.1, the Committee acknowledges that the key areas of interest among those participating in the Inquiry to date were issues relating to education and training and transitions into the workforce. As these issues were also a key focus of discussions during the Committee's overseas study tour, the Committee has prioritised these issues in order to impart its knowledge and learnings into the community as quickly as possible.

The Committee has also reported on government and non-government labour market assistance programs in this First Report, given their central importance to the Inquiry and the need to make improvements to assistance and supports as quickly as possible. Additionally, the Committee has reported on its findings in relation to Indigenous youth and newly arrived and refugee young people in recognition that these groups are among the most disadvantaged in the labour market.

Issues to be covered in a detailed Second Report include social, economic and industrial matters specific to unemployed young people. In particular, the Committee will further examine the causes of youth unemployment, the issue of underemployment of young people, intergenerational unemployment, financial support provided to young people and industrial matters specific to unemployed youth. Some other issues relating to youth participation in education (see Chapter 3), MIPS funding (Chapter 4), the high level of turnover in entry-level employment (Chapter 5) and employment quotas (Chapter 6) require further investigation and will also be dealt with in a second Report.

1.5 Structure of Report

In deliberating on the large volume of evidence received throughout the Inquiry, it became clear that many of the issues are interdependent and could not therefore be neatly covered by a separate chapter dealing with each issue specified in the Reference. What the Committee has endeavoured to do instead, is to present a number of chapters that represent the various themes of the Committee's investigations.

Chapter two presents a statistical overview of youth unemployment, including employment and unemployment by region, age group and gender, as well as employment experiences among Indigenous and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Chapters three and four examine youth participation in education and training and young people's transitions from education and training into the workplace. Chapter five provides an analysis of government policy and assistance to young people in the labour force as well as the role for local governments, while Chapter six considers initiatives in overseas jurisdictions.

Chapter seven briefly outlines areas for further investigation to be dealt with in a second Report to Parliament in 2003.

Chapter 2

Labour Market Experience of Youth in Victoria

2.1 Introduction

Evidence received by the Committee consistently reported that it is very difficult to obtain an accurate, comprehensive picture of young people's experience in the labour force at the local or even regional levels. In particular, it is difficult to obtain accurate data on post-school destinations and levels of unemployment, with official unemployment rates based on a narrow definition of employment that also only provides an indication of those young people actively looking for work. The Committee's evidence suggests there are a number of youth who have given up their search for work for a variety of reasons, including disillusionment and continued failure.

It was also noted during the Inquiry that official data does not capture the difficulties that some young people experience in entering employment and the movements between periods of employment (which is often part-time or casual), unemployment, study, training and withdrawal from the labour market. Furthermore, submissions from around Victoria also highlighted that a high level of youth mobility caused by young people seeking education, training and employment opportunities in regional centres or Melbourne contributes to the difficulty in assessing the true rate of youth unemployment in an area. Some areas also emphasised that seasonal work associated with vineyards, orchards, tourism and the snow fields can also distort the local picture, with many young people experiencing short periods of employment (3-4 months) followed by longer stints of unemployment.

With the above limitations in mind, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) represents a good source of quality, reliable statistics on a range of factors relevant to this Inquiry, including the unemployment rates for Victorian youth. The two key sources of labour

market statistics produced by the ABS are the Census and the monthly Labour Force Survey, although this survey reports on a very limited set of variables for the 15-24 year old target group of interest to this Inquiry.

In addressing its Reference, the Committee obtained through the ABS, 2001 Census data variables such as the number of young people employed and unemployed and the unemployment rate and participation rate, by age cohort (15-19 years and 20-24 years), gender, geographic region (local government area and labour force regions), Indigenous status, language spoken at home (English or other language) and country of birth (main-English speaking country or non main-English speaking country). This Chapter is based largely on Census data, with some additional references to the Labour Force Survey where variables for the youth cohort are available. Appendices 9 to 14 provide key labour market indicators by local government area and ABS labour force regions. However, when examining data for local government areas, it is important to note that a very high unemployment rate often represents a small number of unemployed youth (due to the small population sizes in many councils).

The youth labour force is comprised of all employed and unemployed young people. The youth unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons (aged 15-24 years) expressed as a percentage of the youth labour force (aged 15-24 years). The youth participation rate is the youth labour force, expressed as a percentage of the total youth population. Recently, the ABS has recognised the inadequacy of the unemployment rate as a single measure and has begun to consider 'underutilised labour'. This includes those people who are unemployed, those with a marginal attachment to the labour force and those who usually work part-time but who want to work more hours, commonly known as the underemployed or working poor.

2.2 Number of Young People in Victoria

At the time of the 2001 Census, there were a total of 633,143 youth in Victoria (50.7% male and 49.3% female). The total youth cohort was comprised of 321,749 teens aged 15-19 years (50.8% of total youth cohort) and 311,394 young adults aged 20-24 years

(49.2%). There were a further 322,199 children aged 10-14 years who will be entering the youth cohort over the next five years⁵.

Table 2.1 below shows the youth population in Victoria, by labour force region and gender. The majority of young people reside in Melbourne and its metropolitan surrounds (71.4% of those aged 15-19 years and 78.1% of 20-24 year olds). With respect to regional Victoria, the largest youth population is located in the Barwon Western District.

Table 2.1 Victorian Youth Population by Region – 2001 (Number)

Labour Force Regions	15-19		20-24		15-24	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Outer Western Melbourne	19,284	18,504	19,803	19,625	39,087	38,129
North Western Melbourne	8,738	8,565	9,722	9,935	18,460	18,500
Inner Melbourne	6,611	7,274	13,778	15,447	20,389	22,721
North Eastern Melbourne	14,597	14,232	14,786	14,502	29,383	28,734
Inner Eastern Melbourne	19,557	19,171	21,484	20,188	41,041	39,359
Southern Melbourne	11,396	11,217	12,006	11,615	23,402	22,832
Outer Eastern Melbourne	14,760	14,060	12,568	11,599	27,328	25,659
South Eastern Melbourne	13,249	12,511	11,595	11,335	24,844	23,846
Mornington Peninsula	8,208	7,761	6,862	6,390	15,070	14,151
Metropolitan Total	116,400	113,295	122,604	120,636	239,004	233,931
Barwon-Western District	12,248	11,510	9,774	9,316	22,022	20,826
Central Highlands-Wimmera	6,864	6,649	5,339	5,238	12,203	11,887
Loddon-Mallee	9,023	8,726	6,636	6,431	15,659	15,157
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	10,758	9,781	7,480	6,827	18,238	16,608
All Gippsland	8,411	8,084	5,785	5,328	14,196	13,412
Non-Metropolitan Total	47,304	44,750	35,014	33,140	82,318	77,890
Victoria	163,704	158,045	157,618	153,776	321,322	311,821

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing)

⁵ ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Catalogue No. 2001.0, Table BO3.

2.3 Youth Labour Force in Victoria

At the time of the 2001 Census, the Victorian youth labour force was comprised of 393,453 young people, including 342,968 employed young people and 50,485 unemployed young people (refer Table 2.2). The youth unemployment rate was 12.8 per cent and the youth participation rate was 64.2 per cent. In comparison, the unemployment rate for the whole population was 6.9 per cent, and the participation rate was 73.5 per cent.

Within the 15-19 cohort, there were 127,975 employed and 24,001 unemployed young people, which was reflected by an unemployment rate of 15.8 per cent. The participation rate for this cohort was 48.7 per cent, although a low participation rate would be expected due to the large proportion of teenagers participating in full-time education or training. Predictably, the 20-24 cohort experienced a lower rate of unemployment (11.0%) and a higher participation rate (80.3%) compared to the teenage cohort.

Table 2.2 Victorian Youth Labour Force Comparison 2001 and 1996

	2001			1996		
	15-19	20-24	15-24	15-19	20-24	15-24
No. Employed	127,975	214,993	342,968	109,914	218,451	328,365
No. Unemployed	24,001	26,484	50,485	26,322	36,768	63,090
Total Labour Force	151,976	241,477	393,453	136,236	255,219	391,455
Not In Labour Force	159,784	59,240	219,024	163,289	63,825	227,114
Unemployment Rate	15.8%	11.0%	12.8%	19.3%	14.4%	16.1%
Participation Rate	48.7%	80.3%	64.2%	45.5%	80.0%	63.3%

(Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing)

Throughout all Victoria, the rate of unemployment amongst male youth was higher than that of female youth (refer Table 2.3). This was evident in the total youth (15-24) population and within the two separate age cohorts (15-19 and 20-24). As at August 2001, the unemployment rate for male youth aged 15-24 was 13.7 per cent, compared to 11.9 per cent for female youth.

Table 2.3 Victorian Youth Labour Force by Gender – 2001

	Male			Female		
	15-19	20-24	15-24	15-19	20-24	15-24
No. Employed	62,745	110,092	172,837	65,230	104,901	170,131
No. Unemployed	12,291	15,223	27,514	11,710	11,261	22,971
Total Labour Force	75,036	125,315	200,351	76,940	116,162	193,102
Not In Labour Force	83,312	26,583	109,895	76,472	32,657	109,129
Unemployment Rate	16.4%	12.1%	13.7%	15.2%	9.7%	11.9%
Participation Rate	47.4%	82.5%	64.6%	50.2%	78.1%	63.9%

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing)

Between the 1996 and 2001 Census, the total youth population (15-24) in Victoria decreased by 2,064, while the youth labour force increased by 1,998 young people. The number of employed youth increased by 14,603 while the number of unemployed youth decreased by 12,605. These changes resulted in a decrease in the youth unemployment rate, from 16.1 per cent in 1996 to 12.8 per cent in 2001 and a slight increase in the participation rate, from 63.3 per cent to 64.2 per cent. The unemployment rate declined for both youth cohorts (down from 19.3% for 15-19 year olds and 14.4% for 20-24 year olds) and the participation rate increased for both cohorts (up from 45.5% for 15-19 year olds and 80.0% for 20-24 year olds).

The Labour Force Survey, which represents the most recent data available, shows that as at September 2002, Victoria had a teenage unemployment rate slightly below the average for Australia (15.6%, compared to 16.1%).⁶ Having increased from 17.5 per cent in September 2000 to 18.4 per cent in September 2001, the teenage unemployment rate dropped to 15.6 per cent as at September 2002. While this trend appears positive, the number of full-time teenage jobs dropped by 5.1 per cent over the twelve months to September 2002 (from 47,400 to 45,000). Conversely, there was a 7.2 per cent growth in part-time teenage jobs (up by 8,000 to 119,600) over the same period.

⁶ ABS, *Labour Force, Teenage Employment and Unemployment, Australia, Preliminary*, Catalogue No. 6202.0.40.001, September 2002.

The Labour Force survey also shows that as at September 2002, Victoria had a teenage participation rate slightly below the average for Australia (58.6% compared to 59.1%). Only the Northern Territory (43.8%) and New South Wales (55.0%) had lower teenage participation rates. However, after dropping from 58.7 per cent as at September 1999 to 56.8 per cent in September 2000, the teenage participation rate has increased over the past two years, to 57.8 per cent in September 2001 and 58.6 per cent in September 2002.⁷

The Labour Force Survey also collects data on the duration of unemployment, which the ABS publishes in the Victorian Year Book (refer Table 2.4). The data shows that in the teenage category, the number of unemployed youth remained relatively stable over the period August 1999 to August 2001, although the duration of unemployment tended to get longer. The number of teenagers unemployed for one year or more increased by 31.0 per cent over the two year period. In the 20-24 cohort, the overall number of unemployed declined between August 1999 and August 2001, with the number of long-term unemployed dropping by 61.2 per cent (representing 5,200 persons). However, the number of young adults unemployed for up to 13 weeks increased by 16.7 per cent and the number of young adults unemployed for between 13 and 52 weeks increased by 15.3 per cent.

Table 2.4 Duration of Unemployment by Age Cohort (1999 – 2001)

Duration of Unemployment (weeks)	15-19 years (Number)			20-24 years (Number)		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
Under 13	17,000	14,400	15,800	13,200	12,200	15,400
13 and under 52	8,900	10,800	9,000	9,800	13,700	11,300
52 and over	2,900	4,600	3,800	8,500	6,300	3,300
TOTAL	28,800	29,800	28,600	31,500	32,200	30,000

(Source: ABS, Victorian Year Books 2000-2002)

⁷ ABS, *Labour Force, Teenage Employment and Unemployment, Australia, Preliminary*, Catalogue No. 6202.0.40.001, September 2002.

FINDING 2.1

The Committee finds that based on an analysis of ABS Census data:

- ◆ *the incidence of youth unemployment for males is higher than for females across both the 15-19 and 20-24 age cohorts; and*
- ◆ *between 1996 and 2001, Victoria experienced a decrease in the youth unemployment rate from 16.1 per cent (1996) to 12.8 per cent (2001) and a marginal increase in the youth labour force participation rate from 63.2 per cent (1996) to 64.2 per cent (2001) .*

The Committee further finds that based on ABS Labour Force Survey data, the percentage of 20-24 year olds unemployed over the short-term or medium-term increased between 1999 and 2001, while long-term unemployment has declined in this cohort. There has been a decrease in the percentage of 15-19 year olds unemployed over the short-term, while long-term unemployment has worsened for this group.

2.4 Full-time versus Part-time Employment

The growth in part-time and casual work has been dramatic over the last decade. Related to this phenomenon, the Committee heard significant concerns regarding the level of underemployment among youth. Research has shown that young people who move through cycles of casual employment can experience difficulties in gaining longer-term secure employment. Additionally, casual employment is associated with a lack of entitlement to many employment benefits (such as holiday pay and sick pay), high levels of job insecurity, irregular hours, relatively low and volatile earnings and lack of effective union representation. Opportunities for training and promotion are also likely to be more limited than for full time employment.⁸

It was reported to the Committee that much of the increase in casual and part-time work has gone to full-time students, often at the expense of the unemployed.

⁸ Written Submission No.32, Inner City Regional Youth Committee, 24 May 2002, p4.

Accordingly, young people who have not gone on to further study have suffered a declining employment position relative to students:

“To date part-time employment has not been a viable path to full-time employment for those not in full-time education. The available research indicates that the part-time jobs do not go to either the early school leavers or those most at risk of failing within the school system.”⁹

With the above in mind, the Committee considered underemployment both in terms of number of hours worked per week and the link between part-time and full-time employment and educational status (refer Table 2.5). The number of hours worked was considered in four categories: 0-15 hours, 16-24 hours, 25-34 hours and 35 hours or more.

Table 2.5 Number of Hours Worked by Percentage Attending Education[†]

Hours Worked Per Week	Educational Status	Persons 15-19	Persons 20-24	Persons 15-24
0-15	Total Working (0-15)	67,832	37,786	105,618
	Attending Education (%)	91.6	70.5	84.1
	Not Attending Education (%)	6.5	28.4	14.3
16-24	Total Working (16-24)	12,123	19,610	31,733
	Attending Education (%)	70.1	58.7	63.1
	Not Attending Education (%)	28.4	40.3	35.8
24-35	Total Working (25-34)	6,624	18,041	24,665
	Attending Education (%)	34.5	29.6	30.9
	Not Attending Education (%)	64.3	69.5	68.1
35+	Total Working (35+)	34,028	131,774	165,802
	Attending Education(%)	30.0	15.7	18.6
	Not Attending Education (%)	68.5	83.5	80.4
Total Employed^{††}	Total Working	120,607	207,211	327,818
	Attending Education (%)	68.9	31.0	44.9
	Not Attending Education (%)	29.3	68.1	53.9

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing)

[†] Includes school, TAFE, university and other tertiary institutions. Percentages do not add to 100 due to the proportion who did not state their educational status

^{††} Total refers only to youth who stated the number of hours worked.

⁹ Sercombe, H., et al., *Youth and the Future: Effective youth services for the year 2015*, National Youth Affairs Research Scheme, cited in Written Submission No. 51, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 28 June 2002, p14.

Of all Victorian youth employed at the time of the 2001 Census who stated the number of hours worked, 32.2% (105,618) worked up to 15 hours per week. Of these, 88,773 (84.1%) were concurrently attending an educational institution. However, there were a further 15,120 (14.3%) young people who worked a maximum of 15 hours but who were not attending any educational institution. Also of concern is the additional 11,355 young people who were employed for only 16-24 hours while not engaged in education or training.

Of total employed youth who stated their hours worked, 50.6 per cent worked 35 or more hours per week. Of these, 18.6 per cent (30,871) were also engaged in education or training.

In the 20-24 cohort, the majority (63.6%) worked 35 hours (or more) per week. However, there were 10,732 youth aged 20-24 years who worked less than 16 hours but who were not attending education, and a further 7,911 young people who worked between 16-24 hours and were not linked to education or training. Therefore, 32.5 per cent of young adults who worked a maximum of 24 hours, were not concurrently engaged in education or training, and could therefore be considered underemployed.

Among the teenage (15-19 years) cohort, 56.2 per cent worked up to 15 hours, although the majority of this group (91.6%) were also attending education. Of all employed teenagers, 79,955 (66.3%) worked a maximum of 24 hours a week, of which 9.8 per cent (7,832) were not engaged in any education or training.

The ABS publishes unemployment rates by educational status for teenagers (15-19 years) on a monthly basis.¹⁰ The data for the year to September 2002 shows a mixed picture, with the unemployment rate for those not attending an education institution full-time dropping from 18.2 per cent to 11.6 per cent, and the unemployment rate for those attending a tertiary institution full-time increasing from 16.7 per cent to 17.7 per

¹⁰ ABS, *Labour Force, Teenage Employment and Unemployment, Australia, Preliminary*, Catalogue No. 6202.0.40.001, September 2002.

cent. The unemployment rate for those attending school remained stable at 17.5 per cent.

The Committee suggests that the issue of underemployment and accurate tracking of employment trends be examined further in its second Report to Parliament.

FINDING 2.2

The Committee finds that according to 2001 Census data, there is a significant number of Victorian youth who could be classified as underemployed, that is, they are working part-time and are not engaged in education.

2.5 Labour Force by Region

An analysis of 2001 Census data reveals that youth located in the metropolitan regions of the State have lower unemployment rates in each age cohort than non-metropolitan youth. At the time of the 2001 Census, youth (15-24) in metropolitan regions experienced an average unemployment rate of 12.2 per cent compared, to 14.7 per cent for non-metropolitan youth. The participation rate for 15-24 year olds was 64.4 per cent for metropolitan and 63.7 per cent for non-metropolitan youth.

The unemployment rate in the 15-19 cohort was 15.4 per cent for metropolitan teenagers and 16.7 per cent for non-metropolitan teenagers. In the 20-24 cohort, the unemployment rate was 10.4 per cent for metropolitan youth and 12.9 per cent unemployment for non-metropolitan youth.

Table 2.6 below provides the key labour market indicators for each of the Labour Force Regions in Victoria. The following sections provide a summary of the youth labour force in each of these regions, based on Table 2.5 and Appendices 9 to 14.

Table 2.6 Youth Labour Force by Region – 2001 (Persons 15-24)

Labour Force Region	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Outer Western Melbourne	40,705	6,852	47,557	26,870	14.4	63.9
North Western Melbourne	19,281	3,447	22,728	13,011	15.2	63.6
Inner Melbourne	21,207	3,306	24,513	15,200	13.5	61.7
North Eastern Melbourne	32,302	4,468	36,770	19,744	12.2	65.1
Inner Eastern Melbourne	43,606	4,982	48,588	29,890	10.3	61.9
Southern Melbourne	25,637	2,907	28,544	16,129	10.2	63.9
Outer Eastern Melbourne	32,244	3,683	35,927	15,949	10.3	69.3
South Eastern Melbourne	26,074	3,869	29,943	17,186	12.9	63.5
Mornington Peninsula	17,267	2,404	19,671	8,524	12.2	69.8
Metropolitan Total	258,323	35,918	294,241	162,503	12.2	64.4
Barwon-Western District	23,220	4,037	27,257	14,556	14.8	65.2
Central Highlands-Wimmera	12,671	2,357	15,028	8,531	15.7	63.8
Loddon-Mallee	16,376	2,738	19,114	10,900	14.3	63.7
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	18,981	2,745	21,726	11,972	12.6	64.5
All Gippsland	13,397	2,690	16,087	10,562	16.7	60.4
Non-Metropolitan Total	84,645	14,567	99,212	56,521	14.7	63.7
Victoria	342,968	50,485	393,453	219,024	12.8	64.2

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing)

2.5.1 Outer Western Melbourne

Outer Western Melbourne represents one of the most traditionally disadvantaged regions within the metropolitan zone of Victoria. As at August 2001, the region had the second highest metropolitan unemployment rate, at 14.4 per cent (representing 6,852 unemployed youth) and a participation rate slightly below the metropolitan average (63.9% compared to 64.4%).

The 15-19 cohort experienced an unemployment rate of 18.2 per cent, which is significantly above the metropolitan average for this cohort (15.4%), and a participation rate of 46.1 per cent, which was below the metropolitan average (48.0%).

Of the six local councils within Outer Western Melbourne, the City of Maribyrnong experienced the highest rate of youth unemployment in each of the age cohorts. It also recorded the highest rate of unemployment amongst the 15-19 cohort out of all local councils within Victoria (Males 27.0%; Females 26.8 %).

Outer Western Melbourne has the second highest CALD¹¹ population (13,711) in the metropolitan region and the second highest CALD youth unemployment rate (24.8%). As at 2001, there were 1,664 unemployed CALD young people (male: 877; female: 787). Labour market indicators for the CALD population within the six local councils are:

	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Moonee Valley	28.2	46.1
Hobsons Bay	21.3	49.4
Melton	20.6	54.8
Wyndham	16.8	49.9
Brimbank	25.7	50.6
Maribyrnong	26.5	47.7

Outer Western Melbourne also had the second highest Indigenous youth population (391) among metropolitan regions and the highest number of unemployed Indigenous youth across metropolitan Melbourne (59 young people). The unemployment rate among this group was 28.5 per cent and the participation rate was 53.6 per cent.

2.5.2 North Western Melbourne

At the time of the 2001 Census, North Western Melbourne region had the highest youth unemployment rate (15.2%) among metropolitan regions and a participation rate below both the metropolitan and State averages. Within this region, the City of Hume had a higher unemployment rate (15.7%) and lower participation rate (61.4%) compared with the City of Moreland (unemployment rate of 14.7% and participation rate of 66.0%).

North Western Melbourne also had a high unemployment rate for Indigenous youth (29.7%) although in real numbers this represented only 35 unemployed youth. The participation rate among Indigenous youth was 52.9 per cent (slightly higher than average for Indigenous youth across Victoria (52.7%).

¹¹ CALD in this section refers specifically to young people born in a non-main English speaking country.

2.5.3 Inner Melbourne

As at August 2001, the youth labour force in Inner Melbourne was comprised of 21,207 employed and 3,306 unemployed young people. The region had the lowest participation rate in metropolitan Melbourne (61.7%) and the second lowest in the State. The unemployment rate was 13.5 per cent, which was above the metropolitan and State averages.

The City of Melbourne experienced a substantially higher unemployment rate (16.2%) than all other councils within the Inner Melbourne region: Stonnington¹² (11.1%), Port Phillip (11.8%) and Yarra (13.2%). The City of Melbourne also experienced a significantly lower participation rate (49.2%) compared to the other three councils: Stonnington (63.8%), Port Phillip (70.3%) and Yarra (71.2%).

Inner Melbourne has the third highest CALD¹³ population (12,726) in the metropolitan region, and the highest CALD youth unemployment rate (29.8%). As at 2001, there were 1,251 unemployed CALD young people (637 male and 614 female). The participation rate for this group was the lowest among CALD populations in metropolitan regions (33.2%). Labour market indicators for the CALD youth population within the four local councils are:

	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Melbourne	34.8	25.2
Yarra	29.1	46.0
Stonnington	26.4	40.6
Port Phillip	22.0	44.3

2.5.4 North Eastern Melbourne

North Eastern Melbourne recorded a youth population of 58,117 young people, of which 32,303 were employed and 4,468 were unemployed (representing a participation rate of

¹² City of Stonnington falls partly in Inner Melbourne and partly in Southern Melbourne.

¹³ CALD in this section refers specifically to young people born in a non-main English speaking country.

65.1%). The overall unemployment rate for the region was 12.2 per cent, which was average across metropolitan regions.

Of the four local councils within the North Eastern Melbourne region, the City of Darebin recorded a substantially higher unemployment rate in each of the gender and age cohorts. The overall youth unemployment rate in Darebin was 16.1 per cent, compared to 9.5 per cent in the City of Banyule, 9.3 per cent in the Shire of Nilumbik and 12.6 per cent in the City of Whittlesea.

North Eastern Melbourne has the highest number (473) of Indigenous youth in metropolitan Melbourne, as well as the largest Indigenous labour force (220). The unemployment rate among this group was 23.2 per cent, while the participation rate was 48.1 per cent. While the unemployment rate was below average for Indigenous youth across Victoria (26.4%), the participation rate was the second lowest in the State for Indigenous youth.

2.5.5 Inner Eastern Melbourne

With 43,606 employed youth and 4,982 unemployed youth, Inner Eastern Melbourne had the largest youth labour force as at August 2001. There were a further 29,890 young people outside of the labour force. Both the youth unemployment rate (10.3%) and participation rate (61.9%) were below average for metropolitan regions.

All of the local councils within the Inner Eastern Melbourne region experienced unemployment rates below the metropolitan average: City of Manningham (8.8%), City of Monash (11.8%), City of Whitehorse (10.0%), City of Boroondara (9.8%). All also have lower than average participation rates, with the City of Manningham, Monash and Boroondara ranging from 61.1 to 61.4 per cent and the City of Whitehorse at 64.2 per cent.

Inner Eastern Melbourne has the largest CALD¹⁴ youth population (16,512) in the State. As at 2001, there were 1,273 unemployed CALD young people (685 male; 588 female). The unemployment rate for this group was 20.1 per cent (20.9% for males and 19.1% for females). The participation rate was 38.6% (37.8% for males and 39.4% for females). Labour market indicators for local councils within Inner Eastern Melbourne are:

	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Monash	22.0	38.1
Boroondara	19.9	38.9
Whitehorse	19.8	38.6
Manningham	16.3	39.2

Inner Eastern Melbourne had the highest Indigenous participation rate in the State (72.4%), representing 98 employed and 20 unemployed Indigenous youth. It also had one of the lowest unemployment rates for Indigenous youth (16.9%).

2.5.6 Southern Melbourne

As at August 2001, Southern Melbourne had a total youth labour force of 28,544, comprising 25,637 employed youth and 2,907 unemployed youth. The region had the lowest youth unemployment rate in Victoria (10.2%). The youth participation rate was 63.9 per cent, which was below the metropolitan (64.4%) and State (64.2%) averages.

All local councils within the region had an unemployment rate below average for metropolitan Melbourne. Participation rates were also below average other than in the City of Kingston, which had a participation rate of 67.8 per cent.

2.5.7 Outer Eastern Melbourne

Outer Eastern Melbourne has a relatively strong youth labour market, with the second lowest youth unemployment rate (10.3%) and the second highest youth participation rate in the State (69.3%). Both the teenage and young adult categories reflect this

¹⁴ CALD in this section refers specifically to young people born in a non-main English speaking country.

overall positive labour market with unemployment rates below the metropolitan and State averages (13.2% and 8.0%, respectively).

All three local councils within the region had youth unemployment rates below the metropolitan average: Maroondah (9.9%), Knox (10.2%), Yarra Ranges (10.5%). Participation rates in each council were above average for metropolitan regions: Maroondah (71.9%), Knox (68.8%), Yarra Ranges (67.9%).

2.5.8 South Eastern Melbourne

As at August 2001, South Eastern Melbourne had a total youth labour force of 29,943 people (26,074 employed and 3,868 unemployed). There were a further 17,186 young people not in the labour force. The unemployment rate of 12.9 per cent was slightly higher than the metropolitan average, while the participation rate (63.5%) was below the metropolitan average.

The South Eastern Melbourne region covers three local councils, with contrasting labour markets:

	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Cardinia	9.4	67.1
Greater Dandenong	16.6	57.9
Casey	11.3	67.0

South Eastern Melbourne has the third largest CALD¹⁵ youth labour force in Victoria, representing 4,445 employed and 1,138 unemployed CALD youth. The unemployment rate (20.4%) among this group was below the metropolitan average while the participation rate was the second highest in metropolitan Melbourne.

¹⁵ CALD in this section refers specifically to young people born in a non-main English speaking country.

2.5.9 Mornington Peninsula

The Mornington Peninsula has the smallest youth population of all the metropolitan labour force regions. As at August 2001, there were 17,267 employed and 2,404 unemployed youth and a further 8,524 young people not in the labour force. The overall youth unemployment rate was the same as the metropolitan average (12.2%) and the participation rate was above average at 69.8 per cent.

The Mornington Peninsula covers the City of Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula Shire. The City of Frankston exhibits higher unemployment rates in each age and gender cohort, with the overall unemployment rate 3.4 percentage points higher in Frankston (13.9%) than the Mornington Peninsula (10.5%). Participation rates were similar in both councils, and were higher than the metropolitan average of 64.4 per cent: City of Frankston 69.6 per cent and Mornington Peninsula Shire 69.9 per cent.

2.5.10 Barwon-Western District

Barwon-Western District has the largest youth population of all the non-metropolitan labour force regions. At the time of the 2001 Census, there were 27,257 youth in the labour force, including 23,220 employed and 4,037 unemployed. There were a further 14,556 not in the labour force. The region had an unemployment rate of 14.8 per cent and a participation rate of 65.2 per cent. This is consistent with the non-metropolitan averages for unemployment (14.7%) and labour market participation (63.7%).

Barwon-Western District represents eleven local councils with substantial variations in both population sizes and labour market indicators. The City of Greater Geelong is the largest council, with a youth population of 25,122. The labour force was comprised of 13,494 employed and 2,597 unemployed young people, representing an unemployment rate of 16.2 per cent. Unemployment rates in the remaining 10 councils ranged from 8.5 per cent in Corangamite to 20.6 per cent in Glenelg.

As at August 2001, Barwon Western had the highest unemployment rate among Indigenous youth across all of Victoria (34.2%). This region also had the second highest actual number of unemployed Indigenous youth (81 young people). The participation rate (56.8%) among this group was higher than average for all Indigenous youth in Victoria, but substantially lower than the participation rate of the overall youth population in the region (65.2%).

2.5.11 Central-Highlands-Wimmera

The Central-Highlands-Wimmera region, covering nine local council areas, had a total youth population of 24,090. Of these 12,671 were employed, 2,357 were unemployed and a further 8,531 were not in the labour force. The unemployment rate of 15.7 per cent was the second highest in Victoria. The participation rate (63.8%) was average for non-metropolitan regions.

The City of Ballarat is the largest regional centre in the Central-Highlands-Wimmera, with a youth population of 12,784. It recorded the highest youth unemployment rate in the region at 18.7 per cent (representing 1,526 unemployed youth), which was above average for youth in country Victoria (14.7%). This was also higher than other regional centres such as Bendigo (16.8%), Geelong (16.1%) and Shepparton (14.6%). Amongst the youth population of Ballarat, unemployment is most pronounced in the 15-19 age cohort (23.4%), particularly amongst males (25.6%). This substantially exceeds the average unemployment rate for 15-19 year old across country Victoria (16.7%).

Within the remaining 8 councils, the unemployment rate ranged from 5.3 per cent in the Shire of West Wimmera to 15.8 per cent in the Shire of Hepburn. Participation rates ranged from 54.0 per cent in the Pyrenees Shire to 69.0 per cent in Horsham Rural City.

2.5.12 Loddon-Mallee

The Loddon-Mallee recorded a total youth population of 30,816 young people, including 16,376 employed and 2,738 unemployed youth and 10,900 young people not in the labour force. The unemployment rate of 14.3 per cent was the second lowest in country

Victoria, while the participation rate (63.7%) was the same as the non-metropolitan average.

Within Loddon-Mallee, the City of Greater Bendigo has the largest youth population (12,697 as at August 2001). It recorded the second highest rate of youth unemployment in the region at 16.8 per cent. The Central Goldfields Shire recorded the highest rate of youth unemployment at 18.3 per cent, although this represented only 128 unemployed young people.

The Loddon-Mallee also has the second largest Indigenous population in the State, with an unemployment rate of 25.8 per cent and a participation rate of 48.4 per cent, both of which are consistent with the non-metropolitan averages for Indigenous youth.

2.5.13 Goulburn-Ovens-Murray

Within the Goulburn-Ovens-Murray region, there was a total youth population of 34,846 including 18,981 employed youth, 2,745 unemployed youth and 11,972 young people not in the labour force. The region had the lowest unemployment rate in country Victoria (12.6%) and the second highest participation rate (64.5%). The unemployment rate was below average for non-metropolitan regions (14.7%) and the State overall (12.8%).

The City of Greater Shepparton has the highest youth population in the region, with a total of 7,308 young people. The unemployment rate in the City of Greater Shepparton was the highest across the region at 14.6 per cent representing 687 unemployed young people. The City of Shepparton also recorded the largest Indigenous youth population (257) of any local council in the State. The unemployment rate (28.2%) was greater than average for Indigenous youth across the State, while the participation rate (49.6%) was below average.

2.5.14 All Gippsland

The youth population of Gippsland was 27,608 in August 2001. Of these, 13,397 were employed, 2,690 were unemployed and a further 10,562 were not in the labour force. The region had the highest overall youth unemployment rate in all of Victoria (16.7%) as well as the lowest participation rate (60.4%).

The City of Latrobe had the highest youth unemployment rate in Gippsland at 20.6 per cent, representing 1,159 unemployed young people. This was the highest recorded rate of youth unemployment among all councils across Victoria. The City of Latrobe also recorded the highest unemployment rate amongst the 20-24 cohort, at 18.7 per cent (male: 21.1%; female: 16.0%).

Gippsland had the second highest unemployment rate for Indigenous youth (33.9%) in Victoria as well as the lowest participation rate of Indigenous youth (44.4%). As at 2001, there were 115 employed Indigenous youth and 59 unemployed Indigenous youth.

FINDING 2.3

The Committee finds that youth located in metropolitan Melbourne have lower unemployment rates in each age cohort than non-metropolitan youth. At the time of the 2001 Census, youth (15-24) in metropolitan regions experienced an average unemployment rate of 12.2 per cent, compared to 14.7 per cent for non-metropolitan youth. The participation rate for 15-24 year olds was 64.4 per cent for metropolitan youth and 63.7 per cent for non-metropolitan youth.

However, there are also significant differences within both the metropolitan area and non-metropolitan area. The highest youth unemployment rates were experienced in Gippsland region (16.7%), Central-Highlands-Wimmera (15.7%) and Barwon-Western District (14.8%). Within metropolitan regions, North Western Melbourne experienced the highest youth unemployment rate (15.2%), followed by Outer Western Melbourne

(14.4%) and Inner Melbourne (13.5%). This suggests that structural inequalities exist between non-metropolitan and metropolitan areas as well as within these areas.

2.6 Participation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth in the Labour Force

Victoria receives the second largest number of overseas arrivals to Australia, with 15,710 people or 24 per cent of Australia's total arrivals coming to Victoria in 2001/02. DIMIA's Settlement Database (which electronically tracks all arrivals into Australia) indicates that in the last six years, approximately 23,000 young people (aged 12-25 years) settled in Victoria from non-English speaking background countries.¹⁶ Major source countries include Vietnam, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, the Philippines, Turkey and Lebanon. These numbers are much greater when those under 12 years of age are taken into account.¹⁷

Over the same six-year period, approximately 16,000 young refugees or young people with a Humanitarian visa, aged between 14 and 24 years (inclusive), settled in Victoria. These estimates do not account for additional arrivals under the family migration streams for those reuniting with refugee family members or younger children. Major source countries for refugees include the former Yugoslavia (making up approximately 38% of all young arrivals), the Horn of Africa countries (Somalia, 5%; Sudan, 8%; Ethiopia, 4% and Eritrea, 4%), the Middle East (Iraq, 11% and Afghanistan, 6%) and Indochina (4%).¹⁸

The majority of young refugee arrivals have settled in a relatively small number of local government areas in Victoria, including Greater Dandenong and Brimbank, Darebin, Moreland, Hume, Moonee Valley and Maribyrnong. Of the total 3,896 recent arrivals recorded in the Inner Northern LLEN region over the past three years, 2,377 (61%)

¹⁶ Main English speaking countries are Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Ireland, USA, Canada and South Africa.

¹⁷ Written submission No. 46, DIMIA, June 2002, p7.

¹⁸ Written submission No. 46, DIMIA, June 2002, p7.

were aged under 30 years, with approximately the same percentages of under 30 year olds arriving in each of the three local government areas (Darebin, Yarra and Moreland).

One of the difficulties in assessing the labour market experience of people from CALD backgrounds is in determining how to define the parameters of that group. The Committee obtained Census data for two broad classifications of CALD youth, namely, (1) those who speak a LOTE at home and (2) those who were born in an overseas country where the main language spoken is other than English (refer Appendix 13 and 14 for the size of the labour force, unemployment rate and participation rate by local government area for each CALD cohort). The Committee did not undertake analysis of the country of origin or language spoken due to the very small sample sizes within the youth category, particularly when looking at a geographic segmentation. The Committee, notes however, that this is an important analysis that should be undertaken at the local levels by either the LLENs or the local council.

Table 2.7 Labour Force – Youth Born in a Non-Main English Speaking Country

Labour Force Region	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Outer Western Melbourne	5,048	1,664	6,712	6,860	24.8	49.5
North Western Melbourne	2,064	670	2,734	3,039	24.5	47.4
Inner Melbourne	2,953	1,251	4,204	8,458	29.8	33.2
North Eastern Melbourne	2,607	703	3,310	3,754	21.2	46.9
Inner Eastern Melbourne	5,072	1,273	6,345	10,103	20.1	38.6
Southern Melbourne	2,595	618	3,213	3,971	19.2	44.7
Outer Eastern Melbourne	1,330	240	1,570	1,724	15.3	47.7
South Eastern Melbourne	4,445	1,138	5,583	5,719	20.4	49.4
Mornington Peninsula	417	94	511	644	18.4	44.2
Metropolitan Total	26,531	7,651	34,182	44,272	22.3	43.6
Barwon-Western District	314	133	447	707	29.8	38.7
Central Highlands-Wimmera	100	16	116	166	13.8	41.1
Loddon-Mallee	193	79	272	259	29.0	51.2
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	223	69	292	464	23.6	38.6
All Gippsland	168	56	224	324	25.0	40.9
Non-Metropolitan Total	998	353	1,351	1,920	26.1	41.3
Victoria	27,529	8,004	35,533	46,192	22.5	43.5

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing)

As shown in Tables 2.7 and Table 2.8, each of the two cohorts of young CALD persons examined experience a higher degree of disadvantage relative to the overall Victorian youth population. However, youth 'born in a non-main English speaking country' have a more pronounced degree of disadvantage than those who 'speak a language other than English at home'. The overall unemployment rate for youth born in a non-main English speaking country is 22.5 per cent, compared to 18.5 per cent for those who speak a language other than English at home. The participation rate is also lower for those born in a non-main English speaking country (43.5%) compared with those who speak a language other than English at home (50.6%).

Table 2.8 Size of Labour Force – Youth Who Speak LOTE at Home

Labour Force Region	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Outer Western Melbourne	11,986	2,851	14,837	11,694	19.2	55.9
North Western Melbourne	5,901	1,514	7,415	6,231	20.4	54.3
Inner Melbourne	3,603	1,332	4,935	8,653	27.0	36.3
North Eastern Melbourne	8,110	1,444	9,554	7,135	15.1	57.2
Inner Eastern Melbourne	8,449	1,665	10,114	12,394	16.5	44.9
Southern Melbourne	4,298	810	5,108	5,121	15.9	49.9
Outer Eastern Melbourne	2,100	340	2,440	2,176	13.9	52.9
South Eastern Melbourne	6,150	1,450	7,600	7,381	19.1	50.7
Mornington Peninsula	631	134	765	769	17.5	49.9
Metropolitan Total	51,228	11,540	62,768	61,554	18.4	50.5
Barwon-Western District	929	237	1,166	1,050	20.3	52.6
Central Highlands-Wimmera	181	36	217	241	16.6	47.4
Loddon-Mallee	419	122	541	477	22.6	53.1
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	611	142	753	705	18.9	51.6
All Gippsland	314	103	417	383	24.7	52.1
Non-Metropolitan Total	2,454	640	3,094	2,856	20.7	52.0
Victoria	53,682	12,180	65,862	64,410	18.5	50.6

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing)

The higher unemployment rates amongst the CALD youth population (as compared to the overall Victorian youth population) is evident across all metropolitan and non-metropolitan labour force regions.

Of the 82,345 young people born in a non-main English speaking country in 2001, 27,529 were employed. Of these, 26,531 (96.3%) were employed within the metropolitan zone of Victoria and in contrast, only 998 (3.7%) were employed within the five non-metropolitan labour market regions. These figures reflect the population distribution in metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions.

Within the metropolitan zone, particular labour force regions and local councils have highly concentrated populations of CALD young people. These regions generally experience higher than average CALD youth unemployment rates and lower participation rate. The regions with the highest number of unemployed CALD youth were Outer Western Melbourne, Inner Melbourne and Inner Eastern Melbourne.

The extent of youth unemployment among those with a non-English speaking background is reflected in the fact that they constitute a significant proportion of Job Network clients nationally. However, DIMIA notes that migrants' employment prospects have generally improved in recent years, attributed largely to the overall strong labour market conditions and changes in migration policy to improve migrants' prospects for economic independence. Within the broad range of migrants settling in Australia every year, some are selected on the basis of their employment prospects and their capacity to be economically independent, and this is borne out by their strong performance in the labour market in their early years of arrival.

Research commissioned by DIMIA on the Labour Force Experience of New Migrants compares a range of key settlement indicators, including employment, between recently arrived migrants and refugees in differing visa subclasses. Six months after arrival, refugee and humanitarian entrants settling in Victoria had very low employment to population ratios at four per cent, compared to much higher rates for other migrant streams such as Business Migrants and Skilled Migrants which ranged from 34-60 per cent.¹⁹ Compared to other streams of economic migrants, refugee and humanitarian

¹⁹ Sue Richardson, Frances Robertson and Diana Ilsley, National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University, *The Labour Force Experience of New Migrants*, August 2001, cited in Written Submission No. 48, DIMIA, 17 June 2002, p5.

families are more vulnerable to long-term unemployment and they are more likely to have limited income to meet their material needs.

The majority of evidence received by the Committee on the issue of CALD youth was in relation to newly arrived migrants, and often, refugees or humanitarian entrants. Based on the weight of this evidence, the Committee believes the most pressing needs of CALD youth is with respect to new arrivals and refugees. The barriers experienced by these groups are further discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this Report.

FINDING 2.4

The Committee finds that the unemployment rate for youth born in a non-main English speaking country was 22.5 per cent compared to the State average of 12.8 per cent. The unemployment rate for those youth who speak a language other than English at home was better, at 18.5 per cent. The Committee further finds that new refugee and humanitarian arrivals are more vulnerable to long-term unemployment than other categories of migrants.

2.7 Participation of Indigenous Youth in the Labour Force

Table 2.9 below provides Indigenous youth labour force statistics based on the 2001 Census for each of the 14 ABS Labour Force Regions.

At the time of the 2001 Census, there were 4,570 Indigenous youth (2,305 male and 2,265 female) in Victoria. The distribution of Indigenous youth throughout Victoria is relatively equal between metropolitan (2,259) and non-metropolitan regions (2,314). However, within both metropolitan and non-metropolitan Victoria, particular regions have more concentrated Indigenous populations than others. The largest populations of Indigenous youth within Melbourne were in the Outer Western (391) and North Eastern (473) regions. In regional Victoria, the largest populations of Indigenous youth resided in the Loddon-Mallee (577) and Goulburn-Ovens-Murray (629) regions.

Table 2.9 Size of Youth Labour Force – Indigenous Youth

Labour Force Region	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Outer Western Melbourne	148	59	207	179	28.5	53.6
North Western Melbourne	83	35	118	105	29.7	52.9
Inner Melbourne	76	15	91	74	16.5	55.2
North Eastern Melbourne	169	51	220	237	23.2	48.1
Inner Eastern Melbourne	98	20	118	45	16.9	72.4
Southern Melbourne	73	12	85	33	14.1	72.0
Outer Eastern Melbourne	96	19	115	121	16.5	48.7
South Eastern Melbourne	111	30	141	101	21.3	58.3
Mornington Peninsula	98	31	129	83	24.0	60.8
Metropolitan Total	952	272	1,224	978	22.2	55.6
Barwon-Western District	156	81	237	180	34.2	56.8
Central Highlands-Wimmera	89	44	133	143	33.1	48.2
Loddon-Mallee	201	70	271	289	25.8	48.4
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	217	93	310	300	30.0	50.8
All Gippsland	115	59	174	218	33.9	44.4
Non-Metropolitan Total	778	347	1,125	1,130	30.8	49.9
Victoria	1,730	619	2,349	2,108	26.4	52.7

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing)

The Committee notes that the ABS 2001 Census defines Indigenous persons as those of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. However, many witnesses reported to the Committee that there is some reluctance in the Indigenous community to identify themselves as such and therefore, statistics may under-represent the true number of Indigenous youth in Victoria. Consequently, the extent of youth unemployment in the Indigenous community may also be under-reported.

At the time of the 2001 Census, the unemployment rate for the Indigenous youth labour force was 26.4 per cent and the participation rate was 52.7 per cent. This means that while there is a high proportion of Indigenous youth recognised as unemployed, there is also a significant proportion of the young Indigenous population that are disengaged from the labour market, and are therefore not included in the unemployment statistics. This may contribute further to the under-reporting of the level of unemployment in the Indigenous community. The participation rates of both male and female Indigenous

youth (57.4 per cent and 47.9 per cent, respectively) were substantially lower than the participation rates for all Victorian youth (64.6% for males and 63.9% for females).

The unemployment rate among male Indigenous youth was 28.5 per cent (368), compared to 23.7 per cent (251) for females. Compared to the unemployment rates for the whole Victorian youth labour force (13.7% of males and 11.9% of females), these statistics suggest a more challenging labour force experience for Indigenous youth.

Metropolitan regions have both a lower unemployment rate and a lower number of unemployed Indigenous youth than non-metropolitan regions. At the time of the 2001 Census, there were 272 unemployed Indigenous youth in metropolitan regions (representing an average unemployment rate of 22.2%) and 347 unemployed Indigenous youth in non-metropolitan regions (where the average unemployment rate was 30.8%). The much higher unemployment rates for non-metropolitan Indigenous youth was evident for males and females.

Reflecting the more positive labour market experience in metropolitan regions, Indigenous youth also have higher participation rates in metropolitan regions compared to non-metropolitan regions. In 2001, the average participation rate in metropolitan regions was 58.3 per cent for Indigenous males and 52.7 per cent for females. In comparison, the participation rates in non-metropolitan regions were 56.5 per cent for males and only 43.5 per cent for females.

FINDING 2.5

The Committee finds that based on 2001 Census data:

- ◆ *the Victorian Indigenous youth unemployment rate was 26.4 per cent, compared to 12.8 per cent for the overall Victorian population;*
- ◆ *the labour force participation rate for Victorian Indigenous youth was 52.7 per cent, compared to 64.2 per cent for all Victorian youth; and*
- ◆ *Indigenous youth unemployment rates and labour force participation rates are worse in non-metropolitan Victoria compared to metropolitan Melbourne.*

Chapter 3

Youth Participation in Education and Training

The link between unemployment and the failure to complete secondary schooling is well established. The changing nature of youth labour markets and the growing demand in the marketplace for rising educational qualifications place those young people that do not complete Year 12 or its equivalent at a severe disadvantage. In 2000, a third of all early school leavers were either unemployed, working part-time but not studying or not in the labour force five months after leaving school.²⁰

With the link between low levels of education and unemployment in mind, it was imperative to the Inquiry outcomes for the Committee to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the current education and training systems in the context of preparing young people for employment. Some of the key issues covered were the ability to engage and retain young people in schools, vocational education and training in schools, alternative schools and curriculum options, the apprenticeship and traineeship system and education for young migrant and Indigenous Victorians.

3.1 Current Government Policy

In 2000, the State Government commissioned two reviews of the education and training systems in Victoria: the Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria (Kirby Review) and Public Education: The Next Generation (PENG Review). Both reviews highlighted concerns over the effectiveness of the existing corporate structure and processes for delivering the Government's objectives for education and training.²¹ In response to the two reviews, the Government established the policy framework for education and training in the coming years.

²⁰ Richard Curtain, *How Young People are Faring. Key Indicators 2001*, DSF, 2001, cited in Written Submission No. 6, Education for Work Coalition and Melbourne Citymission, 6 May 2002, p2.

²¹ Department of Education, Employment and Training, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p6.

The PENG Review resulted in the establishment of nine working parties in 2001. These cover school funding, school reporting, collaborative school networks, administrative bureaus, an improvement policy framework, teacher supply and demand, community infrastructure, programs for students with disabilities, impairments and special learning needs, and student support services delivery.

The Kirby Review resulted in the Government establishing a series of new goals for post-compulsory education and training in Victoria, namely: ²²

- ◆ To increase the percentage of young people who successfully complete Year 12 or its equivalent.
- ◆ To encourage more adults to take up education and training and so increase the overall level of educational attainment and literacy levels in Victoria.
- ◆ To increase the level of participation and achievement in education and training in rural and regional Victoria and among groups where it is presently low.
- ◆ To make near-universal participation in post-school education and training the norm in our society – not just for the young, but for all Victorians.

In October 2000, the Premier set three challenging performance targets for education and training in Victoria: ²³

- ◆ By 2005, Victoria will be at or above the national benchmark levels for reading, writing and numeracy for primary students.
- ◆ By 2010, 90 per cent of young people in Victoria will successfully complete Year 12 or its equivalent²⁴.
- ◆ By 2005, the percentage of young people aged 15-19 engaged in education and training in rural and regional Victoria will rise by 6 per cent.

To achieve its new goals, the Government took the following measures: ²⁵

- ◆ Established three new statutory authorities: the Victorian Qualifications Authority, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (replacing the Board of Studies) and the Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission.

²² Department of Education, Employment and Training, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p5.

²³ Loc. cit.

²⁴ Year 12 equivalent may include Certificate IV in General Education, vocational education and training/further education qualifications, part-time apprenticeships or traineeships.

²⁵ Department of Education, Employment and Training, op. cit, p23.

- ◆ Improved access to pathways and support through the implementation of Managed Individual Pathways (MIP).
- ◆ Provided greater choice in delivery and content and more flexible education and training programs.

3.2 School Education

Education in Victoria is compulsory for children aged between 6 and 15 years. Students study eight key learning areas based on the Curriculum and Standards Framework II (CSFII), which covers years Prep to 10. The eight key learning areas are: The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, Languages other than English (LOTE), Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) and Technology.

3.2.1 Victorian Certificate of Education

Students in Years 11 and 12 study for their Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). The VCE is Victoria's internationally recognised senior secondary qualification and gives students the necessary credentials to enter university, TAFE, apprenticeships and the workforce. In 2002, an estimated 140,000 students will undertake their VCE in Years 11 and 12.

The VCE is normally completed over two years. The subjects studied will depend on those offered at individual schools, which in turn, will be determined by overall enrolments, student study choices and the availability of teachers.

Students have a range of options in Years 11 and 12, including:

- ◆ A choice of 42 VCE studies that lead to a Victorian Certificate of Education and act as pre-requisites or recommended subjects leading to higher education.
- ◆ Vocational education and training in Schools (VETiS) programs that enable students to undertake accredited vocational studies within an accredited senior secondary program. There are 28 programs being offered in 2002, providing multiple pathways to university, TAFE and further training as well as to the workplace.

- ◆ Tertiary enhancement courses offered through six Victorian universities provide a choice of first year subjects to talented VCE students. Normally, one subject will be selected and studied concurrently with the VCE.

The Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria recommended that the VCE be available to the school-age cohort in a range of settings, including TAFE institutes and Adult Community Education (ACE) providers. In 2001, pilot projects to deliver the VCE to 15-17 year old early school leavers were established in four TAFE institutes and two ACE clusters, with each project targeting twenty early school leavers who were not in full-time employment. The role of the TAFE and ACE sectors in delivering education and training to youth is outlined under sections 3.3 and 3.4.

The following sections dealing with VET in Schools and the VCAL program refer to evidence illustrating that for many students there is an unrealistic expectation of VCE completion.

3.2.2 Vocational Education and Training in Schools

Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) programs combine nationally recognised training with the VCE. This means that accredited training counts towards the completion of the VCE while also being recognised by industry within a National Training Framework. There are two major VET in Schools programs: VET in the VCE and part-time apprenticeships and traineeships for school students.

Vocational studies have a high status within the VCE. Students can take up to eight units (half of the 16 units required to satisfactorily complete the VCE) as VET subjects. In 2001, there were 26,120 students from 441 secondary schools enrolled in VET in the VCE programs, a 23 per cent increase on 2000.²⁶ There were 33 different programs in 2001, including Agriculture, Automotive, Clothing Design and Production, Hospitality and Sport and Recreation. A number of new programs were recently introduced including: Food Processing (Wine), Dance, Cisco Networking Academy Program and four new Information Technology programs.²⁷

²⁶ Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p15.

²⁷ Loc.cit.

There were more than 1,100 students participating in school-based part-time apprenticeships and traineeships in eleven different industry areas by the end of 2000. These are similar to VET in the VCE programs, however, students sign a formal training agreement with an employer, spend more time in the workplace and receive payment for time spent on the job.

The Committee received evidence during public hearings on the extent of VET in schools, including the interest of these programs among a growing cohort of young people and the partnerships that various schools have developed to ensure they deliver the best program possible to their students.

Mr Peter White, Principal, Notre Dame College in Shepparton, noted in his submission to the Committee as follows:

“From past experience, we have found that students who undertake a VET program during years 11 and 12 not only develop skills in the vocational area they have chosen to study, but also further develop their self-confidence, communication, organisation and decision making skills. They have a history of regular work place experience, which ultimately enhances their opportunities for further education and/or employment.”²⁸

Students from Notre Dame College gave evidence in a public hearing on their involvement in VET courses:

Ms Geraldine Worm:

“The VET business administration course has strengthened my approach into the workplace and strengthened many aspects involved in the presentation of myself.”²⁹

Mr Xavier Angel:

“The experience has given me an edge on any other year 12 leavers looking for a job in the agriculture sector. In year 10 I was far from focused at school. I wanted to leave and look for a job, but now I have both. By doing this VET course I have obtained hands-on work experience and will still receive my year 12. This course has helped

²⁸ Written Submission No. 64, Notre Dame College, 18 September 2002, p3.

²⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, p3757.

me with the rest of my school classes, helping me focus on what to do better.”³⁰

The Committee’s evidence also highlighted some of the challenges facing the VET in schools system. Some of these challenges include linking VET in schools to local employment opportunities, forming VET clusters and partnerships and accessing and organising appropriate work placements for students.

Ms Ruth Pidriz, Assistant Manager, North West WEDG:

“I think a lot of the students who should be doing VET in schools are not doing VET in schools, but VET in schools is quite big in the north-west. What a school chooses to do sometimes is very much based on student demand and making themselves look good compared to other schools to keep their students at their school, so it is not always targeted at where the most jobs are.”³¹

Ms Sue Fowler, Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local Learning and Employment Network:

“it seems to me that the VET programs do succeed in attracting young people to stay on at school. Schools with the low retention rates do not have a large number doing VET.

There is also an issue around the accessibility of VET programs. Of the schools that I have surveyed only 14 perhaps out of 57 responded that they would give access to students not in their schools. The lack of the cluster model in this region is an issue. We do not have schools clustering together to provide access to VET programs for students from other schools. The clustering model is one of the issues that we need to look at, and the need to provide adequate funding to support clusters of schools in the VET and apprenticeship areas.”³²

Ms Shannon Cheal, Workplace Coordinator, South East Vocational Consortium Inc:

“The problem we face at the moment is matching the employers with the programs that are running in the VET schools. ... A particular issue at the moment is that the VET in Schools programs generally provide for one-day-a-week work placements but ... the employers’ view is that they prefer block placements where students can come in for a week and find themselves more integrated into the company

³⁰ Loc.cit.

³¹ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p304.

³² Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p316.

over that week, and they do not lose their knowledge over a six-day gap away from the work environment.”³³

Ms Cheal noted the trend for an increasing cohort of young people to choose VET in schools programs. For the first time this year, demand for VET placements in the region exceeded the availability of places and therefore, a number of students missed out. This of course raises issues relating to which students should be given preference in accessing VET places:

“Generally VET in Schools has been promoted to and selected by students who will probably not continue on an academic pathway, but we have found that that has changed recently as people have started to see the value of this experience, and it is becoming quite mainstream within the VCE. We need to consider the outcomes for students who are not going to continue academically. We need to ensure that these programs continue to meet the needs of those students.”³⁴

The lack of technical and vocationally oriented pathways for young people who are not as academically inclined was raised consistently as a major concern among the full spectrum of organisations working with young people. While VET in schools is seen as a highly valuable and successful development, the Committee senses there is some danger that its increasing attractiveness across the full cohort of students may in fact translate into fewer opportunities for those at greatest risk of disengaging from school. Already, there is some move to make access to VETiS programs a competitive process, with students needing to complete applications and interviews. While this may have some positive outcomes in that it gives students essential practice in applying for jobs and presenting themselves at interview, the negative consequences may be more limited opportunities for those students most in need. The Committee therefore recommends that students be assisted through any application process for VET in schools places.

Notwithstanding the above discussion, the Committee believes that all students can benefit and should therefore have access to VET in schools programs. As Ms Collette Beck, Careers Teacher and VET Coordinator, Traralgon Secondary School notes:

“Through our tracking we have found that many of the VET students who go on to tertiary studies do very well because they have a

³³ Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, p93.

³⁴ Ibid, p94.

particular grounding in their area, and often the area they pursue is one that becomes a real passion to the students.”³⁵

South East Development raised a number of concerns regarding the involvement of schools in vocational education and training. It suggests that there is a need for a review of what is promoted as the flagship of vocational education, VET in schools, highlighting a number of problems in the current system, including:

- ◆ the minimal amount of time spent in the workplace (often only a single block placement in the first year);
- ◆ the need to address funding and supervisory arrangements that currently limit the ability to provide longer placements; and
- ◆ the validity of offering a dual education/industry qualification under VETiS when the translation rate for the VET course undertaken to actual career path is so low (reportedly less than 3% according to a major south-eastern RTO).³⁶

The Committee received further evidence supporting South East Development’s view. Horsham Rural City Council, while recognising that VETiS programs are a very important development in rural Victoria, is concerned that they remain severely under-funded, with parents expected to fund the participation of young people in the programs. Many schools and other partners also noted the resourcing implications of a comprehensive VET in schools program.

The Committee also heard concerns regarding a lack of public transport, particularly in rural areas, which restricts the ability of young people to travel to their VET placements. Even in some metropolitan areas, some students experience difficulty in participating in VET courses due to inadequacies in the public transportation system.

Mr Alan Nield, Workshop Manager, Agfab Engineering:

“One of the areas that we saw that was a difficulty was the transport to some of the workplaces. Going to my experience, we have recently moved to a new location and the students we had booked in to come in and do work placement with us have dropped off because of access to our workplace. That was a concern. Again that is more about the transport issues in the area.”³⁷

³⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p152.

³⁶ Written Submission No. 16, South East Development, 22 May 2002, p2.

Further evidence suggested VET in schools could be of greater benefit if it were available to students earlier.

Mr Paul Di Masi, Chief Executive Officer, South Eastern LLEN:

“... young people leave in equal numbers in year 10 and year 11. The implications of that are quite serious because it is at year 11 that all the vocational education and training initiatives are set. So if young people leave schooling during or at the end of year 10 they have virtually no access to job training and they get no real insight into the world of work.”³⁸

Some schools have recognised the need to introduce a vocationally oriented curriculum into earlier schools levels.

Mr Brendan Vero, MIPS Coordinator, Maribyrnong Secondary College:

“In regard to vocational studies, we offer a program from year 10 right through to year 12. In year 10 we try to give them what we call a TAFE tasters course. They go out for one day a week for 10 weeks to do various TAFE programs. Year 10s can then start a VET subject in term 3 and we offering VET in years 11 and 12. The sorts of subjects we have for VET are hospitality, both back and front of house — and they can do that right through to year 12; desktop publishing; horticulture; automotive; and retail. Next year we are introducing clothing and design, and sport and recreation. All up, we have about 40 per cent of the students in the school involved in some sort of VET program across years 10 to 12.”³⁹

The Committee believes that one of the most significant benefits of the VET in schools program is the link to industry and potential future employment opportunities. The Committee was therefore concerned to hear that the work based component is minimal, and in some cases, not occurring at all. One of the key reasons provided for not undertaking work placements was the lack of local employers offering relevant opportunities. The Committee’s discussion in the next chapter highlights the importance of linking education and training and pathways plans to local opportunities. The Committee therefore argues that successful completion of a work placement, with stringent outcome requirements, should be a requirement of satisfactory completion of any VET in schools program.

³⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p322.

³⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, p78.

Ms Ruth Pidriz, Assistant Manager, North West WEDG:

“many young people are not doing any work placement at all, because if it is not made easy enough for schools to access work placements, sometimes with the hardest cases they just do not do any, so the students miss out.”⁴⁰

Another important part of vocational education and training in schools is work experience programs. The Committee received much evidence regarding the different arrangements for work experience programs in different schools, and the varying attitudes of students and businesses to these programs. In summary, the Committee heard that there are some problems in accessing quality workplace experiences for students, including resource limitations for arranging work placements and a lack of involvement from employers and their representatives in program design and management of the placements.

Mr Paul Cholewinski, Braybrook Secondary College:

“The work experience program as it works at Braybrook is on what we call a dribble process. If a student comes to us and says, ‘I want to go’, we organise it and get them out — we do not have block — and that operates across years 9, 10 and 11. None of the students are barred from undertaking the program. We also backed that up this year with a career education model within their elective system so kids can learn career and career pathway activities, and built into that topic is a more structured work placement where they have to follow an interest rather than just going to Safeway to get some money or to try to get a part-time job, and it just distinguishes between the two. So that has been quite successful.”⁴¹

The Committee also received conflicting evidence regarding the value of the placement to the student, with some students treating work experience as a two-week holiday and others using the opportunity to seriously explore a future pathway. These issues are discussed in depth in the following chapter. Ms Ruth Pidriz, Assistant Manager, North West WEDG explained that even where a work placement does not assist young people to choose their area of further study or future employment, it was a generally valuable experience.

³⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p332.

⁴⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p304.

⁴¹ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p333.

“They were asked also, ‘Did your work placement help you choose your area of study?’. Thirty-one per cent answered that it helped them confirm that they wanted to continue in the same area of study; 18 per cent said it helped them decide that they did not want to continue in the same area; 42 per cent said no, it did not help them choose their area of study but it was a generally helpful experience; and 9 per cent did not enjoy work placement, so 9 per cent of them were not positive about it.”⁴²

The important issue of work experience is discussed further in the following Chapter, where the Committee makes recommendations for a more structured work experience program in all Victorian schools.

FINDING 3.1

The Committee finds that VET in schools programs are an important and attractive option for many students, including those intending to pursue an academic pathway. The Committee further finds that for some students, VET in schools programs may encourage them to stay in school when they otherwise may disengage from education.

FINDING 3.2

The Committee finds that those students who are at greatest risk of disengaging from school benefit the most from access to VET in schools programs. However, there are some emerging issues regarding VET in schools that the Government should note including:

- ◆ *in some regions there is a shortage of VET in schools places;*
- ◆ *the need to enhance linkages between schools and employers; and*
- ◆ *the need to enhance public transport to facilitate travel to work places.*

FINDING 3.3

The Committee finds that VET in schools programs offer students an opportunity to develop job search skills, however, the Committee notes that some students require additional support in writing résumés and preparing for interviews.

⁴² Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p306.

RECOMMENDATION 3.1

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training consult with schools and LLENs in order to identify gaps in VET in schools programs and to ensure that students do not miss out on these opportunities. Information to be collected by the Department should include:

- ◆ **how many students missed out on a place in their preferred VET program;**
- ◆ **what the key areas of shortage were and why these shortages occurred;**
- ◆ **what alternatives were offered to and taken up by the student;**
- ◆ **how schools are engaging with employers; and**
- ◆ **how the current gaps in the VET in schools program can be filled.**

RECOMMENDATION 3.2

The Committee recommends that schools adopt a code of practice for VET in schools programs that:

- ◆ **identifies students in danger of disengaging from school;**
- ◆ **identifies how VET in schools programs can assist these students; and**
- ◆ **guides these students through an application process through one-to-one mentoring.**

RECOMMENDATION 3.3

The Committee recommends that in order to encourage a work based component in VET in schools programs, students who successfully complete the program should receive a certificate that includes the name of the employer where they received training.

3.2.3 Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

A new Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is being progressively introduced over 2002/04.

The VCAL has evolved from the recognition that the VCE is not attractive to large numbers of young people who do not wish to commit to tertiary studies. Statistics show that more than 20 per cent of students do not finish Year 12, and many leave school without the skills and qualifications needed for further education, training or work.⁴³ The Committee's evidence also suggests that a number of students are leaving school early for fear of failing VCE. Implementation of the VCAL is aimed at assisting these young people as well as meeting the Government's target of 90 per cent of young people in Victoria successfully completing Year 12 or its equivalent by 2010.

The VCAL has been designed for young people in Years 11 and 12 and is based on applied learning. It combines part-time work and part-time schooling and an expansion of vocational education and training. It requires equivalent hours to the VCE and includes a combination of accredited courses in four curriculum strands: Literacy and Numeracy, Industry Specific Skills, Work Related Skills and Personal Development Skills. Students who successfully complete their full learning program will receive a VCAL certificate at the end of their program, stating whether the VCAL was completed as the Foundation, Intermediate or Senior level.

VCAL encourages a learning approach aimed at meeting the diverse needs of young people. It is designed to have relevance to personal strengths, interests and experiences and to build resilience, confidence, self worth and employability skills. It provides opportunities for experiential learning and skill development and encourages student decision making regarding future pathways to work and further education.⁴⁴

⁴³ Victorian Qualifications Authority, *Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning Accreditation Submission*, State of Victoria, August 2002.

⁴⁴ Victorian Qualifications Authority, *Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning Accreditation Submission*, State of Victoria, August 2002.

Four hundred students in 20 schools and 2 TAFE institutes are involved in the pilot (see participating schools in Appendix 7). Each trial site has involved partnerships between schools, TAFE institutes, ACE providers, LLENs, employers and other local community organisations. VCAL will be expanded in 2003 to include approximately 200 government schools and 19 TAFE institutes and then be available to all Victorian schools in 2004.

The Committee obtained evidence in public hearings from a number of schools participating in the VCAL trials, including Traralgon Secondary College, Lakes Entrance Secondary School and Notre Dame College in Shepparton. The Committee heard that the students involved in VCAL are enjoying the program, particularly the extracurricular activities. Many students are participating in the program as an alternative to leaving school and finding work. The Committee heard that students are particularly enjoying aspects of the program such as the compulsory work placement, learner driving courses and first aid certificates.

Students from Notre Dame College in Shepparton gave evidence to the Committee on their positive experiences with the VCAL program.

Ms Melissa Onans:

“VCAL has been a great help for us. It has been a great opportunity for us to become more confident in the work force, and we have made great progress in our studies. With ACE we have learnt how to apply for a job, how hard it is to sometimes get a job and how sometimes it is easy to. We learn how to type up résumés and about different work forces in different areas. We learn how to set goals for our future.”⁴⁵

The students noted that it is not possible to gain an ENTER score in VCAL and that students will need to complete the VCE if they wish to go to university. Indeed, it was encouraging to the Committee that some students who had considered leaving school had commenced VCAL in Year 11 but were now reverting back to VCE at Year 12 following positive experiences at work and changed attitudes to the value of education. For example, the Committee heard that of the ten students participating in VCAL at Notre Dame College in Shepparton, five are reverting back to VCE for

⁴⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, p372.

their final year. This flexible movement between VCAL and VCE should be encouraged and maintained.

Comment was also made, however, on the initial negative reaction by other students which was largely based on a lack of knowledge of the program. The Committee heard that there continues to be some difficulty in gaining acceptance among parents that the VCAL is a suitable alternative to the VCE. The Committee also heard some reservations from industry regarding the ability of the VCAL to produce students with the skills and job ready attitudes that will fulfill its needs.

Ms Ruth Pidriz, Assistant Manager, North West WEDG:

*"I think it will be hard to sell the VCAL program to parents as being a valid thing. I think the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning take-up in the area is not going to be as much as it should be."*⁴⁶

Ms Jill Favero, Traineeship and Apprenticeship Coordinator, Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE:

*"there is a need I think for an education program for parents or a marketing campaign to parents."*⁴⁷

Mr Neil Baker, General Manager, Eastern Victorian Group Training:

*"At the moment in order to make that a program that will be useful we need to refocus the schools' attention on what they are trying to do with those kids and develop far greater accountabilities in terms of what the programs they are coming up with will do. It is not enough to keep those kids at school; they need to be working in programs that develop their skills to enable them to have a sustainable future for themselves."*⁴⁸

The Committee heard that to be successful, the VCAL program needs to ensure students are developing specific skills to assist them in obtaining and maintaining future employment. Additionally, the program should be promoted more actively as a positive equal alternative to VCE.

⁴⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p307.

⁴⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p307.

⁴⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 22/08/2002, p209.

Many of the teachers and support workers in the program reported that the students involved in VCAL generally require additional support and attention, resulting in the need for a greater level of resourcing. There were a number of concerns regarding student-teacher ratios, as the development and monitoring of individualised learning programs for VCAL students is very labour intensive. There were also doubts as to whether the required level of resourcing for extracurricular activities will continue to be available as the program expands.

Ms Kerry Timmins, VCAL Coordinator and College Curriculum Coordinator, Traralgon Secondary College:

“It is high maintenance students, it is not just one phone call to get them to do things. ... As a cluster we would like to see the ratio of staff to the number of students in the program be better, as in one staff member looking after 10 students instead of one staff member looking after 20... That is a resourcing issue. We recognise that.”⁴⁹

Further concerns were raised about the resourcing implications and practicalities of making the VCAL available to all young people who could potentially benefit from the program. For example, there are already indications that it will be difficult to find appropriate employment placements for the number of students suited to the VCAL, particularly in rural areas and in metropolitan, regional and rural areas where transport limitations reduce the number of employers that could be considered.

Ms Wendy Gardiner, Principal, Lakes Entrance Secondary College:

“We are now seriously talking about capping the number of students we will take into it next year at 32 simply because we are unsure about being able to find employment opportunities — which is part of the program — in the town for more than that number of students. ... Yet there is probably the potential even next year to run with 50 or 60 young people — not just the current year 10 students who will be moving on to post-compulsory education but also with young people in the town who have been unemployed and out of school and are suddenly seeing a viable way back into the education...”⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p151.

⁵⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 22/08/2002, p227.

Concerns regarding the availability of public transport to access work-based TAFE and ACE aspects of VCAL were raised by a number of witnesses and need to be addressed by the Government. As noted in the previous section, the Committee also heard that this is an issue for some VET in schools programs.

Bendigo Senior Secondary College:

Ms LAKE — “What we have done with our small pilot of 16 students is before we took those students on, we met with their parents, and their parents made a commitment to get them where they had to go to. With increasing numbers, that is going to be increasingly difficult, particularly as their employment is not going to necessarily fit within the school bus timetable.”

Mr CRAIGE — “It is going to disenfranchise those kids where the parental support may not be there, and therefore the choice is not there.”

Mr BASTIAN — “We are experiencing it now with VET programs as well, that a number of those programs require students to be in particular locations for a day or half a day. Horse studies is probably a good example, where they are out at the harness racing club for part of the time. ... the issue of getting them there and back is a huge issue.”

Ms LAKE — “We have been using a taxi for those students.”⁵¹

The lack of public transport was also identified as a barrier to young people obtaining employment. The comments below are typical of many expressed throughout the Inquiry.

Ms Lorna Hawkey, Workways Association:

“It is a major issue, and it does stop a lot of young people from actually getting to their jobs in traineeships or apprenticeships or to work. Of course, traineeships and apprenticeships are prior to driving age, so they cannot drive — they do not have access to public transport and they cannot drive.”⁵²

Mr Chris Guthrie, Education and Development Manager, Melton Shire Council:

“We also believe that if we are going to get kids jobs we need to be looking at transport infrastructure in particular. I know this might sound strange, but in the western region — in Laverton, Sunshine, and

⁵¹ Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/2002, p456.

⁵² Minutes of Evidence, 22/08/2002, p203.

Melton — we have an expansion of industrial estates but there is just no public transport, so the kids cannot get to where the jobs are. It could be working out ways of providing funding to build the public transport networks to the growing communities or it could also be some other kind of creative strategy — a community bussing service that is purpose built to get people to jobs.”⁵³

Another theme in the discussion surrounding VCAL was a strong view that the implementation of VCAL in Years 11 and 12 may be too late for many students.

Ms Anne Kinne, Youth Participation Coordinator, East Gippsland Institute of TAFE:

“I think that starting at year 9 or 10 would be very beneficial. By year 10 they are going. They have been disenchanting or have disengaged, so I think earlier intervention would be really good.”⁵⁴

Ms Noreen Plozza, JPET Coordinator, Gippsland Employment Skills Training:

“The VCAL is a really big breakthrough. I think it is going to be really good, but it is for years 11 and 12; it probably needs to be earlier. ... probably for years 9 and 10.”⁵⁵

Of particular concern was evidence suggesting that introducing alternatives even at the Year 9 or Year 10 levels will be too late for many young people. This was also consistently heard during the Committee’s meetings in Europe. Very convincing arguments were put forward to suggest that children as young as 10-12 years are considered ‘at risk’ in terms of completing secondary education. As suggested by the evidence below, many schools are faced with increasingly challenging behaviours from young people.

Ms Lyn Kckie, JPET Worker, Berry Street Victoria:

“It is a backward extension of that — call it PRECAL, I suppose — in the Baw Baw Shire where they are introducing a similar sort of thing for years 9 and 10. There is some talk among people with major concerns about the education system in the Latrobe Valley, about ... an alternate for years 6, 7 and 8, for those young people identified with extreme challenging behaviours, because the increase in violent behaviour and unmanageable behaviour from

⁵³ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p339.

⁵⁴ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p186.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p158.

primary to early secondary has increased dramatically over the past couple of years.”⁵⁶

The Committee certainly supports the extension of the VCAL into Year 10 and perhaps even Year 9. However, it feels that other strategies should be considered to ensure that children as young as 11, 12 or 13 are not at risk of being lost to the education system as reported in the Committee’s evidence. The Committee therefore supports a fuller exploration of alternative school environments and programs for these students, as discussed later in this Chapter.

FINDING 3.4

The Committee finds that the initial trial of the VCAL has been positively received by participating students and teachers as a means of providing a vocational alternative to VCE, however, there is scope for further promotion of VCAL to students, parents, schools and business as a positive alternative to VCE.

FINDING 3.5

The Committee finds that there are some early issues regarding VCAL that the Government should note including:

- ◆ *the need for a greater level of resourcing;*
- ◆ *the need for VCAL programs to maximise the development of industry specific and employability skills for future career opportunities;*
- ◆ *the limitation to expansion of VCAL (and VET in schools and school-based apprenticeships) in rural areas, due to the smaller number of employers being able to offer appropriate work placements;*
- ◆ *the need to consider making VCAL available to students from Years 9 & 10;*
and
- ◆ *the need to enhance public transport to facilitate travel to TAFE, ACE and employment components of the program.*

The Committee further finds that the ability of students to transfer between the VCAL and VCE is absolutely critical and should be facilitated.

⁵⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 05/08/2002, p11.

RECOMMENDATION 3.4

The Committee recommends that strategies to ensure continued interest in schooling, including vocational related curriculum, be implemented in Victorian schools from Year 8 onwards.

RECOMMENDATION 3.5

The Committee recommends the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) be evaluated to determine:

- ◆ **its success in terms of educational attainment and school retention;**
- ◆ **the level of participation by disadvantaged young people including young people in care, those with a mental or physical disability and those currently disengaged from education;**
- ◆ **any barriers to access for these people; and**
- ◆ **the benefits of extending VCAL to Year 10 students.**

RECOMMENDATION 3.6

The Committee recommends that the State Government develop a promotional campaign aimed at students, schools, parents and business outlining the advantages of VCAL as a positive alternative to VCE as well as a pathway to reverting back to VCE studies and entering university. The Committee further recommends that resources produced as part of this campaign be available in a range of community languages.

3.2.4 Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy and numeracy remain fundamental to success in both education and future employment. Data quoted in a written submission from the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria suggests that young people with low literacy skills are three to four times more likely to be unemployed compared to those young people with average levels of literacy.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Richard Curtin, *How young people are faring 2001: Learning, work and in between*, cited in Written Submission No. 51, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2 July 2002, p8.

The Committee is aware that the State Government has implemented a range of initiatives addressing literacy and numeracy, particularly in primary schools, however, the Committee heard evidence of low levels of literacy and numeracy among 15-24 year olds who may have missed out on these recent initiatives.

Ms Carmen Ilibasic, Manager, YES West:

“Often these kids have literacy and numeracy issues that could well have been identified much earlier, like in primary school, so my recommendation there is that students’ progress be monitored from primary school. If they have issues with literacy and numeracy something has to be done about it there and then rather than letting kids go on year after year until it comes to a point where everyone identifies that the child cannot go on any longer, and then it ends pretty much in schools feeling frustrated, the kid feeling very frustrated and often having a behavioural problem, and parents who are really frustrated.”⁵⁸

The Committee heard evidence from many teachers, youth workers and employment placement providers who are struggling to achieve a positive outcome for secondary students with low levels of literacy and numeracy. In many cases, this has been an issue for these students since early primary school, which remains unaddressed and becomes more acute with the increasing demands of higher education. These students are not competitive with other students in obtaining entry-level employment, including traineeships or apprenticeships as many employers today are advertising these opportunities to students who have completed at least Year 11, and in many cases, Year 12. These students may not even be competitive in attaining part-time work, which is often reserved for young people who are still in the education system.

While the focus of teaching in these areas has traditionally been with primary schools, the Committee suggests that further Government effort should be made to raise literacy and numeracy standards among a range of disadvantaged young people. Groups that may need targeting with additional literacy and numeracy support include:

- ◆ secondary school students whose current level of achievement is being hindered by inadequate literacy and numeracy standards;

⁵⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p328.

- ◆ early school leavers who may benefit from additional literacy support to enable them to successfully return to further study or training programs or to gain employment;
- ◆ recent migrants and others from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who may have disrupted schooling or language training;
- ◆ young Indigenous Victorians who are disadvantaged in mainstream education;
- ◆ young people who are in care or who have left care; and
- ◆ young people who have been involved in the juvenile justice system.

The Committee received evidence from a wide range of migrant groups on the key issues facing young people from ethnic communities in terms of education and employment opportunities. As discussed under section 3.6, one of the greatest barriers facing young newly arrived migrants and refugees is a lack of English language skills.

FINDING 3.6

The Committee finds that low levels of literacy and numeracy are a serious barrier to undertaking further education and training and finding employment for large numbers of young people in metropolitan, rural and regional areas.

RECOMMENDATION 3.7

The Committee recognises the range of existing Government literacy and numeracy programs and recommends that the State Government evaluate these programs and introduce new programs where necessary to ensure that the needs of the following target groups are met:

- ◆ **secondary school students whose current level of achievement is being hindered by inadequate literacy and numeracy standards;**
- ◆ **early school leavers who may benefit from additional literacy support to enable them to successfully return to further study or training programs to gain employment;**
- ◆ **recent migrants and others from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who may have had disrupted schooling or require additional English language training;**

- ◆ **young Indigenous Victorians who are disadvantaged in the mainstream education system;**
- ◆ **young people who are in care, and**
- ◆ **young people involved in the juvenile justice system.**

3.2.5 Retention to Year 12

Overwhelming evidence indicates there is a strong link between unemployment and early school leavers. Completion of secondary education and training therefore increases a young person's future employment opportunities. Berry Street Victoria also advised the Committee that schooling and education are of vital importance in determining future life options and prospects, not only due to skills and knowledge development, but also because they "*present children with occasions to identify, develop and establish fresh, more robust and socially valued aspects of life*".⁵⁹ School may be a source of friendships and peer relationships, serve as an asylum from other painful arenas in the young person's life, provide opportunities for supportive relationships with school staff, help develop social skills, build self-esteem and self-efficacy and offer a gateway to the world of work.⁶⁰

Evidence also indicates that once young people disengage from the education system, it is very difficult to get them back into the system.

Those young people aged 15 to 19 years who are not in full-time education or full-time employment are considered to be 'at risk'. In 2001, 9.8 per cent of young Victorians were in this category.⁶¹ Although this figure is considerably lower than for any other Australian state, it remains of concern to policy makers. It is also important to note that this figure masks a deep gender imbalance, with 15 per cent of young women in this group compared to only 3 per cent of young men.⁶² The causes of gender imbalance remain unclear and the Committee proposes to further examine this issue in a second Report to Parliament.

⁵⁹ Gilligan, *Promoting Resilience: A Resource Guide on Working with Children in the Care System*, 2001, cited in Written Submission No. 33, Berry Street Victoria, 24 May 2002, p3.

⁶⁰ Written Submission No. 33, Berry Street Victoria, 24 May 2002, p4.

⁶¹ Richard Curtain, *How Young People are Faring 2001: Learning, work and in between*, cited in Written Submission No. 29, AMES, 24 May 2002, p3.

Dr John Spierings from the Dusseldorp Skills Forum reported in a public hearing that Australia compares poorly to OECD countries on the proportion of its population that has completed secondary schooling. He also reported that the growth in Australia's retention in the 1980s has stalled in the 1990s and into this decade and that the employment prospects for young people, particularly at the margins of the labour market in terms of casual and part-time work could be quite precarious for numbers of young people, especially non-students.⁶³

Reflecting concern at low school retention rates (that is, retention beyond Year 10 or the compulsory school leaving age of 15 years), active measures were taken throughout Australia over the last 10 years to increase the proportion of young people completing school. The current Victorian Government aims to achieve the target of 90 per cent of young people completing Year 12 or its equivalent by 2010.

In order to achieve greater retention rates, it is important to understand the reasons why young people leave school early. Some reasons, such as taking up employment or apprenticeship options are positive, however most reasons for early exiting are negative. As Cohuna LLEN notes, there are at least six types of early school leaver, each with very different motivations and needs: ⁶⁴

- ◆ Positive leavers who choose to take up employment, an apprenticeship or alternative career path.
- ◆ Opportune leavers who have not decided on a career path, but leave to take up a job or perhaps a relationship in preference to school. Later, this group may need advice or a second chance at training.
- ◆ Would-be leavers or reluctant stayers who prefer to leave but lack opportunities beyond school. The opportunity for better teacher-student relationships and negotiated curriculum could improve their situation.
- ◆ Circumstantial leavers who leave school for non-educational reasons such as family need. Innovative approaches, with flexible attendance and part-time work might improve their retention.

⁶² Infoexchange, *The Deepening Divide: A dangerous age for young Australians*, cited in Written Submission No. 29, AMES, 24 May 2002, p3.

⁶³ Minutes of Evidence, 12/08/2002, p41.

⁶⁴ Written Submission No. 41, Campaspe-Cohuna Local Learning and Employment Network, 31 May 2002, p12.

- ◆ Discouraged leavers who have not had success in their schooling and who have low levels of performance and interest. More flexible school policies and curriculum might help these students, catering for their diverse learning and pastoral needs.
- ◆ Alienated leavers whose needs may be similar to the discouraged students but which are more difficult to meet.

Past studies have identified a range of risk factors for early school leaving where the decision is not linked to an appropriate employment opportunity, including: ⁶⁵

- ◆ low levels of literacy;
- ◆ continued experience of academic failure;
- ◆ inflexible curriculum and teaching strategies;
- ◆ alienating school environments;
- ◆ family conflict and breakdown;
- ◆ abuse;
- ◆ homelessness and unstable home environments;
- ◆ poverty;
- ◆ physical, social or intellectual disability;
- ◆ inadequate behaviour management;
- ◆ devaluing of education; and
- ◆ substance abuse.

Ms Ruth Pidriz, Assistant Manager, North West WEDG responded to questioning in a public hearing as to the reasons why young people want to leave school early:

“Schools really need to address that. I guess our service is partly assisting those who are not surviving well in schools, but there really is a need to do more. As I see it, there is a huge need to do more about literacy and numeracy in schools. A lot of the young people we are seeing in this program are behaving badly in school because they cannot read and write properly and because they cannot understand maths, and it reduces their transition possibilities.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See for example Wheatley & Spillance, 2001; Brooks et al, 1997; Long, 1998; Webber & Hayduk, 1995 reported in Porter, 2000, cited in Written Submission No. 33, Berry Street Victoria, 24 May 2002, p4.

⁶⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p304.

Mr Brendan Vero, MIPS Coordinator, Maribyrnong Secondary College also provided some insight into the reasons for early school leaving:

“The problem with a lot of kids leaving school is not that the school is not offering services. In the experience for me in the west, they are leaving because they have dysfunctional lives, for want of a better term. Most of the kids that have left in years 10 and 11 this year have not left because they do not have the opportunity to do something different at school. They have the opportunities to access the services that we offer—and we offer some really different stuff than traditional education. They are leaving for other reasons. They cannot manage their own lives, most of the time, and that is because they are either homeless or they are having huge problems with families, or whatever.”⁶⁷

This issue of the complex reasons for early school leaving, including an examination of whether it would be appropriate to increase the compulsory school age as has occurred in other countries, will be further explored in the Committee’s second Report to Parliament.

The Committee heard evidence covering each of the six types of early school leaver. Some views expressed to the Committee indicate that the education system has not met the needs of large numbers of youth in each of these categories. That is:

- ◆ many ‘positive’ leavers are not being encouraged and supported to pursue apprenticeships or other employment opportunities due to a tendency to view anything other than school completion a ‘failure’;
- ◆ many ‘opportune’ leavers are exiting the school system without a proper understanding of what it takes to enter and be successful in the workforce, nor the potential impact of leaving school without retaining an active link to the education and training sector;
- ◆ current curriculum options are not sufficient to engage ‘reluctant stayers’ who would prefer to leave school;
- ◆ there are inadequate alternatives to the mainstream education system for those with poor levels of literacy and numeracy; and
- ◆ schools require additional funding and staffing resources to fully address the issues facing circumstantial leavers, which may include family breakdown, homelessness or risk of homelessness and issues such as poor mental health,

⁶⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p335.

crime and drug abuse experienced by the student or a members of the student's family.

Reflecting these different 'types' of early school leaver, much of the Committee's evidence illustrated the reality that many students do not have the inclination to complete VCE. While the Committee acknowledges the importance of VCE completion as a pre-requisite for tertiary education and entry level in many occupations, the Committee is mindful that high expectations of VCE results often have a negative impact on a student's ability and motivation to remain in secondary education. The fear of failure during VCE was often cited as a major cause of early school leaving.

Ms Sue Fowler, Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local Learning and Employment Network:

*"Many students leave school because the risk of failure is high. There appear to be two main reasons for young people leaving schools at year 10 or year 11. [The other] is that they really want to get a job, and the reasons for that are varied. They may come from traditionally blue-collar families; they may not have a large number of people who have gone on to university and higher education in their family; the family may have an economic need. The issue for government therefore is that we need adequate support for families."*⁶⁸

The following evidence suggests that some young people are simply not suited to an academic pathway.

Mr Rodney Hammond, Silversmith Tutor, Gippsland Employment Skills Training:

*"My own opinion is there are two sorts of people on this planet: some are good with their heads and paperwork and pens, and other ones are good with their hands and creating things and being artists."*⁶⁹

Mr Mick Butera, Executive Director, NIETL/NORTH Link, echoed similar sentiments when lamenting the lack of students with technical qualifications:

"...at the moment potential employees in the form of students are provided with lots of opportunities relating to cleverness of the mind,

⁶⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p316.

⁶⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p158.

but opportunities for those who are not that way inclined, but have perhaps cleverness of the hands, don't exist like they used to. We have many manufacturers in the region crying out for the recall of the technical schools system.”⁷⁰

While arguments pertaining to the division between academic and technical skills are often artificial and simplistic, they arise from the recognition that early school leaving into employment, combined with continuing vocational education, is a positive and proactive decision on the part of many young people who are unlikely to successfully complete the VCE.

Dr John Spierings, Research Strategist, Dusseldorp Skills Forum:

“I guess our approach is to say that you are going to get a limited dividend by encouraging vulnerable young people to stay on at school because for a number of them their desire is to be outside that framework. ... What you need to do in that circumstance is actually work with employers to provide those labour market opportunities.”⁷¹

Mr Ron Elliot, Principal, Traralgon Secondary College:

“The other thing that worries me is that there are some kids who are taking up the tertiary education pathway who are not necessarily suited to it. They are taking it up under peer, parental or community pressure because they believe they should — and you only have to look at the drop-out rates at uni.”⁷²

It has been widely reported that approximately 70 per cent of jobs do not require university degrees at the entry level. This seems to be the basis on which many of those participating in the Committee's Inquiry argued against the over emphasis on VCE completion. In particular, a number of submissions referred to European models of vocational education and training and pathways to employment as being more relevant. Chapter 6 highlights the German example, which has built and maintained a successful economy based on a system that encourages 70 per cent of its young people to start their working lives after Year 10 while continuing to train as they work.⁷³

⁷⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 02/09/2002, p272.

⁷¹ Minutes of Evidence, 12/08/2002, p45.

⁷² Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p154.

⁷³ Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network, Newsletter, May 2002.

The Committee also heard strong views about the indicators used to measure the performance of schools. In particular, there were widespread concerns at the tendency to only measure and report 'successes' such as school completion, VCE scores and the number of tertiary offers. The media gives regular exposure to the top VCE students in the State but little focus is given to the many young people who have successfully completed an apprenticeship and developed successful career paths.

As South East LLEN notes in a recent discussion paper, if success is measured in terms of tertiary entrance then up to 70 per cent of State secondary students are failures. Furthermore, a closer examination of first-year university and TAFE 'drop out' rates indicates a further large proportion of these 'successes' subsequently fail.⁷⁴ The following comments are reflective of many others concerning the preoccupation with VCE results.

Mr Ron Elliot, Principal, Traralgon Secondary College:

*"There would appear to be an obsession with judging schools by their VCE scores and that can be a distraction. If you want to have a public persona as a school you have to have good VCE scores and that in my mind is a distraction to the school from seeking and finding the pathways that can meet the needs of all the kids. ... This school has not gone down that pathway. While we pursue the very best VCE results for the kids that are there, we also put an equal amount of energy into finding pathways for every student. I think that is one of the successes of this school. I believe this is an outstanding school but judged by VCE results we would not be considered an outstanding school."*⁷⁵

Mr Peter White, Principal, Notre Dame College in Shepparton:

"The ENTER score dominates Year 12 and permeates down to all levels. It is difficult to further encourage VET, VCAL or Enterprise education subjects, providing students with self employment skills, due to crowded curriculum at the VCE level.... With students, parents and schools competing for the highest ENTER scores, schools are obliged to encourage 'fast tracking' to cater to this demand and to provide opportunities for their students to compete six Units 3 / 4 studies. This does not facilitate time to develop other skills for the

⁷⁴ South East LLEN, *Measure Twice, Cut Once & Less is More: The case for time and reflection and structure, supported whole cohort pathways in and out of education, vocational training & tertiary studies*, SELLEN Draft Discussion Paper #1, August 2002.

⁷⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p149.

many students who do not go on to University, or who do start but drop out.”⁷⁶

The Committee is concerned at the limited measures of performance in schools and supports the introduction of broader series of performance indicators. For example, Traralgon Secondary College measures success not simply by VCE ENTER scores but also by other successful student outcomes, including employment, further training, apprenticeships and traineeships, vocational studies and importantly, by the continued connection of students with learning and the supportive community networks available.

This does not mean, however, that performance measures for VCE should not continue to be made available to parents across all schools or that poor performing schools in VCE should not be encouraged to improve these performances. However, additional measures of performance in these other important vocational areas can help parents and teachers to judge the overall performance of schools.

The Committee also heard arguments that current funding arrangements recognise only retention to Year 12 as a positive outcome. As Berry Street Victoria notes, the level of funding for young people in school is greater than for those seeking alternative pathways and who therefore forego two years' of school education. The Committee supports the development of a more equitable funding arrangement that rewards schools not only for retaining students until Year 12, but also for facilitating appropriate training or employment linked training outcomes for students prior to completion of Year 12.

Dr John Spierings, Research Strategist, Dusseldorp Skills Forum:

“we do not provide a similar level of support and resourcing for those young people who leave at the end of year 10, who are effectively forgoing two years of upper secondary education. I guess the question that I throw back to policy-makers is: what in concrete terms is the resource level available to those young people who want to choose an alternative pathway?”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Written Submission No. 64, Notre Dame College, 18 September 2002, p11.

⁷⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 12/08/2002, p48.

The Committee received much evidence to suggest that social, economic and geographic factors have a significant impact on the ability of certain groups of individuals to participate in the full range of education, training and employment opportunities that may otherwise be available to them. Although one of the key objectives of the Department of Education and Training (DE&T) is to minimise demographic and geographic disadvantage in education, training and employment outcomes⁷⁸, it appears that has only had limited success in many respects, particularly in rural Victoria.

Examples of other factors that may mitigate a young person's ability to engage or fully engage in school include:

- ◆ Representatives of the Indigenous community suggested that many Victorian schools offer an alienating and often discriminatory environment to youth. Some successful, inclusive models for young Koories are outlined later in this Chapter.
- ◆ Individuals and organisations working with migrants, particularly refugee or humanitarian entrants, indicated that many of their clients cannot engage in education due to low levels of English language proficiency and/or high levels of disruption to their early schooling.
- ◆ Those from lower socio-economic groups may find it difficult to become engaged in the education systems, partly due to financial barriers that prevent full participation in activities on offer or access to technologies and partly due to social barriers that may disrupt children's early years (for example, family breakdown, financial difficulties, frequent changes of rental accommodation and, potentially schools) or result in a lack of personal support and motivation and positive role models.
- ◆ Berry Street Victoria highlighted its serious concerns regarding the ability of young people in care to engage in education.
- ◆ A large number of witnesses highlighted the increase in childhood and adolescent depression and other mental illnesses as a serious barrier to school participation.

The Committee believes that these issues are most challenging to all governments and sought evidence as to how governments can improve the level of engagement of disadvantaged youth in school. One of the key themes of the responses was that the resources directed to retain young people in education are often inadequate and may

⁷⁸ Department of Education, Employment and Training, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p10.

be inappropriately targeted. The Committee also heard that disengagement can commence as early as primary school, but certainly before Year 10 which is the earliest commencement point for most funded programs targeted at 'at risk' youth.

Mr Ron Elliot, Principal, Traralgon Secondary College:

“There is something that seems to have occurred in the last couple of years where there is a bit of a pattern with the under-15s dropping out of school. These are the kids that would probably be considered to be in the middle years of schooling. They are the kids that I worry about most because they are at greatest risk. If they drop out before they get into the post-compulsory years where we have this broad range of programs, they are the ones who are at greatest risk of being the long-term unemployed.”⁷⁹

Mr Peter Blunden, Chairman, Melton Education Board

“the support will foster alternative educational arrangements, targeting at-risk and disengaged young people. We believe they should be 10 to 15-year-olds, the reason being that you have to get in early.”⁸⁰

The persistent reporting of young people disengaging in the early years of school is of great concern to the Committee. There seems to be a clear need to evaluate what is occurring at the transition point from primary school to secondary school. There also seems to be a need for early intervention at primary school level and development of more alternative schools and curricula, as outlined in section 3.2.7.

The Committee will further investigate the issues of early disengagement leading to poor school performance and unemployment in its second Report to Parliament.

FINDING 3.7

The Committee finds that school retention to Year 12 greatly enhances future employment opportunities for young people and accordingly, encouraging young people to complete Year 12 should continue to be a key focus of Government education policy, strategy and practice. However, the Committee further finds that for many students, the emphasis on completion of VCE is an unrealistic expectation that often leads to young people leaving school early and becoming unemployed.

⁷⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p149.

FINDING 3.8

The Committee finds that an inclusive and expansive school curriculum that provides for and values a choice between an academic or vocational focus is essential to maintain and increase school retention rates.

RECOMMENDATION 3.8

The Committee recommends that the State Government adopt and promote a broader range of performance indicators that include not only retention to Year 12, VCE ENTER scores and the number of tertiary offers, but also other successful student outcomes such as employment linked to training, apprenticeships and traineeships, vocational studies and continued student connections to learning and local community networks.

RECOMMENDATION 3.9

The Committee recommends that the State Government increase resources for VCAL and VET in schools and examine the need for increased assistance for non-school based registered training organisations.

3.2.6 Trade Training Schools

The Committee heard some very strong views regarding the demise of the technical schools, from education and training providers, youth advocates and from industry. The two key themes were the impact on young people who are more vocationally orientated ('cleverness of the hands') and the impact on industry in terms of skills shortages.

Evidence suggests that the demise of the technical school model has caused a significant level of disadvantage to those young people who have little aptitude or interest in an academic curriculum. A number of organisations suggested that it has been young males in particular that have missed the opportunities of a vocational and skills based curriculum.⁸⁰ However, the Committee also received a written

⁸⁰ Minutes of Evidence 16/09/2002, p338.

⁸¹ Written Submission No. 15, Latrobe City Council, 22 May 2002, p4.

submission from a young woman who felt that the old technical school system was better than the limited VET in schools system that she experienced.⁸² The Committee also heard from a number of schools and community service organisations that the incidence of girls disengaging from education is increasing and in some areas of the State, there is almost equal numbers of girls and boys exiting school early.

Ms Sandie de Wolf, Chief Executive Officer, Berry Street Victoria:

Ms de WOLF — “There were a lot more alternatives in the early ‘90s in terms of schooling opportunities; there were tech schools and alternate schools. I think the abolition of tech schools is one of the most disastrous things we have done, for boys in particular.”

Mr BEST — “So you are advocating the return of technical training and trades training for kids?”

Ms de WOLF — “Yes, it is absolutely critical...”⁸³

From the industry perspective, it is important to note there were strong calls for the return of technical skills in the school curriculum. At the core of these arguments were:

- ◆ lack of entry-level employees who have clear technical skills and a practical orientation;
- ◆ low numbers of apprentices in the system;
- ◆ the perception of an administratively ‘messy’ and confusing apprenticeship system;
- ◆ difficulties recruiting technical training teachers; and
- ◆ the increasing trend for businesses to establish their own training centres rather than relying on established institutions and training systems.⁸⁴

Ms Lorna Hawkey, Workways Association:

“They [teachers, parents, employers] want the technical skills background, to be able to employ people with technical skills background. Those skills are what is required, not perhaps in the form that the old technical schools were teaching. They need not be seen

⁸² Written Submission No. 11, Ms Catherine Thornton, 15 May 2002, p2.

⁸³ Minutes of Evidence, 05/08/2002, pp9-10.

⁸⁴ South East Local Learning & Employment Network, *Report to the VLESC*, June 2002.

to leave the students as second-rate citizens ... but they need to be seen as a viable alternative to education and training.”⁸⁵

Mr Mick Butera, Executive Director, NIETEL/Northlink:

“There are no role models for cleverness of the hands in schools any more, because we have no technical schools. We have very competent and well-credentialed teachers who in the main are geared towards cleverness of the mind, towards taking this set of students through a particular path, which basically leads to a university outcome. That has had some rather devastating effects in the sense that we have had reduction in enrolments in certain TAFE courses, because you need students who are exposed to trade skills and exposed to cleverness-of-the-hand skills, not just suddenly when they are 17 or 18; it doesn't quite work that way...”⁸⁶

The Committee believes that the successful introduction of VCAL and VET in schools will allay many of the above concerns if made widely available. The Committee will continue to examine VCAL and the suggested introduction of trade schools will be further investigated in its second Report to Parliament.

The Committee also believes that consideration should be given to an alternative Year 9 curriculum that gives students time for reflection and a structured, supported pathway into and out of education, vocational training and tertiary studies following a rounding of their basic education at the end of Year 8. After completion of Year 9, students could then pursue either an academic or vocational pathway in a range of institutions that specialised in the preferred focus.

South East LLEN proposed a model for the whole of cohort vocational and training pathway out of and back into secondary schooling at Year 9. This is not considered a 'Gap Year' or a year off, but rather an opportunity for young people in Year 9 to seriously consider and engage in vocational training and placement opportunities. Under the proposal, the main focus of Year 9 would be an extended introduction to the world of work and the skills required in that world. Term one would focus on school based pathways planning and research activities and terms two and three would involve dedicated work placements or vocational training in partnership with TAFE institutes, industry and community based education providers. Term four would

⁸⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 22/08/2002, p205.

⁸⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 02/09/2002, p272.

involve reflection and analysis of what the young person has experienced and learnt and some further dedicated planning of future education, training and employment pathways to prepare for Year 10 and beyond. Any program model would also involve an on-going pastoral care, tracking, support and coordination role by schools.

As outlined in South East LLEN's discussion paper, its new model for Year 9 builds on what is already happening to young people. Often, their decisions are based on negative perceptions such as "*I don't want to be at school*" rather than a realistic view of what is possible and achievable, that is, "*I need to be at school to complete X so that I can achieve Y*".⁸⁷ The Committee heard much evidence confirming that many young people are making decisions about their future in education as early, or even earlier than Year 9 level and therefore it supports the further consideration of South East LLEN's model. However, the Committee supports this as an optional Year 9 curriculum, rather than for the whole of cohort pathway as proposed.

One of the alternative learning environments currently on offer is TAFE institutes. However, again the Committee heard that this option is not suitable for a significant number of young people. Of greatest concern was the availability of resources for TAFE institutes to cope with the social or learning barriers many young people are facing, together with the inability of students to be responsible for their own learning without the intensive support networks that are often provided in schools.

Ms Sandie de Wolf, Chief Executive Officer and Ms Lyn McKie, JPET Worker at Berry Street Victoria spoke about these issues:

Ms McKIE — "The TAFE facility has been very supportive and cooperative; they are open, but they don't have the resources within that institution to be able to deal with a lot of the challenging behaviours and needs that a lot of the young people have, or the ability to give the one-on-one attention and the tutoring, perhaps, they need".

Ms de WOLF — "And a lot of the kids are not in a state where they could go five days a week regularly."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ South East Local Learning & Employment Network, SELLEN Draft Discussion Paper #1, *Measure Twice, Cut Once & Less is More: The case for time for reflection and structured, supported whole cohort pathways in and out of education, vocational training and tertiary studies*, August 2002.

⁸⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 05/08/2002, p5.

There was also some interest in the development of senior secondary schools as an alternative to the old technical school system. Box Hill Secondary College was reported as successful because it provides a broad education across a number of dimensions with a serious VET component. The Committee also heard about the successes of Bendigo Senior Secondary College, as outlined in the following Chapter.

Dr John Spierings, Research Strategist, Dusseldorp Skills Forum:

*“We are advocates of senior secondary schools based on overseas experience, but also if you look at Tasmania, for example, where there are four senior secondary schools. They are all extremely successful with an adult-like learning environment which is very attractive to significant numbers of young people. It is certainly a direction we support”*⁸⁹

Another alternative raised with the Committee was the production school model seen in schools in Denmark, which are community based but substantially state funded.⁹⁰ There are 100 of these schools in Denmark, which are essentially a crossover between an enterprise school and a traditional school. No certificates or qualifications arise through these schools and they operate 52 week per year because they operate as businesses. Approximately one third of their income actually comes from what these schools sell in the marketplace. The scope of businesses currently being run by these schools includes information technology software, metal shops, body building equipment, nurseries, textile and fabrication shops and catering. As noted by Dr John Spierings of the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, the production school model represents a real life engagement where work is crucial and young people learn by doing. There is a strong relationship with local employers and these young students are case managed into employment and further training. A number of them go on to more academic or highly technical pathways through their vocational education and training system.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 12/08/2002, p48.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p46.

⁹¹ Minutes of Evidence, 12/08/2002, p46.

FINDING 3.9

The Committee finds that there has been a decline in technical skills of young people that has had a significant negative impact on businesses and industry that require trade apprentices. The Committee further finds that the decline in technical skills has arisen as a result of a decreased focus on teaching technical skills in schools and the lack of vocationally orientated role models.

RECOMMENDATION 3.10

The Committee recommends that the Government seek cross party support for more detailed examination of options for increasing skills through trade and vocational training, including consideration of the production school model.

RECOMMENDATION 3.11

The Committee recommends that the State Government, in partnership with the South East LLEN, pilot an optional Year 9 vocational curriculum and pathway at the regional, sub-regional or cluster level.

3.2.7 Alternative Curricula

While recognising the Government's innovations in increasing flexibility in the education and training systems, the Committee notes that even with new models such as those discussed in the previous section, there is a small, but significant number of young people who require alternative educational settings. These students also require appropriate courses to enable them to engage and succeed in education.

Mr Chris Guthrie, Education and Development Manager, Melton Shire Council:

"In the area of education and training, we see a lot of the work that is going to be done by VCAL as important, but also the community is looking at alternative arrangements for 10 to 15-year-olds where those young people are not able to be maintained in school, for whatever reason. We need to be looking at more creative ways of working with those young people, like the Internet cafe, where we can

be delivering education to the people when they want it, where they want it and how they want it. If a kid is not going to be engaged in schooling but is going to spend 2 hours at the Internet cafe on a computer then we should be able to be putting some learning tools in there so that young person can start to develop some skills and credentials.”⁹²

Collingwood Alternative School, established in 1972 as an annex of Collingwood College, has developed into a cross-regional resource for schools, human services, hospitals and welfare agencies to place secondary school age students who have clearly demonstrated difficulties remaining in education and training. On enrolment, it must be apparent that all steps have been taken to maintain the young person concerned in the mainstream and that it is clearly in their interest to become part of the Program.

During its earlier years, Collingwood Alternative School saw itself as a ‘holding ground’ with a strong welfare focus. However, over the past 15 years or so, there has been an increasing emphasis on structures, curriculum and pathways to work and training. Mr Chris Astley, Coordinator at Collingwood Alternative School reported to the Committee the importance of the school being a recognised educational institution:

“The word ‘school’ in the title Collingwood Alternative School is significant, and we endeavour to provide the best possible education for these students no matter how difficult their circumstances. Also by emphasising this fact we have found young people have greater security knowing they have not dropped out of the educational group. The more they accept that they are still in an educational institution, the greater value they place on their time with us. Even the most hardened, cynical, streetwise student admits to harbouring a desire to have success in work or training in some capacity.”⁹³

The Committee heard that the Collingwood Alternative School has been extremely successful in meeting the needs of some of the most disadvantaged young people in Melbourne. Mornings are dedicated to academic classes. Younger students participate in a general studies program aimed at improving literacy and numeracy and developing a wider understanding of the world they live in, while the older students undertake VET certificates designed to improve their ability to study, relate

⁹² Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p339.

⁹³ Minutes of Evidence, 02/09/2002, p290.

to others, set goals and understand the workplace. This offers them pathways to TAFE, VCE, jobs and apprenticeships.

Mr Chris Astley, Coordinator, Collingwood Alternative School:

“...we have had students leave mid course, because through a work experience placement they have proved to be as good as anybody else who has taken up the position, and they may have been offered an apprenticeship before they have completed the course. We think that is a really satisfactory result. Others who have completed the course have been able to go back to the school where they failed originally or were told to leave; and they are currently completing VCE, so it is a much better result than we ever had in the past.”⁹⁴

The Collingwood Alternative School adopts a very personalised approach with 4.2 staff to approximately 30 students, while keeping strict boundaries and a strong discipline policy. The young people have been taken out of the larger environment where they do not cope because their standards are nowhere near the other students' or where they feel they can hide and get away with negative behaviours. The Committee also heard reference throughout its public hearing program to the Island Work Education Program. Again, this is another annex of the Collingwood College, which takes students 15 years and older who are to a greater extent work ready.

Evidence received throughout the Inquiry highlighted the need for more alternative schools similar to the Collingwood models. This was reinforced by the fact that Collingwood Alternative School has students travelling from places as far away as Frankston, Warrandyte and Werribee.

The Committee heard that alternative schools and curricula are increasingly being developed, in recognition that the education and training system has failed significant numbers of young people. Some other examples the Committee heard about include:

'Risk It' Curriculum – A consortium led by Swinburne TAFE has developed a youth appropriate curriculum based on the Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA). The 'Risk It' curriculum is aimed at those with poor literacy and numeracy

⁹⁴ Minutes of Evidence, 02/09/2002, p292.

skills, those disengaged from education, who have little interaction with the community or employment agencies, little support to overcome educational obstacles and little knowledge about how to access career and employment advice. It is aimed at 16-18 year olds at school as a preparation for studying VCE or returning to a mainstream school or getting a job. It is equivalent to Year 10 and includes English, Maths, Maths Computer, Health & Human Development, Sport & Recreation, Media Studies and Information Technology. Swinburne TAFE reports that the course is proving very successful and is starting to be used nationally. In 2001, 70 per cent of young participants successfully completed the course and either went on to Year 11 at Swinburne, undertook a TAFE Certificate Program, returned to school or got a job.⁹⁵

Circuit Breaker – A youth training program for unemployed youth in the Mildura region, run by Mildura Rural City Council Youth Services Unit in conjunction with the Further Education Department of Sunraysia Institute of TAFE and other youth service agencies. The aim of Circuit Breaker is to provide young people aged 15-17 with an alternative and modified program to prevent them from becoming disengaged with school and/or education and to develop motivation and direction for ongoing educational opportunities. The program focuses on personal development and vocational skill enhancement to improve the ability of participants to be successful in education or employment. The program includes hospitality, painting and sculpture, interactive multimedia and photography, delivered over three days per week.

Visy Cares Centre – a new school will be opened in conjunction with the Department of Education & Training, with an enrolment of 25 young people in Years 7, 8 and 9 who are outside of the system and not currently enrolled anywhere. The school, which will have 4.5 staff, aims at reintegrating the students into the secondary system. It will partner with Chandler Secondary College which already has an alternative Year 10 program, and once the students reach 15 years, they will also have other options, such as TAFE.

The City of Darebin also presented to the Committee an idea for an alternative school, which it termed a learning academy. The learning academy would be targeted at disadvantaged groups by seeking to initially tap into a student's passion

⁹⁵ Written Submission No. 42, Swinburne University of Technology TAFE, 31 May 2002, p4.

for a sport and using that sport as a medium to enhance learning. It saw the school targeting Indigenous youth and others in their mid teens. This proposal is only in the early planning phases and is currently seeking funding support.

One of the Committee's concerns surrounding alternative schools targeted at the most disadvantaged young people is the issue of whether it is productive to put groups of young people with similar difficulties together. However, the Committee accepts that in many circumstances these environments may be the better alternative.

Ms Lyn McKie, JPET Worker, Berry Street Victoria:

Mr CRAIGE – “Does that in fact manifest the problem of having a group of children who have similar issues, problems, in one environment and then not mixing with the broader community?”

Ms KcKIE – “That happens anyway; it happens within the community that these young people are packed together...We are seeing examples of very positive experiences of young people who have been through Blackwood and who have exhibited a success rate – in them returning to school and remaining at school. But even if they didn't remain at school, the positive outcomes of having that experience are gained.”⁹⁶

Mr Dave Glazebrook, Manager, Visy Cares Centre also responded to the same question:

“I accept that there are some issues there, but from where I stand right now if we do nothing with these young people we will be condemning them to being unemployed, spending time in jail or taking drugs for the next 50 or 60 years of their lives. You name the disaster, they will be going down that road. Let's try to do something about it now.”⁹⁷

In recognition that alternative programs such as those discussed above are sometimes the first step that a young person at risk can make, the Committee notes the importance of positive relationships and pathways between the providers of these programs and the mainstream education system. However, Swinburne TAFE reported to the Committee that funding issues often put pressure on such

⁹⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 05/08/02, p11.

⁹⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, p83.

partnerships, thereby placing such programs at risk.⁹⁸ The Committee therefore supports a review of the flexibility of current funding models to cater for alternative programs where required and to recognise that successful outcomes are most likely to be achieved through working with small groups which may require more generous funding models.

FINDING 3.10

The Committee finds that greater access to alternative curricula, aimed at students at risk and those outside of the education system, is required to assist the students to gain self-confidence in learning, improve their self-esteem and to start to develop some of the employability skills, such as a positive attitude to learning and having the motivation to show up and participate in a structured environment.

RECOMMENDATION 3.12

The Committee recommends the development and expansion of a diverse curriculum and where appropriate, alternate schools that cover a broader range of needs, including for example, preparation for entry into trades, engineering and manufacturing; preparation for the agricultural sector; preparation for entry into tourism, hospitality and other service industries; and development of artistic skills.

RECOMMENDATION 3.13

The Committee recommends that the State Government conduct an information campaign in schools, communities and social and welfare organisations to ensure that those supporting young people with barriers to mainstream education, training and/or employment are aware of alternatives available and how to access them.

⁹⁸ Written Submission No. 42, Swinburne University of Technology TAFE, 31 May 2002, p6.

3.3 Training and Further Education

3.3.1 Background

The Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission (VLESC) was established under the *Victorian Qualifications Authority Act 2000*, which amended the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1990*. The VLESC takes over most of the functions of the old State Training Board, including the accreditation of vocational education courses.

The Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission: ⁹⁹

- ◆ comprises nine members with linkages to community stakeholders, industry and key government advisory bodies;
- ◆ acts in a broad advisory role to government for all post-compulsory education, training and employment;
- ◆ has a lead role in monitoring the outcomes of post-compulsory education and training for the purposes of economic and regional development and social justice;
- ◆ has advisory, policy, regulatory and management functions; and
- ◆ oversees the operation of the State Training Service.

Training and further education places are provided by TAFE institutes and other registered training organisations (RTOs) in accordance with priorities set by government, industry and the community. TAFE institute profiles detail the training to be purchased by the Government from TAFE institutes on an annual basis. The profiles include minimum requirements for total training delivery, as well as training in apprenticeships and traineeships, training for Koories, training in correctional settings and training related to government policies that address Statewide and regional industry skill shortages and community needs.

In 2001, over \$480 million of training was purchased through the profile process.¹⁰⁰

There were 96 million student contact hours of TAFE for 612,000 enrolments by 480,000 students.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p5.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p17.

¹⁰¹ Department of Education, Employment and Training, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p11.

There are 14 TAFE institutes in Victoria, together with nine Victorian universities (five of which have TAFE divisions) and over 1,000 other organisations (including industry and commercial providers and over 200 ACE organisations) registered to provide recognised TAFE programs. A broad range of general education and skills training is provided including courses in basic literacy and numeracy, basic preparation for work, entry or certificate level training (including apprenticeships), advanced vocational training (including training for para-professionals) and advanced technician and advanced post-initial training courses.

3.3.2 The Traineeship and Apprenticeship System

Apprenticeships and Traineeships combine practical work with structured training to give young people a nationally recognised qualification and the experience they need to get the job that they aspire to. They are available in more than 500 occupations nationally, in both traditional and emerging industries. Industries include, for example, agriculture, horticulture and related industries, automotive, building and construction, business services, community services and health, information technology, local government, metals and engineering, retail, sport and recreation, telecommunications and tourism.

There were a record 107,753 apprentices in training at 30 June 2001, 37.4 per cent more than a year earlier. Of these, 83,382 were new employees, an increase of 27.1 per cent.¹⁰²

Traditionally, apprenticeships took three to four years to complete and traineeships lasted for one to two years. However, the new apprenticeship system is competency based, meaning that it may be possible for a new apprentice to complete their training sooner if they have reached the skill level required. Training under the new system has been designed by industry for industry. The training can be delivered on-the-job, off-the-job or a combination of both. Off-the-job training may be completed with TAFE institutes, business colleges or other registered training organisations.

¹⁰² Ibid, p78.

Qualifications gained through New Apprenticeships (known as apprenticeships and traineeships in Victoria) are recognised nationally, even where a school-based traineeship or apprenticeship has been undertaken. Apprenticeships and Traineeships are covered by formal agreements known as either 'Training Agreements' or Contracts of Training. These agreements set out the training and supervision an employer must provide for the employee, as well as the employees' obligations as a trainee or apprentice.

Wages under the traineeship and apprenticeship system vary according to the industry and the stage of the trainee or apprentice and are regulated by industrial awards and agreements. Trainees and apprentices may be paid a training wage that takes into account the time spent in training so that the employer only pays for the time the employee spends in productive work.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships attract financial assistance for eligible employers to help reduce the real cost of training. This includes Commonwealth Government incentives and subsidies from \$1,375 for most employers, an incentive to employ and train a trainee or apprentice in a skill classified as being in shortage in rural and regional Australia (Rural and Regional Incentive), assistance to employ and train Indigenous Australians (Wage Assistance Programme) and assistance to employ and train a person with a disability (Support for People with Disabilities).¹⁰³ Additional incentives and subsidies are available from the Victorian Government.

It is also possible to commence a traineeship or apprenticeship while still at school. The features of a school-based apprenticeship include attendance at both work and school, a training agreement linked to an industrial award or an agreement signed by the employer and employee, attainment of a senior secondary certificate and a VET qualification and a wage earned for time spent in productive work. It was suggested in a written submission to the Committee that school based apprenticeships are an assured way of reducing youth unemployment, although participation is currently low due to insufficient marketing of the program and the additional burden they place on schools in terms of time-tabling difficulties¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ New Apprenticeship website, www.newapprenticeships.gov.au, 23/08/2002.

¹⁰⁴ Written Submission No. 16, South East Development, 22 May 2002, p2.

Group Training is an arrangement where a Group Training Company (GTC) employs apprentices and hires them to other businesses, termed host employers, while they are undertaking their training. The GTC acts as the primary employer and selects the new apprentice, manages the training, takes responsibility for all paperwork connected with wages, allowances, superannuation, workers' compensation, sick/holiday pay and other employment benefits and rotates the apprentice from business to business where necessary, to ensure that they receive a broad range of training and experience.

The Committee heard that there are both benefits and disadvantages relating to GTCs. Group Training is a particularly useful alternative for small and medium sized businesses which may be unable to offer a trainee or apprentice a permanent position because they cannot guarantee ongoing work, may not have the range of work available to ensure a trainee or apprentice gains all the necessary job skills for that industry or simply does not have the time to undertake all employment and training functions. However, the Committee also heard from industry representatives that group training arrangements do not allow apprentices to establish a strong rapport with the employer, which is linked to a commitment of both the employee and the employer to on-going, sustainable employment.

Traineeships and Apprenticeships are open to anyone aged 15 years and older. However, like other areas of the employment market, there is a growing demand for trainees and apprentices who are older and who have completed Year 12 or relevant vocational studies at school or who have a part-time job or work experience in the relevant industry. Indeed, the Committee heard consistent evidence throughout its Inquiry that there is a shortage of high quality applicants for apprenticeships.

3.3.3 Effectiveness of Victoria's Apprenticeship and Traineeship System

To be successful, the apprenticeship system needs active and well-organised employer associations working closely with other social partners, including unions and education providers, both at the State and regional levels. It also requires occupationally organised labour markets, appropriate wage arrangements, sound procedures and processes for the training and supervision of young people within

enterprise and coordinated relationships between education institutions and enterprises.¹⁰⁵

As noted in a Goldfields LLEN newsletter, criticisms of the apprenticeship system are that it can disadvantage young women, its content is often too slow to change and requires lengthy consultations with all the partners, its content is too narrow and it provides too few bridges to further education. However, the newsletter goes on to state that when the apprenticeship system combines all of the above success factors, this model is "*clearly the best in the world for creating positive transition outcomes for young people on the path from school to work*".¹⁰⁶

During the 1999/00 financial year, the Victorian Government commissioned the Ministerial Review of the Quality of Training in Victoria's Apprenticeship and Traineeship System (Schofield Review). This review found that while the system had many strengths and client satisfaction was high, there were significant weaknesses that threatened quality and required immediate attention if public confidence in the apprenticeship and traineeship system and the qualifications issued was to be maintained.¹⁰⁷

Implementation of measures to improve the quality of training proceeded in 2000/01 at the national level, including implementation of an enhanced Australian Recognition Framework.¹⁰⁸

Despite the State Government's efforts in reviewing and attempting to improve the traineeship and apprenticeship system, the Committee received a substantial amount of evidence regarding inherent weaknesses in vocational training and education, including apprenticeships.

Mr Russell Cook, VECCI ATWork, Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry commented on the quality and relevance of training:

"industries are finding that TAFEs and the training providers are not keeping up with those standards. Automotive is a classic. One of the

¹⁰⁵ Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network, *E Zine*, May 2002.

¹⁰⁶ Loc.cit.

¹⁰⁷ Department of Education, Employment and Training, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p6.

¹⁰⁸ Loc.cit.

dealers down here could have a Ford or Holden technician come down and give them two days theory in their workshop and the TAFE would not have any idea what they are talking about. So industry is going ahead in leaps and bounds; the training providers may be still a fair way behind.”¹⁰⁹

Another of the reported weaknesses in the apprenticeship system is the lack of incentive for employers to invest in training of young people, as these costs are increasingly being subsidised by the State and Commonwealth governments and the young people themselves. This year, the Commonwealth subsidy for apprenticeships delivered directly to employers is \$375 million.¹¹⁰ In addition, Victoria pays subsidies for long-term unemployed people and for employers seeking to recruit in areas of skills shortages. Further to that, employers can also access training dollars by becoming RTOs and through the process of user choice. In sum, this situation results in an apprenticeship system that is largely paid for by individuals through the training wage and through government subsidies. This is a vast contrast to the system in countries such as Germany where substantial real costs are borne by employers.¹¹¹

One of the key themes arising from the Committee’s Inquiry was the shortage of quality applicants for traineeships and apprenticeships:

Mr John Glover, Executive Director, Group Training Australia - Victoria:

“The shortage is not necessarily in the number of applicants although this is sometimes true but that too few of the applicants are suitable for the jobs on offer. The unsuitability might be due to lack of knowledge, lack of aptitude, lack of interest or bad/no jobsearch preparation.”¹¹²

Mr Rod Styles, Regional Manager, Gippsland Group Training:

“Perhaps the single biggest issue that confronts our organisation is the lack of good quality young people that we have had applying for our positions, particularly in engineering and automotive... In fact, so serious is the issue that I am comfortable that if you could provide me as I left here today with about 30 motor mechanic apprentices – young people who were keen, able and capable to undertake an apprenticeship – I would have to take them from you today. We

¹⁰⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p143.

¹¹⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 12/08/2002, p44.

¹¹¹ Loc.cit.

¹¹² Written Submission No. 44, Group Training Australia – Victoria, 4 June 2002, p2.

cannot fill the jobs we have. The same thing applies in the engineering fields.”¹¹³

The Committee consistently heard that there is a preference to employ young people into apprenticeships that have completed at least Year 10, and often, Year 11. Some of the reasons for this include the need for strong literacy and numeracy skills and a greater level of maturity and responsibility.

Mr Michael Iaccarino, Executive Officer, Melbourne’s West Area Consultative Committee:

“Tellingly, of the 16 responses that indicated a preference for one or more age categories, only one included the 15-19 year old category. The main reasons given for the unattractiveness of this age category were: lack of stability, lack of practical work experience and work ethic, and the cost associated with training them. Conversely, the main reasons given for preferring employees in the 25-45 age group were: business maturity and qualifications, and reliability and stability. Even amongst those that indicated that age was not a factor in their recruitment decisions, the main factors that were taken into account were skills and experience, which would tend to exclude those in the 15-19 age bracket.”¹¹⁴

The shortage of new apprentices has been reflected in the Government’s inability to meet its targets for new commencements. In 2000, there were 49,122 commencements in the new apprenticeship system, an increase of 3,305 or 7.2 per cent on the previous year. However, this was still not enough to meet the target of a 25 per cent increase on the previous year.

The shortage of applicants for apprenticeships is occurring across a broad spectrum of industries. Swinburne TAFE, which works in conjunction with Melbourne East Group Training, VICTEC, Apprenticeships Victoria and the Australian Industry Group to source participants into pre-apprenticeships in electrical, automotive, carpentry, joinery, shopfitting, stairbuilding, mechanical and painting and decorating and then find them employment noted that it cannot supply sufficient graduates to satisfy industry demand. Within the carpentry and painting and decorating programs

¹¹³ Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/2002, p542.

¹¹⁴ Written Submission No. 50, Melbourne’s West Area Consultative Committee, 18 June 2002, p6.

students are engaged in actual jobs in the community. Typically there is an 87 per cent employment outcome from these programs.¹¹⁵

Ms Ruth Pidriz, Assistant Manager, North West WEDG:

“It has been a real challenge for us to interest young people in engineering. It is something in which we have taken an active role because there is a huge skills shortage in that area, and in the jobs available for young people. It is a matter of selling the program to the students. So we try to promote those programs. We run bus tours to visit employers, to encourage students into those industries.”¹¹⁶

Representatives of the Western Region Economic Development Organisation commented on the lack of interest in engineering and trades related careers:

Ms LINLEY — “We also found there was quite a mismatch of expectation, both young person to employer and employer to young person. It is not a one-way thing; it is actually coming from both angles. It may be that young people actually make it into a firm like Alan’s and they see what happens in an engineering firm but their perception of what is occurring there is quite different from what is actually happening. The negative view about employment options in engineering, manufacturing and transport is pervasive in this region. It is something that is very hard to counter, despite the fact that they are definitely growth industries in the west and they have huge employment potential.”

Mr NIELD — “We saw that we need to build the image for trade-related careers through the community, and that was parental as well as out in the community. We saw that we need to develop some means of raising that attitude. Without coming up with ideas now, that was a big issue.”¹¹⁷

The Committee consistently heard that apprenticeships and traineeships in traditional trades and heavy industry are not being taken up by young people. Reasons given include the perceived poor wages and working conditions, the unfavourable image of the industry or occupation, the risk of injury, the lack of future prospects and the limited exposure of students to trade subjects. Evidence also revealed that there is a clear need for industry to better market itself to young people, families and carers and career advisers.

¹¹⁵ Written Submission No. 42, Swinburne University of Technology TAFE, 31 May 2002, p7.

¹¹⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p322.

¹¹⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p303.

Ms Lorna Hawkey, Workways Association:

“On attitudes towards apprenticeships by the school system, schools and parents, apprenticeships are not generally well promoted. Many teachers and parents are not familiar with the new apprenticeship scheme and schools are being valued for their ability to retain young people to the end of year 12 rather than assist them into apprenticeships or other training. It is not seen as a successful outcome for many young people. ... Many of the young people are still at school even though their chosen career does not require VCE. They could have finished the first year of an apprenticeship if they had started at the end of year 10. ... They stay beyond that because of the pressures often of parents and schools to keep them there.”¹¹⁸

Mr Barry Whitehead, Gippsland Group Training commented on attempts to redress the shortage of applicants for apprenticeships:

“We have focused on tackling people at years 10, 11 and 12. We believe now we need to go back and tackle young people at an earlier age to make them aware of the possibilities and opportunities in trade-based apprenticeships. We have to repackage what we have on offer — not change it but repackage the way we present it so that young people understand that there is a career path in metal fabrication, engineering and those sorts of trade-related areas, that they are not dirty, dead-end jobs, but that in a lot of cases you are working with state-of-the-art equipment in very exciting and innovative industries and that qualification and employment can lead on to an interesting career.”¹¹⁹

As noted by Group Training Australia - Victoria, one of the consequences of the shortages of apprentices is that young people can easily find themselves in the wrong job, as desperate employers start employees they would not normally consider. This can have disastrous outcomes for the young person who is likely to fail and possibly suffer negative effects to their confidence and self-esteem. From the industry perspective, the Committee also heard that skills shortages have flowed into middle management level.

Ms Cheryl Winnell, Training and Employment Services Manager, Master Builders Association of Victoria:

“over the past two years we have had a 40 per cent growth in building activity but only about a 3.6 per cent growth in trade take-ups by

¹¹⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 22/08/2002, p203.

¹¹⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, pp190.

young people. So if that trend was to keep going in 10 years time it is predicted that we will definitely not have enough bricklayers, and we will definitely not have enough plasterers. ... But not only do we have a skills shortage in trades, we also have a skills shortage in middle management. We do not have enough estimators, project managers and contract managers. Two or three years ago several of the organisations and large companies that I work with woke up to the fact that their project management team was getting to the age of 40 to 45 years and they had nothing coming behind them. So suddenly there was this huge gap.”¹²⁰

The Committee also received evidence to suggest that there are high levels of attrition from the trainee and apprenticeship system. This is of concern for a number of reasons, including inefficient use of public vocational monies, the displacement of students who may have made better use of the opportunity, the failure to adequately address industry’s skills needs and the potential negative impact on a young person’s esteem if failing to complete.

Dr John Spierings, Research Strategist, Dusseldorp Skills Forum:

“The latest longitudinal figures ... show that 45 per cent of trainees are not completing and 26 to 30 per cent of apprentices are not completing. So there is a high level of attrition in the program. However, when you look at where those non-completers are going, most of them are actually going into employment. In terms of labour market outcomes of new apprenticeships as a whole, the program is very successful: 75 to 80 per cent of those that do complete actually move into employment.”¹²¹

Another key issue raised in relation to apprenticeships was the negative experience of some young people participating in the system. YACVic reported typical examples such as:

- ◆ a young person terminated from an apprenticeship on one week’s notice as the company no longer needed him (transport/storage industry);
- ◆ the failure of an employer to provide ongoing employment following the successful completion of an apprenticeship (refrigerator mechanic); and
- ◆ an apprentice who found he had been replaced by a new apprentice after taking three days sick leave (panel beating).¹²²

¹²⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/2002, p522.

¹²¹ Minutes of Evidence, 12/08/2002, p44.

¹²² Written Submission No. 51, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2 July 2002, p10.

While much of the Committee's evidence focused on weaknesses on the employer or industry side of the apprenticeship model, the Committee notes that there are employers who are committed to youth.

The Committee was particularly pleased to hear of the model used by Gippsland Group Training, which also trains in Melbourne under the name Apprenticeships Victoria. Since it commenced operating 20 years ago, Gippsland Group Training has provided an absolute guarantee to its young people of four years of paid employment. If a young person happens to be out of work because the Company's host employers do not have sufficient work, they are taken back into one of the Company's training facilities where they can continue to be employed productively.

Today, Gippsland Group Training employs 960 apprentices and trainees, 90 per cent of whom are employed in traditional trade areas such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical, motor mechanics, fitting and machining. It provides a significant level of support to its young people, as well as issuing safety boots, overalls, safety glasses and hearing protection (at no cost) and a tool kit (which can be added to, with the costs of tools deducted from the apprentice's salary over a period of time).

The Committee recognises the great benefits of Gippsland Group Training's model, including:

- ◆ it ensures that the young person can continue with their apprenticeship and training throughout natural cycles and downturns in the economy;
- ◆ it provides a sense of stability and security for a young person at a time when they may be undergoing a range of transitions and challenges in their life; and
- ◆ it makes employment in the traditional trades, many of which are experiencing skills shortages, an attractive career prospect for young people.

Unfortunately, other group training companies have not adopted Gippsland GTC's model in offering guaranteed employment for the entire apprenticeship period.

Another of the impressive apprenticeship models that the Committee heard about was that implemented by HM GEM Engines in Dandenong. This employer demonstrated a real commitment to young people (as well as to people with a disability). Once apprentices at HM GEM Engines have completed their probationary

period, they enter accelerated training. This means that they go to school five days a week for six months, while still being paid. Once they return to the workplace, nine months into their apprenticeship, these young people are paid at second year apprenticeship rates for the rest of that first year. At the start of the second year, they are paid third year wages and during their third year they are paid at fourth year rates. By the time they commence their final year of the apprenticeship, they are paid at basic tradesmen rates and once they are fully qualified, they are paid according to their performance. The Committee commends this model and would like to see more employers demonstrating this level of commitment to young people.

FINDING 3.11

The Committee finds that skills shortages in trades and low apprenticeship take-ups have also resulted in skill shortages at the middle management level in many industries. This is partly attributed to:

- ◆ *lack of promotion to students and parents by both schools and industry; and*
- ◆ *the decline in technical skills and role models in schools (which is now being addressed by VETiS and VCAL).*

FINDING 3.12

The Committee finds that a best practice apprenticeship and traineeship model for Group Training Companies and employers of young apprentices should incorporate the following components:

- ◆ *a focused marketing effort aimed at promoting trades entry and career pathways to students, parents and teachers;*
- ◆ *a high level of support provided to apprentices that includes a mentoring component;*
- ◆ *security of employment and a supportive, youth friendly work environment over the term of the apprenticeship;*
- ◆ *accelerated training where appropriate; and*
- ◆ *assistance to youth in purchasing equipment or accessing the workplace.*

RECOMMENDATION 3.14

The Committee recommends that the State Government liaise with the LLENs to ensure that in each region public vocational monies are directed towards training in growth industries or industries with identified skill shortages and therefore provide greater security of employment.

RECOMMENDATION 3.15

The Committee recommends that the State Government offer a range of incentives to young people to encourage them to enter apprenticeships in priority industries with identified skill shortages or growth industries.

RECOMMENDATION 3.16

The Committee recommends that employers, including Group Training Companies, be encouraged to offer job security as part of offering apprenticeships to young people. The Committee further recommends that the State Government investigate the effectiveness of offering employer subsidies with a requirement that ties apprenticeships and traineeships to more secure employment outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 3.17

The Committee recommends that the State Government investigate the low retention rates from traineeships and apprenticeships and the reasons they occur, including the reasons some Group Training Companies and TAFE institutes achieve better retention rates than others. The Committee further recommends that the State Government further promote successes in the apprenticeship and traineeship system, including effective employer and Group Training Company models and young people experiencing success in the workplace.

3.4 Adult and Community Education

Community owned and managed adult education has developed as an educational sector in Victoria since 1960. The sector is a partnership between government and the community, which was formalised in the *Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991*.¹²³

The ACE sector plays an essential role in attempting to meet the Government's goals for education and training in Victoria. It is also an important sector in the context of this Inquiry because it provides opportunities for 'second chance' learners and works with young people who are alienated by more formal education and training settings.

Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) provides lifelong learning opportunities for Victorian adults, contributing to their social, economic and cultural development as individuals and members of the Victorian community. Providers of ACFE programs are ACE organisations, the Centre for Adult Education (CAE), Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES), TAFE institutes and private registered training organisations.

ACFE program areas include:

- ◆ adult literacy, numeracy and basic education courses up to Year 10 equivalent for those who are just beginning their return to education or those seeking entry to other forms of education and training;
- ◆ VCE (through full-time or part-time study);
- ◆ general preparatory programs and bridging programs including return to study and work preparation programs;
- ◆ english as a Second Language (ESL) courses;
- ◆ vocational education programs; and
- ◆ general adult education programs in the areas of arts, crafts, health, history, languages, literature, personal development, philosophy, politics and science.¹²⁴

¹²³ Adult, Community and Further Education Board, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p8.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p1.

The Kirby Report highlighted the independent identity of the ACE sector and its role in meeting the educational needs of young people in the post-compulsory education and training system. The Report stressed:

- ◆ the need to recognise and resource the ACE sector's role in supporting disadvantaged young people in alternative community settings and in delivering complementary and compensatory programs for the school-age cohort; and
- ◆ that more comprehensive delivery of VCE in the ACE and TAFE sectors is desirable and needs to be better resourced.¹²⁵

The Kirby Report also recommended that 'tagged' resources be made available for guidance support for the school-age cohort. In response, the Victorian Government allocated \$500,000 to ACE organisations for Managed Individual Pathways (MIP) projects aimed at improving participation and outcomes for young people.¹²⁶ The MIP projects in the ACE sector target young people aged 15-17 years who have left school at or before Year 10.

Community learning centres and neighbourhood houses are relatively new players in the area of young people's education and employment. However, the presence of youth coordinators at some ACE providers, and programs for early school leavers covering aspects such as literacy through media, numeracy, computer skills, road rules, interpersonal skills and employment related skills, reflect the increasingly youth focused nature of this sector, and the ability to offer valuable learning experiences to young people.

The Committee received evidence in written submissions and public hearings supporting an increased role for the ACE sector in meeting the education and training needs of young people, particularly those who are disaffected and for those who have had negative experiences within the mainstream system. For example, Inner Northern LLEN outlined in its written submission that the advantages of young people alienated from school participating in ACE, include greater flexibility; an adult learning environment, which values diversity and the transformative nature of learning; and the strong connections that ACE providers have with their local communities. This enables ACE providers to forge effective partnerships with, for example, local government, local employers, welfare agencies and individuals, to

¹²⁵ Adult, Community and Further Education Board, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p10.

help young people through training and into employment.¹²⁷ Despite the provision of additional funds for ACE organisations for MIPs, the Inner Northern LLEN noted that recent changes to the TAFE Entitlement system have had a negative effect on the provision of education to young people through ACE providers.¹²⁸

FINDING 3.13

The Committee finds that the ACE sector is fulfilling an important role in offering opportunities for keeping significant numbers of young people connected to education, training and the broader community.

RECOMMENDATION 3.18

The Committee recommends that the State Government continue to monitor the participation of the youth cohort in adult and community education and provide adequate levels of funding to reflect any increases in participation.

3.5 Education for Young Koories

Throughout its Inquiry, the Committee heard concerns regarding the lower levels of school retention among young Koories. The Committee heard that lower levels of achievement occur due to a range of social and economic barriers, as well as a curriculum and school environment that is often irrelevant or alienating for young Indigenous Victorians. The following section first outlines the policy setting and level of participation in education among young Koories and then discusses some of the evidence heard by the Committee regarding Koories in the education system.

3.5.1 Policy Setting for Koorie Education

Government policy for Koorie education is set out in Koorie 2000 (schools sector) and the Wurreker Strategy (TAFE sector).

¹²⁶ Loc.cit.

¹²⁷ Written Submission No. 35, Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network, 27 May 2002, p3.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p4.

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) was established in 1976 and represents the Koorie community in relation to education policy development and strategic programming at the local, State and national levels. VAEAI supports the provision of education and training that reinforces the Koorie community's cultural identity and increases the awareness in the wider community about Koorie culture and aspirations in education and training.

Koorie 2000

Services to Koorie students within the schooling sector are provided through the Koorie 2000 strategy, which was launched in 1997. Koorie 2000 provides the framework for the delivery of Koorie education programs in Victoria that meet State and Commonwealth priorities for Indigenous education.¹²⁹ Key features of Koorie 2000 include:

- ◆ Eight regional Koorie Education Committees comprising LAECG representatives, school principals and one Regional Principal Consultant with responsibility for decision making about funding and resourcing of Koorie education programs at the local and regional level.
- ◆ Koorie Education Strategy Team which focuses on curriculum development, professional development and management of the 16 regionally based Koorie Education Development Officers.
- ◆ Koorie Open Door Education (KODE) program.
- ◆ Koorie Educator Program (there are 56 effective full-time positions located at schools with a high number of Koorie enrolments to support Koorie students).
- ◆ Koorie Intern Teacher Program, a primary teacher education program within the Deakin University Bachelor of Arts – Education Degree.

The Koorie Open Door Education program was originally established in 1994 in two Victorian schools. Currently, there are four KODE campuses, located in Glenroy, Morwell, Mildura and Swan Hill. According to VAEAI, this program has made a significant impact on attendance, retention and performance outcomes for Koorie students, with schools basing their success on:¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Written Submission No. 28, VAEAI, 24 May 2002, p9.

¹³⁰ Written Submission No. 28, VAEAI, 24 May 2002, p9.

- ◆ the strong partnership between the school and the local community with well established processes to enable the community to fully participate in the life of the schools;
- ◆ the acceptance of these schools by the Koorie community as their preferred provider of education for their children;
- ◆ the commitment of the schools to learn about and from the Koorie community in ways that have helped build understanding and mutual respect; and
- ◆ the ability of the schools to build on this learning in the development and implementation of Koorie inclusive curriculum.

The Committee notes, however, that representatives of ATSIC reported varying levels of success among the KODE campuses. Certainly, it supports the VAEAI in the argument that success is based on acceptance in the Koorie community that the KODE campus is the preferred provider of education. ATSIC representatives suggested however, that in communities where Koories experience racism, they may be reluctant to send their children to these schools.

Wurreker Strategy

The Wurreker Strategy was jointly launched by VAEAI and the Office of Post-Compulsory Education, Training and Employment (now the Office of Training and Tertiary Education) in July 2000. The focus of the strategy is on improving the outcomes of Koories participating in the TAFE sector.¹³¹

When fully implemented, Wurreker will provide:

- ◆ new policy and planning frameworks at the local, regional and State levels involving Koorie communities and TAFE working together;
- ◆ new frameworks, systems and processes for allocating the resources needed to support the Koorie community in achieving quality outcomes from their participation in the TAFE system; and
- ◆ new approaches to foster the development of equal partnerships between the Koorie community and the TAFE system to develop better pathways and improve outcomes.

¹³¹ Ibid, p8.

Eight regional decision making bodies chaired by LAECG representatives will underpin Wurreker. These committees will be responsible for:

- ◆ identifying Koorie regional training priorities;
- ◆ developing regional strategies to improve pathways and outcomes;
- ◆ providing advice on realistic outcomes for Koories in their regions;
- ◆ providing advice on resource allocation and program delivery strategies;
- ◆ forming linkages and promoting Koorie employment with regional employers and employee organisations; and
- ◆ consulting with regional Koorie organisations, ACFE regional councils, government departments, regional organisations, TAFE institutes, industry and employment agencies on how to increase the opportunities and outcomes for Koories in TAFE.

Wurreker Brokers will be located in each of the 8 VAEAI regions to support these communities.

ATSIC argues in its written submission to the Committee that the full implementation of the Wurreker strategy is long overdue.

3.5.2 Level of Participation by Koories in the Education and Training Sectors

Despite the comprehensive suite of Government programs outlined in the previous section, the Committee heard consistent evidence that the education system is not meeting the needs of many young Koories. Some of the key issues include a lack of Koorie educators in schools, inherent racism in the school curriculum and a lack of pathways planning and support. Furthermore, many young Koories do not have strong role models or family support that would assist them to remain in education.

Of Victorian Indigenous children aged 5-14 years, 89.2 per cent (5,847) were attending an educational institution in 2001. This compares with 94.2 per cent (578,265) of non-Indigenous children.¹³² The figures for youth aged 15-19 years were 56.3 per cent (1,453) Indigenous youth attending an educational institution, compared with 78.4 per cent (241,286) of non-Indigenous youth aged 15-19 years.

Table 3.1 below shows the number (and proportion) of Indigenous and non-Indigenous teenagers aged 15-19 years attending an educational institution in 2001 by region in Victoria. It shows the level of participation among Indigenous youth is far lower in every region, ranging from 39.8 per cent in East Gippsland to 66.1 per cent in Gippsland. In comparison, it shows a participation rate of over 70 per cent for non-Indigenous teenagers aged 15-19 years in all regions.

Table 3.1 Victorian Teenagers Attending Education Institution by Region (persons 15-19 years)

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Not Stated		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Barwon	86	55.5	12,842	77.0	98	22.4	13,027	75.4
Central Highlands	80	64.0	7,696	75.9	48	18.5	7,825	74.4
East Gippsland	49	39.8	3,925	76.1	35	22.6	4,010	73.8
Gippsland	84	66.1	7,965	75.4	64	18.1	8,114	73.4
Goulburn	160	49.2	9,440	73.8	79	18.2	9,680	71.5
Loddon	79	65.8	8,643	75.2	46	15.3	8,769	73.6
Mallee	103	47.2	3,849	70.3	33	21.7	3,986	68.2
Melbourne	694	58.7	175,023	79.7	1,666	18.5	177,384	77.2
Ovens-Murray	47	58.0	5,178	77.3	45	20.5	5,271	75.3
Western District	41	51.9	4,604	73.7	35	20.8	4,681	72.1
Wimmera	30	65.2	2,121	73.1	11	21.2	2,163	72.1
Total	1453	56.3	241286	78.4	2160	18.7	244,900	76.1

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Catalogue No. 2002.0, Table I01)

According to 2001 Census figures, Indigenous persons are under-represented in certain types of educational institutions.¹³³ For example, while Indigenous children account for 1.0 per cent of children attending government secondary schools, they account for only 0.3 per cent of children attending Catholic and other non-government secondary schools.

In the post-school sectors, Indigenous youth are slightly over-represented in the TAFE sector, representing 0.8 per cent of those attending a TAFE Institute and under-represented in the university sector, representing only 0.3 per cent of students.

The VAEAI notes that while there has been an increase in access and participation by Koorie people within vocational education and training, this has been skewed

¹³² ABS, 2001 Census, Catalogue No. 2002.0, Table I01.

¹³³ ABS, 2001 Census, Catalogue No. 2002.0, Table I04.

towards the lower end of the qualifications spectrum. Koories are under-represented in trade and diploma level courses and concentrated in TAFE access and preparatory courses.¹³⁴ In 1998, 45 per cent of Victorian Koorie enrolments in TAFE courses were at AQF levels 1-2, 44 per cent were in AQF levels 3-4 and just 11 per cent were at AQF levels 5-6.¹³⁵ VAEAI reported to the Committee that Koorie completion rates within vocational education and training are also below the Australian average.

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 below show that Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over have completed lower levels of schooling when compared with non-Indigenous Victorians. The Department of Education, Employment and Training's 1999 Mid-Year Census revealed that Year 12 retention rates for Koorie students continue to be well below those of their non-Koorie counterparts, with the apparent Year 12 retention rate (from a Year 7 base) for Victorian Koorie students at 43.5 per cent, compared to 71.1 per cent for non-Koorie students.¹³⁶ While retention rates are increasing, they are doing so at a slower pace than for non-Koorie students and consequently, the gap between the achievement rates of Koorie and non-Koorie students in the school system is widening.

Table 3.2 Highest School Level Completed by Indigenous Persons (15 years & over)

	Males		Females		Persons	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Year 8 or below	1,078	14.4	972	12.4	2,050	13.4
Year 9 or equivalent	1,079	14.4	1,103	14.0	2,182	14.2
Year 10 or equivalent	1,675	22.4	1,701	21.6	3,376	22.0
Year 11 or equivalent	979	13.1	1,086	13.8	2,065	13.5
Year 12 or equivalent	1,496	20.0	1,735	22.0	3,231	21.1
Still at school	456	6.1	516	6.6	972	6.3
Did not go to school	139	1.9	85	1.1	224	1.5
Not stated	566	7.6	671	8.5	1,237	8.1
Total	7,468	99.6	7,869	100	15,337	100

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Catalogue No. 2002.0, Table I05)

Analysis of level of school completed by gender indicates that females have higher levels of schooling completed than males, although the difference is greater within the Indigenous population compared with the non-Indigenous population. For

¹³⁴ Written Submission No. 28, VAEAI, 24 May 2002, p4.

¹³⁵ VAEAI and DEET, *Wurreker: The Koorie Community and TAFE in Victoria in Equal Partnership*, 2000, cited in Written Submission No. 28, VAEAI, 24 May 2002, p4.

¹³⁶ Written Submission No. 28, VAEAI, 24 May 2002, p4.

example, while 35.8 per cent of Indigenous females aged 15 and over have completed Year 11 or 12, only 33.1 per cent of Indigenous males have attained this level of school education. Within the non-Indigenous population, the figures are 55.0 per cent of females having completed Year 11 or 12, compared with 54.6 per cent of males.

Table 3.3 Highest School Level Completed by Non-Indigenous Persons (15 years & over)

	Males		Females		Persons	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Year 8 or below	174,137	10.2	205,714	11.4	379,851	10.8
Year 9 or equivalent	137,642	8.1	133,511	7.4	271,153	7.7
Year 10 or equivalent	294,440	17.3	281,647	15.6	576,087	16.4
Year 11 or equivalent	251,767	14.8	254,553	14.1	506,320	14.5
Year 12 or equivalent	677,693	39.8	737,761	40.9	1,415,454	40.4
Still at school	68,107	4.0	72,500	4.0	140,607	4.0
Did not go to school	18,728	1.1	25,570	1.4	44,298	1.3
Not stated	78,263	4.6	91,751	5.1	170,014	4.9
Total	1,700,777	99.9	1,803,007	99.9	3,503,784	100

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Catalogue No. 2002.0, Table I05)

Table 3.4 below shows that the lower levels of schooling among Indigenous persons aged 15 and over is apparent in every region of Victoria.

Table 3.4: Highest School Level Completed by Region (persons 15 & over)

	Year 10 or below (%)		Year 11 to 12 (%)	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Barwon	46.0	40.2	39.2	49.8
Central Highlands	49.8	42.3	35.0	47.6
East Gippsland	61.6	46.9	22.4	42.9
Gippsland	51.7	45.7	28.4	44.0
Goulburn	53.6	46.4	28.1	43.2
Loddon	32.5	34.0	18.9	36.2
Mallee	61.0	49.1	21.1	40.2
Melbourne	44.8	31.6	40.3	58.2
Ovens-Murray	51.9	43.0	34.1	47.6
Western District	57.1	45.3	26.9	45.1
Wimmera	58.1	47.4	25.3	43.3
Total	48.1	34.7	33.5	54.3

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Catalogue No. 2002.0, Table I01)

3.5.3 Comment

A common theme among those representing young Koories was the suggestion that the school system has failed Koorie students. This is supported by the statistics discussed above. The major concerns heard by the Committee in relation to koorie participation in the education system were:

- ◆ That the traditional Australian pathway for young people to enter the workforce, through completion of twelve years of education followed by a period of 3-4 years or more in further education or training is foreign and often insensitive to Indigenous people, and therefore largely closed to Indigenous youth.¹³⁷
- ◆ That many schools fail to acknowledge and/or respond to the cultural needs of Koorie students.
- ◆ That there are few alternative pathways into the workforce and that these nearly always lead to lower paid and less prestigious jobs. These alternatives also represent *"lesser forms or reflections of the main pathway, transversing shorter or less demanding training courses, but which are no more accessible to young Indigenous people"*.¹³⁸
- ◆ There is a high number of young Koories leaving by Year 10, at which stage they have not been able to access any school based industry programs such as VET.
- ◆ That a significant proportion of Koories attending TAFE are doing so in the context of 'catching up' on their school education.¹³⁹
- ◆ The employment situation of Koories and in particular, Koorie youth is not improving in relation to the advances in educational participation evidenced in the last decade.
- ◆ That the regions experiencing the highest unemployment rates among Koories are also those where participation rates across the education and training sectors is highest. As VAEAI notes, this suggests that young Koories are not being supported to pursue education and training options that are linked to local employment opportunities.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Written Submission No. 31, ATSIC, 24 May 2002, p4.

¹³⁸ Loc.cit.

¹³⁹ Written Submission No. 28, VAEAI, 24 May 2002, p4.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p3.

Despite the evidence that the mainstream education and training system can be insensitive to the needs of Young Koories, the Inner Northern LLEN revealed that there is a strong commitment from various educational institutions in its region towards developing innovative programs for young Koorie people.¹⁴¹ Some of the culturally relevant and inclusive strategies that have been adopted are summarised below:

- ◆ The Koorie Open Door Education program at Box Forrest Secondary College.
- ◆ A wide range of innovative programs providing a highly successful environment for Koorie students at Northland Secondary College, where 25% of the school population is young Koories. These include strong connections with the local community, acting as a centre for Aboriginal cultural activity in the area, MASAR (Melbourne Aboriginal Sport and Recreation), a multimedia program and a strong focus on Koorie dance, art and music.
- ◆ A high level of parental involvement at Northland Secondary College: around one third of School Council members are Koorie parents.
- ◆ A commitment by Northland Secondary College to support and track their students beyond school into apprenticeships and further training and education.
- ◆ A Koorie Education Unit at Kangan-Batman Institute of TAFE and a Koorie Services Centre at the Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE (NMIT).
- ◆ Kangan-Batman runs a successful Trades Experience course for early school leavers. There is a high level of demand for this course, which provides workshop activities and a taster program of activities across a range of areas, including hospitality, light engineering, sport and recreation. Young people participating in the program also receive literacy and numeracy support. Participants are collected and returned home each day.
- ◆ NMIT offerings include Coorong Tongala, a Certificate 1 course in Koorie education, which tends to attract younger people.

FINDING 3.14

The Committee finds that the lower participation in education and training among Koorie youth is attributable to a range of factors including:

- ◆ *many schools do not recognise and respond to the cultural needs of Koorie students;*

¹⁴¹ Written Submission No. 35, Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network, 27

- ◆ *many young Koories do not have access to mentoring support and role models that would assist them to value education and develop aspirations; and*
- ◆ *young Koories are not being adequately supported to pursue education and training options that are linked to local employment opportunities.*

RECOMMENDATION 3.19

The Committee recommends that a special VET in schools program, linked to local employment opportunities, be made available to young Koories in the early as well as later years of secondary school. The Committee further recommends that schools identify young Koorie students at risk of disengaging and be proactive in assisting them to access work experience placements and part-time employment.

3.5.4 Access to Information Technologies

Proficiency using computers and the Internet is essential for success in an increasing range of training and education settings, including primary education, as well as within the workforce. Indeed, access to computers and the Internet is increasingly important for full participation in many aspects of life. Like many other areas, however, the Indigenous population, including Indigenous youth does not have the same level of access to these essential tools as the non-Indigenous population.

At the time of the 2001 Census, 50.7 per cent of non-Indigenous children aged 0-14 years and 65.4 per cent of non-Indigenous youth aged 15-24 years used a computer at home. This compares with only 26.5 per cent of Indigenous children and 33.9 per cent of Indigenous youth.¹⁴² Similarly, although there is no age break-down, 40.1 per cent of the non-Indigenous population used the Internet (including 19.5% using the Internet at home), compared with only 25.9 per cent of the Indigenous population (with only 10.3% using the Internet at home).¹⁴³

May 2002, p7.

¹⁴² ABS 2001 Census, Catalogue No. 2002.0, Table I10.

¹⁴³ ABS 2001 Census, Catalogue No. 2002.0, Table I11.

Table 3.5 shows the regional break-down of use of computers in the home by Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth (aged 15-24 years). It also shows the use of the Internet among the total Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

Table 3.5 Use of Computers and Internet by Region

	Uses Computer at Home (15-24 year olds)		Uses Internet (Total persons)	
	Indigenous (%)	Non-Indigenous (%)	Indigenous (%)	Non-Indigenous (%)
Barwon	38.8	62.1	29.1	36.7
Central Highlands	43.3	59.4	27.2	35.4
East Gippsland	20.1	55.9	14.6	32.3
Gippsland	30.4	58.5	20.0	32.9
Goulburn	21.5	55.0	18.6	31.4
Loddon	41.2	59.8	28.7	35.0
Mallee	19.4	51.1	16.1	29.3
Melbourne	41.0	68.7	32.6	43.4
Ovens-Murray	43.6	56.3	33.3	36.4
Western District	21.2	56.1	24.2	31.9
Wimmera	31.7	53.5	18.4	29.0
Total	35.0	66.0	26.9	40.7

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Catalogue No. 2002.0, Tables I10 and I11)

FINDING 3.15

The Committee finds that while proficiency in using computers and the Internet is increasingly essential for success at school or employment, Indigenous youth do not have the same level of access to computers and the Internet as non-Indigenous youth.

RECOMMENDATION 3.20

The Committee recommends that the Government investigate ways of increasing computer skills and access to the Internet for Indigenous youth.

3.6 Education for Young People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

Evidence indicates that the range of issues affecting participation in education by young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds varies both within communities as well as according to the circumstances surrounding their arrival in Australia.

3.6.1 Cultural Needs and Expectations

Speaking in broad terms about the culturally and linguistically diverse community, the South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre outlined in a written submission that different communities have different needs and expectations of the education and training systems. The Committee heard that many communities place a strong emphasis on VCE completion as a pathway to tertiary education, while some other communities are faced with situations whereby early entry into employment is considered a higher priority than completion of secondary schooling.

Dr John Spierings, Research Strategist, Dusseldorp Skills Forum:

*“That is not an area we have looked at in detail. The data shows that more generally across languages other than English educational participation is high, but if you break that down into different communities there are high levels of variation. Young people from Asian backgrounds are doing very well; young people from African and Middle-Eastern backgrounds are not doing so well. It is a mixed picture. In the aggregate, young people with that background are participating in secondary and tertiary education at above average levels.”*¹⁴⁴

In most circumstances, students, parents and their families value education and have high aspirations for academic achievement. Therefore, not unlike the mainstream community, vocational education and training which may lead to employment in trades related industries is often not valued or pursued by young migrant people and their parents.

¹⁴⁴ Minutes of Evidence, 12/08/2002, p48.

The South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre explained in a written submission that there is much pressure on young people in some communities to enter the professions, such as engineering, medicine and law, without proper evaluation of a young person's interest and ability. The submission noted that often this leads to early school leaving and a sense of failure for the young person.

Mr Nick Chiam, Planning Officer, Settlement, Planning and Information Unit, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs noted a similar view from refugee parents and illustrated the importance of promoting VCAL to migrant communities:

“One of the challenges for migrants with that concept of the difference between technical schools and normal mainstream schools, which we were talking about, is the expectations that tie in with that. A lot of parents, especially refugees who are not aware of how the system works, have an expectation that their child should attend and is good enough to be attending a mainstream high school — ‘my child should be just as eligible’, sort of thing. One of the good things about VCAL is that it allows us to try to target kids who do not necessarily have academic skills in an academic context, which would hopefully satisfy some of the concerns from migrant parents about their child still pursuing this idea of pure academia.”¹⁴⁵

The Committee heard evidence that in other circumstances, young people in CALD communities, particularly newly arrived migrants and those with refugee backgrounds, may pursue even lowly skilled and lowly paid employment, due to a need for them to provide financial assistance to the family and other relatives that may be living overseas. South Central Region MRC noted in its submission *“that there is pressure placed on some young people to leave school early and start work in order to contribute financially to the family. This leads to young people taking low paid jobs that are often short-term”*.¹⁴⁶ It then went on to express the need for parents to be educated about the benefits of staying on at school and pursuing vocational or higher education courses.

¹⁴⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/02, p533.

¹⁴⁶ Written Submission No. 22, South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre Inc., 24 May 2002, p2.

3.6.2 English Language and Literacy Skills

Much of the evidence taken by the Committee related specifically to the experiences of newly arrived migrants and refugees, and therefore, focused on the importance of appropriate and adequate English language training as a foundation for access to education, training and employment opportunities.

The *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia*, commissioned by DIMIA clearly demonstrated the critical link between English language proficiency, labour force participation and the long-term success of migrants in the labour market:

*“The views of migrants about the importance of English skills for getting a job is reinforced by multivariate analysis that predicts the probability of being employed. English language competence is an important predictor of the probability of being employed for all visa groups. The effect of less than perfect English is similar for all the visa groups, and reduces the probability of employment sustainability”.*¹⁴⁷

On arriving in Australia, students from non-English speaking backgrounds without adequate proficiency in the English language may access English Language Centres before entering mainstream education classes. Despite a high level of motivation and high expectations of success in education among these young people and their families, many fail or struggle to survive the transition from English Language School to mainstream education. This may occur due to disrupted schooling, which places them well behind their Australian counterparts once they start school and/or because they are simultaneously making a transition into a totally new culture and education system. Additionally, they may also be dealing with experiences of torture and trauma in their country of origin.

Ms Nadine Liddy, Coordinator, Programs Unit, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues discussed some shortfalls in the availability of English language training in Victoria:

Mr Craige – “Firstly, are there adequate opportunities for English to be learned and taught, and positions; and secondly, is there adequate funding and resources for that to take place?”

¹⁴⁷ Sue Richardson, Frances Robertson and Diana Ilsley, National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University, *The Labour Force Experience of New Migrants*, August 2001, cited in Written Submission No. 48, DIMIA, 17 June 2002, p3.

Ms Liddy – “No to the first part of your question, and possibly to the second part of your question. I would say no in terms of adequate opportunities, and that is partly because a proportion of refugee young people and newly arrived young people who come into Australia will enter English language centres and then from there move into the TAFE sector or from there move into a mainstream secondary school and move into further training or employment. That is a proportion. There is another group that will fall through that system and which is particularly vulnerable or particularly disadvantaged. That may be because they have come into Australia with either no previous formal education or disrupted education, so their English language proficiency when they arrive in Australia is very low and/or literacy in their first language is either non-existent or very low. So they would then enter into an English language school or an English language centre but their opportunities for moving beyond that would be lower than for the first group that I spoke of.”¹⁴⁸

Ms Thao Pham, a young woman of Vietnamese background was quoted in a written submission from the Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre explaining her feelings about access to educational opportunities for refugee youth:

“I know at my school many young people who want to do VCE, who drop out because of language difficulties. I think that inadequate educational support for newly arrived refugee young people in mainstream schools is discriminatory – it prevents refugee young people accessing further education and employment and participating fully in the community, and can lead to young people getting really frustrated.”¹⁴⁹

As suggested by the evidence above, the need for English language training is a key issue for a proportion of newly arrived and refugee young people. For others, there may be additional barriers to a young person’s capacity to learn English, including low levels of educational attainment in their first language, and dealing with issues of torture and trauma experienced in the country of origin.

Mr Nick Chiam, Planning Officer, Settlement, Planning and Information Unit, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs:

“Many of them – as you could imagine, coming from the countries I have spoken to you about – come from systems where they had no experience of a school or a classroom or any of the sorts of structured learning frameworks that we take for granted in Australia. One of the obvious impacts of this is that a young person may not only not have English but may not be able to use or be used to the sorts of learning

¹⁴⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/2002, p539.

¹⁴⁹ Written Submission No. 69, Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre, 16 September 2002, p4.

frameworks that allow you to learn a new language. They may not even be literate in their own language.”¹⁵⁰

Mr John Patsikatheodorou, Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre:

“Young refugees, moreover, arrive at all ages and at all stages of education, with different educational experiences. Many young refugees have experienced considerable disruption to their schooling due to long periods, sometimes several years, in camps and due to the dislocation and trauma of war or persecution. Some may have had no education in their first language before coming to Australia. Young people with interrupted schooling will often require specialised programs, especially programs that take account of the time it takes for them to learn how to study and to adapt to the culture and discipline of study.”¹⁵¹

The impact of refugee trauma on education and employment will be further examined by the Committee in its second report.

In seeking to address the English language and literacy needs of newly arrived migrants and refugees, the Committee obtained evidence that successful education, training and ultimately, employment outcomes are dependent on appropriate educational pathways that recognise that young refugees often do not fit neatly into the service models developed for the mainstream community. The Committee heard that education and training providers, including schools, TAFE institutes and universities must facilitate flexible mainstream programs that are not restricted by rigid time or age barriers and provide supportive, specialised educational settings.

Mr Nick Chiam, Planning Officer, Settlement, Planning and Information Unit, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs:

“First of all I think it is important to encourage flexible and specialised education programs. Some of these examples, which I would particularly highlight are TAFE-based programs, are directed at students with disrupted education. ... I think we should also try to promote new mainstream initiatives like VCAL. Our department sees this as a really good opportunity to try to diversify the skills of young people as they reach the end of their secondary schooling.”¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Minutes of Evidence, op. cit, p529.

¹⁵¹ Written Submission No. 69, Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre, 16 September 2002, p2.

¹⁵² Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/2002, p529.

Ms Nadine Liddy, Coordinator, Programs Unit, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues:

*“...there needs to be a shift in the culture and the structure of mainstream secondary schools to accommodate what will be a particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged group of young people. In terms of a culture and a structure it is based on a level of English language proficiency and a level of understanding of the education system. I think there need to be innovative and flexible programs within mainstream secondary schools to accommodate this group of young people.”*¹⁵³

One of the important programs the Committee heard about was the Young Adult Migrant English Class (YAMEC) at the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, which teaches functional English in a range of environments. As well as providing an English course, YAMEC provides a more general education in an attempt to compensate for those missed years. It has an orientation to Australia and to the systems here, including the education systems and options available. Mr Chiam describes YAMEC as a *“really good example of a flexible program which is not necessarily class-based but which has a slightly more diverse curriculum, which is important to try to promote and which has excellent outcomes for the young people involved.”*¹⁵⁴

Inner Northern LLEN also called for greater flexibility in the programs offered to new migrants, noting that Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) is not funded for under 18 years of age. The Committee heard throughout its investigations that many young new arrivals feel more comfortable learning English in an adult environment than in an English language school, especially if they have had a very disrupted childhood and have an adult identity due to the responsibilities they have had to respond to. The Committee therefore feels that there is a special case for AMES to be funded to provide English language courses to new arrivals at an earlier age where this is most appropriate to meet their needs.

¹⁵³ Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/2002. p537.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p524.

The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues made a number of recommendations regarding the language and literacy needs of newly arrived and refugee migrants, namely:¹⁵⁵

- ◆ the provision of targeted pre-literacy or low literacy programs that accommodate the needs of refugee and newly arrived young people with disrupted or very limited schooling prior to their arrival in Australia, either through AMES or the TAFE sector;
- ◆ the provision of an intensive bridging or transition program for students exiting English Language Schools and entering mainstream secondary schools;
- ◆ structural shifts within mainstream secondary schooling that acknowledge and are responsive to the experiences and needs of refugee and newly arrived young people. This would best be achieved via collaborative work with agencies outside the school system to develop strategies and approaches that support or assist refugee and newly arrived young people to remain in the secondary system;
- ◆ the provision of alternative courses with ESL components designed to provide greater levels of flexibility within schools;
- ◆ increasing collaborative work between existing mechanisms such as the Managed Individual Pathways and the Local Learning and Employment Networks;
- ◆ the ongoing provision of effective, responsive programs that support refugee and newly arrived young people in developing and remaining in appropriate education, training and employment pathways; and
- ◆ both encouraging and resourcing employers to accommodate refugee and newly arrived young people in apprenticeship programs.

FINDING 3.16

The Committee finds that the range of issues affecting participation in education by young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds varies both within and between communities as well as according to the circumstances surrounding their arrival in Australia and their socio-economic position following settlement.

¹⁵⁵ Written Submission No. 68, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, 23 September 2002, p4.

FINDING 3.17

The Committee finds that newly arrived migrants often have difficulty accessing the mainstream education and training system due to one or more of the following factors:

- ◆ *they may not have the required level of English language to participate in mainstream education;*
- ◆ *they may have had a disrupted education which impacts on their ability to learn;*
- ◆ *they may not have an adequate understanding of the education and training structures in Victoria and the opportunities and supports available to them; and/or*
- ◆ *they may be suffering from trauma or stress as a result of circumstances in their country of origin.*

FINDING 3.18

The Committee finds that increased school retention and school completion rates are unlikely to be achieved within sub-groups of the CALD community without necessary interventions and programs to assist them in remaining in the school system.

FINDING 3.19

The Committee finds that newly arrived young migrants require special language programs that cater for their language skills, cultural needs and settlement needs and that are sensitive to special circumstances such as experiences of trauma.

FINDING 3.20

The Committee finds that TAFE and other adult learning environments are more suited to the needs of many young newly arrived migrants when addressing their English language requirements. The Committee further finds that these environments offer the added advantage of facilitating the link between language courses and vocational courses.

RECOMMENDATION 3.21

The Committee recommends that the State Government examine whether in certain circumstances, relevant adult learning environments such as Adult Multicultural Education Services could become eligible to receive ACE funding to provide English language training to new arrivals aged under 18 years.

RECOMMENDATION 3.22

The Committee recommends that the State Government provide additional support to employers employing young newly arrived migrants or refugees as trainees or apprentices to assist them to provide the necessary language and literacy support.

RECOMMENDATION 3.23

The Committee recommends that the State and Federal Governments seek an agreement to extend access to training and employment programs for new arrivals in some visa categories.

RECOMMENDATION 3.24

The Committee recommends that English as a Second Language courses be linked to vocational and practical skills and be more widely available at a range of levels.

RECOMMENDATION 3.25

The Committee recommends that when undertaking education and marketing campaigns promoting the full range of education, training, employment and career opportunities to students and parents, the State Government ensure that information is conveyed through culturally appropriate media and that materials are translated into relevant community languages.

School to Work Transitions

As well as the growing demand for rising educational qualifications, there is also strong evidence regarding the importance of a positive early exposure to the labour market. A longitudinal study of around 2,200 Year 10 students from the late 1980s for seven years until the mid-1990s revealed that *“getting a good start in the labour market matters, especially for early school leavers, and for young women. Young people who do not experience full-time employment in their first year after leaving school spend substantially less time in work over the first five years than those who are employed full-time in their first year.”*¹⁵⁶

The 2000 Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria (Kirby Report) clearly demonstrated the serious and complex issues facing young people during their transition from school to further education, employment and training. One of its key findings was a lack of coordination between different parts of the education and training system in Victoria and a lack of accountability for the transition of young people from school to further study and employment. The Report noted that these shortcomings were serious at a time when the transition from education to work is becoming increasingly complex and when there is a stronger link between education and training outcomes and broader economic and community development.¹⁵⁷

As part of its submission to the Committee, Melbourne’s West ACC conducted a survey of nine local Job Network members (as well as 21 local businesses). The most common barriers to a successful transition into employment for young people cited by Job Network members were a lack of experience and lack of education, under-developed work readiness and lack of accessible services and resources. In relation to gaps in the provision of education and training, one of the most common responses from the Job Network was that young people emerged from the system with unrealistic expectations about what work involved. Job Network members

¹⁵⁶ J. Ainley and P. MacKenzie, *Australia’s Young Adults, The Deepening Divide*, DSF, 1999, cited in Written Submission No. 6, Education for Work Coalition and Melbourne Citymission, 6 May 2002, p2.

¹⁵⁷ Adult, Community and Further Education Board, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p9.

further reported that greatest success was achieved in gaining employment for young people where they had participated in work experience programs, part-time employment or a pre-apprenticeship course.¹⁵⁸

4.1 The Nature of School to Work Transitions

Living through the transition from school to work can be a stressful time for many young people: it is a turbulent and uncertain period for most young people, even if many of them start on the right track.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, a failure to negotiate the school to work transition is well recognised as an important risk factor in terms of propensity to long-term unemployment. Berry Street Victoria reports that it is estimated that one in five of Australia's long-term unemployed is connected to a failed school to work transition.¹⁶⁰

4.1.1 Types of Transitions

Although traditionally the transition from school to work marked a young person's progress towards an independent adult life, rapid social and economic change has meant that the pathways between school and work are often no longer linear. Young people are now more likely to leave school without a permanent, full-time job and many choose to continue into further education to enhance future job prospects. Many young people also hold casual or part-time jobs that often do not lead to sustainable employment.¹⁶¹

The nature of a successful transition from education to work can take a number of forms but typically includes: ¹⁶²

- ◆ obtaining a full-time job on leaving school and remaining in full-time work;
- ◆ gaining an apprenticeship or traineeship followed by full-time work;

¹⁵⁸ Written Submission No. 50, Melbourne's West Area Consultative Committee, 18 June 2002, p4.

¹⁵⁹ Boston Consulting Group, *Pathways to Work: Preventing and Reducing Long-term Unemployment*, January 2001, p9.

¹⁶⁰ Business Council of Australia, 2001, cited in Written Submission No. 33, Berry Street Victoria, 24 May 2002, p11.

¹⁶¹ Written Submission No. 51, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2 July 2002, p6.

¹⁶² McKenzie, 2000, cited in Written Submission No. 33, Berry Street Victoria, 24 May 2002, p10.

- ◆ school leavers who participate in full-time further study before entering full-time employment;
- ◆ young people who experience a brief period of unemployment, part-time work or not being in the labour force but then enter full-time work; and
- ◆ obtaining part-time work.

Although any of the above pathways should be recognised as an effective and successful way of achieving full-time employment, the Committee heard that there is pressure on many young people to pursue only one of these pathways. The pressure may come from family, friends, teachers, the media or the community. The actual preferred pathways may differ depending on socio-economic or cultural factors in various communities.

As discussed in Chapter 3, some families believe that the only pathway to success is through a university education. The tertiary education pathway is also strongly supported by many employers in terms of minimum qualifications required to fill a job, and often portrayed by both the community and the media as the best pathway to success. However, in some families there is a lack of role models and encouragement for young people to remain in school. This is typical in families experiencing intergenerational unemployment or where the family unit is broken. The Committee also heard of peer group pressure to leave school early due to socio-economic and cultural circumstances that some families face.

Regardless of the circumstances, external pressures to follow a certain pathway diminish the prospects of young people making a successful transition into employment. The Committee supports the view that there should be parity of esteem between all education, training and employment pathways and that there needs to be greater recognition of the benefits of commencing employment via an apprenticeship or traineeship in particular. This issue was highlighted in the previous chapter when the Committee discussed the need for a positive promotion of vocational education such as VCAL and VET in schools.

Referring back to the various forms of effective transitions, there are high levels of attrition as young people undertake various school to work transition experiences. As young people experience pathways a number of situations may trigger a new transitional choice. For example, they may find themselves caught in a training cycle

without any real job prospects, realise they do not have a high enough qualification, find that the wage received from a part-time traineeship is not sustainable, or simply decide that the ongoing training or education in which they are engaged is no longer the preference.¹⁶³

This complex and non-linear nature of the school to work transition is demonstrated through the experience of a young person who spoke to the Committee during a public hearing in Dandenong (refer case study box below). His experience is important because it illuminates the fact that the move from education to work is not a single permanent step of leaving the education system and entering the world of work. The transition process can in fact extend for some time, with neither an obvious starting point nor a clearly defined end. For many, the transition involves several steps back and forth between education and work and as such there is a clear need for continued and long-term support so that young people can experience various options and make informed employment decisions.

Case Study

Lee left school at the age of 15 years because he did not have a goal to aim for regarding a future career. After working for a fast food outlet for seven months, Lee decided that he wanted more from his life and returned to school. After completing Year 10 (and part of Year 11), Lee again left school and worked as an apprentice mechanic for one month before realising that was not what he wanted to do long-term.

Aged 17, Lee was referred by Centrelink to the Cook Shop program, which is a local eight-week program of life skills workshops covering aspects such as communication, budgeting, job search and interview skills, based around cooking as the medium. While initially hesitant and skeptical, Lee found he enjoyed the first session and continued to attend. The course included an excursion to William Angliss Institute of TAFE, with some hands-on experience in making cappuccinos and cakes. After the course, the group had the opportunity to do some catering functions, which Lee continues to be involved in and enjoy.

A year later, Lee has decided to do a Certificate II in Commercial Cooking at William Angliss. He says "I might be doing a chef apprenticeship and get to travel and do everything. I am starting to look forward to it".

¹⁶³ Written Submission No. 14, Smart Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network, 21 May 2002, p3.

The Committee heard from many witnesses that transitioning a young person to employment is difficult if they have left school early and are not connected to any services in the community. As a general rule, the younger they are when they start looking for work, the more likely it is that they will be unemployed. Many young teenagers find it difficult to even obtain part-time employment as they are competing against other young people who may still be studying or have higher education qualifications.¹⁶⁴ This reinforces the Committee's discussion in the previous chapter regarding the importance of engaging and retaining young people in education and training.

FINDING 4.1

The Committee finds that the most critical transitions in any young person's life are the transitions primary school to secondary school, from childhood into adolescence, from adolescence to adulthood, from education to the workforce, and from dependence to independence and responsibility. The Committee finds that failure to make these transitions successfully will increase a young person's likelihood of long periods of unemployment either now or in the future.

FINDING 4.2

The Committee finds that all forms of education, training and employment should be equally valued and that there is a need for greater recognition of the benefits of commencing employment via an apprenticeship or traineeship.

4.2 The Role of State Government in Supporting School to Work Transitions

The Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria resulted in two key State Government initiatives aimed at enhancing the school to work transition of young people. The first initiative was the establishment of Local Learning and Employment Networks to identify gaps in the provision of education and training, to develop new programs to fill the gaps, develop new opportunities for young people and to link education and training provision to local

¹⁶⁴ Written Submission No. 33, Berry Street Victoria, 24 May 2002, p12.

employment opportunities. The other initiative was the commitment of funds within the framework of Managed Individual Pathways (MIP) to support young people in their transition from school to work, further education and training.

4.2.1 Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs)

The Kirby Review found that not only were too many people dropping out of education and training, but that too often, no institution or individual took responsibility for them. The Government accepted the recommendation of the review to set up collaborative networks for planning and supporting post-compulsory education, training and links to employment.

The Government committed \$27 million to the development of 31 Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) statewide. LLEN members come from a range of organisations, including local government, local employers, TAFE institutes, universities, government and non-government schools, community agencies and organisations, individual community members, Koorie organisations, peak employer organisations and agencies, ACE providers, trade unions and registered education and training providers.

LLENs were progressively established and became operational throughout 2001 and 2002. The main objectives of a LLEN are to:¹⁶⁵

- ◆ Maximise education, training and employment opportunities, particularly for young people.
- ◆ Maximise positive outcomes for people in post compulsory education, training and employment.
- ◆ Establish a new relationship between education and training providers and government that involves less central intervention but greater accountability of providers to government, local industry and the local community.
- ◆ Provide education and training input at the local level.

¹⁶⁵ Department of Education, Employment and Training, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p24.

The key policy shift inherent in the LLENs is to make local and regional communities, organisations and agencies directly responsible for the success of local young people in the post-compulsory area.¹⁶⁶

The Committee received evidence from a number of witnesses about the effectiveness of LLENs in enhancing the school to work transitions. There was widespread support behind the principle of LLENs but witnesses raised a number of issues that should be addressed by the Government in terms of the future role and outcomes of the Networks.

Mr Michael Iaccarino, Executive Officer, Melbourne's West Area Consultative Committee:

*"I think the Local Learning and Employment Networks in our regions are working very well. They have put up some good projects, they are working with other organisations in the region, and we have worked very closely together. I think they are working. Obviously when you establish a new system like the LLEN it takes a bit of time to establish all the corporate requirements — governance, all those sorts of things. I am very impressed with both the Wynbay and Maribyrnong–Moonee Valley LLENs. The Brimbank–Melton one is just getting started, so they have a long way to go."*¹⁶⁷

Mr Graham Bastian, Principal, Bendigo Senior Secondary College:

*"I think the philosophy that underpins the Local Learning and Employment Network is a sound one, but I think there is a lot of work to be done in setting up the implementation structure that actually delivers on that philosophy. To pick up the students who are falling through the cracks in whatever cracks they may be is essential, and that is one of the goals of the LLEN. To engage schools and the workplace and employers to a far greater extent is another aim that I think we all applaud, but I am not sure that we have necessarily got the structures right. I think some of the first tasks that LLENs were involved with perhaps did not announce their presence well and did not engage their constituents, both employers and schools, in a positive aspect."*¹⁶⁸

A key concern throughout the Inquiry was the lack of industry and employer involvement with the LLENs.

¹⁶⁶ South East Local Learning and Employment Network, briefing paper supplied to the Economic Development Committee at a public hearing on 19/08/2002.

¹⁶⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/02, p325.

¹⁶⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/02, p455.

Mr Barry Whitehead, Gippsland Group Training:

*“At the moment the LLENs are very new and most of the engagement is at the training and educational levels. There is very little — in fact, too little — engagement at industry and employer levels, but it is early days. I hope that ramps up and meets some of those needs.”*¹⁶⁹

Mr Mick Butera, Executive Director, Northlink NIETEL:

*“...getting industry involved with the LLENs is going to be very much dependent on the LLENs identifying specific roles for firms to play within schools. I think LLENs are working that out at the moment. We will be supporting them as much as we can with our industry links. We will be passing on our experience in terms of the sorts of things that firms will get involved in with schools and students, and the traps that need to be avoided in order that employers don't walk away dissatisfied from that sort of thing.”*¹⁷⁰

While it may still be too early to pass judgement on the success or otherwise of LLENs, the Committee believes there is a need for LLEN outcomes to be measurable through job creation for young people and school retention rates rather than through the number of advisory panels, reference groups, briefings and consultations that may have taken place.

If the Government's aim is really to make local and regional communities directly responsible for the success of their local young people, then it should be the responsibility placed on the LLEN for making this happen. The effectiveness of current government programs targeted at young job seekers, together with some suggestions for the future directions of these programs is discussed in the following chapter.

FINDING 4.3

The Committee finds that the Local Learning and Employment Networks have significant potential to enhance the school to work transitions of young Victorians and believes that in terms of accountability, the outcomes of the LLENs' work need to be measurable through job creation for young people and school retention rates.

¹⁶⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p192.

¹⁷⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 02/09/2002, p275.

The Committee further finds that linkages with industry and employers need to be strengthened.

4.2.2 Managed Individual Pathways (MIP)

Following the Kirby Review, the Victorian Government committed an additional \$16.5 million a year under the MIP initiative for three years to support young people in their transition from school to work, further education and training. These funds (\$15 million to schools, \$1 million to TAFE institutes and \$0.5 million to ACE organisations) are being used to provide vocational guidance and support to young people.

The goal of the new approach is to strengthen the young person's ability to make effective transitions between education, training and employment. The negotiation of pathways plans with all young people is an important part of the strategy. MIP aims to assist young people to:

- ◆ develop skills to manage their pathways throughout their working lives;
- ◆ develop their knowledge, understanding and experience of opportunities in education, training and employment; and
- ◆ make the transition from compulsory schooling to further education, training and employment.¹⁷¹

MIP resources are aimed at enabling education providers to arrange for an adult having primary responsibility for working with a young person to assist them to shape a pathway to continued education and training and employment. They also provide for a mechanism for developing the necessary pathway and mentoring programs to effectively meet the needs of young people, arising from their plans.¹⁷²

The five key expected outcomes for the MIP initiative are: ¹⁷³

- ◆ increased participation and successful completion of post compulsory education and training programs;
- ◆ improved employment outcomes and other education outcomes by young people;

¹⁷¹ Department of Education, Employment and Training, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p28.

¹⁷² Department of Education, Employment and Training, *Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria INFORMATION KIT*, October 2000.

¹⁷³ Bolster, Denis and Steven, Ian. *Evaluation of the Managed Individual Pathways Initiative School Action Plans Evaluation Report*, November 2001.

- ◆ greater cross-sectoral integration of programs and provision of support for young people;
- ◆ improved tracking of young people and monitoring of standards and outcomes for young people against local and Statewide benchmarks; and
- ◆ improved participation and outcomes for groups of young people who currently have poor education and employment outcomes.

The Statewide targets for MIP are for 60 per cent of post compulsory aged students to have a managed individual pathway plan by 2002, increasing to 100 per cent by 2003. A pathway plan is a working document that is constantly revised and reworked to reflect the provision of appropriate programs arising from the plans. Some of the characteristics that may be included in an individual pathway plan are: a mentoring or counselling element, work experience or work placement, basic literacy and numeracy programs, careers education programs, involvement in community projects, TAFE taster programs, pre-apprenticeship programs, ACE courses and other programs and activities that are designed to enhance life skills and develop independence and creativity.¹⁷⁴

The Committee heard that the scope and progress of the MIP initiative in different schools varies enormously. In those schools where careers education and advice was already extensive, there appears to be greater coverage of students involved in MIP. Other schools have needed to adopt new approaches to careers and student support and in some cases, there is not yet full coverage of students and in many cases, the level of support provided to students under the MIP initiative in these schools is more limited. The following two examples provide evidence of these different approaches to implementation of MIP.

Ms Kerry Timmins, VCAL Coordinator and College Curriculum Coordinator, described the MIP program at Traralgon Secondary College, which covers all students in Years 10, 11 and 12:

“Our Managed Individual Pathways program is working very well. We have one-to-one counselling and individual pathways for all students in their learning direction first before their career direction – or the two can be around the other way. ... [The MIP teachers] have about 25 students in the group they manage... The teachers spend 10 lessons

¹⁷⁴ Department of Education and Training website, www.det.vic.gov.au, 22/08/2002.

per fortnight with those students, so there is a significant adult who spends 10 lessons a fortnight with those students.”¹⁷⁵

Mr Brendan Vero, MIPS Coordinator, Maribyrnong Secondary College:

“This year, we have with our managed individual pathways program funding we have started what is called the advocacy project, in which in year 10 each student is assigned a teacher advocate, and that teacher works with the individual student for maybe half an hour every couple of weeks. They do things like just build up a relationship with them, talk about setting some goals, look at the interests of the student, support them through the work experience program, make sure they have a résumé — all those sorts of things. It has been quite successful so far. It has been off the ground properly for only a couple of terms, but the anecdotal evidence so far is very positive. So for year 10s the counselling is quite extensive because they are starting the process. Year 11s mostly know what they are going to do if they are staying on at school so it is probably less extensive in that area.”¹⁷⁶

The Committee heard a very different focus for the MIP program at Sale Secondary College, where the one staff member was responsible for all 450 students and each student would be seen only once or twice during the year.

Ms Gail Cummins, MIP Coordinator, Sale Secondary College:

“We have put every Year 10 through a software package for course counselling and careers options and just discussed with them the direction. I have met with 130 kids in the last month, which has been pretty hard. ... The ones [at risk] that you see as you are going through, you may refer to Eastern Victorian Group Training for school-based traineeships; you may refer some to student support – except that the careers person and a little bit of me are the only student support anyway, so it is connected with careers counselling. You just cannot physically get through them.”¹⁷⁷

The Inner Northern LLEN also noted the different approaches to MIPs. In 2002, schools variously: ¹⁷⁸

- ◆ supported and extended VET in schools for Years 10-12;
- ◆ provided additional welfare and counselling support to students;
- ◆ purchased Jobs Pathway Program hours;

¹⁷⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p150.

¹⁷⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p332.

¹⁷⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, pp181.

- ◆ set up advocacy and mentoring arrangements;
- ◆ supported work experience programs linked to curriculum programs;
- ◆ liaised with local industry bodies; and
- ◆ provided extra career information and support for students.

Further evidence would suggest that the resources provided to schools for MIP are sometimes not being used in the most effective way, and certainly not as intended under the initiative (for example, the purchase of a computer for the careers room). The Committee therefore suggests that a greater level of accountability for these funds is required. The Committee also considers that the suggestion from Campaspe-Cohuna LLEN that MIP funds be redirected from schools and other education providers to each LLEN for the development of collaborative locally and regionally based individual pathway programs warrants further consideration. There already seems to be some overlap between MIP activities and the local LLEN, particularly with regards to responsibility for tracking of students. It is expected that over time, all MIP providers will inform their LLEN of the practices and priorities of their initiatives. It is also a requirement of funding for MIP that schools will introduce and sustain effective destination-tracking procedures for young people exiting a post-compulsory program (this is also a high priority for LLENs).¹⁷⁹

The Committee notes that the availability of MIP funding differs depending on whether a young person is attending school, TAFE or an ACE provider. For example, MIP is available for young people aged 15-19 years in schools, but only for 15-17 year olds where they select alternative educational environments. The East Gippsland Institute of TAFE reported that 15-17 year olds represented only 14.3 per cent of the total teenage cohort in that Institute in 2001.

Similarly, it was reported to the Committee that special development schools, which are schools for young people with special development needs, are not eligible for MIP funding.¹⁸⁰ The Committee believes the Government should consider the expansion of MIP funding to the full cohort of young people aged between 15 and 19 years (and perhaps beyond), regardless of whether they are currently engaged in

¹⁷⁸ Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network, *Environmental Scan*, June 2002, p77.

¹⁷⁹ Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission, *Annual Report 2000-01*, p14.

¹⁸⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, p80.

education, training or are unemployed. In Chapter 5 the Committee examines how MIPs could be combined with the CBE program.

The Committee notes that North West Pathways, a service of Kangan Batman TAFE, adopted a cross-sectoral model, covering TAFE, schools, ACE and importantly, unemployed young people out of education and training when operating a Phase 1 Pathways Project in 2000/01. This model is innovative, not only because it is cross-sectoral, but also because it combines State and Commonwealth funding under various programs, it has a strong industry focus and it allows for the development of supporting initiatives. These initiatives include a Pathways Information Guide aimed at people working with youth in transition, a cross-sector professional development program for schools, TAFE and the community sector, a program of industry forums and bus tours and provision of industry speakers to schools.

Mr Chris Guthrie, Education and Development Manager, Melton Shire Council supported the need for a cross-sectoral approach:

*“We believe the pathways project officer to support at-risk young people and to case manage them into employment, school or training should receive mainstream funding from government. TAFE/ACE, schools and Jobs Network support need a project officer and a budget to work projects like this and other joint vocational projects. Schools referring students should contribute financially to these kinds of projects through their MIPs funding. There need to be some policy legs to that so that schools understand that the money they are getting should be contributing to the inter-agency and community approaches.”*¹⁸¹

While a key outcome of the MIP initiative is expected to be greater cross-sectoral integration of programs, it was reported to the Committee that the current MIP model does not allow for such approaches to be so easily developed as MIP funding is allocated directly to institutions. The Committee believes, however, that the cross-sectoral model has many benefits, including the access provided to young unemployed people. The Committee aims to further consider the funding and administrative arrangements for MIP with respect to facilitating a cross-sectoral approach in its second Report to Parliament.

¹⁸¹ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p339.

FINDING 4.4

The Committee finds that the Managed Individual Pathways Program is an important and widely supported initiative but has been implemented at varying levels of success in different schools and could be improved further through cross-sectoral collaborations and cooperative approaches with other State and Commonwealth Government initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 4.1

The Committee recommends that individual employment portfolios that include a résumé, personal skills profile and research on relevant industries and employment opportunities, as well as an identified mentoring opportunity, be a component of all students' Managed Individual Pathways Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2

The Committee recommends that the Managed Individual Pathways model be extended to include all young people aged between 15-19 years engaged in the education or training.

4.2.3 The Year 13 Option

The Committee heard support for a Year 13 option for young people. In particular, South East LLEN suggests that a 'Gap Year' will allow young people to more fully consider their vocational and further study options, as well as encouraging young people to seek experiences and employment which will broaden their world view and add value to their ultimate work or study choices. The South East LLEN also suggests that the encouragement of a 'Gap Year' will result in freeing up university and TAFE places for students who have had some time and perspective to clearly consider their directions and so may be more likely to complete their course. Indeed, South East LLEN sees real value in universities and TAFE institutes offering priority places for

young people who have taken a 'Gap Year'.¹⁸² The Committee would like to see some further study into whether those taking a year out before continuing into further training or education actually do have higher completion rates.

The Campaspe-Cohuna LLEN also proposed a model for a Year 13 option following the completion of VCE to enhance the opportunities for young people to make a successful transition to further education and/or employment. It outlined a potential model for Year 13 which would: be delivered through TAFE and ACE providers; allow students to automatically defer their entrance to university; include compulsory programs covering job search and study skills; focus on employment related skills and competencies; include study of a Certificate 3 or 4 in the chosen field; include a work placement; and be recognised for eligibility for Austudy support.¹⁸³

The Committee believes there should be further examination of a structured and planned 'Gap Year' as a potential practical solution for small, but significant numbers of young people who are not yet ready to make a successful transition from education into employment. It is recognised that with an emphasis on academic study during the final two years of schooling, some students have not had adequate opportunity to fully consider their future training and employment pathways and to develop significant work and industry related competencies.

FINDING 4.5

The Committee finds that a Year 13 'Gap Year' may be a practical solution for a number of young people who are not yet ready to make a successful transition from education into employment if it is accompanied by adequate mentoring and engagement with education or training institutions.

RECOMMENDATION 4.3

The Committee recommends that the State Government further examine the concept of a structured and planned 'Gap Year' as a potential practical

¹⁸² South East LLEN, *Measure Twice, Cut Once & Less is More: The case for time for reflection and structured, supported whole cohort pathways in and out of education, vocational training & tertiary studies*, SELLEN Draft Discussion Paper #1, August 2002.

¹⁸³ Written Submission No. 41, Campaspe-Cohuna LLEN, 31 May 2002, p15.

solution for a number of young people who are not yet ready to make a successful transition from education into employment.

4.2.4 Tracking Young People's Progress

Another theme of the Inquiry, closely related to the issue of managing individual pathways into training, further education or employment, is that of tracking young people's progress through the myriad of transitions. There is currently no comprehensive and integrated mechanism in place to track the pathways and movement of young people in the post-compulsory school years, although the State Government has recently given some aspects of this role to the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs).

The Committee consistently heard that it is not considered adequate to simply work with young people while they are still in school to ensure they have future training, education and employment goals and mapped pathways for achieving those goals. Many believe it is essential to maintain contact with young people until they have made a successful transition. For example, a focus group conducted by the Smart Geelong Region LLEN identified the need to track all young people until at least the age of 22 years to ensure that young people who appear to have made a successful transition from school into higher education or training are still monitored until they have completed their courses and to ensure that assistance is available to these young people if they fail to complete their chosen course of study. Of particular concern is the large number of youth who drop out of university partway through or at the end of their first year and then find themselves unemployed.

The need for a greater emphasis on tracking students' transition into and within further education, training or employment was identified in an early evaluation of the MIP initiative. Schools in that evaluation identified a range of strategies to support and enhance the tracking of students, including:¹⁸⁴

- ◆ designating one or several staff members to have responsibility for the tracking of exit students;
- ◆ using staff mentors to track students that they had mentored;
- ◆ designating a School Support Officer as a student tracking officer or manager;

- ◆ ensuring that parents were aware of the requirement for schools to be able to track exit students;
- ◆ establishing clear protocols for contacting students once they had moved on to post-school options;
- ◆ having special provision in the tracking process, such as registration with the local JPP provider, for those students deemed most 'at risk' or those not exiting to education, employment or training; and
- ◆ encouraging supportive friends or teachers to continue to maintain informal contact with exit students.

Approximately one year after the MIP evaluation, the Committee continued to hear that tracking of most students' transitions is either not occurring at all, or is not occurring effectively. While acknowledging the importance of this activity, the Committee questions whether schools are adequately resourced to fulfill all of their careers and student support responsibilities, as well as taking responsibility for students that have left the school. Indeed, the Career Education Association of Victoria noted in its written submission that there is already a problem of past students returning to school careers advisors for support due to the complexity of current employment services arrangements that confuse young people.¹⁸⁵ Section 4.4.2 deals with careers education and advice.

Despite reservations over the ability of schools to take responsibility for tracking students' progress without additional funding, the Committee supports the calls for this tracking to take place. It sees the key issue as the development and consistent use of a system that can track the experience of all school leavers and young people entering and exiting the education systems. The Government must therefore implement policies and procedures for undertaking tracking of young people, either through the schools or some other youth related agency. As noted by the Campaspe-Cohuna LLEN, case notes should be able to be readily transferred from region to region with each young person, so that they know they only have to contact a local MIP or other pathways caseworker for assistance. This caseworker should be

¹⁸⁴ Bolster, Dennis and Stevens, Ian. *Evaluation of the Managed Individual Pathways Initiative School Action Plans*, November 2001, pp16-7.

¹⁸⁵ Written Submission No. 62, Career Education Association of Victoria Inc., 23 August 2002, p2.

responsible for working with the careers adviser to ensure they contact and track each young person or their last contact agency at least every three months.¹⁸⁶

The Committee believes that a useful approach is for the Government to model a tracking system on one or more of those implemented in other jurisdictions. For example, Sweden has a comprehensive approach to taking responsibility for and tracking young people's progress. Local authorities are obliged to take responsibility for all young people up to the age of 18, including those who have left school. A personal plan, which must contain elements of counselling, education and work, is drawn up for each young person not in full-time education or full-time work and is reviewed with the young person every ten weeks. During that time, possibilities of transition into regular education or permanent work must also be examined.¹⁸⁷ Similar community-based models are also being explored in Norway, and in Ireland where local centres are staffed by trained guidance staff who both advise local early school leavers and deliver train-the-trainer sessions in the area. The OECD reports that the Nordic approach keeps the number of early school leavers down and while it can put a strain on resources, it leads to rapid identification of those who have failed to make a successful transition, and subsequently, to effective action plans for each individual.¹⁸⁸

A local example of a community based initiative is the Whittlesea Youth Commitment which is outlined later in this Chapter.

In addition to the desire for extending the period of tracking students through post-compulsory education and beyond, a number of organisations also highlighted the need to be tracking progress far earlier than the middle to late years of secondary school. As noted in the previous chapter, this was raised particularly in relation to those identified as having low levels of literacy and numeracy. In particular, there were concerns about the transition from primary into secondary school.

¹⁸⁶ Written Submission No. 41, Campaspe-Cohuna Local Learning and Employment Network, 31 May 2002, p15.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p14.

¹⁸⁸ Loc. cit.

If an increase in resources is to be dedicated to tracking young people, then those organisations administering the funds must be accountable. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Committee does not believe that the success of schools should be measured solely in terms of either school retention or achievements at the VCE level. Rather, it believes an additional measure of a school's success is its ability to successfully transition its students into appropriate training, further education or employment opportunities. The success of the pathway chosen therefore does not become truly evident until a student achieves employment, which may be some years down the track. Hence, the Committee supports the call of many individuals and organisations participating in this Inquiry to continue to monitor the progress of young people for at least two to three years as they move through various transitional experiences. This type of activity will also contribute to the gathering of intelligence on the effectiveness of government programs.

The Committee heard that the State Government could assist education and training institutions and other local organisations by developing an electronic pathways file to track all young people. A common electronic database that captures personal details, participation in education, training and employment, achievements, planned directions and other relevant issues will enable greater consistency in the pathways and tracking processes and allow for transfer of data to a new education or training provider or other agency as a young person makes various transitions.

FINDING 4.6

The Committee finds that a comprehensive, coordinated approach to tracking young people will increase the likelihood of successful transitions, will assist in the early identification of those who have failed to make a successful transition and will contribute valuable knowledge on the effectiveness of government assistance programs.

RECOMMENDATION 4.4

The Committee recommends that the State Government, in partnership with local government, develop policies and procedures to ensure that an identified local organisation, such as the Local Learning and Employment

Network, be responsible for measuring and reporting the success rate of school to work transitions and the outcomes of young people participating in public labour market and training initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 4.5

The Committee recommends that the State Government develop a comprehensive, universal tracking process to follow the experience of school leavers and young people entering and exiting the education and training systems.

4.3 Relationships and the Role of Mentors

The Education for Work Coalition noted that the quality of relationships, including peers, teachers, parents and mentors available to young people throughout their transitions is critically important.¹⁸⁹ As research has shown, families can play a crucial role in assisting young people to make a successful transition to employment and in supporting young people through periods of unemployment:

*“the transition to economic independence is taking longer and with it, young people are being forced to rely on their parents for longer periods as well. What this means is that opportunities and life chances of young people are increasingly being determined by the socio-economic status of their parents”*¹⁹⁰

If the quality of relationships is important for young people in transition, transition support must be even more important for those who do not have strong family or social networks. The Committee also heard that young people in care (or leaving care) are in particular need of increased support to effect a successful transition into the workforce.

The Committee heard that many young people today do not have the role models and mentors required to make a successful transition to the workforce. Ideally, a role model or mentor would be a close family member, however in reality many young

¹⁸⁹ Written Submission No. 6, Education for Work Coalition and Melbourne Citymission, 6 May 2002, p3.

people do not have such support. Role models are particularly lacking within the Indigenous community and within many of the families which have experiences of inter-generational unemployment. Newly arrived migrants and refugee young people may also suffer a lack of mentoring support and role models of success in the workforce. Sections 4.4 and 4.5 deal more specifically with mentoring for Indigenous and migrant youth.

Many young people come from broken or dysfunctional families and also may themselves be faced with personal issues that will make the transitions to employment even more of a challenge. For those lacking mentors or role models, it can be very difficult to develop strong work and career aspirations, maintain motivation and seek assistance and support where others in their family or community do not value or understand their education and employment goals.

The Committee notes that as role models and mentors in the family and community are decreasing, the capacity of business to provide mentoring support is also decreasing. At the same time, increasing efficiency and competitiveness in industry has led to higher expectations among employers of the skills and abilities of their employees.

The Committee consistently heard that early intervention is critical in ensuring a young person continues with education and training and in ensuring that those who initially become unemployed are given every assistance to quickly enter or re-enter the labour market. The Committee believes mentors play an important role in this early intervention process.

Early intervention through continued one-to-one assistance was also a consistent theme arising out of the Committee's European meetings. Chapter 6 highlights the importance of mentoring programs and individualised support in countries such as England, Ireland and Germany. However, the Committee notes that many of these programs were implemented at significant cost and have achieved mixed levels of success.

¹⁹⁰ Spierings, John, *Youth disadvantage: Some key trends and future policy directions*, paper presented at the National Education and Employment Forum, Brisbane, October 2000, cited in Written Submission No. 51, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2 July 2002, p6.

4.3.1 Whittlesea Youth Commitment

Representatives from around Victoria referred to the Whittlesea Youth Commitment as a successful model when discussing pathways planning and transition support.

The Whittlesea Youth Commitment (WYC) is a long-term community initiative that seeks to address youth unemployment in the City of Whittlesea. Its aim is to ensure that every young person leaving school in the City, especially those who leave before completing VCE or its equivalent, makes a smooth transition between education and further training or employment.

The WYC was formed because 30 per cent of young people in the region were leaving school prior to completing Year 12, mostly in an unplanned manner and without effective links to Job Network providers, other training and education options and personal support services. Prior to WYC there was little or no capacity to follow up students after they had left school.

The WYC was also in response to the dramatic changes in the local job market (decline of full-time opportunities and rapid growth in part-time and casual work); the long-term costs of early school leaving on the local support service system (longer periods of unemployment, limited career choices and longer periods on income assistance); and the higher number of risk factors among young people who do not make a successful transition from school to work (potential substance abuse, mental health issues and early episodes of psychosis and homelessness).

Stakeholders brought together by the WYC include the Whittlesea City Council, Centrelink, eight local secondary colleges, Job Network providers, Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, further education, RMIT University, employers and employer associations, community agencies and the Area Consultative Committee.

The following observations about the WYC were made in evidence to the Committee:¹⁹¹

- ◆ The collaborative approach by education, training, employment and community service agencies acts as a forum for the exchange of information and data on

¹⁹¹ Written Submission No. 49, City of Whittlesea, 17 June 2002, p6.

young people, as well as identifying gaps in services and sharing different perspectives on professional practice.

- ◆ The importance of producing an individual plan to assist young people to clarify their options and assess the risks of early school leaving.
- ◆ Transition brokers and the collection of local data has provided a more complete picture of the actual destinations and pathways being taken by early school leavers.
- ◆ Participating schools are beginning to modify their curriculum, provide flexibility in learning programs for particular students and generally provide more support for students considering leaving school early.

The Whittlesea Youth Commitment commissioned a review of its progress in 2001. Some of the key findings were: ¹⁹²

- ◆ A number of early school leavers continue to slip out of the education system undetected. More extensive use of the surveys, stronger links between school transition teams and the transition brokers, mentoring programs and the greater involvement of parents are suggested.
- ◆ The pathway to employment for young people is complex, fragmented and difficult to negotiate, especially for those leaving school early.
- ◆ A coalition of support between employment services, education and training providers and other agencies is required to improve the preparation of young people for work.
- ◆ Common Exit Procedures are rated by schools as the single most important tool developed by the WYC. The Exit Form provides the platform of information for the Transition Brokers to follow up early school leavers.

The argument for State and local governments to support models such as the Whittlesea Youth Commitment is very strong. Representatives of the Whittlesea Youth Commitment submitted evidence that young people leaving school before completing Year 12 are, on average, \$8,200 worse off than their peers completing Year 12, in terms of the resources available to enable them to attain a successful post-school destination. As noted in the previous section, a crucial resource to assist potential early school leavers is the development of a one-to-one relationship with

¹⁹² Written Submission No. 49, City of Whittlesea, 17 June 2002, pp7-8.

them. The Committee therefore supports a greater level of expenditure on transition brokers for all young people exiting the school system prior to completion of Year 12.

FINDING 4.7

The Committee finds that responsibility for effective transitions is shared between the student, teachers and trainers, parents and families, industry, the community and governments. Successful transitions depend on the effectiveness of these parties as well as the individual family, locality and socio-economic circumstances of students.

FINDING 4.8

The Committee finds that although very costly, transition support through one-to-one mentoring is particularly important for those young people who do not have strong family or social networks. In addition, many young people and their families are unaware of the supports available to them and where to go for advice on education, training and career choices. The Committee therefore finds that transitional support for young people, including careers counselling, post-school options and post-school support services must be strengthened.

RECOMMENDATION 4.6

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training, in partnership with schools, ensure that parents in all schools are appropriately informed regarding student transition issues, including the value and benefits of the full range of post-compulsory pathways, methods of career planning and the changing world of work.

RECOMMENDATION 4.7

The Committee recommends that the State Government improve the mentoring programs aimed at youth currently available through the Local Learning and Employment Networks and the Managed Individual Pathways program. Mentors should be able to assist young people to consider appropriate pathways between education, training and

employment. Mentors should provide a positive role model appropriate to the individual youth and may come from industry backgrounds, small business and the sports, recreation and entertainment industries.

4.4 The Role of Schools in Effecting Successful Transitions

The Committee heard that the two key roles for schools in effecting successful school to work transitions are the integration of workplace and school-based learning and the provision of careers education and advice in schools.

4.4.1 Integration of Workplace and School-Based Learning

The lack of education for work has been closely linked with poor employment outcomes for young people, making the issue of incorporating education for work into the secondary school curriculum of keen interest to policy makers and educators.¹⁹³

Certainly, this trend is consistent throughout OECD countries, which have responded to the pressure of high youth unemployment by reviewing and reforming the role of secondary schools in the provision of education for work. Their reviews have highlighted a range of successful program approaches focused on integrating workplace learning and experience into the secondary school curriculum. They have also identified the need for schools to start providing education about work in the early years of schooling and to fully integrate it into the curriculum.¹⁹⁴

The integration of workplace and school-based learning can be organised in a number of ways, including apprenticeships and traineeships, vocationally oriented curriculum such as VET in schools and VCAL and school organised work experience involving short-term work placements. As apprenticeship models and vocationally oriented curriculum were covered in the previous Chapter, the following section focuses on work experience programs in schools.

¹⁹³ Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network, *E Zine*, May 2002.

¹⁹⁴ Loc. cit.

Although the work experience model varies widely, it is used extensively in Sweden, Finland, Australia, the USA and Canada, with some countries mandating the amount of time that students must spend in work experience. For example, Finland and Sweden have mandated that students spend 15 per cent of their time in work experience.¹⁹⁵

The Committee heard there is great variation in the structure of work experience programs operating in Victorian schools. While the Committee heard that some schools seem to go to considerable effort to secure a work placement within a student's area of interest, other evidence suggested that often students and employers do not treat work experience seriously or make the experience relevant to future work opportunities. The Committee also heard that work experience programs are often too short in duration to be of any real value.

The following evidence from Mr Russell Cook, VECCI ATWork, Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry demonstrates the importance of young people taking work experience seriously:

*"...getting on to how they [employers] find young people, a lot of it is through work experience. A lot of kids may go there and some good ones decide 'This is where I want to work'. Then they get part-time jobs after school and finally it turns into apprenticeships or traineeships. ... I would imagine that less than 1 per cent advertise. They never advertise in any way."*¹⁹⁶

The South East LLEN has conducted a research project on local work experience programs and opportunities, in partnership with South East Development (the local ACC). Some of the key findings of this research revealed: the need for a more structured work experience program linked to industry; opportunities for the involvement of external agencies in developing and delivering work experience programs; a preference among students and employers for longer work experience placements; and a need to review restrictions on the use of work experience in industries declared as high risk, as this may limit the opportunity for young people to gain experience in industries specific to the region.

¹⁹⁵ Loc.cit.

¹⁹⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p141.

Some of the recommendations emerging from the joint study by South East LLEN and South East Development appear to address many of the issues discussed by the Committee in other metropolitan and country areas in Victoria. The Committee has found the need for a more structured work experience program in many schools, and suggests that the State Government consider the following recommendations when devising a Statewide policy for work experience in Victorian schools.¹⁹⁷

- ◆ An adaptation of the VCE unit 'Industry and Enterprise' to provide a context for work experience for the general Year 10 population, to achieve a stronger link between the work placement and the school curriculum.¹⁹⁸
- ◆ A brokerage role for external agencies to assist schools to structure and arrange work experience, to overcome the resource barriers facing many schools in offering structured work experience programs.
- ◆ Structuring work experience around at least a two-week block release format.
- ◆ Reducing restrictions on the duration of work experience. The same level of flexibility in the duration of structured work placements should be applied to work experience, with principals given the discretion to approve extended work experience placements.
- ◆ Improving access to work experience in the 'high risk' industries, either through amending the current legislation or negotiating exemptions through the relevant government department for students of particular regions.

A brokerage role for external agencies to help schools to arrange a structured work experience program is an innovative solution to the major resource barriers facing many schools. However, in redeveloping models of work experience, external agencies should take care to retain the capacity for students to source their own work experience opportunities, with job seeking skills being one of the key benefits of participating in work experience. Brokers could structure a program that allows students to either source their own placement, or to apply to a pool of employers supporting the program established by the broker.

The Committee heard evidence from North West WEDG (Work Education Development Group) which provides an effective brokerage role for VET in schools to 30 secondary colleges, mainly in the north west of Melbourne. North West WEDG

¹⁹⁷ South East Local Learning & Employment Network, *Report to the VLESC*, June 2002.

¹⁹⁸ Haileybury College provides an example of this approach.

liaises between employers and schools to enable young people to access quality, structured work placements as part of VET in schools programs. The Committee sees this as an effective model that is focused on employment outcomes. Key components of the service are:

- ◆ employer-student matching aimed at increasing the probability of the young person being offered employment;
- ◆ a focus on the employer's needs, including advice on how to work with young people;
- ◆ students apply through written applications, and therefore gain important job search skills;
- ◆ students are matched to employers by a WEDG coordinator and given advice regarding being successful at both the interview and the work placement;
- ◆ the employer interviews the student(s) and makes the final decision;
- ◆ WEDG coordinators visit each student on work placement and provide counselling regarding work performance and industry information and advice; and
- ◆ there is continued contact with employers who often request WEDG to make contact with students they have had on work placement in order to offer employment.

As noted in the previous Chapter, the Committee supports a model for VET in schools and VCAL work placements that incorporates a supported recruitment process. The Committee sees the benefits of the WEDG model as twofold. First, the employer receives advice on working with young people and can feel confident of being part of a monitored, supported program, thus increasing the number and quality of work placements available to students. Secondly, the student receives individual attention at the interview and during the work placement, leading to an increase in the quality of the experience and advice received.

The Committee notes that an outsourced model for managing the work placement component of VET in schools and VCAL can have a number of benefits, including: an increase in the number of employers offering work placements to students; enhanced monitoring and supervision of work placements; increased support given to students to enhance their job search skills and work related competencies; and greater likelihood that the work placement will lead to further employment.

The Committee therefore supports and encourages innovative models, including outsourcing, for the management of the work placement component of VET in schools and VCAL.

The Committee also notes that South East LLEN recommends increased payments for work experience students stemming from the finding that almost half of the students undertaking work experience also have part-time or casual employment. It therefore believes it necessary to reward performance in the workplace in a way that provides incentive for students to participate and acquire skills. The Committee believes however, that the danger with seeking increased payment for work experience students is that employers may be less likely to offer work placements. It should be recognised that work experience placements take a considerable amount of time for the employer to arrange and supervise and the demands for work experience and work placements, not only for young people, but other disadvantaged groups in the community are ever-increasing. The Committee would therefore argue that parents and schools should ensure their young people are aware of the commitment and goodwill of employers offering work experience placements and of the potential benefits of participating, which are often far greater than any increased payment.

FINDING 4.9

The Committee finds that in many cases, young people who have undertaken work experience, part-time or casual employment or a pre-apprenticeship course are more likely to make a successful transition into employment. Conversely, many of those who do not access these programs are leaving the education system with inadequate vocational skills, unrealistic expectations of the type of work they may obtain and a poor attitude to work in general.

FINDING 4.10

The Committee finds that existing work experience programs lack structure and in many cases do not provide appropriate links between school and future employment opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 4.8

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training aim to enhance students' exposure to the workforce and a variety of career options during secondary schooling, training and further education. This should be achieved through a combination of work experience placements, part-time employment, presentations by industry and local business people and a focus on developing work readiness skills including organisational skills, teamwork, problem solving and communication skills.

RECOMMENDATION 4.9

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training develop a policy for a structured work experience program in all Victorian schools that includes:

- ◆ guidelines for an appropriate amount of time that students should spend in work experience;**
- ◆ a brokerage role for external agencies where appropriate;**
- ◆ provision for students to undertake work experience in block release format and at times most appropriate to meet the needs of both the student and the employer;**
- ◆ a supported student application process to enhance job search and interview skills;**
- ◆ a reduction in the current restrictions on the duration of work experience for Year 10 students; and**
- ◆ provision for students, at the discretion of the school principal, to undertake work experience in industries currently declared 'high risk', where that placement is deemed relevant to local employment opportunities and a true reflection of the student's interests and aspirations and where that placement can be reasonably supervised.**

4.4.2 Careers Education and Advice

The Victorian careers advice system has grown predominantly from within the school system and therefore has tended to focus on career paths post-VCE, with the consequence that success has been defined by parents, teachers and the broader community in relation to VCE scores and university entrance. In this context, jobs in factories, which have always provided successful career outcomes for large numbers of people have been considered as undesirable by young people and their parents.¹⁹⁹ As noted in the previous Chapter, however, measures of success focusing on VCE scores have been quoted as being out of touch with the reality that approximately 70 per cent of jobs do not require university degrees for entry level.

Evidence indicates that Victoria does not have a coordinated policy of what career education is and its importance in assisting young people to make the transition from school to work and/or further study. In particular, Victoria does not have a formal career framework such as the NSW School to Work program embedded in the secondary curriculum.

The Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV) perceives that secondary schools still suffer from having a very narrow view of what career education programs are and the benefits they can provide to young people. CEAV also claims that the State Government's initiatives following the Kirby Report (for example, LLENs and MIP), while having identified certain deficiencies in the system, are continuing to fall short of providing a quality career education program in every school.²⁰⁰

While recognising the limitations of broad generalisations, the current careers education system in Victoria has been described by the CEAV as follows:²⁰¹

- ◆ A focus on the immediate transition issues from Year 10 into Year 11, rather than a more solid grounding for career development and decision making.
- ◆ A bare minimum series of activities covering subject choices for the VCE, an introduction to career exploration and a work experience placement.

¹⁹⁹ Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network, *E Zine*, May 2002.

²⁰⁰ Written Submission No. 62, Career Education Association of Victoria Inc., 23 August 2002, p1.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, p2.

- ◆ Little or no career education in Years 7-9. Although some schools run work experience for Year 9 students, it is not generally in a career education context that includes supporting lessons, guest speakers, excursions and text book/web based resources.
- ◆ Little or no career education in Year 11, although there may be minor changes to VCE subject choices. This is a year when students grow considerably in terms of sophistication, interests and abilities, yet they have no real opportunity to explore and expand their post-school knowledge.
- ◆ A focus on post-secondary study choices via the VTAC system in Year 12, with students receiving much information and literature from various tertiary institutions, but little in terms of occupational material or job-seeking skills and strategies education.

The Committee's evidence indicates that while some schools are providing a comprehensive, quality career education and career advice service (refer Section 4.3.3 for the success of Bendigo Senior Secondary College), others are clearly struggling to provide anything above the bare minimum in terms of career related services.

Evidence suggests the position of a careers teacher within a school is considered less desirable or not a preferred option for employment within the education system. In many cases the careers teacher was chosen to take on the role while performing normal teaching duties and is responsible for far too many programs and activities covering too many students. For example, the Committee heard instances where the same person is responsible for VET in schools programs, coordinating work experience placements, fulfilling MIP responsibilities as well as acting as the career (and sometimes welfare) counsellor to hundreds of students. As noted by the CEAV, most Government schools currently provide a 0.5 or less position for careers education, and the key role of many in this position is administration or policy relating to VETiS programs rather than running a core career education program.

Campaspe-Cohuna LLEN supported improvements to the careers education and advisory role in schools. It supported calls for a full-time careers adviser in all secondary schools, with this career adviser not having any teaching responsibilities or other duties. It also suggested that careers advisers recruited for these positions

be mature-aged people whose working life has been outside the education system, who is qualified with a Degree in Careers Counselling and who is responsible for developing a higher level of business and industry engagement with education and training providers.²⁰²

Mr Moon, the Deputy Principal of Catholic College Bendigo, wrote to the Committee regarding the rapidly increasing demands on careers and VET in schools staff, including evolving issues such as partnerships and implementation of new VET programs and the VCAL, and increased emphasis on work placements and recognition of students' part-time work involving accredited training. While the College is an active participant in the Goldfields LLEN and the local VET Cluster, the time spent outside of the school developing partnerships and new opportunities reduces the time that specialist staff have available to work with the students, which should be their main activity and priority. The College notes that there has been no increase in the level of funding, nor the introduction of funding tagged to the delivery of Careers and VET services, in recognition of the increased demands.²⁰³

The Catholic College Bendigo makes a striking comparison between the caseload of officers delivering the Jobs Pathway Program (JPP) in Australia and that of staff delivering services for students at risk at Gripenskolan, a school in Nkyoping in Sweden. While the Swedish school has a staffing ratio of 20 full-time staff for 200 'at risk' students to develop and implement individualised learning plans, the JPP officer at Catholic College Bendigo had a caseload of 142 in mid-2002, expected to increase to 235 by the end of the year.²⁰⁴ Mr Moon therefore argues strongly for increased funding for additional staffing, specifically targeted at disadvantaged and 'at risk' students.

The Committee notes in an information kit issued by the DE&T in October 2000, that careers information and guidance "*should promote parity of esteem between employment options, vocational education and training, and higher education as post-school options*".²⁰⁵ However, as noted previously, the Committee's evidence

²⁰² Written Submission No. 41, Campaspe-Cohuna LLEN, 31 May 2002, p15.

²⁰³ Written Submission No. 25, Catholic College Bendigo, 24 May 2002, p1.

²⁰⁴ Written Submission No. 25, Catholic College Bendigo, 24 May 2002, p1.

²⁰⁵ Department of Education, Employment and Training, *Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria – INFORMATION KIT*, October 2000.

suggests that this is still not the case, with many schools, parents and communities still preoccupied with the traditional VCE and study scores.

Mr Neil Baker, General Manager, Eastern Victorian Group Training:

“schools are very good at giving advice as to TAFE and university entrance; they are very good at assisting with VTAC applications; they are very poor at providing advice to young people about the local job market and about anything other than tertiary education. What desperately needs to happen is that anything that relates to teachers giving the advice is taken from the careers component of school advice — this is a teacher telling you this — because they have no idea, and to outsource it to somebody who does. That could be outsourced in many, many ways but the essence of it is that people who are in the job market should be providing the job advice...”²⁰⁶

The lack of consistency and quality in careers education and advice overall is of great concern to the Committee. The Committee takes the view that so long as effective careers advice is provided, successful careers are likely to be built by young people starting their working lives post Year 10 while they continue vocational education and training. Governments, education and training providers and industry must take responsibility for refocusing young people and their families back to this reality.

A key part of providing quality careers education and advice must also be delivering this advice to students earlier in their secondary education. The Committee heard that ideally, careers education and advice should commence earlier than Year 10, and certainly much earlier than during the VCE years, which is common in many schools. The Committee heard an example from the Master Builders Association of Victoria, which speaks to children during their primary school years.

Ms Cheryl Winnell, Training and Employment Services Manager, Master Builders Association of Victoria:

“It gets back to the information given to young people in a secondary school environment. As an aside, we now start to speak to grade 6 kids, because they ask you questions. They are not daunted by the peer pressure in the room about asking dumb questions or looking smart or looking like they are too interested. We have a group of grade 6 kids from Brunswick West Primary School — a very innovative school, I must say — and every Friday they have

²⁰⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 22/08/2002, p208.

somebody come in from a different career and talk to the young people in that classroom. The guy who went out there from our organisation, who was our industry careers promotion person, is an ex-chippie. He dressed up as Bob the Builder and took his cordless drills with him.”²⁰⁷

The Committee also received much evidence on the required skills of careers teachers and the need for the person occupying the position to have human resources skills and links to industry rather than a teaching background.

Ms Karli Price, MIPs Worker, Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE:

“I am unsure about the criteria for who gets to be a careers teacher in schools, but there definitely to my mind needs to be some professional development around how you engage a young person to start with. There is no point in trying to work with them about their goals if you have not engaged them in a safe relationship where they can safely explore those.”²⁰⁸

Ms Roslie Lake, Bendigo Senior Secondary College:

“That has resourcing implications because even in our schools a large number of people who are careers teachers or careers advisers are just trained teachers and do not necessarily have careers training, and they often do not have training or experience outside of the school environment. They go from school to university, back to school, and have very little grasp of industry needs.”²⁰⁹

Cr Anne McCamish, Deputy Mayor, City of Greater Shepparton:

“Often careers teachers are part-time teachers as well, so it is not a full-time job. They have very little experience and knowledge of industry so they are telling kids about jobs as they understood them 20 years ago rather than as they are today. Our LLEN would like to ask the question why a careers teacher has to be teacher trained. Why do they not come from the human resources area where they have networks and contacts with industry?”²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/2002, p524.

²⁰⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/2002, p449.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, p454.

²¹⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, p346.

Ms Anne Kinne, Youth Participation Coordinator, East Gippsland Institute of TAFE:

*"I did a two-year diploma of career education at RMIT, which I loved. It really confirmed what I was doing. I felt that if I was giving out career information or career guidance I needed to have a qualification and to know I was doing the right thing."*²¹¹

Concerns regarding the availability and quality of careers advice in schools was also a recurring theme in written submissions received during the Inquiry. Yes West raised a number of specific concerns regarding the quality of careers education in secondary schools which provide a good summary of the key issues:²¹²

- ◆ the lack of requirement for careers teachers to have formal qualifications;
- ◆ the position is not 'tagged' within the State education system;
- ◆ there is generally only one careers teacher, irrespective of the size of the school;
- ◆ the teaching load of careers teachers continues to expand and currently covers coordination of work experience programs, provision of careers and vocational counselling, integrating careers education into the school curriculum, maintaining involvement with relevant programs such as MIPs and VETiS and developing and maintaining links with local employers;
- ◆ the lack of active links with the local community;
- ◆ the lack of knowledge regarding the world of work among those careers teachers that have never worked outside of the education system; and
- ◆ the lack of up-to-date knowledge regarding the current range of work opportunities within specific industries.

A number of the above concerns were very similar to those raised in a written submission from CEAV, which states that the situation for youth unemployment "*will continue to be grim unless the government sees this issue as its highest priority and mandates the following:*

- ◆ A government policy for careers education programs, to be embedded in all schools.
- ◆ Adequate staff resources to provide the equivalent of a full-time careers counsellor in every school dedicated solely to career education.

²¹¹ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p187.

²¹² Written Submission No. 20, Yes West, 24 May 2002, p7.

- ◆ A government policy to educate the public, particularly parents, on the value of apprenticeships and traineeships as opposed to the constant reinforcement of higher education.
- ◆ A need to address the concerns of parents from non-English speaking backgrounds and support to schools of materials in a number of community languages.
- ◆ Commitment of local and State governments to offer work experience opportunities for students given the range of employment opportunities that these organisations provide.”²¹³

FINDING 4.11

The Committee finds that the existing careers function in Victorian schools is generally unstructured and under-resourced, and lacks the necessary human resource skills and necessary industry links to provide effective advice to students on a range of career options.

RECOMMENDATION 4.10

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training develop a policy for a structured careers education and advice function in all Victorian schools that includes:

- ◆ **clear roles and responsibilities for the position of careers adviser;**
- ◆ **appropriate training or qualifications for careers advisers;**
- ◆ **sufficient funds to enable schools to employ the appropriate number of careers teachers for the size of their school;**
- ◆ **mechanisms to encourage and support linkages with industry and employers;**
- ◆ **strategies to meet the information needs of students and parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and**
- ◆ **strategies for refocusing young people and their families on the reality that VCE completion is only one of a number of valuable options and that successful employment and career opportunities can be achieved through alternative pathways.**

4.4.3 Bendigo Senior Secondary College

As noted elsewhere in this Report, Bendigo Senior Secondary College is seen internationally as a successful model with regards to academic results, flexibility in the curriculum, school retention rates and creating pathways from school to work. The College is a Year 11 and 12 college with an enrolment of almost 2000 students, 32 per cent of whom include a vocational program in their VCE.

The Principal of the College, Mr Graham Bastian, stated the school's goal during his appearance before the Committee:

*“Our goal is that all students will either stay on and complete year 12 or the equivalent, or when they leave the school they will be leaving into a planned pathway — that they are not just leaving to drop out but they leave on the basis that they have a pathway we have worked with them on. We continue to assist them with that pathway so that they either go into further studies of some sort or training or join the work force.”*²¹⁴

The Committee was particularly impressed with the breadth of curriculum on offer at the College and the structures that are in place to engage students during their time at the school. In addition to running Government funded programs such as VCAL, VET in schools and MIPs, there are several key features of the Bendigo Senior Secondary College model that should be highlighted, including:

- ◆ The School to Work Centre has been established as a one-stop-shop for parents and students seeking vocational or academic advice and assistance in accessing relevant programs. The Work Centre houses Jobs Pathway Program staff, MIPs staff, the VET Work Placement team and the College's careers adviser.
- ◆ The Tutor Program is essentially a mentor program where staff take specific responsibility for a group of students and assess a range of issues such as their social needs, emotional needs, academic progress and attendance. Through regular interviews and counselling support, the Tutor Program assists students to develop and implement an individual learning plan, make appropriate course and subject choices and maintain a positive ongoing approach to study.

²¹³ Written Submission No. 62, Career Education Association of Victoria Inc., 23 August 2002, pp2-3.

In addition to the above initiatives, the College has also been proactive in developing links with local industry and employers as well as the Bendigo Institute of TAFE and the Central Victorian Group Training Company.

The Committee notes the importance of these links and initiatives in enhancing the school to work transition. In particular, Bendigo Senior Secondary College has ensured that not only are students given full support to stay in school but considerable work is being done to follow up on students once they leave the College to ensure they are involved in meaningful further education, training or employment.

FINDING 4.12

The Committee finds that Bendigo Senior Secondary College has achieved considerable success in terms of academic results, school retention rates and successful student transitions as a result of a number of integrated programs that provide personal support and advice to students in their education and pathways to employment. The Committee notes that it has achieved this success within its current funding allocations.

4.5 The Job Search Experience

4.5.1 Job Search Skills

Another common theme throughout the Committee's Inquiry was the inability of many young people to conduct an effective job search.

Job search skills include the ability to identify appropriate vacancies, to write a job application and résumé, to make inquiries with a potential employer and to attend and succeed at interview. The lack of job search skills among youth was raised by a wide range of individuals and organisations contributing to the Committee's Inquiry, including the employment service providers themselves. It is of concern to note this latter point, as it is these very organisations that have been set up at the national, state and local levels to assist members of the labour force, including young people to develop effective job search skills.

²¹⁴ Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/2002, p444.

The lack of effective job search techniques was also found to be relevant not only to early school leavers and young people who experience various forms of social or economic disadvantage, but also in relation to university graduates. One explanation for this, as experienced within the young Jewish community, is that many young people complete university with very limited work experience and therefore have not had the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to undertake an effective job search.²¹⁵

Gaining the skills to conduct an effective job search is seen by many to be the responsibility of the education system. Consistent with what the Committee heard during an extensive public hearing program, two surveys conducted by Melbourne's West ACC in response to the Committee's Inquiry²¹⁶, revealed that the most strongly expressed view was that the education system is not preparing young people well for the world of work. It found that young people do not have the basic, practical skills and work ethic required by business and do not possess a clear understanding of the realities of work.

Once again, the role of careers education and advice in schools is important in terms of the significant impact that an ineffective job search can have on a young person's confidence and self-esteem. As highlighted by Yes West in a written submission to the Committee, despondency in youth can lead to petty crime, alcohol and drug abuse and homelessness and potentially even youth suicide. These social issues will be further examined by the Committee in its second Report to Parliament.

The Committee recognises that major innovations have been occurring within the education system to increase the relevance of education and training to industry and to better prepare young people to make effective transitions to the workforce. The Committee believes it is also necessary for a greater commitment from parents and families, communities and industry to assist the development of job search skills in young people.

²¹⁵ Written Submission No. 4, Jewish Employment Network, 2 May 2002, p1.

²¹⁶ The two surveys conducted by Melbourne's West ACC covered nine Job Network providers and 21 small business in a range of industries.

FINDING 4.13

The Committee finds that a significant number of young people do not have the necessary skills to conduct an effective job search including the ability to identify appropriate vacancies, approach employers in the required manner, write job applications and résumés and prepare and present well for interviews. The Committee further finds that the inability to conduct an effective job search spans the full spectrum of young people, including early school leavers and graduates of tertiary institutions.

RECOMMENDATION 4.11

The Committee recommends that the development of an employment portfolio be offered to all students at VCE or its equivalent and that all young people in Years 10, 11 and 12 are given suitable preparation for work, including interview techniques and the range of skills that an employer looks for both in the interview and the job situation.

4.5.2 Industry Expectations

Central to the Committee's discussions with businesses and industry representatives was the need for employees to not only have the relevant academic background and industry specific skills, but to exhibit the key work related competencies required by any employer. The key competencies include the ability to communicate ideas and information, plan and organise activities, work independently and as part of a team, to solve problems and to apply current technologies. Furthermore, employers are looking for young people who exhibit personal attributes such as motivation, adaptability, enthusiasm, a strong work ethic and the ability to manage relationships.

The Committee often heard the above characteristics termed as 'soft skills' or 'employability skills'. Essentially, what employers are seeking is a young person who:

- ◆ exhibits a positive attitude to work and to learning;
- ◆ participates fully in the workplace;
- ◆ is punctual;
- ◆ is well presented;
- ◆ can communicate with their colleagues, peers, supervisors and clients;

- ◆ has respect for those who are older or who have more experience; and
- ◆ is willing to give as well as to take.

Mr Peter Sutherland, Human Resources Manager, Tatura Milk Industries outlined for the Committee what that company expects from its young employees:

“The selection criteria we have for young starters at Tatura are that we would prefer they stayed at school until year 11 or 12. We like to see some evidence that there is a willingness to train and an ability to train, so if they have left school, at least they have continued to do some form of training, whether it be at TAFE or short courses at other institutions. We would like them to have a good grasp of English and a good knowledge of estimation and fractions, decimals and that sort of thing, which are required for manufacturing records. We would like people to have some mechanical appreciation, because a lot of the roles within our organisation for young people are operating equipment.....We would like our young people to do some preparation for interviews before they come to us. We would like them to research our company, get information and try and understand what sort of work they are applying for. We would like them to have some understanding of the special issues of the food industry, such as good manufacturing practices, hazard analysis, critical control point, ISO 9000, and all those particular issues of the dairy industry. We would like them to be aware of the dress codes and the strict codes of conduct that we have to have for food preparation.”²¹⁷

Mr Graham Smith, Production Manager, HM GEM Engines also outlined his business' expectations of prospective young employees:

“We do not worry about school reports. When I say we do not, sometimes we advertise in the local papers only, VCE, Year 11, Year 10, but we do not mind if they do not have that. We look for one criterion – and I think we all do – and that is attitude.”²¹⁸

The Committee noted throughout the Inquiry the tendency for some businesses and/or industry representatives to highlight the shortfalls in the education system in producing work ready young people. Employers responding to the survey conducted by Melbourne's West ACC also suggested that what needs to occur for the employment of young people to be seen as attractive is relevant training to make them more job ready, or at least assistance to reduce the cost burden of making them work ready.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, p387.

²¹⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, p107.

²¹⁹ Written Submission No. 50, Melbourne's West Area Consultative Committee, 18 June 2002, p4.

The Committee also heard from some industry representatives a willingness to accept part of the responsibility for the lack of job readiness among many young people. In particular, it was highlighted that the increasingly competitive environments in which businesses operate reduce the time available for training, mentoring and nurturing young people in the workforce.

Mr Neil Baker, General Manager, Eastern Victorian Group Training:

*“Employers in the new economy are under enormous pressure. The pressure is financial and time. Once upon a time we could employ young people and spend the time with them that we needed to, to develop them; we no longer can do that. That is a luxury that no longer exists in business, unfortunately. Bigger business can have that capacity; smaller businesses do not. Our environment down here is that with somewhere near 300 apprentices we have somewhere near 300 employers — they are very small businesses, and they simply do not have time to devote to the young people. In many ways that is why they use group training companies. Whilst there is the paperwork, the payroll and so on, the service we as a organisation promote and provide is one of solving the problems for them; they do not have to dedicate time to human resource problems in the development of programs that assist these young people to work well and be successful.”*²²⁰

4.5.3 Skills Shortages

Another key issue identified by the Inquiry was the need to link training and careers advice to local employment opportunities. Often, the level of unemployment does not correlate to industry labour demands. For those seeking above entry level positions, the solution may be re-training while for those seeking entry level positions, which in most cases are filled by young people, the issue appears to be one of perception.²²¹ For example, South East Development notes that the local manufacturing industry is in desperate need of young people, yet at the same time these positions remain unfilled, young people continue to be educated in areas where there is less likelihood of employment following school and/or training.²²²

Some of the well documented skills shortages include shortages of suitable applicants for traineeships and apprenticeships, as discussed in the previous chapter,

²²⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 22/08/2002, p209.

²²¹ Written Submission No. 23, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, 24 May 2002, p3.

²²² Written Submission No. 16, South East Development, 22 May 2002, p2.

as well as shortages in many of the professions and specialist trades in rural and regional areas.

This failure to link young people to education and training pathways that offer local employment opportunities was consistently raised throughout the Inquiry. In particular, the Committee heard evidence that there is currently not enough communication between education and industry, which is contributing to the continued deficiency in the number and level of relevant skills obtained by young people in the education and training system. The need for education and training to be relevant to the aspirations and attitudes of young people was discussed extensively in the previous chapter. However, as noted by South East Development, this is only one part of the equation. The other major step that is required is to align young people's expectations with local opportunities.

The State Government, through the Department of Education and Training, has a responsibility to fund and establish courses in rural Victoria to promote rural access to the professions and other areas of skills shortages. There is also a responsibility on schools, parents and the community to inform their young people about local opportunities for education and training and the pathways to future employment. However, there must also be some level of responsibility on local employers and industry to target young people with education and advice about entering their industry and the benefits of doing so. They must also offer more in terms of career paths and real opportunities within these industries if they wish to attract young local people.

Melbourne Development Board calls for greater involvement of industry in a range of activities with local community groups, local governments, local Business Award networks and schools to ensure that industry needs are correctly communicated to young people, their teachers and their supports.²²³ Melbourne Development Board believes the need for industry to actively promote and market itself to the community is critical, and cites the example of the manufacturing industry where a lack of knowledge and understanding of the industry by careers teachers and parents is having a significant negative effect on that industry.

²²³ Written Submission No. 30, Melbourne Development Board, 24 May 2002, p8.

Mr Glen Cox, Factory Manager, SPC Ardmona in Shepparton raised this issue in his evidence to the Committee:

"I would be honest enough to say that our business has done a fairly lousy job of promoting our career opportunities among young people in an area that very much centres around the industry we are involved in. ... The perception among young people is that there are not any careers in the big tin shed around the corner from Notre Dame College; that that is where you go when you fall over at school. That is a wrong perception. Every kid in the Goulburn–Murray region has done the factory tour through SPC, across the catwalk watching all those people putting pears in cans, as you explained, and they say, 'I know exactly where I do not want to go when I finish school'. It is 40 degrees in there and they see basically 1000 people a day in there doing those kinds of jobs. Unfortunately the catwalk does not wind through the offices, the engineering shops or the other parts of the business where there are very highly skilled people working in the business who are also very, very highly paid."

The issue is how do we get the message out about these really good jobs. It would be fair to say that our business has a lot of work to do to be more professional in terms of marketing ourselves at all levels and attracting the right kinds of people into our business." ²²⁴

Teachers, and therefore, students are unaware of the increasing level of skill required to work in a manufacturing operation and are further unacquainted with the newer, cleaner, high-tech manufacturing environment that is emerging in a more competitive, global marketplace.²²⁵ The opportunities in such industries need to be communicated effectively to young people and education and training providers must work actively to seek current and correct information about the different industry employment options, and respond with appropriate curriculum planning.

Inner Northern LLEN outlined two interesting models for forming partnerships with industry.²²⁶ The first is the Northern Interactive Education Coordinated Area Program (NIECAP) which builds partnerships between schools, industry, RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology), the training sector and the community. Through the facilitation of partnerships, an action research model has developed whereby projects, which are essentially outcome driven, provide opportunity for reflection and learning by doing and contribute to future initiatives and strategic directions. An

²²⁴ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, p381.

²²⁵ Written Submission No. 30, op. cit, p9.

²²⁶ Outlined in Written Submission No. 35, Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network, 27 May 2002, p5.

example of this work is the Skills Shortages Project whereby research was conducted to develop a best practice model for meeting identified skill shortages in the manufacturing industry. A model for effective industry involvement in career education at the local level was developed as a result of this project.

The second model is the Northern Stainless Steel Skills Development Group which has been established to increase numbers of young people entering the steel industry, increase employment and career opportunities for young people and develop a sustainable skills base for the industry. While there is still much work to be done, the project is an important partnership model that could be pursued in other industries.

It was highlighted to the Committee in a number of contexts that the training of young people alone does not generate employment and that training a young person, while a necessary component of making them job ready, can be counter-productive if it does not result in a sustainable job placement. Training without a positive outcome can lead to disillusionment and a sense of failure and perhaps, reluctance in the future to take positive steps towards training and employment for fear of further disappointments. As noted by Group Training Australia Victoria, the increasing trend amongst employers is to provide skills through a work and training solution, a model that is encouraged by Governments through various incentive schemes. However, while the incentives may encourage the application of training to a job, they do not deliver the job itself.²²⁷ Rather, the business must be able to support the job with actual work as without the job, the training will not occur effectively and it certainly will not be utilised. Again, this highlights the importance of linking training to local employment opportunities.

FINDING 4.14

The Committee finds that the reasons many employers may not find the employment of young people attractive include:

- ◆ *young people often do not present as job ready;*
- ◆ *past experiences employing young people have revealed that many do not exhibit a sound work ethic, enthusiasm, and a willingness and desire to learn;*

²²⁷ Written Submission No. 44, Group Training Australia - Victoria, 4 June 2002, p3.

- ◆ *young people are often not competitive in the labour market due to a lack of job experience and industry specific skills; and*
- ◆ *the high costs associated with training and supervising young inexperienced people.*

FINDING 4.15

The Committee finds that regional specificity and direct contact at the local level between industry, schools and the general community is important in bridging gaps between these sectors and in overcoming skills shortages. The Committee further finds that parents and employers should be encouraged to take greater responsibility for informing young people about their education, training, employment and career options.

FINDING 4.16

The Committee finds that industry can and needs to play an active role in overcoming skills shortages by ensuring attractive conditions in the industry, by communicating in innovative ways the availability and benefits of completing an apprenticeship and by directly engaging with schools, students and parents.

RECOMMENDATION 4.12

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training aim to further strengthen the Local Learning and Employment Network to:

- ◆ **develop stronger links between employers and education & training;**
- ◆ **enhance young people's attitudes and awareness of work;**
- ◆ **improve employers' understanding of young people's attitudes and capabilities; and**
- ◆ **promote positive career paths in a wide range of industry sectors.**

4.6 School to Work Transitions for Indigenous Youth

Chapter 2 illustrated that the youth unemployment rate for Indigenous Victorians is approximately 26 per cent, double the rate for non-Indigenous youth. It is evident therefore, that Indigenous youth are faced with a number of challenges and barriers in completing education and obtaining meaningful employment.

4.6.1 Barriers to Employment

ATSIC indicates that the problem of youth unemployment within Indigenous communities has two causes: (1) social disadvantage and (2) lack of understanding of self as an Indigenous person, both in terms of self-esteem and in integrating the responsibilities towards community and culture with the demands made from living within mainstream Australian society.

The Committee's evidence suggests that governments need to understand these causes and seek to address them in order to reduce the incidence of youth unemployment within the Indigenous community.

Social Disadvantages

The Committee acknowledges that the starting point of Indigenous youth is vastly different to that of non-Indigenous youth. The range of underlying social justice issues affecting the Indigenous community are well documented, and include poor levels of employment, income, home ownership, health and educational attainment. The Committee also heard concerns from Indigenous groups over discrimination and a lack of cultural understanding in the workforce. Combined, these factors contribute to an overall lack of job readiness among Indigenous youth.

Some of the specific causes of this lack of job readiness, as outlined in ATSIC's written submission are:

- ◆ Feelings of dislocation and alienation and widespread welfare dependence undermines the ability of many young Indigenous Victorians to acquire the broad range of life skills.
- ◆ Family separations, domestic violence, and general dysfunction have undermined the natural occurrence of positive role models.

- ◆ Indigenous youth have lower school retention rates and thus lower levels of academic achievement and aptitude (see Chapter 3).
- ◆ A lack of Indigenous people in business has denied Indigenous youth access to appropriate role models for developing a vision and realistic expectations related to employment.
- ◆ Where Aboriginal people have been successful in business or the community, they often do not recognise themselves as Aboriginal, further exacerbating the problem of a lack of role models.
- ◆ The high incidence of substance abuse and crime amongst peers has further exacerbated an overall lack of direction in the lives of young Indigenous people.
- ◆ Social disadvantage has led to poor parenting skills in many Indigenous families, with many of today's young Indigenous people experiencing poor health, diet, hygiene and grooming.
- ◆ Lack of self-esteem, self-confidence and a poor image of what it is to be an Indigenous Australian.

Many of the above barriers were confirmed by witnesses during the Committee's public hearings, including Ms Sue Allengame, Chairperson, Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and Indigenous Service Officer, Bendigo Centrelink Customer Service Centre:

"Some of the barriers that we see in the initial thing are interviews, the lack of transport by our community and therefore the lack of money. A lot of them do not have phones at home so you cannot ring them. ... A lot of the community move around and the letters do not reach them in time so therefore they do not get to the interviews and people see it as they are unreliable ...

Generally the third generation of unemployed is present in a lot of the families in this region. Someone might get up to go to school but all the others are not working so they are home, and that child has to be really strong to break that mould, to go to school and want to learn. If they do get a job there is the pressure of the family – what is yours is ours so you share..."²²⁸

Lack of Understanding of Indigenous Culture

Cultural differences in education and the workforce were also a key theme of the evidence presented to the Committee. Chapter 3 dealt with the level of participation

²²⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/2002, p450.

by Koories in education and training and highlighted cultural awareness issues in school curriculum and a lack of pathways planning and support.

The commercial world is a foreign place to Indigenous people, with traditional culture developing not on philosophies of ownership and commerce, but rather on notions of inter-generational custodianship and shared responsibilities. Although the strength of family ties can be very supportive for Indigenous youth, when the best chance of gaining employment requires moving away from home, then the cultural expectations of remaining within the community can be counter-productive. ATSIC also indicates that where welfare dependence is the main experience of the community, *"there can be pressure placed on young people to 'not strive above their elders' lest they show the older people up"*.²²⁹

Once in the workforce, cultural differences continue to impact on young Indigenous people. Generally, they are the minority and therefore they may find themselves in both a confusing and competitive work environment without the supports required for dealing with that environment. Expectations that once a young Indigenous person does gain employment, his or her wage will be shared among the family can also act a deterrent to employment and even exacerbate family dysfunction.

The issue of culture also came through from those working with young Indigenous people.

Ms Kerri Watson, Future Connections:

*"We have a few Koorie young people coming through. We do not set up special programs for them. ... Tony and I were just talking this morning about our lack of being able to support them enough ... We support them as much as we support anyone else, but Koorie young people have special needs that we cannot necessarily support. ... We do not know their culture, so we cannot give them learning in their culture. The ones we have had are probably further behind the eight ball as far as their literacy goes. Also, the ones we have had through have had fairly major alcohol and family problems as well, so that takes them away from any training. Most of the young people have those issues, but it seems we cannot connect as well as we would like to with the Koorie young people."*²³⁰

²²⁹ Written Submission No. 31, ATSIC, 24 May 2002, p7.

The Committee also heard consistently that Indigenous people suffer discrimination in the workforce, although it was recognised that for most employers this is based not on hostility towards Indigenous people, but rather on ignorance of the Indigenous culture. ATSIC suggests that many employers believe that "*Indigenous employees are difficult because they will be involved with substance abuse, frequently go missing due to cultural responsibilities, and have a generally poor work ethic*".²³¹

A young representative of the Aboriginal Community also told the Committee that Indigenous youth tend to be stereotyped by potential employers.

Ms Naomi Thorpe:

*"It is frustrating. I have lost a lot of confidence from being unemployed. I just wish that some people would give us a chance, you know. Some aboriginal people in this community do want to work, and we are sick of being stereotyped."*²³²

Other Barriers

The Committee heard that Indigenous youth, like many young people in the mainstream community, lack job search skills, including the ability to prepare a résumé or the ability to present appropriately for an interview. Lack of financial support often limits their ability to travel to interviews and jobs. The lack of Indigenous people in employment and business also serves to limit access to job vacancies which are often filled via personal networks of friends or acquaintances.

Evidence indicates that not all of the traineeships and other sponsored positions provided to Indigenous youth result in sustainable employment outcomes. Written material provided by a representative of the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group in Bendigo suggests that more effort needs to be put into mentoring young Indigenous people in State Government sponsored traineeships, to ensure that their skills develop in line with the requirements of the contemporary workplace. It suggests that skill deficiencies, including poor literacy or numeracy, lack of computer

²³⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/2002, p434.

²³¹ Written Submission No. 31, ATSIC, 24 May 2002, p6.

²³² Minutes of Evidence, 02/09/2002, p251.

skills and lack of familiarity with organisational systems could be addressed within traineeships, through formal or informal mentoring. This suggestion is consistent with those of many organisations representing the mainstream community, and is acknowledged as a significant need of many youth, including Indigenous youth.

FINDING 4.17

The Committee finds that many young Indigenous Victorians are disadvantaged in the labour market due to a number of factors including:

- ◆ *experiences of social disadvantage, including lower socio-economic status, poor health and family breakdown;*
- ◆ *low school retention rates and levels of educational attainment;*
- ◆ *inadequate or inappropriate vocational education and training;*
- ◆ *intergenerational unemployment and high levels of welfare dependency;*
- ◆ *lack of family and work role models;*
- ◆ *low level of self-confidence and self-esteem;*
- ◆ *lack of networks to employers; and*
- ◆ *discrimination and lack of cultural understanding in the workforce.*

4.6.2 Improving Job Pathways for Indigenous Youth

Evidence indicated that the promotion of role models, improving cultural awareness, enhancing training and employment outcomes and the development of affirmative action policies are all essential elements for improving job pathways for Indigenous youth.

The Committee heard that building a positive image and creating positive role models for Indigenous young people is a key priority in Indigenous communities around Victoria. Positive role models, particularly in the sport and entertainment industries are receiving greater publicity. There are specific government and community programs being developed to foster respect for elders by young people and many cultural camps, festivals and celebrations are being conducted within Indigenous communities. Many institutions also recognise the importance for young Indigenous people to develop a positive self-image and are running specific community-controlled cultural immersion programs.

The importance of Koorie role models was illustrated by Mr Dave Glazebrook, Manager of Visy Cares Centre in Dandenong, who outlined his reasons for recently hiring Australian representative athlete Mr Kyle van der Kuyp:

*“We have a significant Aboriginal community around here and the work we did with young people last year made it pretty clear to me that while young Aboriginal people want to use the services of the Visy Cares Centre they are not going to do so until we have an indigenous worker in there..... Kyle is working with us two days a week so it has set up some really nice links and some really nice programs with our indigenous community.”*²³³

A clear need arising from the Committee’s investigations was for a greater level of cultural awareness and acceptance in the mainstream community. The Government could assist this by developing cultural awareness resources and training programs targeted at employers, and through greater use of Indigenous role models in its marketing and promotion activities, particularly those promoting young people and the workforce.

ATSIC argued very strongly that governments need to revisit the way in which they prepare the pathways for Indigenous youth to enter the workforce and the need to support affirmative action until Indigenous people achieve equity in mainstream society. ATSIC suggests that programs be designed in collaboration with communities, delivered through community-controlled mechanisms and specifically address the needs of family members, leaders of Indigenous communities, teachers and trainers, employers and mentors in regard to the support they provide young Indigenous people.²³⁴

Mr Troy Austin, Chairperson, Tumbukka Regional Council – ATSIC:

“They may not have been the best person for the job at the time, but with a bit of mentoring and support they may be able to carry out the job. Proactive opportunities. The positions we hold at the moment – and whether it is in our communities or state government – are designated positions; so it is: You are the aboriginal liaison officer; you are the aboriginal this or that. We want people to be winning those positions on their own merit with maybe a little bit of support,

²³³ Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, p84.

²³⁴ Written Submission No. 31, ATSIC, 24 May 2002, p13.

but they sit there as an employee of the state who happens to be aboriginal rather than filling an aboriginal position".²³⁵

While ATSIC believes Aboriginal youth should be able to eventually gain employment on their own merits, it has recommended that there be a legislative requirement for all business over a certain size to employ a minimum quota of Indigenous staff. The VAEAI also supported affirmative action measures.

Mr Lionel Bamblett, General Manager, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association:

"Yes, there is racism out there, and people will go outside to employ instead of employing an Aboriginal person. I have some ideas on how that is done or how that has turned around, but whether people want to look at that is another matter. I go with the affirmative employment policy and people should be encouraged to employ Aboriginal people, whether it be through subsidy arrangements which are a bit more proactive than now exist through the Commonwealth or there be some legislative arrangement that allows for affirmative action, I am not quite sure. That is the only way that will happen."²³⁶

However, the introduction of quotas was not supported by all participants in the Committee's Inquiry.

Mr Jim O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer, Worktrainers Ltd:

"It would be extremely counterproductive ... what that results in is the store manager of, say, Target at Shepparton being told that he must put on two Indigenous kids as soon as possible. ... You have the kid who didn't really want to be there perhaps anyway; you have a person in charge who says they have been told to do it so they do it but do not really care about it, and colleagues who say these people got a special deal and who do what they can about it."²³⁷

The issue of enforced quotas on businesses is also referred to in Chapter 6 when discussing the Belgian Government's initiatives. The Committee will further explore employment quotas in its second Report to Parliament.

The Committee heard that some regional and local organisations are becoming proactive in increasing the level of Indigenous participation in mainstream

²³⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 05/08/2002, p39.

²³⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/2002, p494.

²³⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, pp401-2.

employment, without the formal requirement of filling quotas. For example, the City of Greater Dandenong has joined with seven other councils that make up the inter-council Aboriginal Consultative Committee to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the south-east region of Melbourne. The aim across all of these councils is to employ 40 Aboriginal people over the next three years.

As the above evidence demonstrates, debate within the Indigenous community exists on how their young people can best be supported to enter and remain in sustainable employment. However, some of the consistent issues raised were the need for:

- ◆ fostering of education and training programs for Indigenous youth that have direct links with employment outcomes, or involve on-the-job training;
- ◆ education within the mainstream community regarding the level of support provided to the Indigenous community to overcome perceptions that targeted programs create an unfair advantage for Indigenous people; and
- ◆ cultural awareness training and supporting mechanisms for mainstream employers to overcome a level of ignorance and misconceptions about the culture of the Indigenous community.

The Committee notes a positive initiative undertaken by the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry to enhance Indigenous employment opportunities. VECCI has an Indigenous Education and Employment Program which has two key objectives: first, to actively promote the employment of Indigenous job seekers with the private sector and secondly, to assist in the improvement of the level of education and training participation and outcomes for Indigenous students in Victoria by encouraging them to participate in vocational education and training and to complete their VCE.

FINDING 4.18

The Committee finds that building a positive image and creating positive role models for Indigenous young people is an important step in improving employment prospects for young Indigenous people. The Committee further finds that increased access to and participation in vocational training and education will have a positive impact on the opportunities for young Indigenous Victorians to achieve a successful school to work transition.

RECOMMENDATION 4.13

The Committee recommends that the State Government assist young Indigenous Victorians to achieve a successful school to work transition and become more competitive in the labour market by providing an increased number of pre-apprenticeships and other vocationally oriented training programs, linked to local employment opportunities and assisting Indigenous youth to access these opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 4.14

The Committee recommends that the State Government improve existing training and employment programs available to Indigenous youth by supporting employers to implement formal mentoring structures that meet the specific needs of Indigenous youth.

RECOMMENDATION 4.15

The Committee recommends that State and Federal Governments, together with key employer and Aboriginal groups, consider affirmative action policies for young Indigenous people seeking employment.

4.7 School to Work Transitions for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth

The previous Chapter outlined some of the barriers and needs of young newly arrived migrants and refugees in accessing the Victorian education and training systems, with a particular focus on English language and literacy skills. The following section outlines some of the additional barriers in accessing employment opportunities.

4.7.1 Employment Barriers Facing Young Newly Arrived and Refugee Migrants

According to the DIMIA Settlement Database (2001), 78 per cent of refugee youth are unemployed for a minimum of eighteen months after arrival and four years later, some 34 per cent remain unemployed.²³⁸

Refugees or humanitarian entrants are more likely to experience labour market disadvantage. Some have come from developing countries where exposures to urban society and opportunities to develop work skills have been limited. These young people share the same challenges of finding appropriate pathways towards employment and/or further education or vocational training with other young job seekers. However, they may also have to balance additional issues of cultural conflict and identity formation and the competing expectations of family and society while making transitions from school into the wider community. These factors are occurring when they are entering a particularly competitive and performance oriented phase of their lives.²³⁹

There can be a high convergence of factors recognised as barriers to employment, such as low levels of education, literacy, English language proficiency and work skills. Many of these young people may also have had experiences of torture or trauma and suffer from poor physical and/or mental health.²⁴⁰ In summary, refugee young people are likely to have experienced some or all of the following:²⁴¹

- ◆ forced to leave their own country of origin;
- ◆ profound disruption prior to their arrival in Australia, including extended periods of discrimination, conflict and human rights abuses in their countries of origin often followed by a period of uncertain status in a country of asylum, in some cases in a refugee camp;
- ◆ exposure to traumatic experiences such as the loss of or separation from family members, torture or life-threatening event; and/or
- ◆ prolonged periods in countries where basic human service infrastructure, including health and education is poorly developed or disrupted as a consequence of conflict.

²³⁸ Written Submission No. 61, Ecumenical Migration Centre, 12 August 2002, p2.

²³⁹ Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council, Strategy for Refugee Young People, April 2001, cited in Written Submission No. 48, DIMIA, 17 June 2002, p8.

²⁴⁰ Written Submission No. 48, DIMIA, 17 June 2002, p3.

The draft report *Wealth of all Nations* by the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS) also makes a number of observations regarding refugee youth, consistent with those highlighted to the Committee. This report found that labour market disadvantage experienced by young people in general is compounded for many young refugees by several factors, including: ²⁴²

- ◆ low levels of English language proficiency;
- ◆ lack of job seeking skills (especially in the event that they are unfamiliar with the concept of an open labour market);
- ◆ lack of access to support networks;
- ◆ inadequate career information;
- ◆ biased employer attitudes, especially under-valuing of bi-literacy and bilingual skills;
- ◆ non-recognition or non-transferability of qualifications;
- ◆ an absence of local work experience or lack of documentation about relevant work experiences; and
- ◆ the general economic insecurity experienced by young refugees.

Evidence received by the Committee during public hearings particularly noted the impact of experiences of trauma, the challenges associated with adapting to a new community and the difficulties faced in negotiating the complex pathway through education, training and employment systems.

Mr John Patsikatheodorou, Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre:

“Refugee young people have two issues to deal with. One is the refugee experience, which is very traumatic for a lot of them and their families in that they have arrived here not as a choice, but have been forced to find a safe haven out of their own country... The issues from them include getting over the traumatic experiences, but there is then the disrupted schooling they have had to endure coming into today’s education system. I know it is difficult for an English speaker to understand the education system we are operating in, and it is very complex for a newly arrived person to identify the plethora of programs we currently have and how they fit in.” ²⁴³

²⁴¹ Ibid, p8.

²⁴² Written Submission No. 48, DIMIA, 17 June 2002, p8.

²⁴³ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p309.

Mr Nick Chiam, Planning Officer, Settlement, Planning and Information Unit,
Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs:

“These experiences create a particularly difficult challenge for refugee young people seeking employment in Victoria, and their challenge is threefold, in a sense. One is to overcome the symptoms of trauma they continue to undergo. Research on the symptoms of trauma, which agencies like the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture and others have done, has shown that trauma has a day-to-day impact on your ability to deal with life. It can affect anything from your short-term memory to your capacity to manage time and events during the day. Second, the challenge for young people, as with any migrants, is to adapt to a new community. Thirdly, and this is very important... is the idea of trying to negotiate a pathway through the mainstream and specialised education system and also through the job assistance programs and networks available to them when they arrive in Australia.”²⁴⁴

The Committee also spoke with a young representative of the Horn of Africa community in the western suburbs of Melbourne regarding her experience and those of her peers and the combination of factors that may contribute to difficulties in obtaining work in Victoria.

Ms Sahra Ibrahims, Young Representative of the Horn of Africa community:

Ms Ibrahims – “Some of them have been here about four, five or six years and they have qualifications. They have diplomas, degrees, but they are jobless. Basically they cannot find a job.”

Mr Theophanous – “Is that because their qualifications are not recognised?”

Ms Ibrahims – “Yes, that is part of it. Part of it is they are either not qualified for the job or they do not have enough experience. In order to get experience they need to get a job first. How will they get the job without it? Some of them have been here about one year, or less than that, and they basically do not know the right areas to go, or where to go for help, or what to do next.”²⁴⁵

FINDING 4.19

The Committee finds that many newly arrived young migrant and refugees face considerable barriers in making a successful school to work transitions including:

²⁴⁴ Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/2002, p528.

²⁴⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p296.

- ◆ *lower levels of oral and written communication skills in English required for effective job search, written applications and job interviews;*
- ◆ *the reduced likelihood of having local work experience (linked to school, university or part-time employment);*
- ◆ *lack of knowledge of Australian workplace culture and systems, including OHS requirements, EEO and work-based relationships; and*
- ◆ *lack of understanding within the workplace of the extent of post trauma stress.*

4.7.2 Temporary Protection Visas

The Ecumenical Migration Centre raised specific concern in its written submission to the Committee over the extent of 'hidden' refugee youth. That is, there are particular groups of youth with refugee experiences who are not included in statistics, due largely to being excluded from certain services and entitlements due to the conditions of their visa class.

Excluded groups in Victoria are young refugees on Temporary Protection Visas (main source countries include Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan) and young people who are asylum seekers (main source countries include Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Jordan, Turkey [Kurds], Sri Lanka, Albania, Timor and countries of the Horn of Africa). These groups have no access to essential Settlement Services provided by Migrant Resource Centres and no access to post secondary education or language classes, except as an overseas paying student. They have no (or very minimal) income and no access to accommodation. Some asylum seekers who have limited access to a regular income or Centrelink benefits are ineligible for transitional housing.²⁴⁶

Due to their exclusion from settlement related services, many young asylum seekers and TPV refugees have no information about the Australian social welfare system. They have limited understanding about how to get assistance or how to get involved in their local community. As noted by the Ecumenical Migration Centre, the lack of support and structured pathways has a direct impact on their ability to find employment and to participate in economic life.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Written Submission No. 61, Ecumenical Migration Centre, 12 August 2002, p2.

²⁴⁷ Loc.cit.

Inner Northern LLEN also identified young people on a TPV as a particularly disadvantaged group who face immense problems and suffer serious educational and employment disadvantage. These young people are often highly mobile and very unsettled and many have mental health issues as a result of their experiences before arrival in Australia and during detention in Australia. Local English Language Centre staff have identified the following issues as a result of their experience with young people on TPVs: ²⁴⁸

- ◆ a range of physical health problems;
- ◆ mental health issues including severe depression;
- ◆ irregular attendance often related to having to organise and attend to settlement and general survival issues;
- ◆ disdain and distrust of authority;
- ◆ serious housing problems;
- ◆ a wide range of educational backgrounds;
- ◆ self-medication and risk-taking behaviour;
- ◆ systematic social and employment discrimination; and
- ◆ despair about the future.

RECOMMENDATION 4.16

The Committee recommends that the State Government seek to negotiate an agreement with the Commonwealth Government that allows young migrants on Temporary Protection Visas access to settlement services available through the Migrant Resource Centres.

4.7.3 Strategies to Assist Young Migrant and Refugee Job Seekers

In 1999, DIMIA consulted with government agencies, youth workers and community organisations working with refugee young people. The consultations highlighted the need for improved pathways between programs for these young people who are at risk of falling between gaps in service delivery between settlement specific and mainstream services and programs.

²⁴⁸ Written submission No. 35, Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network, 27 May 2002, p10.

As discussed in the previous Chapter, one of the key forms of assistance required by many newly arrived migrants and refugees is English language and literacy support. The Committee heard that the lack of such support is also a barrier to newly arrived young people accessing apprenticeships. The Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre noted in a written submission that young refugees cannot meet the language requirements of apprenticeships, particularly the many modules requiring substantial amounts of written work.²⁴⁹ The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues also raised concerns in its written submissions about the New Apprenticeship Scheme to accommodate the needs of refugee and newly arrived young people. It noted that many of this group access apprenticeships because their English language proficiency is low and the demands of mainstream secondary education too high. However, once in the workplace, they often find that their English language skills are a barrier to successful employment.²⁵⁰

The Committee continued to hear calls for increased levels of case management and pathways support for CALD young people. As DIMIA notes, there are a variety of good programs available to young people, however, they often do not take account of the young person's migrant or refugee experiences.²⁵¹ The Ecumenical Migration Centre also noted that there is a widespread lack of awareness in the generalist service system of the particular issues facing refugee and asylum seeker young people, meaning there are few accessible services or that services are inappropriate in their delivery. For example, labour market program facilitators often fail to recognise post-traumatic stress in young refugees and therefore continue with inappropriate service delivery.²⁵²

Some of the key messages from DIMIA's earlier consultations of refugee young people include the need to:

- ◆ facilitate pathways for young people when they leave their school/program to go on to further education, training or employment;
- ◆ provide better pathways from English language programs to vocational training and employment opportunities for young job seekers;
- ◆ target and promote programs such as the New Apprenticeship Scheme;

²⁴⁹ Written Submission No. 69, Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre, 16 September 2002, p4.

²⁵⁰ Written Submission No. 68, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, 23 September 2002, p4.

²⁵¹ Written Submission No. 48, DIMIA, 17 June 2002, p12.

- ◆ promote greater partnerships between schools and youth workers to support young migrants and refugees making transitions;
- ◆ raise awareness of the issues young migrant and refugee job seekers face with Job Network providers and provide greater information to young job seekers about Job Network services generally; and
- ◆ investigate the scope of migrant welfare groups or migrant community groups to contribute to pathways into employment for newly arrived migrant and refugee young people in their communities.

The Committee notes that much of the above work is currently occurring and/or improving, with many community organisations developing locally relevant programs that are targeted at CALD people. For example, the Brotherhood of St Laurence is attempting to address some of the issues of exclusion from government programs through the trial Given the Chance project, which is an education, employment and advocacy skills program for refugee youth. This program is jointly funded by the Department of Human Services the Victorian Women's Trust and the Invergowrie Foundation. The Given the Chance project provides an integrated program of both education and employment opportunities, strengthened by supported mentoring for up to eighteen months after the end of the formal project.²⁵³ The Committee anticipates that an evaluation of the level of success of this project will contribute to development of effective models for future employment programs targeting young unemployed refugees.

The Committee also recognises, however, that many community organisations are calling for far greater assistance for CALD youth. The South Central Region MRC outlined some of the issues that need to be addressed, including:²⁵⁴

- ◆ the need for more interaction between schools and employers so that young people know what employment opportunities are available from local employers and local employers can get young people with the right skills;
- ◆ alternative education and training pathways that are linked to local industry demand need to be developed and implemented via partnerships between industry and schools;

²⁵² Written Submission No. 60, Ecumenical Migration Centre, 12 August 2002, p3.

²⁵³ Ibid, pp3-4.

²⁵⁴ Written Submission No. 22, South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre, 24 May 2002, pp2-3.

- ◆ programs that link refugee young people with appropriate remedial education programs need to be established;
- ◆ in some cultures there are different expectations for young men and women when it comes to education and employment. Concerted community education campaigns, in conjunction with community leaders, need to be run to change such attitudes and enhance opportunities for both young women and men, especially in relation to non-traditional employment areas;
- ◆ employers need to be made aware of the potential business opportunities that can arise from having a multicultural and multilingual workforce, especially in creating new markets overseas as well as locally within larger ethnic communities; and
- ◆ provision of a regional settlement assistance service to assist migrant and refugee workers to settle in rural and regional Victoria.

As for the Indigenous community, there were some calls for a proportion of State Government traineeships to be 'tagged' for refugee youth. The Ecumenical Migration Centre was one organisation calling for these targets, as well as the development of pilot entrepreneurship and enterprise programs. The Committee is particularly supportive of the development of enterprise programs specifically targeted at this group, as it was for the development of such programs for the broader youth cohort in the previous chapter.

As noted earlier in this Chapter, an increasing number of young people are settling into Victoria with either no immediate family members or as unattached minors. Given that the need for mentoring throughout the youth community was identified as a strong theme throughout the Inquiry, the Committee believes this may also be a particularly effective strategy for many newly arrived or refugee young people. Matching these young people with mentors will increase the number of job contacts they have to assist in finding jobs, as well as help them to undertake effective job search strategies and to understand Australian workplace culture.

FINDING 4.20

The Committee finds that CALD youth, particularly newly arrived migrants and refugees require access to a range of specialist settlement services, in addition to participating in a range of mainstream education, vocational and employment services or programs.

RECOMMENDATION 4.17

The Committee recommends that the State Government, in partnership with relevant community organisations, develop a mentoring model relevant to the needs of newly arrived and refugees in accessing relevant education, training and employment pathways and provide access to this model through existing Government programs such as LLEN, MIP and VET in schools.

Labour Market Assistance and Programs

The Committee's evidence highlights that the solution to youth unemployment is longer-term economic development and jobs creation in general, rather than short-term employment placement programs targeted at specific groups.

It is certainly true that economic growth stimulates an increase in employment, and in turn, an increase in opportunities for young people however, it is important to note that youth do not always benefit equally from overall economic growth in the community. As a June 1998 study revealed, while there was a 5 per cent increase in the total number of jobs in inner Melbourne between 1991 and 1996, the number of teenagers who were employed declined 11 per cent and the number of young adults employed declined eight per cent.²⁵⁵

Throughout this Report, the Committee highlights the significant challenges in assisting early school leavers, disadvantaged youth, Koorie youth and youth from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

With the above in mind, the Committee examined the range of labour market assistance programs available to young people. These included employment placement programs, training programs and initiatives targeted specifically at the young Indigenous community, available at either the Commonwealth or State level.

As well as the multitude of Commonwealth and State Government labour market assistance programs, the Committee observed many examples of innovative initiatives undertaken at the local level, often in partnership with local governments. The latter part of this chapter focuses on these initiatives and the lessons that can be learnt from them.

²⁵⁵ Written Submission No. 32, Inner City Regional Youth Committee, 24 May 2002, p1.

5.1 Commonwealth Government Policy and Programs

Each level of Government has a different role in policy and program development to assist young people into employment. It is the Commonwealth Government that typically determines policies regarding the level and types of supports provided to unemployed people. The following section provides descriptive details of Commonwealth Government employment policies and programs, some of which are specific to young unemployed people.

5.1.1 Australians Working Together

The Commonwealth Government's policies on employment and unemployment are encapsulated in *Australians Working Together – Helping people to move forward*, a joint Statement made by the Minister for Family and Community Services and the Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business in May 2001.

Australians Working Together (AWT) recognises that financial support and obligations on those receiving this support, together with additional assistance for those who require it, will lead to pathways to independence and ultimately paid employment or increased participation in the community.

Under *Australians Working Together*, those of workforce age on income support payments have access to one of four main pathways to independence:

- ◆ Job Search Support – a pathway for the Job Ready;
- ◆ Intensive Support – a pathway for people at risk of long-term unemployment;
- ◆ Community Participation – a pathway for people with severe or multiple barriers; and
- ◆ Transition – a pathway back into the workforce.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Outlined in *Australians Working Together: Information Kit*, published by the Commonwealth Government, May 2001.

1. Job Search Support – a pathway for the job ready

Many unemployed people are ready to look for work and are capable of finding jobs themselves. However, where people cannot find work within a few months, early assistance is likely to make a difference. Under Job Search Support, after three months of unemployment payments, people in this Pathway are required to undertake Job Search Training. After six months or more on unemployment payments, options such as Work for the Dole, community work, study and part-time work generally apply.

For Indigenous people living in areas where job opportunities are available, Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) may also have the role of Indigenous Employment Centre. These centres offer work experience, job search support and access to training and support and mentoring assistance to help Indigenous job seekers move into paid employment.

2. Intensive Support – a pathway for people at risk of long-term unemployment

Intensive Assistance is designed to address more substantial vocational barriers to getting a job. It usually begins with a comprehensive interview to identify the barriers people face. Following initial interviews, most job seekers receive a two or three-week skills course to assist them to develop confidence as well as developmental plans. A variety of approaches can be adopted to meet the needs of different individuals.

3. Community Participation – a pathway for people with severe or multiple barriers

Some people need more intensive assistance to stabilise their life or address certain problems that they may face such as homelessness, alcohol or drug addiction, mental illness and domestic violence. For others, encouraging greater social participation will be of most benefit in the short term. The new Personal Support Programme aims to assist people who have severe or multiple personal obstacles to finding employment. Additional support services are available to Indigenous unemployed people and their families who may also face unique difficulties.

4. Transition – a pathway back into the workforce

People who have been out of the workforce caring for children, a frail or aged relative, or a person with a disability, sometimes need extra help before they are ready to look for work. Programs to assist these people must be very flexible, and therefore, the Transition to Work program brings together various aspects of support, including assessment, training and advice about how to get into the job market.

5.1.2 Mutual Obligation

An important component of the *Australians Working Together* policy is the principle of mutual obligation. This principle is based on the premise that those receiving unemployment payments should contribute something back to the community by actively seeking work. Certain recipients of such allowances must undertake an approved activity designed to improve their skills and job search activity, as well as continue to look for work to fulfill their mutual obligation requirements. Mutual obligation activity tests are applicable to all job seekers aged 18 to 24 after six months of receiving unemployment benefits.

Job seekers can partake in a range of activities which enable them to fulfil their mutual obligation requirements, these include:

- ◆ Paid part-time work;
- ◆ Part-time study in an approved training or education course;
- ◆ Work for the Dole;
- ◆ Community Development Projects;
- ◆ Voluntary Work;
- ◆ Green Corps;
- ◆ Approved literacy and numeracy training;
- ◆ New Apprenticeships;
- ◆ Job Search Training;
- ◆ Advanced English for Migrants Program (AEMP);
- ◆ Intensive Assistance;
- ◆ Jobs Pathways Program (JPP);

- ◆ Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET); and
- ◆ Career Counselling.

Preparing for Work is a four-step program to help people back into the workplace. It includes assessment of a job seeker's situation and needs; an agreement on appropriate activities to improve their employment prospects; referral by Centrelink to available programs to increase their chances of finding work; and follow-up or regular review of their progress.

From their initial contact with Centrelink to claim income support, activity tested job seekers are asked to negotiate and sign a Preparing for Work Agreement with their One to One Service Officer. The job seeker's mutual obligation responsibilities are specified in the Agreement.

As described by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in its written submission to the Committee, mutual obligation is based on the assumption that permanent work is available to those who want it, with unemployment a matter of choice rather than a product of structural inequalities. As a result, YACVic argues it has become acceptable within the social contract to keep the level of unemployment benefits low and to impose a penalty regime on unemployed people for breaches of the mutual obligation contract. YACVic further argues that the policy fails to recognise that the full-time labour market is shrinking and that fewer jobs now exist in industries such as manufacturing and the public sector that traditionally provided secure work opportunities for young people.²⁵⁷

YACVic also makes the observation that the mutual obligation policy considers education to be the primary alternative to participation in the labour force. However, while valuing the importance of education and training, YACVic believes that education alone cannot address the structural determinants of unemployment. While acknowledging that education can prepare young people for work, it indicates that it cannot address the very real lack of employment opportunities. Furthermore, it highlights that strategies

²⁵⁷ Written Submission No. 51, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 28 June 2002, p5.

that place the primary focus on education neglect those young people who are detached from the education and training sector.²⁵⁸

5.1.3 Centrelink's Role in Assisting Young Job Seekers

Centrelink was established as the Commonwealth Services Delivery Agency under the *Commonwealth Service Delivery Agency Act 1997*. Commencing in September 1997, Centrelink is a statutory authority within the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (DFaCS).

Centrelink delivers or provides referrals to a number of employment and other support programs on behalf of DFaCS, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and other organisations.

Centrelink's role in helping young people to find work is:

- ◆ being the first point of contact for people looking for help to find work and needing income support;
- ◆ registering young job seekers eligible for Job Network services;
- ◆ issuing eligible young job seekers a Job Network Card which gives them access to Job Network member services, including Job Matching, Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance;
- ◆ identifying and referring eligible young job seekers who may benefit from government training or employment programs;
- ◆ fostering self-employment opportunities by referring job seekers to the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) and Self-Employment Development Scheme;
- ◆ providing self-help facilities to help customers access Job Network services and conduct an effective job search; and
- ◆ assessing, determining and making payments of Youth Allowance to eligible job seekers.

²⁵⁸ Written Submission No. 51, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 28 June 2002, p6.

Centrelink provides a number of self-help facilities for young people, helping job seekers to identify employment opportunities and to make contact with service providers who may be able to help them in various aspects of their search for work. Facilities include personal computers and printers with specialist résumé and application preparation software, Australian Job Search touch screens, information on Job Network members and services, comprehensive job guides and job databases, a wide variety of information pamphlets and brochures, photocopiers, printers, career and job search information, telephones and facsimile machines and newspapers.

Centrelink refers young job seekers to a range of programs and specialist services to assist them with their job seeking efforts. These include:

- ◆ Personal Support Programme;
- ◆ Language, Literacy and Numeracy;
- ◆ Career Counselling;
- ◆ New Apprenticeships and New Apprenticeships Access Programme;
- ◆ Social Work Services;
- ◆ Psychology Services; and
- ◆ Multicultural Services.

In order to deliver its programs more effectively, Centrelink has introduced 'One to One Service' in which customers are linked with a Customer Service Officer who will work with them over the period of their job seeking efforts. The Customer Service Officer aims to provide young job seekers with targeted personalised assistance.

Centrelink Community Officers are available specifically to provide services to homeless and 'at risk' people of all ages. These staff deliver Centrelink services to customers outside the mainstream setting (eg. rehabilitation centres, hospitals, prisons, hostels and refuges) so that their access to income support and other services is not compromised. In Victoria, these staff are based primarily in the inner suburbs of Melbourne.

5.1.4 Centrelink Youth Servicing Strategy

The Commonwealth Minister for Children and Youth Affairs launched Centrelink's Youth Servicing Strategy on April 10, 2002. The purpose of the strategy is to deliver services, consistent with a whole of government approach that supports and empowers young Australians to achieve independence throughout engagement in education, training, employment and community life. Central to the Youth Servicing Strategy is Centrelink's Youth Servicing Model, which seeks to respond to the specific needs of young people at risk; Indigenous young people; young people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds; and young people from rural and remote areas.

The three key elements of the model are:

- ◆ young people having easy access to Centrelink information and services, being given the opportunity to choose from a range of options and making decisions based on their needs;
- ◆ Centrelink tailoring service delivery to the needs of young people; and
- ◆ Centrelink working in partnership with all levels of Government and the community to achieve better outcomes for young people.

Work will be conducted over the next two to three years to explore new access and communication options for young job seekers, students and their intermediaries. These include:

- ◆ offering Centrelink's Student Update publication via email;
- ◆ proof of concept trial in Short Message Service (SMS);
- ◆ customer requested email links to Centrelink information;
- ◆ web subscription service for Centrelink products and publications;
- ◆ e-Business links with educational institutions; and
- ◆ Centrelink's online claim and customer notification capability.

Several issues were raised during the Inquiry with respect to Centrelink's services to unemployed youth. In particular, the Committee received evidence that Centrelink services are not always easily accessible to youth in rural Victoria. For example, Macedon Ranges Shire Council indicated that the only location within the Shire for

people needing to access Centrelink services was at Kyneton, based on a very limited visiting service. Elsewhere in this Report, the Committee has referred to a lack of public transport in rural Victoria, which impacts on young people seeking education and employment opportunities.

The Smart Geelong Region LLEN suggested that there needs to be a more youth focused and youth friendly orientation to the employment sector, including an overview of the role of Centrelink and the various employment service providers. The LLEN believes that there is a role for Centrelink (and/or Job Network providers) to provide an outreach service to young people by going into sporting venues and clubs and working with young people in these environments.²⁵⁹ While the Committee acknowledges that Centrelink's Youth Servicing Strategy is a new initiative and that its benefits may not yet have reached all communities, it believes further initiatives such as those suggested by Smart Geelong Region LLEN have merit.

Evidence also suggests there is a significant number of young unemployed people who do not register with or access Centrelink services for various reasons. For example, Wellington Shire Council reported that of 409 young people not in paid work, only 152 are registered with Centrelink or are looking for work. There was also strong evidence that this situation is worse within Aboriginal communities. As noted in Chapter 1, this non-registering at Centrelink also has the effect of distorting unemployment figures.

The Committee notes that McCabe Consultancies in Dandenong developed the Youth Initiatives Program (YIP) in an attempt to establish a stronger youth clientele when the demise of the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) led to a reduction in the number of school leavers registering as looking for work with Centrelink or employment agencies. The Youth Initiatives Program was initially piloted in the Dandenong and Mornington Peninsula areas in 2000 and following its success, it was expanded in 2001 and again in 2002. The program has grown significantly beyond the Dandenong area and has been introduced in its initial stage to the whole of metropolitan Melbourne.

The Youth Initiatives Program consists of the following services: ²⁶⁰

Newsletters – 3 newsletters are sent each school term to over 250 secondary colleges in the Melbourne metropolitan area. These newsletters educate students about employment services and provide information about how to seek work, attending interviews, Centrelink and youth vacancies.

Faxback System – all newsletters are sent to schools with an accompanying faxback form that allows potential exit students to send their details to a central location, which confirms the receipt of the information to the relevant school for their records. All applicants are then sent a letter detailing registration procedures and the location of the nearest Employment National office. Consultants then ring the potential exit student if a position in their area of preference arises.

During the period May 2001 to January 2002, over 700 students from over 100 schools/campuses faxed their details, resulting in over 500 registrations, 250 referrals and 132 placements. In December 2001 alone, over 250 Year 12 school leavers were registered.

Website – a website for the Youth Initiatives Program has been included on Employment National's website providing important information and advice to school leavers.

Job Sourcing – employer newsletters are sent out on a regular basis informing them of the Youth Initiatives Program and the database of potential youth applicants who are ready to interview and/or trial for positions that may be available. To end of January 2002, over 80 vacancies had been sourced in this way, resulting in 90 per cent being filled by the Program.

²⁵⁹ Written Submission No. 14, Smart Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network, 21 May 2002, p5.

²⁶⁰ Written Submission No. 1, McCabe Consultancies, 17 April 2002, p1.

It was reported to the Committee that one of the key causes of young people not registering with Centrelink is that Youth Allowance, the income support payment for both full-time students and unemployed young people, is subject to parental means testing for people aged under 21 years. Some young people who are not eligible for the Youth Allowance, therefore may not be accessing Centrelink and other services that they may be entitled to.

The Committee also notes that eligibility for the Youth Allowance has been used to determine the entitlement of young people to Federal Government employment, education and training assistance. Effectively, this means that access to a whole range of programs for young people is subject to a parental means test.

Another concern is that students who are looking for work, including young people still at school, are not eligible for Centrelink services, other than an assessment for the Youth Allowance. In particular, they are not eligible to receive a Job Seeker ID number from Centrelink, which is the entrance requirement for many education, employment and training programs. Consistent with the need for early intervention, the Committee suggests that access to Centrelink services be available to more young people, including students, on the basis that it is easier to work with young people while they are still engaged in education and training, rather than waiting for them to drop out of the system before providing support.

FINDING 5.1

The Committee finds that current eligibility criteria for Youth Allowance may act as a barrier to some young people registering as unemployed or accessing Centrelink services. The Committee further finds that employment outcomes could be enhanced by linking young people with Centrelink services while they are still in education.

RECOMMENDATION 5.1

The Committee recommends that Centrelink improve the marketing and promotion of its services to ensure all young people are accessing appropriate services and further, that as part of the Youth Servicing Strategy, it explore opportunities to expand visiting services to a wide range of environments attended by young people, including educational institutions.

5.1.5 Job Network

The Job Network is a national network of private, community and government organisations contracted by the Commonwealth Government to provide flexible and tailored assistance to help employers find staff and to assist job seekers to find employment. The main services provided to job seekers are outlined below, although the exact mix of services offered by each Job Network provider is determined by a tender process.

Job Matching – Members who provide job matching services canvass employers for jobs and then seek to match job seekers to suitable vacancies. Job matching is the most basic level of assistance offered by Job Network members to those job seekers who are considered to be job ready.

Job Search Training – Job search training providers aim to assist job seekers in gaining the skills necessary to successfully market themselves to potential employers. The service is designed for job seekers who have been unemployed for between 3 and 12 months.

Intensive Assistance – Intensive Assistance is the most personalised and intensive form of assistance and is offered to eligible job seekers who are long-term unemployed or who are at risk of becoming long-term unemployed. Intensive Assistance may include vocational training, work experience, literacy and numeracy training, English as a second language, wage subsidies or workplace modifications.

New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) – NEIS is a specialist advice and support service offered by Job Network members at approximately 345 sites across Australia, to assist job seekers with an idea for a viable small business or self-employment venture.

Project Contracting – Project Contracting-Harvest Labour Services is specifically concerned with the supply of labour to major harvest areas in need of large numbers of harvest workers.

Job Network members also offer a range of services to employers wishing to fill a job vacancy. Those employers who use a Job Network member have their employment vacancy details displayed on the Australian Job Search database. Job Network members also have the flexibility to offer a range of services to employers, including short listing and interviewing of applicants, contacting referees and organising background checks.

In some areas, there are Job Network services that provide specialist Intensive Assistance to specific groups of job seekers. In Victoria, there are two services aimed at youth, multiple services aimed at clients from non-English speaking backgrounds and nine services aimed at those with a disability.

The Committee understands the rationale that different levels of employment assistance are provided depending on the length of unemployment. However, given that youth are such a disadvantaged group generally, and that early labour market experience has such a large impact on the future career and employment prospects of a young person, the Committee believes earlier intensive assistance should be available to young people.

For example, Smart Geelong Region LLEN suggests that the best type of orientation to the employment sector is through Intensive Assistance, including access to a dedicated case manager until a successful transition into work has been achieved.²⁶¹ It further suggests that while Job Search Training is now available to young people three months after entering the job market, this is still too late to be of optimum value to young

²⁶¹ Written Submission No. 14, Smart Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network, 21 May 2002, p2.

people who really require such support at the point of exiting school or the training system.

The Committee also heard that representation of young people on the books of Job Networks members is very low. Evidence suggests that like Centrelink, young people who are unemployed are less likely to register with Job Network than other job seekers.

Mr Neil Baker, General Manager, Eastern Victorian Group Training:

“They do not understand it and it is not a particularly pleasant place to go. It is a threatening place for young people.”²⁶²

Mr Peter White, Principal, Notre Dame College in Shepparton also noted that the Job Network is not a youth friendly environment.

“The whole job network environment is intimidating and confusing to our students and often their only supports, their parents and peers, have no experience of the welfare/job system.”²⁶³

5.1.6 Work for the Dole

Work for the Dole is about helping job seekers improve their employment prospects by providing opportunities for work experience. Communities are involving job seekers in local projects that provide facilities and services of value to the community.

In 2002/03, the Commonwealth Government has provided \$147 million for Work for the Dole to support 55,500 places in the program and to provide Passport to Employment services and Training Credits to eligible participants.

Work for the Dole is targeted at eligible job seekers who are 18-19 years and in receipt of Youth Allowance for three months, 18-24 year olds in receipt of Newstart/Youth Allowance for six months or more and also those in older age groups. Generally, participants undertake work experience activities for 24 hours a fortnight if aged 18-21, 30 hours per fortnight if aged 21-39 or 12 hours if aged 40 and over.

²⁶² Minutes of Evidence, 22/08/2002, p209.

Work for the Dole is a mutual obligation activity that aims to:

- ◆ give job seekers valuable work experience opportunities;
- ◆ help job seekers develop good work habits;
- ◆ involve local communities in providing quality activities which support job seekers and assist them at the end of their activity; and
- ◆ provide local communities with facilities and services of value to them.

Work for the Dole projects are managed by Community Work Coordinators, who tailor placements to the individual needs of job seekers and their local communities. Projects can include work that entails caring for the environment, caring for people, caring for heritage and caring for the community. Projects are predominantly located in areas of high unemployment, with an emphasis on outer metropolitan, rural and regional areas.

Extensive literature has been published regarding Work for the Dole, with the most cited criticisms being that it does not have employment outcomes as its chief objective, the projects are not required to provide recognised training, specific skills development, or structured pathways and projects are not tailored to the participants needs or career aspirations.²⁶⁴ It should be noted, however, that under Australians Working Together, the Commonwealth Government has established a new Training Credits system at a cost of \$111 million over four years. The Training Credits, worth up to \$800 each, will be available to people who complete at least 16 weeks in Work for the Dole projects or equivalent hours of community work (as well as eligible mature age workers and Indigenous people through Job Search Training or Intensive Assistance providers).

Currently in Victoria there are 362 Work for the Dole projects/activities in operation. The majority of these projects (246) are located in metropolitan Melbourne, with the remainder dispersed throughout rural and regional Victoria. There are 11 projects in Geelong, 13 in Bendigo and another 41 across western Victoria and 20 projects in Gippsland and a further 30 across the remainder of eastern Victoria. The types of projects vary considerably in each location and range from administration, gardening and community education to music production and web page design.

²⁶³ Written Submission No. 64, Notre Dame College, 18 September 2002.

²⁶⁴ Liz Dearn, *Negotiating the Maze: An analysis of employment assistance for young people*, Brotherhood of St Lawrence, April 2001, p29.

The Committee considers Work for the Dole and other community projects as useful for developing motivation, building self-esteem and confidence and gaining work experience. While evidence received by the Committee generally supported this view, there were some comments that certain aspects of Work for the Dole could be improved, particularly through a change of name. 'Work for the Dole' is considered by some to imply a punitive activity and may mitigate the confidence and esteem building that participation encourages.

Mr Dave Glazebrook, Manager, Visy Cares Centre:

*"We have been running Work for the Dole programs since day one, although I have some issues with the Work for the Dole program and the naming of it. We base our programs around self-esteem and we have been running mural arts and theatre programs for some time. We have found these very useful because, the way we run them, they provide self-esteem and motivation for young people to take them on a journey somewhere."*²⁶⁵

The Committee received a written submission from a young person who felt that her experience with Work for the Dole could have been improved through greater choice of projects, an opportunity to gain genuine skills through the program and some form of certificate or formal record of her mutual obligation activities. Given that the Committee heard that one of the positive aspects of the Community Jobs Program (and other programs such as the Cook Shop which is outlined later in this chapter) was the certificate received at completion, the Committee would welcome the introduction of this aspect to Work for the Dole.

FINDING 5.2

The Committee recognises that the introduction of a Training Credit system for Work for the Dole participants should improve the scheme and finds that the benefits of Work for the Dole could be enhanced by a new name for the Program and by providing a certificate of participation which outlines key activities and skills obtained.

²⁶⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, p82.

5.1.7 Indigenous Employment Policy and Programs

The Indigenous Employment Program provides support for employers and Indigenous people seeking work. It includes the following initiatives:

- ◆ *Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Employment and Structured Training and Employment Projects* provide funding to businesses (and public sector and community organisations) to encourage the employment of Indigenous Australians.
- ◆ *Community Development Employment Projects* aim to develop the work skills of Indigenous participants to allow them to move into the mainstream labour market.
- ◆ *Wage Assistance* provides subsidies to employers who employ eligible Indigenous job seekers.
- ◆ *National Indigenous Cadetship Project* assists in matching full-time undergraduate university students with employers who can give them work skills and professional employment experience.

In addition to the above programs, Indigenous Services Officers are located in Centrelink Service Centres to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in metropolitan and rural communities can access government labour market assistance. This includes the full range of employment related services delivered by Centrelink and other programs developed to assist Indigenous families and encourage the development of community projects.

5.1.8 Jobs Placement, Employment and Training (JPET)

Jobs Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) is an early intervention program that focuses on youth in transition. It provides assistance to young people who are aged between 15 and 21 years (with a focus on 15 and 19 year olds) who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, ex-offenders, refugees or wards of the State. JPET provides assistance to overcome a range of personal barriers which prevent young people from participating effectively in employment, education or training.

The types of services provided to JPET clients include brokerage, counselling, mediation support, links into education, training and work opportunities and post-placement support.

The Coordinator of JPET in Morwell described the JPET Program that she conducts, which includes activities such as woodwork, driver learner permits, job search training, murals and jewellery making. While many of these are not work related, they are the all-important first step in engaging or re-engaging young people. They are also important in addressing issues such as boredom and depression that act as barriers to employment.

Ms Noreen Plozza, JPET Coordinator, Gippsland Employment Skills Training:

“We feel, though, that we have had successes and over time the kids who have had failures at school then have had success in attending and creating works of art. They then feel ready to go on to some of the other things we get them into. We have short 10-weeks and 16-weeks activities that they seem to go to from us.”²⁶⁶

The Committee received evidence that the JPET program is widely known and well regarded in the community and has been successful in assisting some of the most disadvantaged young people. Those running JPET programs are getting an increasing number of referrals of young people aged 13 and 14 years who are currently not eligible for most government support programs, and therefore, the Committee heard calls for criteria to be relaxed so that those younger than 15 years can be supported. Evidence indicates that while the services and service delivery for this younger age group would need to differ, services could be more delivered effectively by introducing more flexibility into an existing program such as JPET, rather than attempting to establish an entirely new one.

Mr Craig Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Brayton Youth and Family Services:

“What we do not need is another program to start up from scratch without an established rapport and established networks, without an evidence-based program. We feel that we have evidence-based programs that

²⁶⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p157.

work and we can provide that and we would like to enhance and expand that”²⁶⁷

The suggestion that JPET be made available a younger age group is consistent with evidence throughout this Report regarding the need for early intervention. Evidence suggests that for many young people, such intervention should begin at the transition from primary to secondary school. The Committee heard many examples where intervention at the age of 15 is too late and that young people aged 12, 13 and 14 are at risk of exiting school.

FINDING 5.3

The Committee finds that the Jobs Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) program has been successful in providing assistance to young people aged 15-21 and may form the basis of assisting at risk young people as young as 13 and 14 years old.

5.1.9 Jobs Pathway Programme

The JPP is administered through the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). It aims to assist young people who have left school, or are contemplating leaving school to find work, further education or training. JPP services may include an assessment of individual needs, assistance with job search preparation, career counselling, referral to vocational education and training programs and New Apprenticeship Centres, as well as ongoing support throughout the funding period.

The outcomes for young people who participate in JPP may include:²⁶⁸

- ◆ the successful completion of a course of action aimed at improving their overall capacity to compete effectively in the labour market;
- ◆ employment;
- ◆ commencement in a school-based vocational program or a school-based part-time apprenticeship or traineeship; or

²⁶⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, p367.

²⁶⁸ Department of Education, Science and Training, *Jobs Pathway Programme Guidelines*, November 2001, p3.

- ◆ further education or training, including that towards the achievement of a recognised Year 12 certificate either at a school or another training provider.

School leavers participating in JPP are helped to make the all-important transition from school to the world of work through job search assistance and mentoring support for up to 12 months.

5.1.10 Green Corps – Young Australians for the Environment

Green Corps gives young Australians aged 17 to 20 the chance to demonstrate their commitment to preserve and restore Australia's natural environment and cultural heritage. During a full-time voluntary six-month placement they develop transferable skills through accredited training.

Green Corps is managed by Conservation Volunteers Australia on behalf of the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs and Environment Australia and is currently the only Commonwealth Government program that incorporates training and work placement. It provides a training wage and accredited training specifically in environmental projects.²⁶⁹

5.1.11 Language, Literacy and Numeracy Training

The Language, Literacy and Numeracy program run by Centrelink provides language, literacy and numeracy training for eligible young job seekers whose skills are below the level considered necessary to secure sustainable employment or pursue further education and training. It is designed to help remove a major barrier to employment and improve participants' daily lives.

The program includes up to 400 hours of training which is designed to lead to a measurable level of competency. Training is provided through registered training organisations and tailored to meet the needs of the participants. Most language, literacy

²⁶⁹ Liz Dearn, *Negotiating the Maze: An analysis of employment assistance for young people*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, April 2001, p32.

and numeracy training is provided in a face-to-face situation over a period of 20-52 weeks. Generally this means participants attend for between 6-20 hours per week.²⁷⁰

5.1.12 New Apprenticeships Access Programme

This program provides pre-apprenticeship and pre-traineeship assistance for people who may require additional assistance with preliminary training to help them compete for apprenticeships or traineeships.

To be eligible, participants must meet at least one of a range of criteria indicating a particular area of disadvantage. Early school leavers are also eligible if they have been referred by a JPP service provider. Training under NAAP must be full-time (at least 20 hours per week), no longer than 26 weeks duration and tailored, where possible, to meet the particular needs of individuals. Training programs should lead directly into a traineeship or apprenticeship and should, where possible, reflect identified national skill shortages.

Sunraysia and Murray Group Training, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE and the local engineering industry have a partnership that promotes apprenticeship employment opportunities through the NAAP. In the past five years, 81 out of 85 (95%) students have been placed in employment. In 2001/02, all 14 students enrolled in this four-week pre-apprenticeship program were employed as apprentices.

The Committee notes that pre-apprenticeship training and 'taster' modules are an important component of many of the most successful employment assistance programs on offer.

5.2 State Government Policy and Programs

The key State Government policy and program areas relevant to this Inquiry are the Employment Programs Division (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development) and various divisions of the Department of Education and Training,

²⁷⁰ Department of Education, Science and Training website, www.dest.gov.au, 25/09/2002.

including the Office for Youth. As would be expected with an issue involving so many causes and consequences, there are many other areas within Government that may also play a role in either addressing youth unemployment, or providing services to unemployed youth. These areas include juvenile justice, disability services, and areas providing services to young people in care, young Indigenous Victorians and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The previous chapters provided an extensive discussion of the role of education and training in meeting the employment needs of young people. The following section examines the activities of the State Government's Employment Programs Division and the Office for Youth and comments on some of the specific State programs in operation.

5.2.1 State Government Policy Context

With the primary responsibility for employment services residing with the Commonwealth Government, the State Government seeks to fill any gaps in Commonwealth employment programs and service delivery.

The Employment Programs Division provides specialist employment programs and services to job seekers, employers, industry and community organisations. It provides industry with information on current labour market data and employment issues, assesses overseas professional qualifications and develops local community initiatives. The Employment Programs Division also provides assistance to unemployed Victorians through the Community Business Employment (CBE) Program and the Community Jobs Program (CJP). Details of these programs are discussed in the following sections.

The Department of Education and Training's Office for Youth (OfY) aims to be the first State Government point of contact for Victoria's young people. Its three main business units are: Policy Unit, Culture and Communication Unit and Participation and Development Unit.

While not specifically focused on employment related matters, the programs which are managed through the OfY may have some indirect benefits to the employment prospects of young people. The OfY also coordinates Victoria's participation in the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).

The following provides a summary of the key activities of the OfY that may impact on future employment opportunities and the well-being of young people in general.²⁷¹

FreeZA - a youth development program that funds local government and not-for-profit organisations to establish youth committees that implement cultural events. The aim of FreeZA is to encourage youth participation and community capacity building. Participants gain teamwork and leadership skills and skills that may help them gain future employment.

Youth Services Program - funds community organisations to respond to the issues of vulnerable young people aged between 10-25 years. The program aims to engage and connect young people with their community by providing funds to organisations that assist young people to re-establish or strengthen supported links with their families and significant others, resolve conflict, provide information, referral and advocacy services, provide support and services to Indigenous and multicultural communities and assist young people in rural and regional locations.

Victorian Youth Development Program - a hands-on training initiative that takes students out of the classroom and offers them a range of opportunities that enhance youth leadership, team building, self-confidence and self-discipline. Under the initiative, schools enter a partnership with a leading community organisation and participants engage in active citizenship and community building activities. All participants learn the core components of accredited first aid and cardio pulmonary resuscitation and complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award course.

²⁷¹ Minutes of Evidence, 12/08/2002, pp64-66.

Youth Round Tables –These events (4 per year) are hosted by the Minister for Youth Affairs and aim to present an opportunity for young people to provide input to Government policy making.

Regional Youth Committees – provide policy advice to Government and undertake youth sector development initiatives at a local level. There are fifteen Regional Youth Committees.

The Committee did not receive any substantial evidence regarding the programs and activities of the Office for Youth. In general, however, there was a feeling that the Youth Affairs portfolio at the State level appears to have a low status, with insecurity and inadequacy of funding for youth services and youth workers. A number of local councils highlighted that the short-term focus of funding inhibits the ability to plan effectively over the longer-term, and that there needs to be more consistency and stability in the grants provided through the Office for Youth.

The Committee is also interested in the Youth Development Program, which is currently targeted at young people engaged in education. As discussed later in this Chapter, there are concerns regarding the lack of personal development programs available to very disadvantaged youth, as well as concerns regarding the lack of coordination among State Government programs, eligibility criteria that restricts access to programs at the time they may be of most benefit to the young person, and the tendency for young people facing serious challenges to be categorised as 'at risk' and then pushed towards programs that keep them within that category. The Committee would therefore welcome the extension of the Youth Development Program to other groups of young people.

RECOMMENDATION 5.2

The Committee recommends that the State Government introduce more flexibility into the Youth Development Program so that young people who are disengaged from education can participate in an appropriate program.

5.2.2 Community Business Employment Program

The Community Business Employment (CBE) program is a State Government funded employment assistance initiative that targets three disadvantaged groups: youth aged 15-24, mature aged unemployed people 45 years and older and people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Through a network of approximately 100 community based agencies, CBE provides job seekers who are not in receipt of Commonwealth Government job search training and intensive assistance training, with pre-employment, placement and post-placement assistance. Services include advice with career options, résumé and job application skills, job interview skills and links to training and work placement programs.

The CBE program also offers a number of services to employers, including helping to define recruitment needs, matching skilled and experienced candidates to recruitment needs and assisting with advertising, pre-selection interviews and reference checks.²⁷²

The Committee's investigations raise some concerns regarding the effectiveness of the CBE Program. Notably, while the Committee heard much evidence regarding the various successes of programs such as the JPET and CJP (described in the following section), there did not appear to be widespread awareness of the CBE Program and how it can assist young people.

From the provider perspective, there were concerns regarding the level of funding provided to this program. Specifically, CBE Program is being paid at 1997 funding levels, which are considerably less than the level of funding provided for comparable services delivered by Job Network providers. Not surprisingly then, CBE providers appearing before the Committee are seeking increases to their funding.

Ms Carmen Ilibasic, Manager, YES West:

"My first recommendation is that the Community Business Employment program be allocated increased State Government funding. I was hoping

²⁷² State Employment Programs Division website, www.employment.vic.gov.au, 19/09/2002.

that was a message you could take back on our behalf: that at a regional meeting of all State Community Business Employment Program providers that is the message that is coming from across the State.”²⁷³

Mr Chris Hobson, Chief Executive Officer, Youth Projects:

“What has happened from our point of view is that under the CBE program we are forced to operate rather like a sausage factory. We have to churn people through — do a brief discussion with them and look at group activities. That is fine because group activities are relevant, but one-on-one contact has to be very limited because the overall funding for the program means we are limited in the staff resources we can place in it and to achieve the sorts of outcomes set in CBE you need to have in your case load, if you like, substantially more young people.”²⁷⁴

At the same time, however, CBE providers are claiming that one of the successes of the Program is its cost effectiveness, costing approximately \$800 per client to provide pre-employment service, to assist them into employment and to ensure that they remain in employment for 13 weeks.

More importantly, from the job seeker perspective, there were concerns regarding the sustainability of employment outcomes under the CBE Program. For example, CBE providers are funded based on a 13-week outcome for job seekers, while Commonwealth programs such as the JPET, which targets some of the most disadvantaged job seekers have a more stringent, 26-week requirement for retention in employment. The Committee was concerned that CBE providers do not even know how many of their clients achieve a placement that lasts longer than 13 weeks.

The State Government commissioned a review of the CBE Program in 2001, with the primary purpose to provide recommendations as to the future role of the CBE Program in the context of other State and Commonwealth labour market programs. In measuring the performance of the CBE Program against placement targets in the youth cohort, the review found:

- ◆ achievement of the actual placement target for youth was very strong for short-term unemployed, at 91 per cent for Melbourne and 99 per cent for regional Victoria; and

²⁷³ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p334.

- ◆ outcomes for long-term unemployed youth are lower, at 64 per cent of the target in Melbourne and 79 per cent of the target in regional Victoria.²⁷⁵

In assessing how many of the above placements were into sustainable employment opportunities, the review found a much lower level of success. For short-term unemployed youth, 52.6 per cent of CBE placements in Melbourne and 59.8 per cent of placements in regional Victoria lasted 13 weeks or longer. For long-term unemployed youth, 54.8 per cent of CBE placements in Melbourne and 62.5 per cent of placements in regional Victoria achieved a 13-week retention in employment.²⁷⁶

The review also made a number of findings regarding the funding and administrative arrangements for the CBE Program, including:

- ◆ current target groups are too tightly defined, denying service to many disadvantaged job seekers not serviced by other programs;
- ◆ having employment as the only payable outcome for the CBE creates pressure on providers to try and place a client in employment, even when other outcomes may be more appropriate;
- ◆ providing payments only for those clients placed in employment fails to recognise services provided to many other clients;
- ◆ the manner in which payments are made, and the high proportion of total payments only claimable after a client is placed in employment can cause cash-flow problems for smaller providers; and
- ◆ payment rates have not changed for a number of years, meaning the current cost of providing assistance is not reflected in the rates paid to service providers.

The Committee notes that the review recommended a number of refinements to the CBE Program, including changing the outcome targets of the Program, adding a focus on pathways services, changing the payment system and administrative arrangements, rationalising the number of providers and removing the industry based providers from

²⁷⁴ Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/2002, p516.

²⁷⁵ The SA Centre for Economic Studies, *Evaluation of the Community Business Employment Program Executive Overview Report*, January 2002, pA1.9.

²⁷⁶ Loc. cit.

the Program to create a new Industry Based Employment and Recruitment Program focused exclusively on employment placement outcomes for specified industry sectors. The Committee supports an enhanced role for CBE providers in delivering pathways and transition support to unemployed young people and believes integration of the CBE Program with the LLENs and MIPs initiatives should be closely examined to improve efficiencies.

FINDING 5.4

The Committee recognises that the refinements arising from the State Government's review of the CBE Program should improve the Program and finds that the benefits of CBE could be further enhanced through greater marketing of the Program and greater integration with other employment initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 5.3

The Committee recommends that the pre-placement support provided under the Community Business Employment Program be retained. However, the Committee recommends that the Government consider integrating this Program into a more inclusive pathways and transition support service that is available to all young people in Victoria.

5.2.3 Community Jobs Program

The Community Jobs Program (CJP) supports community organisations, local government and other government agencies to employ local job seekers on community projects. Projects must provide a combination of work experience and skill development linked to the skill needs of the local labour market and which are of benefit to the community. CJP targets job seekers aged 15 years and over who have been unemployed for at least six months during the previous 12 months or deemed to be disadvantaged and at risk of long-term unemployment.

Projects employ a minimum of 12 participants for up to 16 weeks. CJP projects can include:

- ◆ information technology enhancement and administrative support projects such as developing community valued data bases, communication networks and exchange centres;
- ◆ innovative social infrastructure projects relating to the delivery of new or additional community based services, such as aged and childcare services;
- ◆ retail/hospitality, including community internet Cafés, community canteens and community retail outlets;
- ◆ public works projects; and
- ◆ landcare and environmental restoration projects.

Evidence received by the Committee projected a generally positive response to the Community Jobs Program, primarily due to its mix of work experience and relevant training, and the fact that participants receive a certificate at the end of their project. Many of these programs also take a holistic approach to the needs of young people participating in the program.

Ms Kerry Watson, Future Connections:

“We run a program where we work with community organisations to do things like repair their buildings. They put in the materials but the difference between CJP and Work for the Dole is people are actually employed. We employ 12 young people to work for us to go out in the community. That has been a great news story because we have taken a lot of the kids who have gone through our training into that program and they have gone out and worked for a wage. I am their boss and they cannot take sickies without explaining why; we try and treat them as much as a staff member as we can. At the same time they are getting some training as well. That has been a real boost for many of them; they are walking really proudly that they have to put in a time sheet every week and get paid. That has been a brilliant program for us.”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁷ Minutes of Evidence 19/09/2002, p440.

Mr Jamie Edwards, Youth Service Coordinator, Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services:

“We have 10 young people in the program. They had two weeks of orientation around preparation, motivation and workplace policies – the whole works – and then they have been on three-day-a-week placements at a range of community agencies for work experience, mostly in office admin. They are doing a day and a half of TAFE, Office Admin. Certificate 2; and on average, they spend half a day a week with Mary and Hans in terms of one-on-one support and group support around a whole range of issues.”²⁷⁸

Cr Bill Horrocks, Mayor, City of Maribyrnong:

“Last year, in an attempt to do something meaningful and positive, this council undertook a community jobs program (CJP). The program, which is one of the biggest in the state, assisted 100 long-term unemployed to undertake training and work for 16 weeks in positions in parks and gardens, our swim centre and our recreation centre, Recwest. The program was a great success. It is also a real indication of the nature of the problem that we received an overwhelming number of applicants for the positions and were unable to find positions for all the applicants. ...

We think this is an excellent program. It is one of the best youth unemployment programs that is going around. That is why we got behind it.”²⁷⁹

A young job seeker from the Horn of Africa told the Committee about her experience and frustration in trying to find employment and how the CJP has given her a positive outlook for her future employment prospects. She perceives that one of the key benefits of the Program is the ability to demonstrate recent, local work experience to a potential employer.

Ms Sahra Ibrahims, CJP Participant:

“The CJP is basically giving me a different option. I am doing something different now. Meeting with other young people from the Horn of Africa, we get to combine ideas and expand our horizons on different options and opinions and where we can get help, and at the same time come up

²⁷⁸ Minutes of Evidence 23/09/2002, p508.

²⁷⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p298.

with a kit which shows other Horn of African young women the right places to get help and the right direction to go.

I feel the CJP is really making a difference to me and other people who are really new to Australia. It makes me feel I have different options rather than just waiting to see if I get a job tomorrow or the day after.”²⁸⁰

Another young person spoke to the Committee about her experience with the CJP and how important the networks she made during this Program were to her during her subsequent job search experience.

Ms Cherie Watson, CJP Participant:

“In the span of about four months I applied for about 500 positions in the Mitchell shire and the outer parts of Melbourne and got nowhere. As a result I started getting depressed, wondering what was wrong with me and why all of a sudden I was not getting jobs. If it was not for the fact that I knew Adam and had that mentor I do not know where I would be now...”²⁸¹

While evidence regarding the CJP was generally positive, the Committee also heard that some of the most disadvantaged job seekers who are targeted by the program still require further assistance in preparing them to participate effectively in the Program. Often these young people have progressed from an inactive lifestyle to having to participate in daily activities. As a consequence, it is a major challenge to motivate them to achieve this lifestyle change.

Ms Mary Hutchison, Project Worker, Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services:

“The Community Jobs Program is a fantastic idea, but from what we have gauged from the young people who are doing the program, there needs to be something that is offered first to disadvantaged young people who have already left school. ... CJP is meant for disadvantaged young people, but there is not enough time within the program to focus on a lot of personal issues that most of the young people have, like housing... drug and alcohol issues. If there had been a program that they could have done prior that focused more on personal development and life

²⁸⁰ Ibid, p302

²⁸¹ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, p395.

skills, and the secondary focus on work, it would have been a good stepping stone into the CJP.”²⁸²

Indeed, the lack of a government program that specifically targets personal development, motivation and self-esteem among disadvantaged youth was raised in a number of public hearings and is discussed under section 5.3 of this Chapter.

FINDING 5.5

The Committee finds that local communities have embraced the Community Jobs Program as a positive step in providing young disadvantaged job seekers with appropriate local work experience and skill development. However, the Committee notes that some significantly disadvantaged job seekers may require further assistance in preparing them to participate effectively in the Program.

5.2.4 Youth Traineeships

The State Government conducts two key youth traineeship programs, the Youth Employment Scheme (YES) and Go for IT.

The Youth Employment Scheme (YES), introduced by the Victorian Government in July 2000, provides apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities within the Victorian Government for young people aged 15-24. It offers a wage incentive of \$12,500 to employers who employ an apprentice or trainee under the scheme. Employers may also be eligible for a further \$1,250 if the apprentice/trainee is long-term unemployed or a disadvantaged young person.²⁸³

The four-year scheme offers 2,600 positions with State Government organisations, including government departments and agencies, hospitals, the CFA and the water authorities. A variety of occupations including IT, building and construction, business administration and hospitality are available with young participants receiving formal training and accredited qualifications as part of the scheme.

²⁸² Minutes of Evidence, 23/09/2002, p508.

²⁸³ Employment Programs Division website, www.employment.vic.gov.au, 20/09/2002.

Go for IT is another State Government program aimed at assisting young people gain traineeships, specifically within the IT, Communications or Multimedia field. Trainees are placed in pre-employment training, followed by a 12-month traineeship with a relevant employer while continuing to receive on and off the job training.

The program was recently expanded and aims to place an additional 740 IT trainees in the sector in the next two years. The objectives of the program are:

- ◆ to assist people to develop the skill and confidence to gain ongoing employment and succeed in the IT Workforce;
- ◆ to respond to the IT industry's needs for entry level training and employment;
- ◆ to provide organisations with an alternative recruitment and training option; and
- ◆ to encourage organisations and employers to recognise the value of employing people in traineeships.

An annual wage incentive of \$1,100 is available to eligible employers who take on an additional trainee in an IT entry level position. This is in addition to the Commonwealth Government traineeship incentives that apply.

The Committee notes that YES funding is currently only available to State Government departments and agencies. However, some local councils are seeking to have the program expanded to local government. The Committee supports this idea, particularly for regional Victoria where the local council may be the major local employer. If more young people can access quality employment opportunities in their local community there may be positive spin-offs in terms of youth retention, youth leadership capacity, and a greater sense of community involvement and morale.

Mr Jim Wilson, Manager, Organisational Development, Wellington Shire Council:

*"We get in the vicinity of \$1200 a year per trainee from the Commonwealth. We would like to think we would also get other support, generally from the State. One of our main aims is to secure Youth Employment Scheme (YES) funding from the State Government. That is provided to other State government departments but not to local government."*²⁸⁴

²⁸⁴ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p161.

FINDING 5.6

The Committee finds that the State Government's Youth Employment Scheme, which is currently available to State departments and agencies, could achieve further benefits, particularly in regional and rural Victoria, if the program was available to local government.

5.2.5 Youth Pathways Program

The Youth Pathways Program (YPP) combines and refocuses the Youth Allowance TAFE Entitlement and the MIP Program. The YPP is available in the TAFE and ACE sectors.

The aim is to provide training and support for a specific cohort of 'at risk' youth to achieve either an employment or further training outcome which is sustained for at least six months after the completion of training.

Under the Program, TAFE institutes and ACE organisations are required to:

- ◆ design and implement a customised accredited education/training program of up to 400 Student Contact Hours per student;
- ◆ provide appropriate student support;
- ◆ report the outcome of the education and training;
- ◆ track student destinations for six months after the student exits the education/training program and make a report on each student's destination at the six month point; and
- ◆ consult with relevant LLENs on the local application of these funds.

A student is eligible for funding under the YPP if he/she:

- ◆ is provided with a Centrelink issued Youth Training Entitlement; or
- ◆ is identified as 16-17 years of age at the time of the enrolment and has left school prior to completing Year 12 and is unemployed and in receipt of Youth Allowance; or
- ◆ is identified as 15 years of age and has left school prior to completing Year 11 and is unemployed and has a report/endorsement from a school or external agency such as JPET, a LLEN or a health professional.

The Committee heard that the Youth Pathways Program does not allow institutions to provide services to the full cohort of 'at risk' young people that could benefit from the Program.

Ms Anne Kinne, Youth Participation Coordinator, East Gippsland Institute of TAFE:

“Even to go into our mainstream courses they need a lot of support. We assess them when they come in or we find out eventually that they need support ... Of course, top of the line is funding. We are actually funded for this Youth Pathways Program for 55 students – it is 22,000 hours at 400 hours of training for a student and that equates to 55 students. That is across East Gippsland Institute of TAFE, which means Bairnsdale, our forest ed. Campus, the Sale campus, the flexible learning centre and our outreach. We have a lot more than 55 who are at risk...”²⁸⁵

Ms Jeanette Hartley, Youth Support Officer, Continuing Education Bendigo:

“I think that the vouchers are very important. The voucher system has been pretty much shoved away. The voucher system gives students an opportunity to access free education and training.”²⁸⁶

FINDING 5.7

The Committee finds that the Youth Pathways Program provides essential assistance to young people 'at risk' and that more young people in the TAFE and ACE sectors could potentially benefit through an expansion of the Program.

5.3 Effectiveness of Government Programs

While the Committee did not receive a substantial amount of evidence regarding many of the individual government programs, it did receive evidence regarding the overall effectiveness of government intervention in employment opportunities for young people. The following sections seek to highlight some of the key issues.

²⁸⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002 pp184-5.

²⁸⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/2002, p433.

5.3.1 Training and Employment Outcomes

Obviously, the key measures of success of a labour market program are the number of participants finding employment and the duration of that employment. The longer an employment placement lasts, the more likely it is that participants will break the unemployment cycle.

The Committee's investigations did not seek to specifically evaluate the success or otherwise of individual government programs currently targeting youth. However, it became clear that many of the programs are generally very good at reporting commencements, but generally very poor at measuring and reporting sustainable outcomes. For example, the Committee could not obtain concrete evidence regarding the skill dividends from participating in employment programs, nor the numbers of participants remaining in employment six months or twelve months after they had been involved in a program.

The Committee found that the ability to measure outcomes is an important part of all State and Commonwealth Government employment programs and should be strengthened wherever possible. Innovative localised programs, and some of the organisations running CJP projects appear more able to report on the outcomes of the programs for the individuals participating, perhaps because they are competing to obtain and retain limited funding sources and because they are more visible at the local level. Localised programs are also likely to have more success in achieving sustainable employment and training outcomes because in most instances they have evolved from a recognised local need and are supported by community leaders. This lends support to arguments that State Government funding targeted at youth, employment and training initiatives could be better administered through relevant regional or local organisations.

Dr John Spierings, Research Strategist at Dusseldorp Skills Forum reported to the Committee that turnover of entry-level employment among young people is currently around 50 per cent. This means that young people entering employment are exiting that job within 12 months. Understanding the dimensions of this phenomenon would assist governments to be more effective and efficient in their labour market spending. The key

factors to consider are whether young people are leaving due to their own preferences and needs or whether there are factors on the employer side such as level of induction or the culture around entry-level employment.

The Committee will aim to further investigate the factors contributing to the high level of turnover in entry-level employment in its second Report to Parliament.

FINDING 5.8

The Committee finds that innovative, localised programs are more likely to monitor, measure and report outcomes from their activities than labour market programs operating at the State or Federal level. The Committee further finds that a greater level of scrutiny and pressure to access limited resources contributes to a stronger focus on achieving and demonstrating sustainable outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 5.4

The Committee recommends that the State Government develop a more rigorous set of measures for its employment programs that include a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures to assess the skills dividends and long-term employment outcomes as well as benchmarks against best practice programs in other jurisdictions.

5.3.2 Funding and Coordination

The Committee's evidence suggests that greater coordination and communication between all levels of government is required to decrease the incidence of duplication and service gaps in addressing youth unemployment. Adding to the confusion surrounding government assistance programs is the lack of continuity in programs, caused by the short-term and pilot funding arrangements that are common.

As responsibility for employment policy and programs largely resides with the Commonwealth Government and education with the State Government, young people often find it difficult to source the appropriate information or program to suit their needs. The Committee heard that young people moving from training programs into the employment sector find it increasingly difficult to negotiate the myriad of processes and agencies with a role in employment and training services. Adding further complexity is the number of programs for youth at risk, which are shared between non-government organisations and different levels of government.

Mr Jim O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer, Worktrainers Ltd:

*"I think the degree of youth unemployment is exacerbated by fragmented service delivery. ... there is enough money and resources put in, whether it is from government, State or Federal, local government or through philanthropic bodies. It is just poorly delivered. It is wasted through the delivery mechanisms, being the plethora of bodies and organisations..."*²⁸⁷

Mr John Patsikatheodorou, Inner Western Migrant Resource Centre:

*"I would argue certainly that there should be some simplification. I think the issue is that there has to be some flexibility in the current programs to allow for individual needs if people do not necessarily fit into a particular target area. They may have a component of it but not the other components, so there needs to be flexibility for the system to be able to take care of their needs as well."*²⁸⁸

A consistent concern among witnesses appearing before the Committee was the limitations placed on government assistance programs by their various eligibility criteria. While many programs were recognised as having the potential to benefit certain client groups, those working with these young people often feel they cannot access the most appropriate programs. Another concern was that single programs may not be comprehensive enough to meet all of the needs of many young people, yet often they are barred from participating in more than one assistance program at any one time. The

²⁸⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, p399.

²⁸⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p318.

Committee heard clear calls for a greater level of flexibility in many of the Federal and State government labour market programs.

Mr Brian Beveridge, Chief Executive Officer, Djerriwarrh Employment Service:

“there are significant issues in Commonwealth–State relationships here because the schools have responsibility until 15, but once young people are technically unemployed all of a sudden they are largely a Federal responsibility. As Peter mentioned, there are federal programs — the Jobs Pathway program and such — but each comes with its own set of rules and regulations and funding criteria, which do not always interface neatly and just cause ongoing issues — and it is a ongoing issue across many areas.”²⁸⁹

Given the consistent evidence that there are too many programs operating, with differing eligibility criteria that creates confusion in the marketplace, the Committee would like to see greater cooperation and coordination across different government portfolios. One example where programs could be aggregated is the MIP initiative, whereby pathways support is provided to young people in schools and the CBE Program, which offers pre-employment assistance to young job seekers. As noted above, a review of the CBE Program has recommended a much stronger role for delivering pathways support.

While a certain level of aggregation is necessary, the Committee also sees the emergence of ‘one-stop shops’ as a key in improving the level of service coordination between government programs at the Federal, State and local levels.

Mr Jim O’Connor, Chief Executive Officer, Worktrainers Ltd:

“I believe that one way of getting the best of both worlds is to site them within one area or precinct and let them have their independence. If they are in one area or precinct, you get automatic peer review, you get recognition of best practice and recognition of poor practice ... Those that are not performing and not offering the services they are funded to in a complementary way to the other services tend to get named and outed in

²⁸⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p340.

those sorts of environments, which is a good thing. We want them all to be doing what they are funded to do.”²⁹⁰

The Committee heard about some examples of ‘one-stop shops’ for youth services, including the Visy Cares Centre in Dandenong, which provides a range of services and activities for young people aged 12 to 24. The Centre is also a meeting place where young people have a chance to express themselves and seek help and advice if needed. The Centre is the first of its kind in Victoria, with services covering health care, specialist advice, entertainment and leisure and training and personal development workshops.

Another example of a ‘gateway’ service is that being developed in Maribyrnong. The Maribyrnong collaboration trial brings a range of local community service providers and employment providers together to provide a more cohesive service system for young people, focusing on their employment, education and training needs, in tandem with their support needs.

Ms Sharon Fisher, Employment, Education and Training Unit, Melbourne Citymission Western:

“there is an overall pledge to provide face-to-face services for young people 12 to 25 who walk in the door. That is quite a departure from other programs in the past that have looked at education, employment and training, in recognition, I think, that there is an increasing amount of 13 or 14-year-olds that are becoming under-age school leavers and are finding it very difficult because there are no services out there at the moment currently engaging them in education, training and employment options out of mainstream schooling. So there is a recognition that there is an increase in 14-year-olds that have no programs to go to. So this gateway trial is picking up on 12 to 25-year-olds.”²⁹¹

Accordingly, like the Visy Cares Centre, the Maribyrnong project is a positive initiative aimed at servicing all young people aged 12 to 25. The Committee heard strong evidence throughout the Inquiry that there is an increasing cohort of young people requiring services at an earlier age, but that at present, there is a very limited number of programs available to service their needs.

²⁹⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, p399.

²⁹¹ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p305.

The Committee also heard of an approach at Bendigo Senior Secondary College that links services together through a school to work centre. This service is consistent with the Committee's view that there needs to be stronger linkages between employment services and educational institutions, as noted earlier in the Chapter.

Mr Graham Bastian, Principal, Bendigo Senior Secondary College:

"I think each of the organisations has its own infrastructure and accountability requirements that in essence divert some of the resources, understandably, away from the target audience. So if there can be an element of coordination, there is an advantage out of that. I guess the advantage we find is that having those services primarily available on site so that students see them as something that is integral within the operation of the school is a significant advancement of where things have been in the past where they might have had to go to organisations down the street elsewhere, and there was some reluctance on the part of many to make that step."²⁹²

FINDING 5.9

The Committee finds that there is a high level of duplication in the delivery of government employment related services. However, some major gaps exist in delivering services to young people who perhaps require more intensive assistance, including young people aged under 15 years who have disengaged from school.

FINDING 5.10

The Committee finds that there is a need to integrate some employment and training programs targeted at youth so as to make them more relevant and more sustainable over a longer period of time and that the State Government has a significant role to play in encouraging aggregation of services, peer review and synergies.

²⁹² Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/2002, p454.

FINDING 5.11

The Committee finds that youth friendly 'one-stop-shops' should be considered an effective way of ensuring the effective participation of young people in the education, training and employment service system.

RECOMMENDATION 5.5

The Committee recommends that the Government consider amalgamating the CBE Program and the MIP initiative to deliver a coordinated pathways and transition support program to all young people, whether they are currently engaged in education or training or currently unemployed.

RECOMMENDATION 5.6

The Committee recommends that the State Government establish an Interdepartmental Committee to:

- ◆ **develop cooperative arrangements that allow greater flexibility for young people to access programs based on their need at any point in time rather than on rigid, pre-determined eligibility criteria that create gaps in the market and;**
- ◆ **investigate the feasibility of each LLEN establishing local youth access points, or 'one-stop-shops' in conjunction with relevant government and community agencies.**

5.3.3 Case Management and Personal Development Support

A common theme throughout the Inquiry was the need for a greater level of case management of young people.

Mr Keren Vallenge, Manager, Centre for Innovation, Learning and Research:

*“Local and international best practice is one where individual young people are case-managed, and I would be suggesting that it is not the 4 per cent, but that we think seriously about the other 96 per cent so that we rethink the way we deal with individual young people through the entire schooling system as distinct from large cohorts of kids who are not the same...”*²⁹³

As noted by Swinburne University of Technology TAFE Division in its written submission to the Committee, government funding needs to be provided for a range of youth programs that address skills, education and employment needs, as well as the additional needs of youth who are at risk of disengaging from education, training or employment. Programs need to be resourced to move the learner from a disengaged, marginalised person, who often sees themselves with no prospect of employment, to becoming empowered and seeing themselves as part of mainstream society. This requires appropriate staff student ratios, support from youth workers and an individualised case management approach.²⁹⁴

Ms Sharon Fisher, Employment, Education and Training Unit, Melbourne Citymission Western:

*“There is a lack of case planning and follow-up, or case management of young people in terms of what happens to them during the course of trying various programs or training options. For some months young people in disadvantaged situations might go well, but then something may happen in their family that sends them backwards a few steps.”*²⁹⁵

Linked to the issue of case management, is the identification that one of the major gaps in current government service provision is support for personal development programs. Macedon Ranges Shire Council wrote to the Committee suggesting that there is a need for additional resources for educational, employment, social and recreational activities for early school leaver groups and other at risk young people.²⁹⁶ As Swinburne University

²⁹³ Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/2002, p448.

²⁹⁴ Written Submission No. 42, Swinburne University of Technology TAFE Division, 31 May 2002, p3.

²⁹⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p305.

²⁹⁶ Written Submission No. 23, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, 24 May 2002, p5.

of Technology TAFE Division highlights, however, there are sub-groups of youth at risk of not engaging with education and employment, including:²⁹⁷

- ◆ young people who are moderately 'at risk' and who mainly require broader educational options than are currently available and less traditional modes of delivery to remain in education and training and gain long-term employment;
- ◆ young people who have very disadvantaged backgrounds, who have grown up with issues such as inter-generational unemployment and who will require extensive support to see themselves as someone who will gain employment; and
- ◆ young people who have dysfunctional backgrounds, suffer depression or use drugs, and who do not currently see themselves as part of mainstream society nor ever entering the realm of the employed.

Another theme of the Committee's Inquiry was the need for employment assistance to be delivered over a far longer period of time. For example, the Pyrenees Shire Council argues that both the Work for the Dole and Community Jobs Program provide a short-term solution and "*are more concerned about being seen to do something without an overall strategic direction*".²⁹⁸ It suggests that a better outcome would be to provide employment assistance over a much greater period of time (for example, 48 weeks rather than 16 weeks) with diminishing financial support over that period. This would allow for an increase in job skills and work readiness for the job seekers and the employer to gain a skilled worker experienced in their work culture and environment.

The call for programs of a longer duration is consistent with the call for a greater capacity for case management of young people, as well as the point that while traineeships and apprenticeships recognise that it takes between one and four years to develop the necessary skills to become competent in a job, most employment programs offer assistance for only 13 to 16 weeks. This is ironic given that the people participating in employment programs are those that are most disadvantaged to begin with.

²⁹⁷ Written Submission No. 42, Swinburne University of Technology TAFE Division, 31 May 2002, p3.

²⁹⁸ Written Submission No. 27, Pyrenees Shire Council, 24 May 2002, p2.

Future Connections noted in the supplementary material provided to the Committee during a public hearing that while some of its participants do obtain employment, it is usually after attending Future Connections for longer than the 400 hours allowed under the Youth Pathways Program.

“This is a totally inadequate period of time to prepare young people, whose peers are still in mainstream education, for the workforce. First jobs are often short term, in most cases due to lack of workskills/social skills knowledge. ... There needs to be recognition that most of the young people attending training organisations like Future Connections are still young, would still be at school if mainstream education was the right structure for them. There also needs to be recognition that training needs to be of longer term, more relevant and seen as an appropriate option for young people, thus allowing them to be more competitive in the labour market...”²⁹⁹

The Committee also heard that the length of time over which young people are given assistance needs to be extended in both directions. That is, there needs to be more support for personal development programs that prepare young people to participate in further education, training or employment assistance programs and secondly, there needs to be support for young people to participate in longer-term enterprise programs. A discussion of youth enterprise programs is provided later in this Chapter.

FINDING 5.12

The Committee finds that current government service provision could be improved through increased access to case management, more personal development programs and longer-term assistance to support young people in self-employment and enterprise initiatives.

FINDING 5.13

The Committee finds that support services offered to youth should respond to the needs of all sub-groups of youth at risk of not engaging with education and employment, including:

²⁹⁹ Written material supplied by Future Connections to the Committee during a public hearing on 19/09/2002.

- ◆ *young people who are moderately 'at risk' and who mainly require broader educational options than are currently available and less traditional modes of delivery to remain in education and training and gain long-term employment; and*
- ◆ *young people who have very disadvantaged or dysfunctional backgrounds, suffer depression or use drugs, and who do not currently see themselves as part of mainstream society.*

RECOMMENDATION 5.7

The Committee recommends that the need for a greater capacity for case management be addressed through the development of a comprehensive pathways, transition and tracking service, building on current initiatives such as LLENs, MIPs and CBE, that is available to young people between the ages of 15 and 25 years.

5.3.4 The link between government programs and industry

There is a general view that employers are not interested in employing young people without subsidies, balanced by an agreement that once an employer has the chance to see a young person with a good work ethic and good team skills at work, then the employer will be willing to employ them regardless of any subsidy offered.³⁰⁰

A number of participants in the Committee's investigations expressed skepticism over the effectiveness of direct subsidy type assistance to employers in delivering long-term benefits for young people. These concerns came from both industry and policy makers. For example, Group Training Australia - Victoria suggests in its written submission that job creation is a misnomer, with jobs that are not durable too often being created. It argues that jobs that are created on the basis of employer subsidies do not last beyond the term of the subsidy, and that more important are jobs identified through expansion of commerce and the production of goods and services that can be sustained without

³⁰⁰ Written Submission No. 14, Smart Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network, 21 May 2002, p3.

employer incentives.³⁰¹ The Committee notes, however, that it did not receive evidence that employers are deliberately accessing subsidies and then terminating employment at the end of the funded period.

Dr John Spierings, Research Strategist, Dusseldorp Skills Forum:

*“...there is a difference between an employer having a good intention to take on a young person and then actually having a work environment that meets the needs of that young person. A range of employers have the goodwill, but they do not have the capacity to provide the support, mentoring, induction and all those things that make the entry into work important and mean that you are going to encourage young people to stay in that job.”*³⁰²

The need for a closer relationship between government programs and industry was raised during a number of public hearings in metropolitan and regional centres. Specifically, the Committee heard that there is a need for government programs to have a stronger focus on meeting the needs of industry, and in educating employers about how programs could benefit their workforce. As Dr Spierings of the Dusseldorp Skills Forum explained, the money remains important, however, it is also necessary to provide a range of other support to employers. It is also necessary for employers themselves to realise that it is in their own long-term interests to be involved in skill development.

Mr Don Intine, Regional Manager, Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry:

*“I do not think it is that the agencies are not preparing the kids; I think the agencies are not preparing the employers. ... I do not think the right messages get sold enough ... The right messages have to be the non-financial benefits to an employer in that they might end up with a staff member who after a 12-month traineeship they may move into an assistant manager position or managerial role that will help them sell more beehives or look after other staff and train new staff; that they can be people who will be able to help grow the business...”*³⁰³

³⁰¹ Written Submission No. 44, Group Training Australia - Victoria, 4 June 2002, p2.

³⁰² Minutes of Evidence, 12/08/2002, p45.

³⁰³ Minutes of Evidence, 18/09/2002, p411.

Ms Sally James, General Manager, Melbourne Citymission Western:

“A lot of Federal programs are on the ground at the moment, as well as State Government-funded programs. We believe at this time there needs to be a bit more work done at the employment end of the service system, connecting the education and training service system to job vacancies, and working closely with employers around what they need and what they want to see in a young person turning up at their door. If that is not working at the end of the day, then all the training education does not matter if employers are not going to take up young people.”³⁰⁴

The issue of incentives was raised not only in relation to employers, but also in relation to employment service and training providers. The concern was that current funding models may encourage some providers to simply churn young people through the system and various programs, rather than to seek a relevant, sustainable outcome for the young person concerned.

Mr Barry Whitehead, Gippsland Group Training:

“...there has been an absolute dearth of organisations that have come into the wider Job Network or employment opportunities and not many of them with really good intentions about creating meaningful, long-term employment opportunities for young people. Basically, to be frank, they're in it for the buck. They sell the concept to employers that you can get a trainee or an apprentice and there are all these incentives that go with it, so the motivation is the dollar, not necessarily the creation of a real job. So, too, training providers who are being funded from various angles are going into it with the point of view: the more numbers we have churning through the system, the more money we can get through our organisation.”³⁰⁵

There were also some concerns that the current system of subsidies actually disadvantages young people who have already completed some level of training. For example, young people who have completed a Certificate III course in any area are disadvantaged in the labour market because they no longer attract a training or wage subsidy for an employer, even where they have no prior work experience. Members of a focus group conducted by the Smart Geelong Region LLEN in response to the Committee's Terms of Reference reported examples of young people being counselled

³⁰⁴ Minutes of Evidence, 16/09/2002, p302.

not to complete a Certificate III until they were placed with an employer so that the subsidies could be paid. They also suggested that young people are disadvantaged if they do any VET course at all prior to employment, because the less training a young person has prior to employment, the greater the training and wage subsidies available to the employer.³⁰⁶ Focus group participants recommended that a once-off incentive payment should be paid to employers taking on a young person with a Certificate qualification, to be justified by making the first year of employment the work experience component of the Certificate course.

FINDING 5.14

The Committee finds that there needs to be a stronger link between labour market programs, industry and employers and that young people who have completed VET in schools programs should not be disadvantaged by potential employers receiving lower subsidies for young people who have completed a certificate course.

FINDING 5.15

The Committee finds that employer subsidies alone are not effective as a means of creating sustainable employment opportunities for young people and that of more relevance are strategies that stimulate economic development and strategies that provide support to employers to provide a youth friendly workplace.

RECOMMENDATION 5.8

The Committee recommends that the State Government review and adjust the system of wage subsidies paid to employers to remove any disincentive for young people to undertake vocational education and training.

³⁰⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p190.

³⁰⁶ Written Submission No. 14, Smart Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network, 21 May 2002, p3.

5.3.5 Data Collection

The Committee received much evidence to suggest that the lack of comprehensive, reliable data is a hindrance to the delivery of required services. Indeed, the Committee was concerned that most organisations appearing before the Committee either could not provide it with any relevant statistics or, while able to quote available statistics, they did not place great faith in their accuracy.

There were many comments that more accurate data on youth employment and unemployment, apprenticeships, training and education retention and attrition rates must be collected and made available to relevant stakeholders. While some organisations noted the Environmental Scans being undertaken by the LLENs will make a good starting point for the collection of such data, there is a need for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to ensure that regular, accurate data is collected, analysed and available.

Some of the perceived weaknesses in the current level of data collection are:

- ◆ the Labour Force Survey underestimates the real level of unemployment;
- ◆ aggregation at the regional level creates a distorted picture of both cyclical and structural changes in regions; and
- ◆ the needs and experiences, and even legal relationships of young people within the youth cohort differ, and therefore there is a need for data on a year-by-year basis.

FINDING 5.16

The Committee finds that there is a need to collate more current, comprehensive, reliable data to assist organisations in delivering appropriate education, training and employment programs and services.

5.3.6 Conclusion

In writing about government policy for labour market assistance, John Spierings of the Dusseldorp Skills Forum states:

“For young people who are unemployed, 'underutilised' or involuntarily not in the labour market there are substantial policy failures in terms of disconnected education and employment assistance systems, a profound lack of support to encourage informed decision-making about options and alternatives, a propensity to shift costs and obligations between sectors and governments and waste resulting from extravagant competition between pathway providers.”³⁰⁷

The above observations are consistent with the Committee’s evidence outlined throughout this Report.

One of the suggested policy responses from the Dusseldorp Skills Forum is a legislated national youth commitment guaranteeing a foundation level of education, training and employment assistance. Legislation would articulate in clear terms the obligations that would fall on governments to guarantee such access with particular support for early school leavers or those facing other disadvantages to:

- ◆ complete Year 12 either at school or another recognised provider; or
- ◆ obtain an education or training qualification that is at an equivalent level such as a TAFE certificate or apprenticeship; or
- ◆ obtain a full-time job that is linked to education or training.³⁰⁸

Effectively, the above options are the equivalent of the existing minimum level of at least two years full-time education in the post-compulsory years. This model is similar to successful models operating in some of the European countries, and is currently being considered in Queensland, where one proposed direction is legislating a State-sponsored entitlement for young people to participate in schooling, training or the labour market up

³⁰⁷ John Spierings, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 'Make your own way there'. An agenda for young people in the modern labour market, Paper for ALNARC, March 2002, p6.

³⁰⁸ Ibid, p7.

to the age of 17 years, with schools responsible for negotiating and monitoring participation in these diverse options.³⁰⁹

Chapter 4 of this report discussed at length the need for a greater level of pathways and transition support. The Committee supports the above direction for Victoria as a method of achieving the required level of support for all young people.

RECOMMENDATION 5.9

The Committee recommends that the State Government, following extensive consultation, consider legislating a State-sponsored opportunity for young people to participate in schooling, training or the labour market up to the age of at least 17 years.

5.4 The Role of Local Government in Developing Employment Opportunities for Youth

By their nature, local councils are closely in touch with community needs and expectations. Often, local governments are the largest employer in a municipality, and therefore are generally well-placed to play a key role in addressing issues of youth unemployment through the direct provision of training and employment opportunities.

As noted by the Smart Geelong Region LLEN, the strengths of local governments in helping to solve local youth unemployment include:³¹⁰

- ◆ strong local knowledge;
- ◆ their status as the first point of call for most businesses and agencies coming into the area;
- ◆ the breadth of services delivered by local councils;

³⁰⁹ Department of Premier & Cabinet, Queensland Government, *Education and Training Reforms for the Future*, March 2002, cited in John Spierings, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, *'Make your own way there'. An agenda for young people in the modern labour market*, Paper for ALNARC, March 2002, p7.

³¹⁰ Written Submission No. 14, Smart Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network, 21 May 2002, p4.

- ◆ the ability to target services to meet local needs;
- ◆ the ability to be politically active to optimise opportunities for the local area;
- ◆ access and networks to decision makers at the State and Federal levels; and
- ◆ access to substantial financial resources to support local priorities.

It is noted, however, that each council has a different capacity to attract revenue and therefore, councils may need to commit to a regional approach in addressing youth unemployment.

The following section seeks to identify some of the key roles local councils are currently playing in assisting to address local youth unemployment.

5.4.1 Advocacy and Advisory Roles

Local councils have a key advocacy and advisory role. They have the capacity to be closely linked to the local youth community and advocate on their behalf to government across the youth sector. In particular, local government has the capacity to assist State and Federal governments in an advisory capacity regarding identification of service gaps, funding shortfalls and the creation of innovative community response programs.

Some of the ways in which local councils are gathering intelligence from the local youth community is to run Youth Councils, Youth Leadership programs and to involve them directly in decision making through consultations on specific matters. Latrobe City Council has an effective model for its Youth Council, which incorporates young people from within and outside education and which moves around the municipality.

Ms Leanne Vella, Youth Development Officer, Latrobe City Council:

“The representatives from the youth council come from within mainstream education and also outside mainstream education. We have a really good broad coverage of young people. Basically any issues that council would like young people to have an input in, those views come from youth council and are directed back to our local government councillors and management team. We believe that youth council is very strong; we have been running for about six years. ... We move around the venues.”

Sometimes we are inside local government venues, but other times we are in the community. The young people get a feel of what is happening in the community and what are some of the services within the community.”³¹¹

A key component of effective advocacy is the development of strong partnerships. In seeking to enhance employment opportunities for young people, councils should form partnerships with parents, secondary schools, business and industry, training institutes and relevant government and non-government agencies (for example, Centrelink).

One example of such partnerships is that between the City of Casey, engineering staff at Motorola and local secondary schools to develop the award winning ICE (Information, Communications, Electronics) program. This program is designed to encourage youth to consider a pathway in science and technology, and offer a 'hands on' curriculum in wireless and telematics technology. A different example of local partnership activity is the Campaspe Youth Persons Resource and Support Service. This is a community initiative involving the Shire of Campaspe, Victoria Police and St Lukes Family Care providing a referral process to detect young people at risk and linking them to support services at a time of early intervention.

The advisory role of local government extends beyond their participation in policy making and partnerships with other levels of government, to also include responsibility for the direct provision of information to local constituents.

A number of local councils have become involved in establishing or supporting the development of local 'one-stop shops' where young people can access services from a range of agencies at the one location.

FINDING 5.17

The Committee finds that a key role for local governments is in forming partnerships with agencies whose prime target group is young people who are unemployed. This is achieved through funding support and resources, advocacy and advice.

³¹¹ Minutes of Evidence, 21/08/2002, p124.

5.4.2 Employment of Young People

One of the key approaches that many local councils are adopting is to provide local leadership in employing and training young people. Many are also acting as leaders by participating in relevant State and Federal Government initiatives such as traineeships, Community Jobs Program and Green Corps.

A theme in a number of written submissions was the impact that government privatisation and contracting out at the Federal, State and local levels has had on the ability of the public sector to employ and train young people. In the past, the government sector represented an entry point for a large number of youth. The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria was just one of a number of organisations that suggested that the public sector, including local councils has a responsibility to increase the number of entry level employment options for young people, including pathways into the public service from TAFE and training courses.³¹²

Wellington Shire Council is just one example of a local government that is proactive in developing direct employment opportunities for young people. Its Youth Initiative aims to employ 12 youth trainees per year, each year for the next three years. Opportunities are available in the areas of office administration, community development, library services, leisure, cultural services, finance, civil construction and open space (horticulture).

The aim of Wellington Shire's Youth Initiative is to encourage local youth into meaningful training and work experience and provide leadership within the community in addressing youth unemployment. The Council expects that all trainees will find employment in the community following their traineeship with the Council.³¹³ It is also anticipated that by creating more opportunities for youth employment, young people will not be forced to leave the area to advance their careers. Another positive outcome is the Initiative's contribution to reducing skills shortages across the region.

³¹² Written Submission No. 51, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2 July 2002, p15.

³¹³ Written Submission No. 8, Wellington Shire Council, 9 May 2002, p1.

Wellington Shire Council has funded the Youth Initiative to the extent of \$250,000 per year from within its own resources, with external funding from the Commonwealth amounting to \$1,200 per trainee. However, the Council feels that increased support at the State level would increase the capacity for it, and other local councils to offer traineeships to young people. Accordingly, Wellington Shire Council seeks access to the Youth Employment Scheme that is currently available only to State Government departments and agencies.

In establishing its Youth Initiative, the Wellington Shire Council has identified the following issues that should be addressed by other councils embarking on a similar process:

- ◆ the employment of youth trainees requires a well developed induction program. Wellington Shire found that some trainees were not well prepared for entering the organisation;
- ◆ any trainee program needs to be well promoted among existing staff. Wellington Shire found that some staff did not respond as well as anticipated to the initiative, perhaps due to limited preparation and education regarding the initiative; and
- ◆ youth initiatives of the Council should also be well promoted within the community, so that lessons can be imparted to other local businesses that may be encouraged to emulate the council's successes.

Delatite Shire Council also wrote to the Committee regarding its success in offering employment to young people. In partnership with Benalla College, it employs a part-time school based apprentice of business administration. This employee has proven vital to the consultation process embarked on with young people for the town's new BMX Track and given the success of this apprenticeship, the Shire has indicated to the Committee that it will become an ongoing venture.

Delatite Shire has also implemented an innovative scheme to offer casual, paid employment to young people in Years 10 and 11. A council employee speaks to school students to advise them about administration opportunities and invites them to apply for a position. All students receive an interview and feedback about their performance and application, and the successful student commences work after school each day. The

Committee believes that this is a simple, yet important way that even small, local councils that perhaps cannot deliver more formal traineeships, apprenticeships and employment programs can offer local youth an opportunity to gain job search skills and some work experience.

The Knox City Council has developed a youth action plan that includes two objectives of particular interest to the Committee due to their direct impact on improving employment opportunities for young people, namely:

- ◆ Knox City Council will support the development of a range of initiatives to increase young people's retention within schools; and
- ◆ Council supports adequate, accessible and appropriate employment and training options for young people.

The strategies contained in the Knox City Council's youth action plan highlight many roles that local governments can play in enhancing the employment prospects of local youth. They include:

- ◆ develop local responses to transition and school retention (advocate for flexible youth friendly curriculum, link with programs outside the education system, host an Expo of secondary schools to assist young people and families to make effective school entry choices and encourage schools to provide VET programs in the curriculum);
- ◆ advocate for a greater number of accredited, affordable training courses, advisory, guidance and support services for young people who do not fit into the mainstream school environment;
- ◆ maximise Commonwealth and State government resources for traineeships for young people in local government and participate in relevant employment programs such as the Community Jobs Program;
- ◆ support and work in collaboration with relevant Centrelink approved employment and training providers to establish youth specific training programs; and
- ◆ continue to investigate the employment and training needs of youth and develop relevant action plans.

FINDING 5.18

The Committee finds that local governments can play a direct role in addressing youth unemployment by providing mainstream employment opportunities at the entry level, running a youth traineeship program and participating in relevant employment initiatives of the State and Federal Governments as well as offering opportunities for young people to participate in work experience and work placements.

5.4.3 Local Economic Development

As highlighted many times throughout the Inquiry, the key in addressing high levels of youth unemployment is to generate local economic development. Local councils facilitate economic development through infrastructure projects and enhancing the establishment and growth of new businesses.

Local governments also play a key role in attracting businesses to locate or relocate within their municipality. North East Regional Youth Committee suggested that the State Government could assist this process in rural Victoria where there are less businesses and industries by offering incentives for local businesses providing jobs for young people.³¹⁴ The Smart Geelong Region LLEN suggested that local government could play a role in youth unemployment by building into project tender guidelines a bias to generate youth employment and by targeting and attracting businesses into the area that have entry level and other opportunities for young people in that industry.

5.4.4 Youth Strategies and Action Plans

Many local councils have become active in improving employment opportunities and the general well-being of their young people through the development of youth action plans and strategies. Often, these are formulated in conjunction with relevant local organisations, including the LLENs, local education and training providers and community and welfare agencies.

³¹⁴ Written Submission No. 55, North East Regional Youth Committee, 17 July 2002, p2.

One example of a Youth Strategy is that at the City of Casey. Its work, in conjunction with organisations such as the South East LLEN has resulted in the following activities aimed at encouraging youth employment:³¹⁵

- ◆ encouraging businesses to become involved in Career forums;
- ◆ working with business and secondary schools to develop courses that encourage youth into 'hi tech' industries;
- ◆ developing a whole of council approach to issues concerning young people;
- ◆ advocating for improved public transport in the region to enable youth to travel to areas of employment;
- ◆ encouraging the uptake of apprenticeships, particularly those that have embraced some form of information technology;
- ◆ developing and expanding current council youth information centres into 'one-stop shops' providing a range of services in key areas; and
- ◆ encouraging young people to choose further education or training over job search if they do not have sufficient skills to obtain long-term employment.

The City of Knox has also developed a detailed youth action plan to help improve the health and well-being of young people in the community. The City of Knox's Youth Plan determined 12 priority areas, with school retention and employment and training identified as the first and second priorities. Other issues covered by the Plan were also discussed during the Committee's Inquiry, including:

- ◆ access to recreation, arts and culture;
- ◆ public transport;
- ◆ consultation and inclusion of young people;
- ◆ information and access regarding programs, facilities and services available for youth;
- ◆ family and case management support;
- ◆ accommodation;
- ◆ physical and mental health; and
- ◆ drugs and alcohol.

³¹⁵ Written Submission No. 9, City of Casey, 14 May 2002, p1.

The Committee believes local governments have a role in identifying small projects based on local needs, that are relatively inexpensive, yet can have a significant impact to a young person's employment opportunities. Those councils that have strong links to the local youth community are most successful in identifying such projects. For example, Latrobe City offers an education support scholarship for young people who are living independently and trying to remain in school to continue their education. At a cost of only around \$5,000 per year, it assists around 25 young people by purchasing textbooks, uniforms or equipment, which are then returned to the school or the Council following their studies so other young disadvantaged people can access the resources. Latrobe City has received very positive feedback from those young people who have been assisted under the program.³¹⁶

On a broader level, the Committee believes local councils can play a range of roles in assisting to enhance employment opportunities for local youth. They may act as advocates, planners, purchasers, providers or facilitators of services that will make a difference to young people. Those councils that are most effective will be those that address the issue in a holistic manner, covering all relevant functions such as youth services, social planning, economic development, community services and corporate services (in the direct employment of young people). They will also be the councils that have strong partnerships with a range of local and regional organisations.

FINDING 5.19

The Committee finds that the role of local councils in addressing youth unemployment may include one or more of the following: advocate, planner, purchaser, provider or facilitator and that the responsibility for addressing youth unemployment at the local government level spans across the functions of councils, including Youth Services, Social Planning, Economic Development, Community Services and Corporate Services.

³¹⁶ Written Submission No. 15, Latrobe City Council, 22 May 2002, p2.

FINDING 5.20

The Committee finds that local government must form active partnerships with a range of local organisations in order to effectively address youth unemployment at the local level, including relevant government departments and agencies at the State and Federal levels, local secondary schools, employment and training providers, Regional Youth Committees, Local Learning and Employment Networks and community service agencies.

5.5 Innovative Local Initiatives

While responsibility for employment, education and training policy and programs reside with the Federal and State Governments, there is a wide recognition that issues affecting youth unemployment need to be dealt with at a local level. The important role of local government in developing employment opportunities for youth was discussed in section 5.4 of this chapter. The need for locally based projects targeting local needs was also a major finding arising out of the Committee's overseas meetings (see Chapter 6).

The following section outlines a sample of the innovative programs that are operating at a local level, often in partnership with the local council and other regional or local organisations in Victoria.

The Committee classifies these programs into two groups: first, those that are targeted at young people experiencing multiple challenges or barriers in their lives and which therefore take a holistic approach to meeting the young person's needs, and secondly, those programs or services that have an enterprise or entrepreneurial component.

5.5.1 Programs and Services for Young People 'at risk' of Disengaging

The Committee heard strong evidence that there is a substantial cohort of young people whose employment needs would be best served through initiatives that are aimed at improving factors such as personal presentation, motivation, self-confidence and self-esteem, communication and team work skills and other 'employability' skills. (Refer to

Ireland's community training workshops outlined in Chapter 6). For example, many disadvantaged young people who are currently disengaged from education, training or employment are not ready to move straight into a full-time program. There also appears to be a gap in the provision of programs that can support young people in addressing a range of issues, such as homelessness or unstable housing, depression and the ability to participate in positive recreational activities.

The following section outlines some of the innovative, successful initiatives that were highlighted to the Committee during its investigations.

Hand Brake Turn

The Handbrake Turn program in Dandenong is an automotive training program incorporating three areas of the automotive industry: spray-painting, panel beating and mechanics. Initially beginning as a motor vehicle theft rehabilitation program, Hand Brake Turn has evolved into an eight-week employment and education program for young people between the ages of 15 and 19.

The program targets the long-term unemployed, young people at risk of becoming unemployed, Indigenous youth, young offenders, youth in care, youth from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and homeless youth. A majority of the participants have a Year 8 education (or lower), suffer a lack of self-esteem, have not yet developed a strong work ethic and may have had a negative experience with authority (police, school, parents).

Primarily aimed at assisting young people into apprenticeships and traineeships, Handbrake Turn is a work based project where participants attend an automotive workshop, and receive hands on training in motor mechanics, spray painting and panel beating. Over the past six years, between 50 and 80 per cent of the young people who have participated in the program in Dandenong have achieved an employment outcome in an apprenticeship, traineeship or general employment, or have returned to training. Results have varied according to the economic climate and the nature of the young people participating, however, given the previous experiences and barriers of these

young people, the Committee views even a 50 per cent outcome as extremely successful.

TAFE accredited education is a vital part of the program and vocational support is also offered to the participants in the form of interview skills, résumé writing and links to employment and further education. In addition to the operating objectives, Hand Brake Turn also has a number of social objectives, including building and developing self-confidence and self-esteem, motivation and teamwork.³¹⁷ These objectives have been previously identified by the Committee as critical in terms of youth achieving successful education and employment outcomes.

Mr Luke Talanoa, Apprentice Mechanic, Hand Brake Turn:

*“The good part of the course was that I got a secure job, and I am still in it now. I have made good friends, and I still keep in touch with Tom and people at Hand Brake Turn. I still do work for them and help them out. It’s a pretty good pre-apprenticeship course. It gave me a lot of confidence, and if it was not for them I would not be where I am right now.”*³¹⁸

The Committee believes one of the strengths of the Program is its recruitment process. Young participants are required to write a letter stating the reasons they wish to do the Program, they discuss the goals they seek to achieve and they are required to attend two interviews, the first with the youth worker on the Program and a second, more formal interview with the manager, youth worker and one of the trainers. Often, this may be the young person’s first experience in attending a job interview.

It was a particular concern to the Committee that there is a large group of young people within Victoria experiencing such a range of challenges in their lives and as a result are not at the stage where they could enter education, training or employment on a full-time basis. The Committee was therefore pleased to hear that a key aspect of Hand Brake Turn is its focus on developing a strong work ethic and time management skills.

³¹⁷ Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, pp89-90.

³¹⁸ Ibid, p91.

Mr Tom O'Brien, Manager, Hand Brake Turn:

*“Hand Brake Turn is full time. They get to Hand Brake Turn at 8.30 a.m. and they finish at about a quarter to four every day, five days a week, so they learn about getting out of bed and structuring their time. They cannot go outside and have a cigarette whenever they want; it is like going to work. ... One of the things that is pushed is the whole issue of time. Time equals money. Employers are interested in young people who are productive, so that is pushed.”*³¹⁹

The Committee believes that the success of the Hand Brake Turn Program in Dandenong is due to:

- ◆ its focus on job search skills and interview skills;
- ◆ the opportunity to experience three different industry areas;
- ◆ the positive impact on young participants' confidence, self-esteem, motivation and team work skills;
- ◆ the emphasis on developing time management skills and a strong work ethic; and
- ◆ its ability to assist the majority of participants into an employment or training outcome.

The Cook Shop

The Cook Shop program is an eight-week cooking and life skills program jointly run by the City of Greater Dandenong and Mission Australia. It specifically targets young people between the ages of 11 and 16 who are not accessing mainstream education such as secondary school or TAFE.

During the course of the program, participants learn the basics of cooking, as well as life skills such as job search training and communication skills. Participants must complete 99 per cent of the modules to graduate from the program. Modules include OH&S - food handling and safety, budgeting, communication, nutrition, waiting skills and basic cooking. Pathways into the hospitality industry is a component of the Cook Shop program, with participants visiting the William Angliss Institute of TAFE, and partaking in some practical experience at catering functions. Upon completion of the program

³¹⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, p90.

participants receive a certificate stating the skills they have gained and the modules they have completed.³²⁰ The Certificate was an important component mentioned by a young participant with some pride and the Committee sees that the issuing of such a certificate in other programs could have a positive impact on the young participants by giving them a sense of achievement and something that they can take to an employer that demonstrates that achievement.

A young participant of the Cook Shop told the Committee about some of the positive outcomes for himself and others who have participated. For example, a young Koorie participant has obtained a waiting position in the only Aboriginal cuisine restaurant in Melbourne, another is attending TAFE while still participating in catering functions through the Cook Shop and one has decided on a pathway towards a future career in catering.

Mr Lee Keldoulis, Participant, The Cook Shop:

“I think it was a real experience for me. I worked when I was 15. I quit school, I went back to school just to get year 10 and when I left that I was really just doing nothing. Then I found out about this. I swear that if I did not do the Cook Shop program I do not think I would be doing anything still because that really gave me a better idea of what I wanted to do. I am pretty sure I would still be bludging.”³²¹

Like Hand Brake Turn, the success of the Cook Shop Program is based on its holistic approach that covers pathways support, job application, advice on support services such as Centrelink and directing the young people into other positive activities and programs.

Ms Bernadette Rowland, Youth Activity Service Worker, City of Greater Dandenong:

“...it is not just about cooking. I know it is called the Cook Shop. The communication interaction stuff we did was about body language and interview skills. They are little techniques that they can use when they go to a party on the weekend ... as well as cooking at home, and talking today. Lee has come very far since he joined us. I have learnt heaps just listening to him myself. ... We are using a medium which a lot of our

³²⁰ Ibid, pp 118-122.

³²¹ Ibid, p119.

programs are based on. It is hidden agenda stuff and it is outcome based, that is for sure.”³²²

The Committee notes that the issuing of a certificate to successful program participants gives the young people a sense of achievement, has a positive impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence and should assist them in their future education, training or employment pathway by providing a record of their skills and achievement.

FINDING 5.21

The Committee finds that the success of innovative programs such as Hand Brake Turn and The Cook Shop is based on:

- ◆ *the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff;*
- ◆ *the one-on-one support provided to young people in addressing a range of issues in their lives; and*
- ◆ *the ability to engage young people through a 'hands on', interesting, yet practical activity.*

The Committee further finds that the issuing of a certificate to successful program participants gives the young people a sense of achievement, has a positive impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence and will assist them in their future education, training or employment pathway by providing a record of their skills and achievement.

The examples of Hand Brake Turn and The Cook Shop demonstrate the importance in having a range of programs operating at the local level that aim to develop 'soft skills', provide early training and vital work experience opportunities.

5.5.2 Youth Enterprise Models

The Committee was particularly interested to hear about young people developing entrepreneurial and enterprise skills. It sees self-employment as one of the major

³²² Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, p121.

opportunities for young people, particularly in rural areas to remain within their community.

In recognition that enterprise and self-employment opportunities are the way of the future for many young people, the Committee heard that there is an increasing trend for innovative youth employment programs to be based on a youth enterprise model. These programs are extremely valuable in imparting employability skills and giving young people a work history. Another benefit of the enterprise model is that it can be all-encompassing, with even those facing major barriers in their lives able to participate at varying levels.

Ms Kerry Watson, Future Connections:

*"We have started up a furniture-making enterprise at the moment, working mainly with young people who come through JPET. ... so far it has been really successful for the young people. They are making furniture for St Luke's, for the emergency housing, so we have sold the contract. St Luke's is paying us for the kids to make these products, so they are learning that they have to have the product made by a certain date because young people are shifting into those houses, so it is around learning some work ethics."*³²³

Mr Dave Glazebrook, Manager, Visy Cares Centre:

*"The other thing we have done this year based on some modeling last year is open our first youth enterprise, and we want to have more of these. We have opened a hand car wash and café in Dandenong. It will be run as a profitable business, and while the business has been opened for only three months our business projections are showing it will operate profitably. ... The car wash café works for us. It is high labour and low skills. Let's be honest, you can give a kid the skills to clean a car pretty quickly – it is not rocket science – so we can put these kids in there and employ them. We have four young people employed there already and they will gain a work history so that when they move on to another job we will be able to give them an honest reference saying, 'Yes this kid has been working for us'. We are paying them an award wage at the moment and we are putting them on car detailing traineeships so when they move on to another employer we can give them a genuine employment history."*³²⁴

³²³ Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/2002, p442.

³²⁴ Minutes of Evidence, 19/08/2002, pp83-84.

The following section outlines a sample of enterprise type initiatives that the Committee investigated.

GippSK8

GippSK8 is one of six national projects funded by the Breakthrough Program of the Foundation for Young Australians, with additional funding contributed by the Commonwealth Regional Assistance Program and a donation from the Rotary Club of Bairnsdale. The GippSK8 community enterprise model was developed in recognition that conducting training programs in rural areas where there are limited employment opportunities does little more than make the participants more exportable.

GippSK8 is an enterprise development project based on the manufacture and sale of skateboard decks in Gippsland. It is delivered in partnership with Lakes Entrance Community Health, the Small Rural Communities Health Project and East Gippsland Institute of TAFE.

The initial objectives of the project were to:

- ◆ create a sustainable (profitable) enterprise owned by the young people involved;
- ◆ develop a new local industry that will assist in addressing the high unemployment rates among young people in East Gippsland;
- ◆ create a value adding timber industry; and
- ◆ achieve 6 per cent of the national skateboard market.³²⁵

GippSK8 has been implemented as a three-stage project. Stage one involved the young people completing a 12 month accredited training component based at the East Gippsland Institute of TAFE Forestech Campus. Stage two, commencing in 2003, will see the project move from a training and development program into a business establishment with the support of the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme and stage three will see a consolidated and diversified, small, independent, viable business with at least 5 full-time owner/operators.

³²⁵ Written Submission No. 3, East Gippsland Institute of TAFE, 26 April 2002, pp4-5.

The training component of GippSK8 is unique. As there was no single training program or apprenticeship relevant to the needs of the young participants, the TAFE system allowed GippSK8 to take the relevant modules from various certificate and diploma courses.

Another important aspect to the GippSK8 project is that it has taken a social perspective and has included life skills, including team building and instilling a strong work ethic and the importance of creating a good high quality product that is Australian made and can compete with imports. The success of the enterprise model is that it creates new jobs and trains young people in running a business. Already, GippSK8 has one viable contract and another is being negotiated. The business is now trading under the name of Cheffy Industries.

The project coordinators and young participants of GippSK8 spoke about their experiences in a public hearing in Bairnsdale. The Committee heard that participants have gained design, research and enterprise skills, hand-tool and machinery operation skills and importantly, generic employment skills. Flow-on benefits from the project are expected to include improved confidence and social cohesion, job creation, new opportunities for disadvantaged youth, wealth creation, import replacement and local value-adding. The Committee was most impressed by the enthusiasm of the young group in presenting their product and experiences at the public hearing.

Mr Aaron Podubinski, Participant, GippSK8:

“I will mention some of the vast variety of skills I have been through. I have learnt to put pride into my work, and have gained self-esteem, confidence, good teamwork and ethics, a lot of business skills such as manufacturing, research development, marketing, design and numerous costing exercises. Outside of all that, the work has not always been easy but it has been quite rewarding.”³²⁶

³²⁶ Minutes of Evidence, 22/08/2002, p216.

However, the Committee also heard that the project has had to overcome a number of challenges. Mr Neil Smith, Project Officer, stated "*it feels like we have been swimming if not against the tide of government policy at least across it.*"³²⁷ In comparison, Mr Smith felt it was easy to work with local organisations such as the health centres, TAFE, private enterprise and the industrial supplies office.

Some of the problems experienced by the project include:

- ◆ difficulties accessing funding;
- ◆ a lengthy and difficult process to access the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme;
- ◆ all the participants have experienced problems with Centrelink payments; and
- ◆ difficulty in accessing simple government support such as business plans.

One of the critical success factors for the GippSK8 project was the substantial financial support it received over a long period of time. Ms Patricia Burrows, Senior Initiatives Manager at the Foundation for Young Australians explained the significance of this in relation to other traineeship and apprenticeship programs:

*"The GippSK8 project manager had never received so much money over such a long period of time. It is a four-year funding of about \$250,000. The key point he made, which I had not thought of before, is that the funding is over four years and an apprenticeship takes four years; how can we invest in something that targets youth unemployment if we expect it to be fixed in 12 months or less? If we consider that all training programs provide qualifications – for example, four years for a degree, four years for an apprenticeship, five years for medicine – where along that time frame do we need to consider looking at the issue of youth unemployment. And I think that is a key issue."*³²⁸

While the Committee questions the economic benefit of enterprise programs due to their high cost to participant ratio, it notes that the long-term benefits of such programs extend beyond the participants to the wider community.

³²⁷ Ibid, p214.

³²⁸ Minutes of Evidence, 05/08/2002, p17.

Mr Glen Bury, Project Coordinator, GippSK8:

*“In terms of dollars put in, it is hard to measure the return, but in my opinion it has vast benefits not only for the participants themselves but for the community at large. One of the things that makes this program work is that we take the philosophy of engaging these people and involving them at every level. They have the control over this right down to the artwork, the layout of their workshop and what makes it work, purpose-built machinery, produce design, product development and all those things.”*³²⁹

FINDING 5.22

The Committee finds that the successful enterprise model used by GippSK8 is based on:

- ◆ *the development of real, local employment opportunities;*
- ◆ *the success in negotiating a flexible, relevant training package with the local TAFE institute;*
- ◆ *the holistic approach taken that addresses the young participants’ employment, training and social needs; and*
- ◆ *the ability to access a substantial financial grant that was delivered over an extended period of time.*

Lead On

Lead On was opened in Bendigo in 1999. The plan was to create a pilot program that would find ways of engaging, informing and connecting young people to the business and broader community. The belief was that communities that fail to engage their young people are losing and under-utilising one of their key resources.

Communities that engage and develop their youth benefit in many ways, including a better skilled future workforce, young people with more knowledge and choices in the region and young people who feel connected and involved and therefore are more likely to remain in or return to the region. For the young people involved, the benefits include new skills, improved self-esteem, and a new awareness of what is possible in their region.

³²⁹ Minutes of Evidence, 22/08/2002, p215.

Mr Chris De Araugo, Chairman, Lead On Bendigo:

“It is all about real life opportunities. When I sat down with young people three years ago and asked them what would be relevant to them, the response was ‘Real life projects’, ‘Experience’, ‘How can I know what job I want if I do not know what is available?’ and ‘How can I get the skills and find out if I do not know what is available or how things work?’ A phrase that was used in the early days was ‘Lead On is like exploded work experience’. I think that is in many ways quite relevant to the core projects. However, as I said, it is all about businesses working with us to provide kids with a chance to work on a project with them.”³³⁰

Lead On has proven a great success and in the past three years offices have been opened in Mildura, Swan Hill and Echuca in Victoria and Ipswich in Queensland. In that time, almost 800 young people from these communities have been actively engaged in a range of meaningful projects that have provided them with various skills, personal development, community connections, employment, direction and confidence. More than 120 business and community partners from these communities that have provided project opportunities have experienced the value of having young people involved with the business or organisation.

It is primarily through real life project partnerships that the Lead On model engages and develops young people within the community. Some of these projects have provided ongoing roles, employment and development for young people. Projects include the very successful LOOP newspaper supplement, which is written, edited and designed by youth and Lead On Inc that has provided web pages and other IT support for businesses and internet training for older people through the innovative ‘Internet for the Oldies by Kids’ project.

The Committee heard that there are communities throughout regional Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland that are currently hoping to bring Lead On to their area. However, due to limitations to current government funding models, the ability of Lead On to grow and meet demand rests in its ability to develop strategic financial partnerships with the ‘right’ corporate partners.

Lead On does not easily fit into existing Government funding streams, despite the fact that the continued demand from young people and communities demonstrates the relevance of the model. This is partly because it does not focus on any particular segment of youth or the community, but rather, it takes an all-inclusive approach. As outlined earlier, however, the Committee does not support the current level of categorisation and segregation of 'at risk' youth, which often serves to hinder their ability to re-engage with the mainstream community. The Committee would therefore like to see the State Government pursue a partnership with Lead On to bring the model to other rural, regional and metropolitan communities.

FINDING 5.23

The Committee finds that Lead On has achieved success in engaging young people in a range of projects that have provided them with various skills, personal development, community connections, employment, direction and confidence. The projects success is demonstrated by:

- ◆ *expansion into four additional locations within the first three years of operation;*
- ◆ *the steady stream of business partners ready and willing to provide projects or other opportunities for young people in their communities; and*
- ◆ *the fact that it has never been required to advertise for young participants.*

RECOMMENDATION 5.10

The Committee recommends that the State Government assist the expansion of Lead On to other rural and regional communities in Victoria.

C.R.E.A.T.E Program

The Creating Rural Entrepreneurial Attitudes Through Education (C.R.E.A.T.E) program is a pilot program initiative of the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. network aimed at empowering young people with an entrepreneurial mindset and ability to identify opportunities for

³³⁰ Minutes of Evidence, 19/09/2002, p464.

self-employment and entrepreneurial activity within the region. The program is a response to the recognition that today's education systems are focused on preparing young people to work for others, often with the assumption that rural youth will need to leave town in search of employment in metropolitan or larger regional centres.

Moyne Shire Council wrote to the Committee outlining its involvement in the C.R.E.A.T.E pilot.

The key features of C.R.E.A.T.E. are:

- ◆ concentrates on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education within a rural context;
- ◆ focuses on helping young people to develop the inclination and ability to see and seize opportunities, rather than just being prepared to start and operate effectively within enterprises;
- ◆ provides high quality entrepreneurship strategies, curriculum, tools and resources which are age appropriate, flexible, empowering and engaging;
- ◆ uses experiential learning methodologies that ensure 'hands on' experiences support entrepreneurial thinking and habits; and
- ◆ enables access to the national network of schools and individuals committed to the C.R.E.A.T.E. concepts, as well as annual facilitation/teacher training events.³³¹

Participants in the program undertake studies in a number of areas including responding to change, community and regional awareness, self awareness and assessment, idea generation and critical thinking, understanding the world of business, preparing and presenting a business plan and operating a business. These life, business and entrepreneurial themes are incorporated into the program to ensure that participants gain knowledge, skills and experience.

C.R.E.A.T.E also incorporates workshops into the program to bring together successful entrepreneurs and potential and emerging entrepreneurs. Mentoring is also a vital component of the program with young entrepreneurs gaining support and development

³³¹ Written Submission No. 12, Moyne Shire Council, 15 May 2002, p6.

through various workshops and ongoing communication.³³² The following activities are planned for the pilot occurring at Hawkesdale and Mortlake Colleges during 2002:

- ◆ School based curriculum – the theory of entrepreneurship will be enhanced by analysis of relevant and inspiring case studies and real life examples of rural entrepreneurship compiled by Bank of I.D.E.A.S., Moyne Shire and the young people from Hawkesdale and Mortlake. The primary aim of this element is to motivate and educate young people as to the opportunities that exist for self-employment in rural Australia.
- ◆ Workshops bringing together successful entrepreneurs, potential and emerging entrepreneurs – designed to develop positive networks, develop skills and knowledge and capture the imagination and entrepreneurial spirit of young people involved.
- ◆ Mentoring of Moyne young entrepreneurs by successful entrepreneurs through workshops and ongoing communication.

FINDING 5.24

The Committee finds that the C.R.E.A.T.E program is consistent with the International Labour Organization and European Commission's policy directions that encourage and incorporate entrepreneurial and mentoring components into education and employment programs.

FINDING 5.25

The Committee finds that the youth enterprise model is effective in addressing youth unemployment in rural areas where mainstream employment opportunities are limited.

RECOMMENDATION 5.11

The Committee recommends that the State Government develop a cross-portfolio policy approach that encourages and assists young people into self-

³³² Ibid, pp1-9.

employment opportunities. The Committee recommends that this approach include:

- ◆ **the promotion of young people succeeding in business to other young people, their parents and the community;**
- ◆ **the inclusion of entrepreneurial and enterprise skills and activities in education and employment programs; and**
- ◆ **a mentoring component.**

5.6 Conclusion

This Chapter has covered a wide range of employment policies and programs currently in operation at the Federal, State and local levels. It has also provided some discussion regarding the limitations of current programs when considered as the full suite of programs aimed at addressing young people's employment and training needs, which are often impacted by social, cultural and economic factors.

In summary the roles for local and State governments in generating employment opportunities for young people include:

- ◆ economic and employment policy;
- ◆ incentives and rebates to employers;
- ◆ provision of appropriate education and training programs;
- ◆ direct generation of employment opportunities;
- ◆ collecting and reporting data; and
- ◆ engaging industry in the development of employment opportunities for young people.

The Committee has come to the conclusion that there needs to be a more coordinated approach to addressing the needs of young people. The Committee supports the calls for a stronger commitment to successful pathways and transitions for all young people, regardless of their current level of engagement in education, training and employment. There is a need to increase the flexibility of government programs so that all young

people have equitable access to the programs that will address their needs at any particular point in time.

FINDING 5.26

The Committee finds that the roles for State and local governments in generating employment opportunities for young people include:

- ◆ *economic and employment policy;*
- ◆ *incentives and rebates to employers;*
- ◆ *provision of appropriate education and training programs;*
- ◆ *direct generation of employment opportunities;*
- ◆ *collecting and reporting data; and*
- ◆ *engaging industry in the development of employment opportunities for young people.*

FINDING 5.27

The Committee finds that programs addressing youth unemployment are most effective when:

- ◆ *the response comes from the local community and reflects the needs of that community;*
- ◆ *programs are tailored to the needs of individuals rather than applying generic solutions;*
- ◆ *there is follow up beyond the date of completion; and*
- ◆ *early intervention prevents the cycle of unemployment becoming entrenched.*

RECOMMENDATION 5.12

The Committee recommends that when addressing the issue of youth unemployment that the State Government:

- ◆ **adopt a regional and community approach;**
- ◆ **adopt a whole of Government approach; and**

- ◆ **ensure vocational learning and employment skills underpin education and training aimed at young people.**

Chapter 6

Youth Employment Policy Initiatives

Overseas

6.1 Background

Part of the Committee's Terms of Reference requires an examination of 'innovative initiatives implemented in other jurisdictions to address youth unemployment and the effectiveness of such initiatives.' The Committee's initial research and evidence indicated that several European countries such as the United Kingdom, Ireland and Germany have had recent success in reducing youth unemployment rates following the implementation of various policy initiatives.

In order to fully explore these initiatives and as a means of broadly examining labour market policies in jurisdictions outside Australia, the Committee undertook a three week study tour of western Europe from 28 June to 18 July 2002. A copy of the Committee's meeting program is attached in Appendix 5. This Chapter reports in depth on the Committee's overseas investigations, although many of the innovations and ideas which the Committee considered overseas are also discussed throughout the Report.

Germany is considered to be a model in terms of successful youth employment policy and is noted for its apprenticeship and vocational training schemes. The Committee met with representatives from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Berlin Labour Office to discuss the success of vocational training, apprenticeship and traineeship schemes. Additional meetings were held with trade union, employer and social research bodies. One of the main areas of discussion was with respect to Germany's JUMP program which involves a wide range of measures focussing on transitions from school into training and from training to employment.

The Committee met with various Government Departments and agencies in London to discuss the British Government's recent *'New Deal For Young'* initiative which aims to tackle unemployment in the 18-24 age group. Discussions also focussed on the *14-19 Green Paper* which sets out proposals for a new phase of learning for young people aged 14-19, the recent Modern Apprenticeships scheme and the Connexions scheme.

The rapid growth of the Irish economy over the last decade has been partly attributable to the education and skilling of the nation's youth. The Committee visited Dublin and met with the Irish Government's Department of Enterprise, Trade and Development which is responsible for the National Employment Action Plan that has achieved success in reducing youth unemployment in Ireland.

In contrast, the Committee examined the problems existing in Italy with its traditionally high youth unemployment rates. In particular, the Committee looked at the distinction between a highly industrialised Centre and Northern Italy with high employment rates and a depressed South which lacks industrial development and consequently suffers very high youth unemployment. This differential in youth unemployment between economically depressed areas within a country was also evident in Germany with higher youth unemployment rates in the eastern states compared to the west and in Belgium where youth unemployment rates are much higher in the south compared to the north.

These observations assisted the Committee when focusing on the differentials between metropolitan Melbourne, outer growth areas and rural Victoria. Of particular relevance to the Committee's investigations, is the Italian Government's recently released White Paper on the labour market which has the objective of guaranteeing a substantial increase in youth employment.

The Committee also chose to visit Geneva, Paris and Brussels principally to speak to key international organisations examining youth unemployment issues.

The Committee met with the International Labour Organisation based in Geneva to discuss employment and labour market policies including the Youth Employment Network which has been established to overview worldwide activity on youth employment.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD) in Paris briefed the Committee on OECD programs dealing with the transition from education to work as well as relevant labour market programs covering training and job creation. Additional meetings were held in Paris with a key French academic on the issue of employment routes for young people in danger of social exclusion and the need for remedial programs for disadvantaged youth.

The Committee conducted a number of meetings in Brussels including the Higher Institute of Labour Studies, the Brussels Regional Employment Office and the European Commission, Employment and Social Affairs Directorate which is responsible for the development and monitoring of the European Employment Strategy. Of particular interest to the Committee was the Belgian Government's Rosette Plan, a preventive approach to youth unemployment whereby young people are given the opportunity to acquire vocational experience through a first job agreement.

This chapter outlines the key initiatives discussed during the Committee's study tour, provides some analysis on the success or otherwise of these initiatives in reducing youth unemployment levels and highlights some parallels to various policy initiatives within Victoria.

6.2 International Labour Organization Initiatives

The Committee met with a number of officials from the International Labour Organization in Geneva to discuss youth employment initiatives. The ILO is the United Nations specialised agency which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognised human and labour rights.

As referred to in Chapter 1, the Committee had discussions with the ILO regarding definitions of youth unemployment and the characteristics of the youth labour market. It also discussed ILO initiatives such as the Youth Employment Network and InFocus Program on Skills, Knowledge and Employability.

In addition to discussing the Youth Employment Network strategies, the meeting with the ILO covered industrial relations issues for young people, the need for increased expenditure on education and training, the importance of positive work experience and apprenticeships schemes and the need to create partnerships between education, employers and trade unions.

6.2.1 ILO Youth Employment Network

The ILO, in conjunction with the United Nations and the World Bank, has established a Youth Employment Network to overview worldwide activity on youth employment. The recommendations of the Network will provide the international community with the impetus to gain political commitment to greatly enhance employment opportunities for youth.

The ILO has a series of recommendations to pursue, including:

- ◆ calling for heads of State and Government to develop national action plans for a decent work strategy for young people;
- ◆ establishing four key priority areas for the national action plans;
- ◆ encouraging ten countries to champion the process by immediately preparing their national action plans;
- ◆ building up youth institutions to provide assistance;
- ◆ training and skills – provide appropriate tools and access to skills; and
- ◆ building bridges between formal and informal economy.

ILO officials were keen for Australia to consider becoming one of the champion countries with respect to its relationship with Indonesia and to pursue the following priority areas.

1. Employability – need for countries to reorient their education, vocational training and labour market policies to facilitate the school-to-work transition and give young people – particularly those who are disadvantaged because of disabilities or face discrimination because of race, religion or ethnicity – a head start in life.

2. Equal opportunities for young women and men – countries should set objectives and targets to rectify the gender disparities in access to education, training and labour markets, and develop and implement the necessary gender-sensitive policies in these areas.

3. Entrepreneurship – countries should develop the framework to make it easier to start and run a business and to encourage the concept of entrepreneurship to stimulate personal initiatives and to enable small enterprises to prosper and create decent work opportunities.

4. Employment creation – employability, equal opportunities and entrepreneurship, to be most effective, require an enabling environment where employment creation is placed at the centre of macroeconomic and other public policies.

6.2.2 InFocus Program on Skills, Knowledge and Employability

The Committee was also briefed on the InFocus Program on Skills, Knowledge and Employability which is a recent ILO program that includes policy-oriented research on ways to integrate youth more effectively into education and work by:

- ◆ documenting successful programs for reducing the number of school dropouts and helping them to return to school;
- ◆ identifying innovative pathways from school to work, including better linkages between initial education, training and work experience, and building bridges between schools and employers; and
- ◆ evaluating and drawing lessons from labour market programs for unemployed young women and men.

The Program is geared at strengthening the capacity of governments and the social partners to address youth employment problems by:

- ◆ providing policy advice and technical support to governments on how to develop 'second-chance' schemes for young school dropouts;
- ◆ raising awareness of successful strategies to combat youth marginalisation and unemployment;
- ◆ setting up demonstration projects/pilot activities that combine training institutions and enterprises to provide apprenticeship, mentoring or work experience for young persons.

In carrying out these activities, it is intended to send a clear ILO message that the full social and economic integration of young women and men depends on their access to skills and human resource development and employment opportunities.

6.3 European Commission, Employment and Social Affairs Directorate

As part of its program of meetings in Brussels, the Committee held discussions with Ms Odile Quintin, Director General, Employment and Social Affairs Directorate within the European Commission. The Directorate has the task of promoting a modern, innovative and sustainable European Social Model with more and better jobs in an inclusive society based on equal opportunities.

6.3.1 European Employment Strategy

Since 1997, the Commission and the Member States have jointly developed the European Employment Strategy (E.E.S) to co-ordinate national jobs policies in a concerted drive for full employment. The Commission monitors the efforts of the Member States against defined objectives, reports on progress each year in the Joint Employment Report and agrees new Employment Guidelines with the Council for the coming year which the Member States have to take into account.

The Employment and Social Affairs Directorate concentrates on four main areas, so-called pillars, outlined below:

1. Employability

Every individual must be offered an opportunity in terms of job offers, work experience, training or other activating measures as soon as possible – no later than 12 months or 6 months for young people – after becoming unemployed. Young people and others facing the greatest difficulties in getting work or who face discrimination, require specific help.

2. Entrepreneurship

A culture of entrepreneurship needs to be nurtured. People have to be encouraged and assisted when starting new businesses and when they are about to take on new staff.

3. Adaptability

Competitive firms need to be flexible and up-to-date in the way they work in order to meet the changes of the economy while providing security for workers. It needs to be made easier and cheaper for companies to invest in training for their staff.

4. Equal Opportunities

Men and women must have the same training and support opportunities to participate in the labour market on an equal footing. Active policies need to make it less difficult to combine working life with family responsibilities and to return to work after a long absence.

FINDING 6.1

The Committee finds that the European Commission's four employment strategy pillars (employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities) are a useful guide in policy development and can be used as an overall direction or set of objectives for reducing youth unemployment.

6.3.2 European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the European Union's main financial instrument to provide support for achieving a wide range of policy objectives to help Member States develop their job markets and the skills of workers and job seekers.

One of the ESF's main policy priorities is to develop and promote active labour market policies. Specific attention is given to the early identification of people who might be at risk, particularly young people. These people will require a wide range of assistance such as diagnostic interviews, training that is closely linked to a personal action plan, career counselling, job search assistance and work experience.

The ESF is promoting labour market policies that will bridge the gap between school and work through vocational training and apprenticeships. The ESF believes education and training systems need to be better geared to the needs of the job market and provide young people with basic skills such as literacy and numeracy.

6.4 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

The OECD's employment analysis looks at how unemployment and employment vary by region, gender, employment status (part-time and self-employed), and according to working conditions such as earnings. Work on unemployment examines active labour market programs and the public employment service. Active Labour Market Policies to help unemployed people back to work include

job placement services, unemployment benefits, and labour market programs such as such as training and job creation.

The Committee met with several researchers within the OECD's labour market division and were briefed on a number of issues outlined below.

Early Intervention

One of the key aspects of the OECD's analysis is the importance of early intervention policies for disadvantaged youth. The OECD believes a sustained effort of education is required beginning in kindergarten and continuing through primary and secondary school.

The Committee's evidence in Victoria confirms the view that early intervention is critical when dealing with disadvantaged youth and young people considered at risk of leaving school early. As stated elsewhere in this Report, intervention during secondary school is often considered too late for a number of young people.

Diverse Education Pathways

The OECD also emphasised the need for diverse education pathways and early contact with work. In particular, the OECD sees the following as critical in terms of enhancing the school-to-work transitions:

- ◆ general availability of secondary education;
- ◆ education and training programs for those who are unable to complete secondary school;
- ◆ pathways from vocational education into tertiary education;
- ◆ workplace experience through schools;
- ◆ student part-time and holiday jobs; and
- ◆ apprenticeship systems.

Dual Systems

The OECD briefed the Committee on the success of dual systems as a bridge between school and work. Positive outcomes have been achieved in Germany and Austria where:

- ◆ low apprenticeship wages are attractive to employers;
- ◆ apprenticeship qualifications have real value in the labour market and are considered attractive to youths and their parents; and
- ◆ a regulatory framework and industry employer bodies supervise and maintain the value of apprenticeships.

The OECD noted however, that the rigidity of the German and Austrian systems would make it difficult for all countries to introduce similar dual systems.

'Safety Nets' for School Leavers

The OECD emphasised the importance of creating safety nets for all school leavers, particularly early leavers. It is necessary to maintain contact with and engage youths who have left school but are not yet employed or registered as unemployed.

The OECD suggests national registers for school leavers need to be established, combined with networking between schools, social assistance services, employment offices and specialist youth outreach programs operating at a local level.

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)

The OECD briefed the Committee on the results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is a three-yearly survey of the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in the principal industrialised countries. It assesses the degree to which students near the end of compulsory education have acquired the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society.

The report shows considerable variation in levels of competency between students, schools and countries. There are also considerable differences between countries in the extent to which the socio-economic background of students and schools affects student performance. The results suggest that schools themselves can make a significant difference to performance.

The results put Australia fourth out of 31 surveyed countries but showed that Australia's retention rates are comparatively poor. (see Appendix 8 for PISA results)

Victorian Schools recognised by OECD

With respect to the PISA results, the Committee was pleased to hear the OECD make reference to the success of Bendigo Senior Secondary College and Glen Waverley Secondary School in terms of its outstanding academic success and excellent student achievement in a wide variety of extracurricular activities.

In Chapter 3, the Committee refers to evidence from Bendigo College where students have the flexibility to undertake part-time study and part-time work and to complete their VCE over three years. A number of Vocational Education & Training programs, apprenticeships and traineeships are also available to students providing pathways to further study or employment.

6.5 United Kingdom

The Committee was particularly interested in studying the U.K.'s recent initiative aimed at tackling youth unemployment known as the *New Deal For Young*, together with other initiatives such as the 14-19 Green Paper the recent Modern Apprenticeships scheme and life long learning initiatives.

6.5.1 Youth Labour Market in the U.K.

Youth unemployment rates in the United Kingdom have gradually reduced since 1993 when they were approximately 18 per cent. In February 2002, youth unemployment in the U.K. was just over 12 per cent (13.7 per cent for males

and 10.3 per cent for females). Long-term youth unemployment in the U.K. is now virtually non-existent. However, the Committee notes that the U.K.'s social security system differs from Australia's and accordingly any comparisons between the two country's long-term unemployed are subject to definitional variations.

The reduction in unemployment rates has been attributed to the success of the various recent initiatives undertaken by the Blair Government including *New Deal For Young*. Reduced unemployment rates are also partly the result of an improvement in overall economic conditions in the U.K.

6.5.2 *New Deal For Young*

New Deal for Young is a key part of the Blair Government's Welfare to Work strategy and aims to assist young people who have been unemployed and claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for six months or more, to find work and to improve their long-term employability.

The program involves an initial gateway period in which up to four months of intensive advice, counselling and assistance with job search are provided. New Deal Personal Advisers will help jobseekers identify their strengths and weaknesses and choose the most suitable New Deal option. The Advisers will ensure that entrants in New Deal are: employable, motivated and committed, and right for the job.

Following this gateway period, four options are available for employment or further training:

- ◆ Employment Option – a job for which the employer receives a subsidy for up to six months;
- ◆ Full Time Education and Training – for up to 12 months and intended to lead to an approved qualification;
- ◆ Voluntary Sector Option – up to 6 months placement with a voluntary organisation; and
- ◆ Environment Task Force – up to 6 months working on a project to improve the environment.

In addition to the above, follow-through support is provided whereby an entrant will receive up to 4 months of further intensive advice, counselling and assistance with job search.

If the New Deal program fails entrants, they are put through a SetUp program in which entrants are placed in a 12 month, fully subsidised job. After the government funding expires, the employer has the option of continuing or terminating the appointment. At the very least, an entrant will have one year of work experience.

The important aspect of the scheme is the ongoing one-to-one assistance and follow up support provided. Programs are specifically tailored to an individual's needs to ensure positive outcomes and every effort is made to prevent individuals 'falling through the net'.

There is widespread agreement that the introduction of Personal Advisers providing tailored, individualised advice and relationships that are developed with clients has been one of the successes of New Deal. The Committee received evidence throughout Victoria of the importance of this personal assistance and one-to-one mentoring.

The Committee met with the Department of Works and Pensions in London which is responsible for the New Deal policy initiative. The Committee was advised that to date, the strategy has produced positive results in terms of less youth unemployment and more employment for participants. Substantial numbers of young people are progressing through the program with more than 200,000 having joined. One-third of entrants are still in the gateway period and 23 per cent have moved into one of the four options.

A large number of employers are joining the program however it is too early for them to be able to gauge the success of longer-term participation. The Department's research suggests early results indicate a positive impact on the wider labour market.

The Committee also met with the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion in London, a research and lobbying organisation which is expert in the social policy, labour market and welfare-to-work field. The Centre believes the New Deal initiative has achieved positive outcomes but still needs improvement in the following areas:

- ◆ less than 40% of entrants in the 18-24 age group get sustained jobs;
- ◆ 25% of entrants get unsustained employment;
- ◆ there is marked geographical variations in outcomes;
- ◆ the least employable are being helped less;
- ◆ ethnic minority job entry is up to 40% lower than for other participants; and
- ◆ one in three participants are re-entrants.

Professor Dan Finn of the University of Portsmouth (UK) has been involved with and published material about the New Deal and Personal Advisor programs introduced by the Blair Government. Evaluation so far has proved that the New Deal program has made a tangible difference to the lives of youth, recruitment patterns, satisfaction levels of employers and to the efficiency of the labour market. It aims to achieve a radical improvement in the employability of young people, giving them the necessary skills which in turn become personal assets, not just to get a job, but to stay in work for the rest of their lives.

The Economic and Social Research Council in England has recently conducted research into the initial effectiveness of New Deal which was premised on the belief that raising the employability of the long-term unemployed would move them into employment wherever they happened to live. It finds that the program's effectiveness in tackling youth unemployment has varied significantly across different parts of the country, depending on local labour market conditions. In those cities and regions with low labour demand and a lack of employment growth, the New Deal has been far less successful at getting young people into work and keeping them there.

The New Deal and Personal Advisers programs also involve very significant expenditures of public funds and as such, a thorough evaluation is required to determine whether they deliver value for money.

6.5.3 14-19 Phase of Education and Training

Of further interest to the Committee was the British Government's proposal for the 14-19 phase of education and training which aims to achieve higher standards in education.

The key objectives of the wide ranging proposals are to:

- ◆ meet the needs and aspirations of all young people;
- ◆ raise the levels of achievement of young people;
- ◆ broaden the skills acquired by all young people to improve their employability;
- ◆ deliver students a more flexible curriculum which will motivate them to continue learning;
- ◆ promote technical and vocational education as a positive choice for students; and
- ◆ deliver an education system that is more responsive to those with special educational needs such as young people from ethnic backgrounds, low-income families or those in danger of social exclusion.

At the time of the Committee's meetings in London, the proposals were the subject of a final consultation process before commencement of initial implementation. The Government aims to phase in the 14-19 reforms over several years culminating in full implementation by 2005/2006.

Key aspects of the 14-19 education and training proposals are consistent with the direction the State Government is taking with education in Victoria. The promotion of vocational education is being trialed through the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning and the expansion of VET in schools. However, as outlined in the U.K.'s 14-19 proposals, the Government needs to promote technical and vocational education as a positive choice for students rather than being a second-class fallback for less able students. The Committee's evidence throughout Victoria confirms the view that vocational training, such as that offered through VCAL, should be seen as a positive alternative to VCE. However, as the Committee reports in Chapter 3, the promotion of such alternatives

should also not be at the detriment of VCE and it is important to maintain pathways between the two alternatives.

6.5.4 *Connexions Service*

Connexions is a recent Blair Government initiative aiming to assist young people aged 13-19 in making a smooth transition to adult and working life. Under this service, all young people will have access to a Personal Adviser who provides support for those young people who feel excluded and find it difficult to access normal avenues of support.

Specifically, young people receive:

- ◆ assistance and support to review strengths and weaknesses;
- ◆ advice on planning to achieve educational and life goals;
- ◆ information and advice to address any personal problems;
- ◆ information and advice to explore and develop talents and interests; and
- ◆ access to specialist support where needed.

One of the main targets of the scheme is to increase young people's attendance, participation and attainment in education. Other expected outcomes include reducing youth offending, teenage pregnancy and substance misuse.

The Committee believes the concept of young people having access to personal advisers is an essential element in ensuring the needs of every young person are addressed and to provide personal development opportunities to fulfil a young person's potential. Evidence received throughout Victoria confirmed the benefits of the role of personal advisers. Again, this has to be balanced against the costs of employing such a large number of personal advisers for this role. As an alternative, a program of personal advisers for identified 'at risk' young people particularly within the existing school environment, makes economic and practical sense.

6.5.5 Modern Apprenticeships

The Committee also discussed the Modern Apprenticeship scheme in the U.K., which provides young people the opportunity to gain skills and qualifications while working in a real job. All Modern Apprenticeships involve working towards a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) which is widely recognised by employers as their first choice when recruiting young people.

Key features of the Modern Apprenticeship scheme are the attainment of key basic skills to prepare entrants for the job market and proven competence in a real working environment.

There are two types of Modern Apprenticeship, Foundation and Advanced. The different level of attainment between the Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships are reflected by the competencies required and qualifications gained. Apprentices can progress from Foundation to Advanced Modern Apprenticeship and even gain entry directly onto an Advanced Modern Apprenticeship in some circumstances. This allows young people to join at the level most appropriate for them.

The British Government commissioned a review of Modern Apprenticeships in 2001. Senior representatives from industry, the voluntary sector, trade unions and learning and training providers carried out this review. They recommended a number of changes to Modern Apprenticeships to make sure the apprenticeship system compares well with the best international practice.

Amongst the changes recommended was revision of the existing Modern Apprenticeship frameworks, which make clear the basic content and expected duration of apprenticeships. The frameworks are produced by representative industry bodies for each sector known as National Training Organisations (NTOs) or the new Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) – so for example the engineering Modern Apprenticeship frameworks are developed by the Engineering Marine Training Association (EMTA). This means that the Modern Apprenticeship is relevant and respected by the industry concerned.

FINDING 6.2

The Committee finds that there are a number of key elements in the British Government's New Deal for Young policy initiative that should be noted by the Victorian Government in future policy development to address youth unemployment. Key aspects of New Deal are:

- ◆ *the need to persevere with young people considered 'at risk' or disadvantaged;*
- ◆ *the importance of personal advisers particularly for 'at risk' youth; and*
- ◆ *the promotion of vocational education as a positive choice for students.*

FINDING 6.3

The Committee finds that while New Deal initiatives have achieved success in reducing Britain's youth unemployment levels, particularly in relation to long-term young unemployed. Less success has been achieved in economically disadvantaged regions, with young people who are considered to be at greatest risk of unemployment and with ethnic minority groups. The Committee received no information to suggest a cost benefit analysis of these programs has been carried out to identify whether they deliver value in terms of results for the expenditure outlaid.

6.6 Germany

6.6.1 Youth Unemployment in Germany

Germany's youth unemployment levels are low in comparison with most European countries and Australia. The significant feature of Germany's youth unemployment levels is that they differ only marginally from unemployment rates in all age groups. Unemployment problems, therefore, are not specific to young people.

As at May 2002, the average youth unemployment rate for all of Germany, together with the overall unemployment rate, was approximately 9 per cent. However, there is a significant difference in unemployment rates between western and eastern German states. The east German states average is 14.5

per cent compared to only 7 per cent in western states. This illustrates the difficulty in addressing unemployment in geographically depressed regions despite considerable expenditure of public monies as has occurred in Germany.

6.6.2 Dual Education Vocational Training System

One of the key factors affecting Germany's relatively low youth unemployment rates, and particularly low teenage unemployment rates, is its dual education and vocational training system.

To understand the dual system, it is necessary to explain the German education system. Primary or elementary school concludes at age 11. From this point, students have the options of entering three different levels of secondary school: higher, intermediate and lower secondary school, depending on their performances at primary school. Students who will end up in university take the path of continuing higher secondary school to the age of 18 (similar to Australia). Those students attending intermediate school have the option of entering full-time vocational or technical school. Students in the lower secondary schools will either enter the labour force at 15 or the dual system of vocational training.

The importance of the dual system is that students undertake formal training within a company or the public sector for three or four days a week. Part-time vocational school training is carried out for one or two days per week. At the end of the vocational training, students receive a nationally recognised qualification. These qualifications allow young people to enter into full-time employment with the company they did their training with or another company that recognises the acquired skills.

The system's success is partly due to the involvement of partnerships between employers, unions, governments and schools.

The Committee heard throughout Victoria that low retention rates in many secondary schools are a significant problem. Students as young as 12 and 13 are losing interest in school curriculums and by the age of 15 and 16 many

students have left school and are unemployed. Unlike Germany, teenage unemployment in Victoria is a major concern.

The marked difference between the German and Australian systems is that most young Germans (up to 70%) undertake some form of apprenticeship and a student's education/training pathway is determined initially at age 11; by age 15 many have embarked on a pathway of vocational training.

Even many students who go on to university have undergone some vocational training and apprenticeship. This suggests that the Committee's view that there should be more opportunities for VCAL and VET in schools at earlier years could also deliver benefits in terms of students continuing on to tertiary education.

While the dual system has been responsible for Germany's low teenage unemployment levels, problems still exist in terms of dealing with highly disadvantaged youth, migrant youth and young people in eastern states of Germany.

FINDING 6.4

The Committee finds that Germany's dual education and training system has been largely successful in lowering youth unemployment levels and is supported both practically and financially by employers, employee organisations and the government. The system has resulted in very low teenage unemployment rates except in the eastern states.

FINDING 6.5

The Committee finds that the concept of vocational training and apprenticeships as part of secondary education would greatly assist the school-to-work transitions in Australia and may even assist some students who ultimately pursue a university education. However, the Committee notes that the German dual system is highly structured and generally considered inflexible as young people's career paths are often decided very early on in life.

6.6.3 JUMP Program

The other key component of the Committee's discussions with relevant government departments and other bodies, was the German Government's Immediate Action Program for training and jobs for young people. The program, referred to as JUMP, commenced at the start of 1999 and is funded by the Federal Employment Service at one billion Euros per year (AUD 1.8 billion).

JUMP targets young people up to the age of 25 who have been out of work for at least six months and require further training or skill upgrading. In addition, 'at risk' young people such as early school leavers, disabled persons and young migrants are key target groups. Special priority is also given to tackling the high youth unemployment levels in east Germany.

The JUMP employment and training measures can be summarised as follows:

- ◆ apprenticeships within a company or external training with subsequent work placement;
- ◆ preparation for young people to apply for training places;
- ◆ continued training to adapt to new developments; and
- ◆ working and studying.

The main bodies responsible for implementing JUMP are the federal and local employment offices. The involvement of local employment offices allows for regionally targeted support according to local needs.

Unlike some other employment creation schemes, there are no incentives or subsidies provided to employers who create vocational training places. Companies taking part in the scheme are encouraged to train young people in the interests of obtaining a more highly qualified workforce.

The emphasis of JUMP is to facilitate transitions. The initial aim is to facilitate a young person's transition from school to training. The second stage is to make a successful transition from training to employment. The transition from training to work is enhanced if a young person has received prior vocational training.

The Committee met with the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Berlin who advised that the immediate action plan to bring down youth unemployment has been considered a great success and has been renewed until 2003. Since 1999, 377,000 young people have received benefits under the scheme. The most important outcomes were integration into the first labour market through wage subsidies, qualification-job procurement activities, and various training courses.

The Committee also met with researchers from the Social Science Research Centre Berlin who had examined outflow statistics from the JUMP program. The statistics reveal that six months after completing the program 33 per cent returned to unemployment immediately after finishing the program, 21 per cent had commenced employment, 10 per cent started an apprenticeship, approximately 6 per cent were involved in school-based vocational training, 21 per cent joined a further measure outside the youth action program and the remainder had commenced some other activity immediately after finishing participation (such as compulsory military training).

The Social Science Research Centre Berlin saw this outcome as positive, however the Committee also met with the Federation of German Employers' Association who believed a success rate of 21 per cent in employment was quite poor considering the extent of Federal Government funding provided to the scheme. The Committee is of the opinion that while the program is very expensive, it has achieved some success in that two-thirds of participants were involved in employment or further training.

FINDING 6.6

The Committee finds that Germany's Immediate Action Program (JUMP) is a high cost program that has achieved some success in reducing youth unemployment levels to date, however, the Committee sees benefits in regionally based training and skill upgrading measures specifically targeted at early school leavers, disadvantaged youth and young migrants.

With respect to regionally based training targeting early school leavers, the Committee noted earlier in this Chapter and throughout Chapter 4, the successful model adopted by Bendigo Senior Secondary College.

6.7 Belgium

Belgium is a federal state divided into three distinct regions: Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia. Each region has separate responsibility for employment policies

During its study tour, the Committee conducted meetings in Brussels including the European Commission Employment and Social Affairs Directorate, the Brussels Regional Employment Office and the Higher Institute of Labour Studies, a Flanders based social and economic policy research body.

6.7.1 Overview of Belgian Youth Labour Market

Youth unemployment rates in Belgium are relatively high by European standards. In April 2002, youth unemployment rates were 17 per cent for young males and 19 per cent for young females. While these rates are still unacceptably high, they are an improvement from the mid 1990s when Belgium's youth unemployment rate was around 25 per cent. Overall unemployment rates in Belgium are approximately 7 per cent.

Statistics show that youth unemployment in Belgium is even higher (30 per cent) for young people with fewer qualifications and higher still among youth from ethnic backgrounds, such as Turkish and Moroccan families where the rate is as high as 50 per cent.

There are significant differences in youth unemployment rates between the south (Wallonia) and the north (Flanders). The youth unemployment rate in Wallonia is 27 per cent while the rate in Flanders is only 7 per cent. The high youth unemployment rate in Wallonia is the result of a lack of economic development and job opportunities. The situation is similar in Italy where the south is economically depressed and has high youth unemployment. The Committee noted certain regional and rural areas in Victoria also suffer from

high youth unemployment levels due to a lack of economic development activity.

In Belgium, the overall education level of young people is increasing, however the percentage of young people without a secondary school qualification remains high. Consistent with the Committee's evidence received in Victoria, the lower the educational level in Belgium, the higher the unemployment risk.

Belgian authorities spoke to the Committee about job demands from companies in terms of qualifications and job experience. Unfortunately, a vicious circle exists whereby companies are seeking qualified employees who can demonstrate relevant work experience, however many young people are unable to gain the necessary work experience to fulfil this criteria. Statistics reveal that two-thirds of job seekers in Belgium are unqualified, however, two-thirds of jobs require high school qualifications.

6.7.2 Rosetta Plan

In November 1999, the Belgian Government commenced a preventative approach to youth unemployment by providing young people with the opportunity to acquire some vocational experience through a first job agreement. This agreement, known as the Rosetta Plan, places an obligation upon employers in the private and public sectors to hire a certain number of skilled or unskilled young people under the age of 25.

The Rosetta Plan comprises two components:

- ◆ an activation program guaranteeing pathways to integration to all young people entering unemployment; and
- ◆ the First Job Agreement which is meant to be the main lever for labour market integration.

Specifically, every company in the private sector with more than 100 staff are legally obliged to fill a 3 per cent quota of young employees, while public services must recruit 1.5 per cent. In other words, three young people must be employed in a first job agreement over and above existing workforce

(companies cannot fire staff to meet the quota). Recruitment subsidies are available to encourage firms to take on young people with few qualifications, and to exceed the 3 per cent quota. Enterprises that do not fulfil their quota are liable to financial sanctions, although such penalties have seldom been applied so far. Young people who refuse employment offered under the plan may lose their unemployment benefits.

Companies that fill their quota receive a reduction in labour costs weighted towards the period of unemployment that their young recruits had experienced. Further financial incentives are available for employers who keep low skilled young people employed under a fixed term contract. Despite initial resistance by some employers, the program is now considered appropriate and has wide support.

Preference for entry to the First Job Agreement is to young people under 25 who have left school within six months on the condition that they are no longer required to attend school (i.e. are over 18).

A first job agreement can consist of an open-ended or fixed-term full or part-time employment contract, a part-time employment contract combined with training, or an apprenticeship/traineeship contract.

Within one year of the Rosetta Plan's introduction, 86,500 First Job Agreement contracts had been concluded. However, these statistics do not provide conclusive proof of the effectiveness of the program throughout Belgium.

Data collected by Belgian authorities to date reveals that young people in Flanders are over-represented in comparison with other regions. Seventy per cent of young people in Flanders signed a First Job Agreement, however they accounted for only 30 per cent of the unemployed. Evidence suggests the weakest regions, like Wallonia, are the most poorly represented in the program. Such outcomes indicate that the Rosetta Plan works well in the more dynamic regions in terms of employment.

FINDING 6.7

The Committee finds that while the Rosetta Plan has proved successful in many respects, it also illustrates that those young people that are most disadvantaged and most in need of help, are the ones who are not benefiting from policy initiatives aimed at reducing youth unemployment and increasing school retention rates.

The concept of enforced employment quotas on companies, in particular, the availability of financial incentives in the form of subsidies or tax concessions, with a particular weighting towards disadvantaged youth and long-term unemployed young people, needs to be further considered and will be investigated by the Committee in its second Report to Parliament.

6.8 Ireland

The rapid growth of the Irish economy over the last decade has been led by a more educated and skilled workforce and particular growth in the IT sector. This growth has had a positive impact on the nation's youth unemployment levels. In 1992, Ireland's youth unemployment rate was 25 per cent. In 2001, the rate had dropped to approximately 8 per cent for the 15-19 age group and 5 per cent for 20-24 year olds. In 2002, the rates had risen slightly to 10 per cent and 7 per cent respectively.

The Committee met with Ireland's Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment, Department of Education and Science and the Government's national Training and Employment Agency to discuss programs and initiatives aimed at reducing youth unemployment. The Committee was particularly interested in measures aimed at disadvantaged youth and those with learning difficulties.

The Irish Government's national Training and Employment Agency, FAS, has a broad mission to increase the employability, skills and mobility of job seekers and employees to meet labour market needs. The Agency has a number of specific employment and training services targeting young people in transition

from school to work including career guidance, IT based career directions, referral to job vacancies, training and education opportunities and psychometric testing.

Specific provision is made for young people experiencing difficulty through initiatives such as traineeships, community training workshops, community employment, specific skills training and tracking and support measures for early school leavers. FAS attempts to develop the long-term potential of every young person and emphasised the need for a coordinated approach from all agencies to work with young people.

One of the key strategies adopted by the Department of Education and Science in tackling disadvantaged youth is early prevention starting from early childhood. The Committee heard that attempts to assist disadvantaged youth at the ages of 14-17 will invariably fail as it is often too late to change behavioral and learning problems.

In Ireland, early intervention begins at primary school through measures including additional supports for schools in disadvantaged areas, integrated planning and targeting of pupils most at risk, community liaison teachers who visit homes encouraging parental assistance and a national educational psychological service.

6.8.1 Youth Reach

Youth Reach is a joint Department of Education and Science and Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment program targeted at early school leavers who are experiencing particular difficulties within the labour market. Typically, they have left school with no qualifications or with less qualifications than are accepted as an entry requirement to general employment.

The program attempts to draw together a number of innovative approaches, which have been developed as a response to early school leaving within both the training and education spheres. Social inclusion is a key aim of the program

and has been identified as a key national priority with considerable resources devoted to its achievement.

Youth Reach has four main streams with a general emphasis on experiential learning and on building relationships with the young people. Two key phases are: the Foundation Phase, where basic introductory, pre-vocational training and education takes place, and the Progression Phase, where vocational and general education and training are provided.

Through Government Youth Reach centres, emphasis is placed on:

- ◆ enhancement of vocational training and work experience programs for early school leavers with no qualifications;
- ◆ focus on personal development, literacy, numeracy, communication and new technology skills; and
- ◆ provision of supporting services such as child care, guidance, counselling and psychological services.

Participants in Youth Reach services have generally come from a background of social disadvantage with the main problems being:

- ◆ dysfunctional family background;
- ◆ poor literacy/numeracy skills;
- ◆ substance abuse problems;
- ◆ need for sustained psychological support; and/or
- ◆ poor physical health.

Early outcomes of Youth Reach have been positive. Completion of Youth Reach in 2001 resulted in 47 per cent progressing to employment and 27 per cent progressing to education and training.

6.8.2 Community Training Workshops

Community Training Workshops represent the main FAS response to the Foundation Phase of Youth Reach. The Workshops are autonomous training units, set up and managed by local communities with the support of FAS

funding, to meet the specific training and development needs of job seekers that cannot succeed in mainstream education and training.

The Workshops provide second chance education and training mainly in an experimental learning environment. The aim of the workshop is to progress young people to further education, training and employment. Given that many of the vulnerable young participants have suffered from issues such as homelessness, drugs and crime, one of the main aims of the training is to promote personal development, or the teaching of 'soft' skills such as getting out of bed, operating to a timetable, being responsible and being part of a team.

Learning is organised around practical subjects such as woodwork, catering, arts and crafts. All trainees also engage in core modules of literacy and numeracy, which have the highest priority, computer skills and personal development.

As part of its program of meetings in Dublin, the Committee visited the St. Vincent's Trust community training workshop which is a training centre for early school leavers and young mothers, particularly those from disadvantaged communities.

The Committee spoke to a number of participants who were enjoying their involvement in the program. For example, several participants included single mothers who are being taught parenting skills that they were unable to inherit from their own backgrounds, as well as household skills such as fixing the plumbing and wallpapering, and budgeting and nutritional skills. The children of these mothers are cared for within the workshop site and are being taught pre-kindergarten skills to assist in the transition to kindergarten and primary school.

The Committee members were extremely impressed with the work of the St. Vincent's Trust and were encouraged to see disadvantaged young people being given a real chance for the future. The success of the St. Vincent's Trust workshop was largely due to enthusiasm and personal attention shown by the Workshop Manager, Mr Ken Smart.

FINDING 6.8

The Committee finds that the Irish Government has been particularly proactive in addressing the needs of disadvantaged youth and early school leavers through personal mentoring, community training workshops and vocational training and education. The Committee believes this personalised, targeted approach can also be used with success in Victoria.

6.9 Italy

6.9.1 Italian Youth Labour Market

Italy, and indeed most of southern Europe, has suffered very high levels of youth unemployment. A measure of the extent of youth unemployment problems is a comparison between youth unemployment levels and adult unemployment levels. In 2001, the adult unemployment level in Italy was 8 per cent compared to youth unemployment of approximately 33 per cent. In comparison, the youth and adult unemployment rates in Germany are almost identical at around 9 per cent.

The southern regions of Italy, below Rome, have youth unemployment levels well over twice the levels experienced in the central and northern regions. The Committee saw parallels between these differentials and the varying unemployment levels throughout Victoria.

There are many reasons for Italy's high youth unemployment levels, particularly in the south. While the Italian economy is now the fifth largest in the world, there still exist major structural problems. There is a significant lack of industrial development in the south and infrastructure is poor. Labour laws and industrial relations are very rigid due, to a large extent, to the existence of traditionally powerful trade unions.

There exists a number of demographic and generational problems in the Italian youth labour market. The transition from school to work is considered to be very difficult, vocational training is inadequate compared to other European

countries and young women still experience difficulty in entering the labour market. Unemployment rates for young females in Italy are around 38 per cent. Other interesting aspects of the youth labour market in Italy are the tendency for young Italians to stay at home later in life and the lack of labour mobility.

6.9.2 *White Paper on Labour Market Reform*

In October 2001, the newly elected centre-right coalition Government, led by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, issued a White Paper on labour market reform. The objectives of the Paper are to guarantee a substantial increase in the employment rate, to improve the quality of labour and to obtain stronger social cohesion.

The Government's major policy reforms within the White Paper include:

- ◆ the modernisation and the liberalisation of public employment services;
- ◆ the enhancement of public intervention in the school-work-training transition;
- ◆ strengthening of apprenticeship schemes with stronger skill based outcomes;
- ◆ financial incentives for firms employing youth; and
- ◆ greater attention to the participation of women in the labour market.

The reform of labour market laws, in particular changes to Article 18, are the subject of much debate. The Government is seeking to modify Article 18 of the Workers' Statute, which currently requires an employer to re-hire any worker if their dismissal has been judged by the courts to be invalid. The proposals have been met with strong opposition from trade unions.

It is still too early to gauge the success or otherwise of the White Paper reforms, primarily because key aspects of the reforms, such as Article 18, are yet to be fully implemented. Despite the fact that Italy's labour market is not as modern as Australia's and that unemployment rates are much higher, the Committee meetings in Rome highlighted a number of important issues for the Committee to consider.

Clearly, the freeing of labour markets from restrictive economic and regulatory mechanisms are seen as critical in terms of achieving growth in youth unemployment.

There are significant regional disparities in youth unemployment levels in the north and south of Italy. The Committee saw similar disparities in Belgium and Germany. Youth unemployment rates in Victoria (see Chapter 2) also illustrate certain regional disparities. Evidence indicates that areas lacking economic development will generally suffer higher youth unemployment levels and as such will require greater attention from governments.

Italy's White Paper reforms also highlight the importance of vocational training, apprenticeship schemes and the role of the education system in developing skilled young professionals.

It should also be noted that Italy's unemployment benefit system is similar to other European countries and differs from Australia's in that benefits are only available to those who have previously been employed and contributed previously to the scheme.

FINDING 6.9

The Committee finds the Italian example illustrates that extremes in economic development in the same country are reflected in youth unemployment and further, that some cultural aspects such as young people living at home may be major factors in sustaining what should otherwise be an unacceptable level of youth unemployment.

6.10 Conclusion

The Committee's European meetings provided a valuable insight into the key issues facing young unemployed people, the characteristics of youth labour markets and an understanding of recent policy initiatives in other jurisdictions.

FINDING 6.10

The Committee finds that the following issues arising out of its overseas study tour are of particular relevance to youth unemployment solutions in Victoria:

- ◆ *the need for specific programs aimed at disadvantaged youth including early school leavers, young people from socio-economically deprived communities, migrant youth and young Koories;*
- ◆ *the importance of vocational training and apprenticeships in assisting transitions from school-to-work;*
- ◆ *the importance of early intervention strategies commencing at primary school;*
- ◆ *the importance of mentoring and personal assistance, particularly for 'at risk' youth;*
- ◆ *the need for locally based projects targeting local needs;*
- ◆ *the need to obtain employer commitment to programs; and*
- ◆ *the importance of pathways and flexible approaches.*

The Committee has applied the principles contained in the above finding when making recommendations in other chapters throughout this Report.

Issues for Further Investigation

As noted in Chapter 1, during deliberations on this Report, the Committee agreed to present a first Report to Parliament at the end of October 2002 and to table a second Report in 2003. This was considered necessary in order to provide a substantial report on the Committee's work so far based on a number of related issues that were identified as a consequence of initial investigations, including its overseas meetings, while allowing for further investigations leading to a second Report.

This chapter briefly highlights issues that have arisen while preparing this Report, which are to be covered in a Second Report.

7.1 Further Social Issues

The Committee received some evidence regarding the social matters associated with youth unemployment: both social factors that contribute to youth unemployment, and the social consequences of youth unemployment.

Some of the social issues that have been raised throughout the investigations which seem to be associated with youth unemployment, either as a cause or affect, include:

- ◆ the impact on a young person's self-esteem and self-confidence;
- ◆ the link with youth crime rates;
- ◆ the link with poor mental health being experienced either by the young person or a member of his or her family;
- ◆ the link with drug and alcohol addiction;
- ◆ the link with homelessness and/or unstable accommodation and the need for a greater level of accommodation support for young people;
- ◆ the link with poverty as both a cause and consequence of youth unemployment;
- ◆ teenage pregnancies and the impact on current and future employment opportunities; and
- ◆ the increased polarisation of employment opportunities between different neighbourhoods, communities and regions, with many rural and regional centres

in particular affected by higher rates of youth unemployment compared with the metropolitan average.

The Committee acknowledges that the above social matters relating to youth unemployment are vast and complex and require more thorough examination.

The Committee also recognises that a number of individuals and organisations representing young people with a disability (as well as a Local Learning and Employment Network) were disappointed that the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry did not specifically include the needs of this group of young people. This was a concern among those working with young people with either physical or mental disabilities, including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and social phobias. The Committee would therefore like to see this group included in any future Inquiry into youth unemployment or associated areas.

It should be noted that the Economic Development Committee has a specific function within the Parliamentary Committees Act to inquire into any matters connected with economic development or industrial affairs. The broad social impact of youth unemployment is relevant to this function, but could also be examined by other Parliamentary Committees such as the Family and Community Development Committee and the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee.

7.2 Further Economic Issues

Some of the key economic related themes arising from the Committee's investigations to date are the need to investigate further the impacts of under-employment of youth and inter-generational unemployment and to assess the level of financial assistance provided to young unemployed people. Some of the other matters that may be addressed in the Committee's future investigations include:

- ◆ the impact of major structural changes on the range of employment opportunities and the range of entry level positions in various industries and geographic regions of Victoria; and
- ◆ access to technologies and the impact of a widening digital divide.

7.2.1 Under-employment of Young People

Under-employment is a significant issue facing youth, with a large proportion of young people employed in part-time or casual positions. Others, who may have simply given up seeking work and are therefore not included in unemployment figures, would work if the opportunity existed and also contribute to the level of under-employment among youth. As noted in Chapter 1, the ABS definition of employed includes persons who have worked at least one hour in a week. Rather than classify such persons as being employed, the Committee believes these people are significantly under-employed.

The Committee received much evidence surrounding concerns over the casualisation of the labour market, particularly for youth. Work in many rural areas is not only part-time or casual, but is often seasonal as well. These opportunities are associated with a lack of entitlement to many employment benefits (such as leave entitlements), high levels of job insecurity, irregular hours, relatively low and volatile earnings and lack of effective union representation. Consequently, opportunities for training and promotion are likely to be more limited than for full-time employment. Such jobs do not provide a pathway into a more stable work future and the *“unavailability of permanent work or work that provides a living wage for young people causes many young people to leave the region or to spiral into long-term unemployment”*.³³³

The Committee received strong evidence to suggest that young people are still being encouraged towards the completion of secondary and tertiary education and then towards the normal expectation of a full-time job that will provide them with stability and security. The reality of the world of work for this generation is much different. They will most probably experience a combination of roles in different organisations, contract positions, labour hire, job-sharing and laticing as the new way of achieving a positive outcome. As noted by Yes West, this reality not only has implications for the type of career guidance and counselling that should be provided, but also for the community at large, with a whole generation facing on-going insecurity and an inability to effectively budget and plan for future home ownership and stability.³³⁴

³³³ Written Submission No. 14, Smart Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network, 21 May 2002, p1.

³³⁴ Written Submission No. 20, Yes West, 24 May 2002, p8.

When examining ABS Census data in Chapter 2 relating to the number of hours worked, the Committee stated that the issue of under-employment and accurate tracking of employment trends will be examined further in its second Report to Parliament.

7.2.2 Intergenerational Unemployment

One of the greatest concerns heard by the Committee throughout its Inquiry was the issue of intergenerational unemployment. Particular areas of the State, in both metropolitan and country areas have communities where second and third generations have experiences of unemployment. The young people in these communities face extreme challenges to break this cycle. The first challenge is to instill some form of hope and aspirations in the young people in these communities. The second is to overcome the influences working against them, including the lack of positive role models and encouragement within the family and financial and social constraints to participation in education, training and community life. Many of these young people need a strong emphasis on life skills training and personal development as part of their schooling experience and continued support in these areas after they have exited the school system.

7.2.3 Financial Support

Although the Committee did not have extensive discussions in public hearings regarding the level of financial support provided to young people, a number of key issues were highlighted in written submissions received by the Committee. These include:

- ◆ the high cost of completing part-time courses that could offer a pathway to higher education or training or employment or simply, keep a young person engaged and contribute to a sense of self-worth and self-esteem is considered a serious barrier to the success of many youth;
- ◆ young people from rural and regional Victoria are disproportionately disadvantaged and the lack of financial support for young people wishing to move to major regional or metropolitan centres to study is a significant barrier for many young people and their families;

- ◆ the cost of some VET in schools subjects is prohibitive to some students and their families and therefore some students are prevented from pursuing preferred VET in schools opportunities;
- ◆ the costs of looking for work, including transportation costs are a barrier for many young people;
- ◆ concerns that eligibility for the Youth Allowance may cause disadvantage and stress within families, particularly where the period of unemployment is lengthy and where other members of the family have not experienced unemployment;
- ◆ inequalities in the level of Youth Allowance paid to students compared with those not working or studying; and
- ◆ the impact of low youth wages on motivation to secure a traineeship or apprenticeship due to the insignificant financial gain when compared with the Youth Allowance.

7.3 Further Industrial Issues

Industrial matters are important to this Inquiry due to the documented evidence that a young person's first exposure to the workforce is often a powerful indicator of future attachment to the labour market.

The Committee included industry and employer organisations, unions, group training companies and major employers in its initial mail out seeking written submissions to the Inquiry. Despite receiving 69 written submissions, the Committee received very limited evidence specifically related to industrial issues. Some of the key industrial matters that the Committee expected may have been covered include:

- ◆ Youth Rights at Work;
- ◆ Union Representation;
- ◆ Unfair Dismissal;
- ◆ Young Women in the Workforce;
- ◆ Discrimination;
- ◆ Safety at Work; and
- ◆ Minimum wage.

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, in its written submission to the Committee, highlighted concerns about young people experiencing unpaid work trials, harassment and a lack of meaningful or sustained work. It was noted that community education campaigns and legislative reform around issues such as workplace bullying have begun to address workplace cultures that victimise young people.

Some witnesses, including employer groups, briefly referred to the impact of unfair dismissal laws and occupational health and safety requirements on a business' willingness to employ young people.

In view of the limited evidence collected and the Committee's reporting timeframe, the Committee has agreed to defer consideration of industrial matters specific to young people to a second Report to be tabled in 2003. As part of these further investigations, the Committee will target specific witnesses including employer groups, unions, youth and Government departments such as Industrial Relations Victoria.

7.4 Issues Arising from Report No.1

Chapter 3 of this Report dealt with youth participation in education and training. There were some issues that the Committee wishes to further investigate and report back to Parliament in 2003. Briefly, these issues are:

- ◆ the extent of gender imbalance in school retention rates and the causes of these imbalances;
- ◆ the reasons for early school leaving, including an examination of whether it would be appropriate to increase the compulsory school age as has occurred in other countries;
- ◆ the issue of poor school performance and early disengagement leading to unemployment;
- ◆ an examination of VCAL and VET in schools as a means of enhancing technical skills and the concept of introducing trade schools into the Victorian education system; and
- ◆ the impact of refugee trauma on education and employment.

In Chapter 4, the Committee discussed the funding arrangements under the Managed Individual Pathways program and the benefits that a cross-sectoral approach would have on the ability of young people to access the program. The Committee aims to further consider the funding and administrative arrangements for the MIPs program with respect to facilitating a cross-sectoral approach in its second Report to Parliament.

In Chapter 5, the Committee indicated it would further investigate the factors contributing to the high level of turnover in entry-level employment in its second Report to Parliament.

Chapter 6 dealt with findings arising out of the Committee's European study tour. The Committee discussed the Belgian Government's recent Rosetta Plan initiative whereby employment quotas are enforced on companies to employ young unemployed people. The Committee agreed to further consider, and report back to Parliament, the concept of enforced employment quotas on companies, in particular, the availability of financial incentives in the form of subsidies or tax concessions, with a particular weighting towards disadvantaged youth and long-term unemployed young people.

7.5 Process for Further Investigations

The Committee will commence further investigations on these issues with the aim of tabling a second Report in Parliament during 2003. Part of these investigations will involve a series of further public hearings throughout Victoria.

In the event that a State Election is announced and Parliament dissolves before the second Report is complete, the Parliament or Government will need to consider presenting another Reference to the Committee relating to the above matters.

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FUNCTIONS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Economic Development Committee is an all-party Investigatory Committee of the Parliament of Victoria. It was originally established in 1992 under section 4EC of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 1968* as a Joint Investigatory Committee.

In the 54th Parliament, the Committee was reformed under section 37 of the *Parliamentary Committees Act* as a Select Committee of the Legislative Council.

The Committee consists of seven Members of Parliament, all of whom are drawn from the Legislative Council. The Committee carries out investigations and reports to Parliament on matters associated with economic development or industrial affairs.

Section 38 of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 1968* prescribes the Committee's functions as follows:

The functions of the Economic Development Committee are to inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on any proposal, matter or thing connected with economic development or industrial affairs, if the Committee is required so to do by or under this Act.

Appendix 2

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE	Adult Community Education
ACC	Area Consultative Committee
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
AMES	Adult Multicultural Education Services
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CBE	Community Business Employment Program
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
CGEA	Certificate of General Education for Adults
CJP	Community Jobs Program
DE&T	Department of Education and Training
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
ECEF	Enterprise Career Education Foundation
FaCS	Department of Family and Community Services
GTC	Group Training Company
JPET	Job Placement Education and Training Programme
JSCI	Job Seeker Classification Instrument
KODE	Koori Open Door Education
LLEN	Local Learning and Employment Network
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment and Training and Youth Affairs
MIPs	Managed Individual Pathways Program
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
NEIS	New Enterprise Incentive Scheme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OTTE	Office of Training and Tertiary Education
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
RYC	Regional Youth Committee
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TPV	Temporary Protection Visa
VAEAI	Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools
VLESC	Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission
VSPC	Victorian Settlement Planning Committee
YACVic	Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
YES	Youth Employment Scheme

Appendix 3

LIST OF WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

Submission Number	Name of Individual/Organisation	Date Received
1.	Mr Mark McCabe Employment Consultant McCabe Consultancies	17 April 2002
2.	Mr Brian O'Dwyer Executive Director JobsEast	24 April 2002
3.	Mr Ray Griffiths Director East Gippsland Institute of TAFE	26 April 2002
4.	Mr Claude Fromm Employment Consultant Jewish Employment Network	2 May 2002
5.	Mr Ray Hortle Executive Director Albury-Wodonga Area Consultative Committee	6 May 2002
6.	Ms Robyn Broadbent & Ms Sally James Education for Work Coalition	6 May 2002
7.	Mr Mark Johnston Chief Executive Officer Central Goldfields Shire Council	7 May 2002
8.	Mr Lyndon Webb Chief Executive Officer Wellington Shire Council	9 May 2002
9.	Mr Kim McFarland Business Development City of Casey	14 May 2002
10.	Ms Michelle Cleggett Family Services Officer Shire of Campaspe	15 May 2002
11.	Ms Catherine Thornton Unemployed Person	15 May 2002

12.	Mr Richard Gent Youth Development Officer Moyne Shire Council	15 May 2002
13.	Confidential Submission	15 May 2002
14.	Ms Anne-Marie Ryan Executive Officer Smart Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network	21 May 2002
15.	Mr Richard Hancock Chief Executive Officer Latrobe City Council	22 May 2002
16.	Mr Richard Percy Executive Officer South East Development	22 May 2002
17.	Mr Brian Charlton Life Engineering	23 May 2002
18.	Mr George Stone Acting Chief Executive Officer Sunraysia Institute of TAFE	23 May 2002
19.	Ms Alison Cran Director Community and Cultural Services Shire of Yarra Ranges	23 May 2002
20.	Ms Carmen Ilibasic Manager YES West	24 May 2002
21.	Mr Ian Marshman Senior Vice-Principal The University of Melbourne	24 May 2002
22.	Mr Ross Buscemi Deputy Director South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre	24 May 2002
23.	Ms Lydia Wilson Chief Executive Officer Macedon Ranges Shire Council	24 May 2002
24.	Mr John Blair Chairperson Beacon Foundation	24 May 2002
25.	Mr Kevin Moon Deputy Principal/Head of Campus Catholic College Bendigo	24 May 2002

26.	Mr Kevin Phillips Secretary Central Grampians Local Learning and Employment Network Inc.	24 May 2002
27.	Mr Geoffrey Gray Manager Economic Development & Tourism Pyrenees Shire Council	24 May 2002
28.	Mr Lionel Bamblett General Manager Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.	24 May 2002
29.	Mr Bill Marks Acting Chief Executive Officer Adult Multicultural Education Services	24 May 2002
30.	Ms Jacki O'Toole Melbourne Development Board	24 May 2002
31.	Mr Peter Schubert Victorian State Policy Centre Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission	24 May 2002
32.	Mr Jack Melbourne Chairperson Inner City Regional Youth Committee	24 May 2002
33.	Ms Sandie de Wolf Chief Executive Officer Berry Street Victoria	24 May 2002
34.	Ms Marie Dumais Director Planning and Development Chisholm Institute	27 May 2002
35.	Ms Deborah Davison Executive Officer Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network	27 May 2002
36.	Mr Andrew Pollard	29 May 2002
37.	Mr Chris Guthrie Economic Development Manager Shire of Melton	29 May 2002
38.	Mr Gerard Jose Group Manager - Community Services Knox City Council	29 May 2002
39.	Ms Martha Kinsman Director Gordon Institute of TAFE	30 May 2002
40.	Mr Robert Dobrzynski Chief Executive Officer Delatite Shire Council	31 May 2002

41.	Ms Rosemary Copeland Co-Principal Campaspe-Cohuna Local Learning and Employment Network	31 May 2002
42.	Ms Judith Bissland Acting Director, Educational Development Swinburne University of Technology TAFE	31 May 2002
43.	Ms Elsie L'Huillier Executive Officer Goldfields Local Learning & Employment Network	03 June 2002
44.	Mr John Glover Executive Director Group Training Australia	04 June 2002
45.	Ms Kerry Thompson Director City of Melbourne	7 June 2002
46.	Ms Peta Fitzgibbon National Manager, Youth and Student Community Segment Centrelink	12 June 2002
47.	Mr Kerryn Shade Chief Executive Officer Horsham Rural City Council	13 June 2002
48.	Ms Jennifer Bryant Senior Assistant Secretary - Settlement Branch Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs	17 June 2002
49.	City of Whittlesea	17 June 2002
50.	Mr Michael Iaccarino Executive Officer Melbourne's West Area Consultative Committee	18 June 2002
51.	Ms Janet Jukes Executive Officer Youth Affairs Council of Victoria	2 July 2002
52.	Dr John Spierings Research Strategist Dusseldorp Skills Forum	4 July 2002
53.	Mr Bernie Carlon General Manager Queensland Department of Employment & Training	8 July 2002
54.	Ms Sarah McDonald Executive Officer Youth Affairs Council of South Australia	12 July 2002

55.	Ms Julie Rawson Chair North East Regional Youth Committee	17 July 2002
56.	Mr Alan Wilson Chair Central Gippsland Regional Youth Committee	18 July 2002
57.	Ms Maree Wheelens Head of Dept. Employment and Training Services Victoria University of Technology	18 July 2002
58.	Mr Ian Hill Director General Western Australian Department of Training	29 July 2002
59.	Ms Therese Taylor General Manager Investment, Trade & Development Tasmanian Department of State Development	29 July 2002
60.	Ms Kerry Angwin Acting Executive Director, Employment Programs Div. Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development -	1 August 2002
61.	Ms Sarina Greco Manager Ecumenical Migration Centre	12 August 2002
62.	Career Education Association of Victoria Inc.	23 August 2002
63.	Ms Barbara McLure Executive Director Western Melbourne Regional Economic Development Organisation	16 September 2002
64.	Mr Peter White Principal Notre Dame College	18 September 2002
65.	Ms Jeanette Hartley Continuing Education Bendigo Inc.	19 September 2002
66.	Ms Sue Allengame Chairperson Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group	19 September 2002
67.	Mr Graham Bastian Principal Bendigo Senior Secondary College	19 September 2002
68.	Ms Nadine Liddy Programs Coordinator Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues	23 September 2002
69.	Mr John Patsikatheodorou Director Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre	16 September 2002

Appendix 4

LIST OF PUBLIC HEARING WITNESSES

5th August 2002 (Melbourne)

- Dr Andrew Hollows, Manager Policy and Advocacy, Ms Sandie de Wolff, Chief Executive Officer and Ms Lyn McKie, JPET Worker, **Berry Street Victoria**
- Ms Patricia Burrows, Senior Initiatives Manager and Ms Rebecca Gardner, Initiatives Manager, **Foundation for Young Australians**
- Mr Troy Austin, Chairperson, Tumbukka Regional Council, Ms Caroline Martin, Councillor, Tumbukka Regional Council, Mr John Collyer, CDEP Resource Officer and Mr Peter Schubert, Policy Officer, **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission**

12th August 2002 (Melbourne)

- Dr John Spierings, Research Strategist, **Dusseldorp Skills Forum**
- Mr Chris Redmond, Business Manager, External Relationship Management, Mr Alan Grant, Area Business Manager, Area North Central Victoria, Mr Michael Dullard, Area Business Manager, Area West Victoria, Ms Jill Chapman, Area Business Manager, Area South East Victoria; and Ms Diane Major, Youth and Students Manager, Area South East Victoria, **Centrelink**
- Mr Patrick Lyons, Director, Office for Youth, and Mr Phil Harrold, Acting Manager, Youth Culture and Communications, **Department of Education and Training**

19th August 2002 (Dandenong)

- Cr Paul Donovan, Mayor, Mr Carl Wulff, Group Manager, City Services and Mr Bryon Powell, Aboriginal Policy Officer, **City of Greater Dandenong**
- Mr Paul Di Masi, Chief Executive Officer, **South Eastern Local Learning and Employment Network**
- Mr David Glazebrook, Manager and Mr Kyle van der Kuyp, **Visy Cares Centre**
- Mr Tom O'Brien, Manager, Mr Pat Sua, Apprentice Mechanic and Mr Luke Talanoa, Apprentice Mechanic, **Hand Brake Turn**
- Ms Shannon Cheal, Workplace Coordinator, **South East Vocational Consortium**
- Ms Jenny Semple, Manager, **South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre Inc**
- Ms Dary Lean, Youth Worker, **Cambodian Association**
- Mr Graham Smith, Production Manager, **HM GEM Engines**

- Ms Barb Pedersen, JPET Coordinator, **Youth Links**
- Ms Bernadette Rowland, Youth Activity Service Worker and Mr Lee Keldoulis, Participant, Cook Shop Program, **City of Greater Dandenong**

21st August 2002 (Morwell)

- Ms Christine Leth, Manager, **Parent Zone Gippsland**, and Ms Leanne Vella, Youth Development Officer, **Latrobe City Council**
- Ms Leanne Bruce, Manager, **Gippsland Vocational Training Unit**
- Ms Yoka Beumer, Chief Executive Officer, Ms Jane Barr, representative, **Berry Street Victoria**, Mr Grant Rathjen, representative, **Department of Employment, Training and Youth Affairs** and Mr Mick Murphy, Chief Executive Officer, **Local Learning and Employment Network** and representative, **Central Gippsland Regional Youth Committee**
- Mr Russell Cook, VECCI ATWork, **Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry**
- Mr Amir Omerovic, **Gippsland Migrant Resource Centre**
- Mr Ron Elliot, Principal, Ms Kerry Timmins, VCAL Coordinator and College Curriculum Coordinator, Ms Collette Beck, Careers Teacher and Vocational Education and Training Coordinator, and Ms Karen Cain, Campus Principal, **Traralgon Secondary College**
- Ms Noreen Plozza, JPET Coordinator and Mr Rodney Hammond, Silversmith Tutor, **Gippsland Employment Skills Training**

21st August 2002 (Sale)

- Mr Jim Wilson, Manager, Organisational Development, Ms Glenys Butler, Manager, Community Development and Mr Tim Wills, Manager, Economic Development, **Wellington Shire Council**
- Dr Barbara Johnson, Deputy Chair, Ms Victoria Reynolds, Project Officer and Mr Kevin Liddy, Indigenous Employment Facilitator, **Gippsland Area Consultative Committee**
- Dr Ali Khan, Chief Executive Officer, **Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation**
- Ms Gail Cummins, MIPs Coordinator, **Sale Secondary College**
- Ms Anne Kinne, Youth Participation Coordinator, **East Gippsland Institute of TAFE**
- Mr Barry Whitehead, **Gippsland Group Training**

22nd August 2002 (Bairnsdale)

- Mr Robert Haldane, Chairperson, **Gippsland East Local Learning and Employment Network**, and Coordinator, **East Gippsland Vocational Educational Program**
- Mr David Hawkey and Mrs Lorna Hawkey, **Workways Association**
- Mr Neil Baker, General Manager, **Eastern Victoria Group Training**
- Mr Neil Smith, Project Officer, Mr Glen Bury, Project Coordinator, Mr Aaron Podubinski, Ms Cara Kilby, Mr Theo Drieson, and Mr Tim Skogli, **GippSK8**
- Mr Michael O'Brien
- Ms Wendy Gardiner, Principal, Mr Craig Sutherland, Curriculum Coordinator, **Lakes Entrance Secondary College**

2nd September 2002 (Preston)

- Mr Kevin Breen, General Manager, Strategy and Governance and Ms Sue La Greca, Manager Economic Development, **City of Darebin**
- Mr David MacKenzie, Director, Centre for Youth Affairs Research and Development, **RMIT University, Bundoora**
- Ms Sally Missing, Health Promotion Manager, Ms Shirley Firebrace, Aboriginal Access Worker, Ms Naomi Thorpe and Mr Robert Firebrace, **Darebin Community Health**
- Ms Catherine Scarth, General Manager, Community Services, Ms Jill Carr, Coordinator, Given the Chance Program, Ms Ainslie Hannan, Coordinator, **Ecumenical Migration Centre, The Brotherhood of St Lawrence,**
- Mr Rick De Paiva, **Salvation Army**
- Mr Mick Butera, Executive Director, and Mr Paul Smarrelli, Program Manager, **NIETL/NORTH Link**
- Mr Ray Davis, Deputy Chair, **Darebin Youth Consortium Inc.**
- Ms Anne Giddens, Youth Unit, **Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE**
- Mr Chris Astley, Coordinator, **Collingwood Alternative School**

16th September 2002 (Footscray)

- Cr Bill Horrocks, Mayor, **City of Maribyrnong**
- Ms Sally James, General Manager, **Community Development**, Ms Sharon Fisher, **Employment, Education and Training Unit** and Ms Sahra Ibrahim, **Melbourne Citymission Western**

- Ms Ruth Pidriz, Assistant Manager, Post Compulsory Educational Pathways, **North West Work Education Development Group (WEDG)** and Ms Jill Favero, **Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE**
- Mr John Patsikatheodorou, **Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre**
- Mr Michael Iaccarino, Executive Officer, **Melbourne's West Area Consultative Committee** and Ms Sue Fowler, **Maribyrnong & Moonee Valley Local Learning and Employment Network**
- Ms Barbara McLure, Executive Director, Ms Justine Linley, Project Manager, Mr Alex Esposito, Economic Research Officer, **Western Melbourne Regional Economic Development Organisation** and Mr Alan Nield, Workshop Manager, **Agfab Engineering**
- Ms Carmen Ilibasic, Manager, **YES West**
- Mr Brendon Vero, Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) Coordinator, **Maribyrnong Secondary College** and Mr Paul Cholewinski, **Braybrook Secondary College**
- Mr Chris Guthrie, Manager, Economic Development, Mr Tony Ball, Manager Family, Youth and Housing Services, **Melton Shire Council**, Mr Peter Blunden, Principal, **Kerunjang Secondary College**, Chair, **Melton Education Board** and Deputy Chair, **Brimbank-Melton Link** and Mr Brian Beveridge, Education Officer, **Djerriwarh Employment and Education Services**

18th September 2002 (Shepparton)

- Cr Anne McCamish, Deputy Mayor and Mr Dennis Wapling, Coordinator Community Building Project, **City of Greater Shepparton**
- Mr Peter Ryan, Chief Executive Officer and Mr Jim Pascal, Divisional Manager, **Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE**
- Mr Craig Kelly, Chief Executive Officer and Mr Marcus Cook, JPET Coordinator, **Brayton Youth and Family Services**
- Mr Peter White, Principal, Ms Melissa Onans, Student, Ms Meagan Kenny, Student, Ms Julie Hodgkins, VET / VCAL Coordinator, Ms Carol Gemmill, Careers Counsellor, Ms Geraldine Worm, Student and Mr Xavier Angel, Student, **Notre Dame College**
- Mr Glen Cox, Factory Manager and Mr Roger Ottrey, Human Resource Manager, **SPC Ardmona**
- Mr Peter Sutherland, Human Resource Manager and Mr Darren Dix, Training Coordinator, **Tatura Milk Industries Ltd**
- Mr Adam Cockerell, Team Leader and Ms Cherie Watson, **Cutting Edge Youth Services**
- Mr Jim O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer, **Worktrainers Ltd**
- Mr Brian O'Mahony, Training Manager, **Goulburn Murray Group Training**

- Mr Don Intine, Regional Manager, **Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry**
- Mr Richard Phillips, General Manager, **Goulburn Valley Community Development Employment Program**

19th September 2002 (Bendigo)

- Mr Mark Hands, Manager, Recreation and Youth Services and Ms Vivienne Browne, Youth Services Coordinator, **City of Greater Bendigo**
- Mr Chandalala Mambwe, President, **Bendigo Regional Ethnic Communities Council**
- Ms Jeanette Hartley, Youth Support Officer, **Continuing Education Bendigo**
- Ms Kerry Watson and Mr Tony White, **Future Connections**
- Mr Keren Vallence, Manager, Centre for Innovation, Learning and Research and Ms Karli Price, MIPs Worker, **Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE**
- Mr Graham Bastian, Principal and Ms Rosalie Lake, **Bendigo Senior Secondary College**
- Ms Sue Allengame, Chairperson, **Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group** and Indigenous Service Officer, **Bendigo Centrelink Customer Service Centre**
- Mr Chris DeAraugo, Chairman, **Lead On Bendigo**
- Mr Clint Wardle, Youth Services Officer and Ms Monica Rowland, Youth SAAP Worker, **St Luke's Anglicare**
- Ms Elsie L'Huillier, Executive Officer, **Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network**
- Mr Ian Graham, Central Manager, Victorian Region, **Central Victoria Group Training**

23^d September 2002 (Melbourne)

- Mr Lionel Bamblett, General Manager, **Victorian Aboriginal Education Association**
- Mr Nathan Niven, Assistant Secretary, **Victorian Trades Hall Council**, Mr Khan Churchill, Participant, **Community Jobs Program** and Mr Paul Wilson, Youth Worker, **Melbourne Citymission.**
- Mr Brian O'Dwyer, Executive Director, **JobsEast**
- Mr Jamie Edwards, Youth Services Coordinator, Mr Hans Gabina, Project Worker and Ms Mary Hutchison, Project Worker, **Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services**
- Mr Chris Hobson, Chief Executive Officer and Ms Lisa Dunbar, Employment Support Services, **Youth Projects**
- Ms Cheryl Winnell, Training and Employment Services Manager, **Master Builders Association of Victoria**

- Mrs Margaretha Korn, Coordinator and Mr Nicholas Chiam, Planning Officer, Settlement Planning and Information Unit, **Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs**
- Ms Nadine Liddy, Coordinator, Programs Unit, **Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues**
- Mr Rod Styles, Regional Manager, **Gippsland Group Training**
- Cr John Fry, **City of Whittlesea** and Ms Jane Edwards, Member, **Northern Area Consultative Committee**
- Mr Les Twentymen, Street Outreach Worker, **Open Family**

Appendix 5

Economic Development Committee

Victorian Parliament



REPORT ON EUROPEAN STUDY TOUR

28 JUNE TO 18 JULY 2002

Economic Development Committee Members Participating in Study Tour

Members

Hon. Neil Lucas, PSM MLC (Chairman)

Hon. Theo Theophanous, MLC (Deputy Chairman)

Hon. Ron Best, MLC

Hon. Andrea Coote, MLC

Hon. Geoff Craige, MLC

Hon. John McQuilten, MLC

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Introduction

Members of the Economic Development Committee of Victorian Parliament conducted a study tour of western Europe from 28th June to 18th July 2002 investigating issues relating to the Committee's Inquiry into Youth Unemployment. Some meetings also took place with respect to the Committee's Inquiry into Rural Export Opportunities.

The cities visited were Rome, Geneva, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, London and Dublin.

This is not a report on the outcomes of the study tour but rather represents an overview of the meetings. Greater detail on various initiatives and programs dealing with youth unemployment will be contained in the report of the Youth Unemployment Inquiry to be tabled in Parliament during the 2002 Spring Session.

The Committee is grateful for the assistance of Australian Embassies throughout Europe in identifying key appointments and arranging a comprehensive program of meetings. In particular, staff from the Embassies in Brussels and Berlin accompanied the Committee to each meeting in those cities which was greatly appreciated. The Office of the Victorian Agent-General in London provided assistance during the Committee's meetings in London.

Rome: Friday, 28th June 2002 4.00 to 5.30 p.m.

Meeting with Mr Murray Cobban, Australian Ambassador to Italy

The Committee met with the Australian Ambassador to Italy, Mr Murray Cobban, to outline the purpose of its visit and to receive a briefing on the social, economic and political climate of Italy.

Discussions focussed on the centre-right coalition Government, led by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, and its major platform of labour market reform.

The stark economic differences between the south and north of Italy were highlighted, particularly with respect to youth unemployment.

Mr Cobban indicated that export opportunities should be explored through regional authorities and that the Milan and Venice regions have had several recent trade missions to Melbourne.

The Italian Government is focussing on China for future trade opportunities, but it also sees potential in Australia given its position in the Asian region. There is an increasing number of Australian companies looking at Italy for trade opportunities. Mr Cobban sees a need to develop bilateral opportunities in niche export markets.

Rome: Monday, 1st July 2002 8.30 a.m.

Visit to Centro Agro-Alimentare Markets

- Tour conducted by Ms Dorian Ciambuschini, Secretary to Director
-

The Committee conducted an on-site visit to Centro Agro-Alimentare markets with respect to its Inquiry into Rural Export Opportunities.

Centro Agro-Alimentare Roma is a huge \$200 million development on the outskirts of Rome. When it opens in October 2002, it will be Europe's largest wholesale market covering fruit, vegetables and fish. It boasts a large and modern infrastructure and is a reference point for national wholesale commerce. It aims to become one of the main international market hubs with a particular focus on Mediterranean countries.

Centro Agro-Alimentare Roma has two wholesale distributors in its consortium who are keen to encourage out-of-season imports of products of the appropriate quality and assured quantity. Accordingly, opportunities exist for Victorian fresh food related businesses. The Committee will aim to further explore these opportunities in conjunction with Victorian producers and Sir James Gobbo, the Victorian Government's Commissioner for Italy.

Rome: Monday, 1st July 2002 2.00 p.m.

Meeting with Italian Parliament, Chamber of Deputies - XI Public and Private Works Committee

- Dr Domenico Benedetti-Valantini, Committee President
 - Representatives from each Parliamentary group
-

The Committee met with the President and members of the XI Public and Private Works Committee of the Chamber of Deputies (Camera Dei Deputati), the Lower House of the Italian Parliament.

The XI Public and Private Works Committee is responsible for the following areas: public works; private works; social security; income support action; vocational training; service cooperative activities.

Discussion initially focussed on an overview of the Parliamentary Committee system in Italy and the changes brought about by the centre-right Government. The reform of labour market laws, in particular changes to Article 18, are the subject of much debate. The Government is seeking to abolish Article 18 – which currently requires an employer to re-hire any worker who has been dismissed unfairly. The proposals have been met with strong opposition from trade unions.

The Committee received a further briefing on major public work restructure, the overhaul of State run job system and the Government's aim to solve the youth unemployment problems through measures such as vocational training and raising education levels. Some discussion also took place on immigration and youth unemployment in migrant communities in Italy.

Rome: Monday, 1st July 2002 3.45 p.m.

Meeting with Ministry of Welfare

- Dr. Paolo Sestito, Director-General
 - Ms Anna Maria Mattarazzo, International Affairs
-

The Ministry of Welfare is responsible for Italian labour market and strategies/policies to counteract youth unemployment.

Discussions focussed the Italian Government's White Paper on the labour market reform which was released in October 2001. The objectives of the Paper are to guarantee a substantial increase in the employment rate, to improve the quality of labour and to obtain stronger social cohesion.

Dr Sestito indicated that for the Government to achieve its objectives, the labour market must be freed from the existing restrictive economic and regulatory mechanisms.

The Government's major policy reforms include:

- the modernisation and the liberalisation of public employment services;
- the enhancement of public intervention in the school-work-training transition;
- strengthening of apprenticeship schemes with greater skill based outcomes;
- financial incentives for firms employing youth;
- greater attention to the participation of women in the labour market.

Further discussions centred on the history of Italy's youth unemployment problems, the divide between the north and south and the nature of existing unemployment benefits which are more like a social insurance scheme.

Dr. Sestito also spoke of general problems in the transition to adult life and the transition from school to work.

Rome: Monday, 1st July 2002 6.00 p.m.

Meeting with Institute for Studies and Economic Analysis

- Dr Fiorella Kostoris Padora Schioppa
-

The Institute for Studies and Economic Analyses (Istituto di Studi e Analisi Economica - ISAE) is an Italian public research body within which it contributes to the planning, evaluation and control of the results of the Italian research system.

The President of ISAE, Dr. Fiorella Kostoris Padoa Schioppa, provided the Committee with an independent analysis of Italian Government policy on youth employment and related labour market strategies. Dr. Schioppa's research also looks at all unemployment on marginalized sections of community throughout Europe.

Discussions took place on the following subjects:

- youth unemployment statistics;
- the need for greater flexibility in labour laws;
- the tendency for young Italians to stay at home later in life and the lack of labour mobility
- the disenfranchisement of women in the labour market system;
- the importance of the education system and the need to develop skilled young professionals;
- the power of Italy's trade unions and their lack of representation for women or young people; and
- the existing rigidities within Article 18.

Geneva: Wednesday, 3rd July 2002 9.30 a.m.

Meeting with International Labour Organization

- Mr. Göran Hultin, Executive Director, Employment Sector
 - Mr. Duncan Campbell, Head, Employment Policy and Advisory Services
 - Mr. G. Szirackzi and Mr. T. Ueda, youth employment
 - Mr. Brent Wilton, Senior Adviser, International Organisation of Employers
 - Ms. Deborah France, Bureau for Employers' Activities
 - Mr. Bob Kylvoh, Bureau for Workers' Activities
-

The International Labour Organization is the UN specialized agency which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights.

The Committee conducted extremely worthwhile discussions with a range of officers within the ILO in relation to its current work on youth employment strategies.

The ILO, in conjunction with the United Nations and the World Bank, has established a Youth Employment Network to overview worldwide activity on youth employment. The recommendations of the Network will provide the international community with the impetus to gain political commitment to greatly enhance employment opportunities for youth. The four key priority areas are:

1. Youth employability
2. Equal access – gender equality
3. Entrepreneurship
4. Employment creation (mainstreaming employment policies)

The ILO has a series of recommendations to pursue including:

- Youth employment strategy
- Building up youth institutions to provide assistance
- Training and skills – provide appropriate tools and access to skills
- Building bridge between formal and informal economy

In addition to the discussing the Youth Employment Network strategies, the meeting with the ILO covered industrial relations issues for young people, the need for increased expenditure on education and training, the importance of positive work experience and apprenticeships schemes and the need to create partnerships between education, employers and trade unions.

Geneva: Wednesday, 3rd July 2002 2.00 p.m.

Meeting with Geneva Red Cross

- Ms Katja Pecoud, Managing Director
-

The Committee met with the Red Cross in Geneva to discuss a project called 'année humanitaire' or humane year, which aims to facilitate the often difficult passage between the compulsory schooling and a vocational training.

The program is fully funded by the Swiss Government's Department for Economic Affairs (SECO). In five years approximately 70 young people have gone through the program – approximately 47% are now working full-time.

The program is aimed at 15-25 year olds who are in need of special attention. The objectives are to focus and develop competencies and responsibilities, to provide orientation and to improve communication.

The project has 3 main phases:

- get young people ready for work place environment (develop soft skills such as waking up early);
- develop a project in conjunction with Red Cross; and
- realise the project – undertake suitable work experience/training within a company.

Paris: Friday, 5th July 2002 9.15 a.m.

Meeting with Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

- Mr David Grubb, Labour Market Policy
 - Mr Greg Wurzburg, education expert
 - Mr Richard Sweet, main author of the OECD 'From Initial Education' report
-

The OECD's employment analysis looks at how unemployment and employment vary by region, gender, employment status (part-time and self-employed), and according to working conditions such as earnings. Work on unemployment examines active labour market programs and the public employment service. Active Labour Market Policies to help unemployed people back to work include job placement services, unemployment benefits, and labour market programs such as such as training and job creation.

Mr David Grubb discussed youth unemployment statistics, early intervention policies for disadvantaged youth and the need for diverse education pathways and early contact with work, including the importance of training, vocational education, workplace experience and apprenticeships. The Committee also received a background to initiatives in other countries including the JUMP program in Germany, Ireland's National Action Plan, the U.K's New Deal for the Young and the Rosetta Plan in Belgium.

Mr Richard Sweet, an Australian who used to work with the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, discussed the progression from school to work. Mr Sweet commented on the correlation between youth and the overall labour market and the correlation between early school leavers and unemployment. Mr Sweet believes Australia's youth friendly labour market should result in lower levels of youth unemployment. Other subjects discussed included the role of TAFE and apprenticeships. The success of Bendigo Senior Secondary College and Glen Waverley Secondary College were brought to the Committee's attention.

Mr Greg Wurzburg further discussed the importance of education in terms of youth retention, the role of TAFE and vocational technical education.

The results of PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) were also discussed. PISA is a three-yearly survey of the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in the principal industrialised countries. It assesses how far students near the end of compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society. The results put Australia fourth out of 31 surveyed countries but showed that Australia's retention rates were comparatively poor.

Paris: Friday, 5th July 2002 2.30 p.m.

Meeting with the Institute of Economic and Social Research

- Mme. Florence Lefresne, Researcher
-

Mme Lefresne from The Institute of Research Economic and Social (IRES) is considered a leading expert in youth employment research in France and the whole of Europe. Mme Lefresne has studied closely the employment needs of disadvantaged youth and the importance of education and qualification.

Mme Lefresne discussed the basis of her research paper concerning employment routes for young people in danger of social exclusion and the need for remedial programs for disadvantaged youth.

Other topics of discussion included:

- the correlation between youth unemployment and economic cycles;
- the recent increase in female education participation rates;
- the tendency in Latin countries, including France, for young people to stay at home and hence not actively seek employment; and
- the importance of vocational training and the success of the German system.

Brussels: Monday, 8th July 2002 9.00 a.m.

Meeting with Ms Joanna Hewitt, Australian Ambassador to Belgium

- Also in attendance, Ms Antionnette Merrillees, First Secretary

The Committee received an extremely useful briefing from the Australian Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union on the Belgian labour market system and a broader discussion on the political and economic climate in Belgium and the E.U.

Issues discussed included Belgium's welfare system, problems with language barriers, policy challenges surrounding illegal immigrants and the need for incentive programs and policy initiatives aimed at creating youth employment opportunities.

Brussels: Monday, 8th July 2002 9.45 a.m.

Meeting with Higher Institute of Labour Studies

- Mr Dirk Malfait and Mr Peter Van der Hallen

Mr Malfait provided an overview of the Higher Institute of Labour Studies which is a research institute attached to the Catholic University of Leuven in Flanders, Belgium. The Institute has a primary role in canvassing and conducting scientific studies in the fields of education and the labour market, social and economic policy, and employment.

The Committee received overview of the three Belgian regions: Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia. Discussions then focussed on youth unemployment statistics in Belgium which has seen unemployment rates decrease from 25 % in the mid 1990s to around 18% at present. The contrasts in high unemployment in the south and low levels in the north were highlighted.

The presentation also covered causes of youth unemployment, education levels, training and policy initiatives.

In particular, the First Job Agreement (Rosetta Plan) was discussed. Under this Belgian scheme, every company with 100 or more employees must recruit three young people in their first job every year over and above existing workforce levels. In exchange, companies receive a reduction in labour costs.

Brussels: Monday, 8th July 2002 11.45 a.m.**Meeting with Brussels Regional Employment Office (ORBEM)**

- Ms Pascale Destailleur
-

Ms Pascale provided the Committee with a background to the role of regional and federal governments generally and more specifically in relation to employment policy making and job finding.

The aim of the Brussels Regional Employment Office (ORBEM/BGDA) is to enforce the Brussels-Capital Region Government's employment policies, to organise and properly manage the labour market. The ORBEM/BGDA offers specialized services to employers or to people in search of a job in the Brussels Region.

ORBEM has monopoly on providing job services but will soon be contracted out to private sector.

Topics covered in the meeting include:

- an overview of Brussels youth unemployment and education levels;
- the three language requirement of many jobs that adds to youth unemployment problems;
- the Rosetta Plan;
- the lack of training provided by small companies.

Brussels: Monday, 8th July 2002 3.00 p.m.**Tour of European Parliament and meeting with Employment Committee**

- Tour conducted by Mr Niall, O'Neill, Protocol
 - Meeting with Ms Anna Thompson, Secretariat, E.U. Employment Committee
-

The Committee Members were taken on an interesting tour of European Parliament and sat in on one of the committee debates in progress.

At the conclusion of the tour, the Committee met with Ms Anna Thompson, Secretariat, with the E.U's Employment Committee to discuss the five year employment strategy between member states. Discussion also focused on the European Social Fund and its aim to create jobs.

Brussels: Monday, 8th July 2002 5.00 p.m.

Meeting with European Commission, Employment and Social Affairs Directorate

- Ms Odile Quintin, Director-General
-

Ms Quintin commenced discussions with an overview of the Employment and Social Affairs Directorate-General which has the task of promoting a modern, innovative and sustainable European Social Model with more and better jobs in an inclusive society based on equal opportunities.

The E.E.S concentrates on 4 main areas, so-called pillars:

- improving employability - making sure that people can develop the right skills to take up job opportunities in a fast-changing world;
- developing entrepreneurship - making it easier to start and run a business and employ people in it;
- promoting adaptability - developing new more flexible ways of working which reconcile both security for the worker and flexibility for employers; strengthening equal opportunities
- *ensuring equal access to jobs for women and men and equal treatment at work.*

The Committee discussed the different means by which unemployment figures are developed and the recent increase in job activity rate for young workers, particularly 18-20 year olds.

Other areas of discussion were:

- *social exclusion policies:*
- *increase in participation of young in labour market studies and part-time work*
- *vulnerable young are still very much at risk*
- *minimum standards with respect to labour laws and equality between men and women*

Berlin: Wednesday, 10th July 2002 9.30 a.m.

Meeting with Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

- Dr Peter Pompe, International Relations
 - Mr Andreas Kepper, Vocational Training Section
-

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Federal Employment Service are responsible for developing and administering Germany's youth employment policies and programs.

Mr Kepper provided the Committee with a statistical overview of youth unemployment in Germany and comparisons with the rest of Europe. It was noted that comparisons are often difficult due to variations in how each country defines youth unemployment and how the data is presented. Key aspects of the German statistics were that long-term unemployment is not really a problem for young people and that there is little or no difference between rates for youth and all age groups. The difference in unemployment levels between western German states and eastern states is significant.

The key topics covered during the meeting were:

- Vocational training in Germany which has successfully reduced youth unemployment levels;
- Apprenticeship and traineeship schemes which have been very successful in leading to full-time employment;
- retention rates in schools and university;
- Germany's social assistance scheme in which people need to have worked for at least one year before being entitled to unemployment benefits;
- The Hart Report on social insurance;
- The importance of counsellors for 'at risk' young people;
- The close link between economic development and youth employment opportunities; and
- The flexible and mobile youth labour market in Germany.

Berlin: Wednesday, 10th July 2002 2.00 p.m.

**Meeting with Labour Office Berlin-Mitte (BIZ) and visit to
Job Information Centre**

- Ms Beate Zschunke, Job Training and Placement
 - Ms Dorothee Gordon, Advisory Service, Vocation and Economics
 - Ms Andrea Titel, Support Measures
-

Discussions with the Labour Office Berlin initially focussed on vocational training and the role of job counselors who work with students to identify abilities and attitudes to determine future directions.

The main focus of discussions was the JUMP program.

The German Immediate Action Programme for Training, Qualification and Employment of Young People ("JUMP") commenced in 1999 with the aim of reducing unemployment among young people. The program involves a wide range of measures with particular focus on transitions from school into training and from training into employment. The main target groups of the programme are young people who applied for an apprenticeship but were so far unsuccessful, young unemployed people, and young people who are neither in employment or in training and are no longer registered. The programme has a social inclusion aspect and also specifically targets particularly disadvantaged young people, women, young foreigners and people with disabilities.

Further discussions took place on youth unemployment problems in migrant communities, particularly the large Turkish population in Germany.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Committee visited the Job Information Centre.

Berlin: Thursday, 11th July 2002 10.00 a.m.

Meeting with Federaton of German Trade Unions (DGB)

- Mr Volker Scharlowsky, Education Section
- Dr Wolfgang Lutterbach, International and European Trade Union Policy

Mr Volker Scharlowsky provided a background to the German trade union movement. The DGB represents the German trade union movement in dealing with the government authorities at Federal State and national level, the political parties, the employers' organisations and other groups within society.

The Committee discussed the trade union's involvement in reducing youth unemployment through job creation programs and training geared to future needs

Dr Wolfgang Lutterbach spoke of the need for more vocational training positions and incentives for life long learning, the problems with youth unemployment in eastern Germany and importance of businesses to create jobs.

The results of the PISA study were discussed which showed Germany's education system is not achieving the desired outcomes. There is a political objective to improve basic skills at schools and to prepare young people for work environment.

The Committee also discussed the impact of high unemployment levels in migrant communities.

Final discussions centred on the forthcoming German Federal election.

Berlin: Thursday, 11th July 2002 1.30 p.m.

Meeting with Social Science Research Centre Berlin

- Mr Christian Brzinsky, Labour Market Division
 - Mr Markus Gangl, Labour Market Division – JUMP Program
-

The Social Science Research Centre Berlin is one of Europe's largest research institutes focussing on basic social science.

Mr Christian Brzinsky and Mr Markus Gangl spoke to the Committee on their work-in-progress evaluation of recent youth unemployment policy programs implemented by the Federal Government.

Discussions focussed on:

- reform of unemployment insurance scheme – Hart Commission;
- the success of vocational training in reducing youth unemployment in immediate post school years;
- the value of apprenticeship schemes; and
- and an evaluation of the success to date of the JUMP program in getting young people into jobs.

Berlin: Thursday, 11th July 2002 4.00 p.m.
Meeting with Federation of German Employers Associations

- Ms Tania Nackmayer, Project Officer
 - Ms Elke Gundle, Project Officer
 - Mr Bernhard Schwarzkopf
-

The Confederation of German Employer's Association (BDA) is the principal organisation of German private employers at the federal and the international level.

Ms Nackmayer provided an overview of BDA's involvement in employment policy including discussion on

- labour laws
- labour market and vocational training
- social policy in educational and youth work

The meeting covered the following topics:

- the results of the PISA assessment of students - BDA believes the poor result for Germany was no surprise because poor skills had previously been identified;
- some problems identified in the German traineeship system such as many young not being able to get apprenticeship because of poor performance, flexibility of training regulations;
- the requirements of employers in filling apprenticeships at lower levels – less skilled positions; and
- the need to closely link traineeship schemes to real work and the needs of companies.

The BDA also put to the Committee that the early JUMP program results are quite poor – only 37% of supported persons obtained full-time employment after they had participated in program. Some debate ensued on the outcomes of the program compared to the funding provided by Government.

London: Monday, 15th July 2002 9.00 a.m.

Meeting with Department of Work and Pensions

- Mr Michael Richardson, Director, Work and Welfare Strategy
 - Mr Bill Wells, Economy and Labour Market Division
-

The Department of Works & Pensions is responsible for delivering the Government's unemployment programs. Mr Michael Richardson outlined the broad role of the Department in terms of dealing with youth unemployment.

Of particular interest was discussion on the New deal for Young People initiative.

New Deal is a key part of the Government's Welfare to Work strategy. It has been created to help unemployed people into work by closing the gap between the skills employers want and the skills people can offer.

New Deal is based on local partnerships between employers, local authorities, training providers, Jobcentres, environment groups, voluntary organisations and others. These partnerships are co-ordinated by the Jobcentre Plus or, in some cases, by the private sector.

Under New Deal, if a young person fails to get into labour market after 6 months then they are given personal help/counsellor to provide necessary support. The program includes developing soft skills and training obligations. New Deal has been a major factor in the recent reduction in youth unemployment in the U.K. The program is still lacking success in some ethnic minority groups and socially disadvantaged areas.

Further discussions focussed on Life Long Learning, the National Employment Insurance system, discrimination by some employers against certain ethnic groups and a general discussion on unemployment figures, ILO definitions and statistical comparisons with Australia.

London: Monday, 15th July 2002 2.00 p.m.

Meeting with Department of Education and Skills

- Mr Julian Ward, Youth Directorate Support Team
 - Mr Alan Davies, Young People's Policy Division Manager
 - Ms Sara Marshall, Qualifications for Work Division Manager
 - Ms Marney Dick, Learning and Skills Council Programme Manager
 - Ms Claire Weiss, Learning and Skills Council Development Agency
-

The meeting commenced with an overview of the Department for Education and Skills' main priorities for the next four years:

- Providing high-quality early education and childcare for more children.
- Continuing the progress already made in primary education.
- Transforming secondary education.
- Developing a flexible and challenging 14-19 phase of education.
- Increasing and broadening participation in higher education.
- Developing the skills of the workforce - particularly the basic skills of some adults.

The Committee was given an outline of the 14-19 Green Paper which sets out proposals for a new phase of learning for young people aged 14 to 19.

Some discussion took place on 'entry to employment' which involves early assessment and development of skills for young people in preparing them for further education or employment.

The Committee took part in a video link meeting with Department staff Sheffield to discuss Modern Apprenticeships and National Vocational Training.

The Modern Apprenticeships are seen as one of the key initiatives in increasing skills nationally. With a Modern Apprenticeship young people can work towards a National Vocational Qualification in a chosen career, providing a nationally recognised qualification that is valued by employers.

London: Tuesday, 16th July 2002 9.00 a.m.

Meeting with Learning and Skills Council

- Mr Stuart Gardner, Program Manager, Young People's Programmes
-

Mr Gardner initially outlined the purpose of the Learning and Skills Council which is responsible for funding and planning education and training for over 16-year-olds in England. The creation of the LSC was a central feature of the Government's radical proposals for post-16 education and training and is the first time when one body has been responsible for education and training funding.

Discussions centred on the three key areas of focus on youth:

- The role of work-based learning in improving the transition from school to work
- The critical 14-19 education phase and the work the LSC is doing to ensure that everyone in this age group receives the required level of education
- The work of the Inclusive Learning Team in placing students with learning difficulties in special education institutions

The Committee was briefed on the 'Learning to Succeed' White Paper which sets out a vision whereby all individuals, irrespective of their background or education levels would be given the chance to:

- learn new skills
- fulfil their potential
- improve the quality of their lives at home and at work

London: Tuesday, 16th July 2002 11.00 a.m.

Meeting with Ms Fiona Buffington, Senior Trade Commissioner, Austrade

The Committee met with Ms Buffington in relation to its Inquiry into Rural Export Opportunities and to gather information on food related export opportunities in the U.K and Europe.

The role of Austrade was initially raised followed by discussion on:

- the importance of quality and consistency of supply
- the need for growers to combine to create necessary scale
- freight issues into Europe
- the need to focus of niche products such as premium fruits and gourmet foods
- the importance of marketing (New Zealand example)
- the need for more sophisticated farming techniques

London: Tuesday, 16th July 2002 2.00 p.m.

Meeting with Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion

- Mr Paul Convery, Director
- Mr Dave Simmonds, Director

The Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion is a London based national research and lobbying organisation, which is expert in the social policy, labour market and welfare-to-work field.

Mr Convery and Mr Simmonds provided the Committee with a very interesting and independent analysis of effectiveness of relevant UK policies such as New Deal for the Young, Modern Apprenticeships and various labour market programs.

Topics covered in the meeting included the concept that long term youth unemployment in the U.K is no longer evident, the emphasis on upskilling through enhanced education and training, the importance of New Deal in offering opportunities for the young, intergenerational unemployment, and the work of Job Centre Plus.

Mr Convery and Mr Simmonds believe New deal needs to improve in terms of its outcomes. At present, less than 40 % of youth entrants get sustained jobs and the least employable are being helped less.

Dublin: Wednesday, 17th July 2002 1.00 p.m.

Meeting with Mr Bob Halverson, OBE, Ambassador to Ireland

- Also in attendance, Mr David Hammond, First Secretary
-

Australia's Ambassador to Ireland and the Holy See, Mr Bob Halverson, hosted a working luncheon upon the Committee's arrival in Dublin.

Interesting discussions took place on a range of issues including:

- the political system in Ireland;
- the recent economic surge that has taken place led by a more educated and skilled workforce, the growth in IT, how this has translated into new job opportunities for young people and similar opportunities for Victoria;
- opportunities for Victorian wine distribution in Europe and Ireland and opportunities for Victorian exports generally throughout in Europe;
- Ireland's position in the European Union; and
- the Ambassador's role as the Australian Government representative to the Holy See.

Mr Halverson and Mr Hammond also briefed the Committee members on the program of meetings arranged in Dublin.

Dublin: Wednesday, 17th July 2002 3.00 p.m.

Tour of Leinster House (Irish Parliament)

The Committee were taken on a fascinating tour of Leinster House, the building which houses the Irish Parliament. The tour included a visit to the Dail (Lower House) and Seanad (Upper House) Chambers.

The counting of votes for the election to Seanad Eireann (Senate) was taking place during the Committee's visit.

The tour guide provided an interesting background to Ireland's politics from the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 to the present Government.

Dublin: Thursday, 18th July 2002 10.30 a.m.

Meeting with Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment

- Mr David Barry, Principal Officer, Employment and Training Strategy
 - Ms Amy Hubbard, Higher Executive Officer, Employment Services Section
 - Ms Cliona Ryan, Labour Market Policy Unit
 - Ms Margaret Kelly, Higher Education Div., Dept. of Education and Science
 - Mr Gus O'Connell, National Co-ordinator, FAS
-

Mr David Barry commenced discussions by providing a briefing on the Department's labour market analysis, trends in employment, unemployment and the labour force. The key activities of the Training Strategy Unit were outlined which are to deal with core issues such as Lifelong Learning, skills demand and supply, vocational and enterprise training, and employment and training for people with disabilities.

Ms Margaret Kelly, representing the Department of Education and Science, provided a presentation on measures to retain young people in education and to provide young people with the skills to enter the labour market.

Discussion took place on the Life Long Learning Program which will aim to upgrade literary skills for unemployed and the need to deal with disadvantaged youth who are not able to complete the required education levels. Ms Kelly spoke of the importance of local partnerships between schools, communities and businesses and of the increasing relevance of vocational training.

Mr Gus O'Connell is the National Co-ordinator of Youthreach within FAS, the Government's national Training and Employment Agency. Mr O'Connell's presentation dealt with employment and training services for young persons in transition, special provisions for young persons under 21 experiencing difficulty and the importance of promoting social inclusion to prevent young people becoming long term unemployed.

Mr O'Connell sees potential every young person and emphasised the need to for a co-ordinated approach from all agencies to work with young people.

Dublin: Thursday, 18th July 2002 1.15 p.m.

Meeting and tour of the St.Vincent's Trust Workshop for Young People

- Accompanied by Mr Gus O'Connell, FAS
 - Discussion and tour conducted by Mr Ken Smart, Workshop Manager
-

St. Vincent's Trust community training workshop is a training centre for early school leavers and young mothers, particularly those from disadvantaged communities. The aim of the workshop is to progress young people to further education, training and employment. Given that many of the vulnerable young participants have suffered from issues such as homelessness, drugs and crime, one of the main aims of the training is to promote personal development, or the on teaching of 'soft' skills – e.g. getting out of bed, operating to a timetable, being responsible and being part of a team.

The Committee members were given lunch cooked by some young boys who are involved in the workshop training.

Following the lunch, the Committee visited other parts of the workshop training and spoke to several participants including single mothers who are being taught parenting skills, skills that they did not inherit from their own backgrounds, as well as household skills such as fixing the plumbing, wallpapering etc, and budgeting and nutritional skills. The children of these mothers were being taught pre-kindergarten skills, things that children with more advantages take for granted. This would give the children a greater start at pre-school.

The Committee members were extremely impressed with the work of the St. Vincent's Trust and were encouraged to see disadvantaged young people being given a real chance for the future.

The program's success was due to a local Nun who formulated the idea and the Workshop Manager, Mr Ken Smart, who was very enthusiastic, a good disciplinarian and yet had a great empathy with the young people because he had come from a similar background.

Appendix 6

MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES FOR ABS LABOUR FORCE REGIONS

The municipal boundaries which make up each metropolitan region are as follows:

Outer Western Melbourne	Brimbank (C), Hobsons Bay (C), Maribyrnong (C), Melton (S), Moonee Valley (C), Wyndham (C).
North Western Melbourne	Hume (C), Moreland (C).
Inner Melbourne Statistical Region	Melbourne (C), Port Phillip (C), Stonnington (C), Prahran (SLA), Yarra (C).
North Eastern Melbourne	Banyule (C), Darebin (C), Nillumbik (S), Whittlesea (C).
Inner Eastern Melbourne	Boroondara (C), Manningham (C), Monash (C), Whitehorse (C).
Southern Melbourne	Bayside (C), Glen Eira (C), Kingston (C), Stonnington (C), Malvern (SLA).
Outer Eastern Melbourne	Knox (C), Maroondah (C), Yarra Ranges (S), Part A (SSD).
South Eastern Melbourne	Cardinia (S), Casey (C), Greater Dandenong (C).
Mornington Peninsula	Frankston (C), Mornington Peninsula (S).

The municipal boundaries which make up each non-metropolitan region are as follows:

Barwon-Western District	Colac-Otway (S), Corangamite (S), Glenelg (S), Golden Plains (S), Greater Geelong (C), Moyne (S), Queenscliffe (B), Southern Grampians (S), Surf Coast (S), Warrnambool (C), Lady Julie Percy Island.
Central Highlands Wimmera	Ararat (RC), Ballarat (C), Hepburn (S), Hindmarsh (S), Horsham (RC), Moorabool (S), Northern Grampians (S), Pyrenees (S), West Wimmera (S), Yarriambiack (S).
Lodden-Malle	Buloke (S), Central Goldfields (S), Gannawarra (S), Greater Bendigo (C), Lodden (S), Macedon Ranges (S), Mildura (RC), Mount Alexander (S), Swan Hill (RC).
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	Alpine (S), Campaspe (S), Delatite (S), Greater Shepparton (C), Indigo (S), Mitchell (S), Moira (S), Murrindindi (S), Strathbogie (S), Towong (S), Wangaratta (RC), Wodonga (RC).
All Gippsland	Bass Coast (S), Baw Baw (S), East Gippsland (S), La Trobe (S), South Gippsland (S), Wellington (S), Yarra Ranges (S) - Part B (SLA), Yallourn Works Area, Bass Strait Islands, French Island, Off Shore Areas and Migratory.

Appendix 7

VCAL TRIAL SITES FOR 2002

LLEN Region	School or TAFE Institute
Frankston/Mornington Peninsula	Langwarrin Secondary College Western Port Secondary College Padua College
Bendigo Region	Maryborough Regional College Castlemaine Secondary College
Goulburn Murray Region	Shepparton High School Notre Dame College
Highlands/Ballarat Region	Sebastopol Secondary College Damascus College
Inner Northern Metropolitan	Northland Secondary College Collingwood College (The Island) Samaritan College Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE
Latrobe/Baw Baw Region	Kurnai College Lowanna College Traralgon Secondary College Lavalla Catholic College, Traralgon
Geelong Region	Corio Bay Senior College
South East Metropolitan	Doveton Secondary College Eumemmerring College
Eastern Metropolitan	Box Hill Senior Secondary College Box Hill Institute of TAFE

Appendix 8

**PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA)
FIRST RESULTS FROM PISA 2000**

Mean Reading, Mathematical and Scientific Literacy Rankings

Country Ranking	Reading Literacy	Mathematical Literacy	Scientific Literacy
1	Finland	Japan	Korea
2	Canada	Korea	Japan
3	New Zealand	New Zealand	Finland
4	Australia	Finland	United Kingdom
5	Ireland	Australia	Canada
6	Korea	Canada	New Zealand
7	United Kingdom	Switzerland	Australia
8	Japan	United Kingdom	Austria
9	Sweden	Belgium	Ireland
10	Austria	France	Sweden
11	Belgium	Austria	Czech Republic
12	Iceland	Denmark	France
13	Norway	Iceland	Norway
14	France	Liechtenstein	United States
15	United States	Sweden	Hungary
16	Denmark	Ireland	Iceland
17	Switzerland	Norway	Belgium
18	Spain	Czech Republic	Switzerland
19	Czech Republic	United States	Spain
20	Italy	Germany	Germany
21	Germany	Hungary	Poland
22	Liechtenstein	Russian Federation	Denmark
23	Hungary	Spain	Italy
24	Poland	Poland	Liechtenstein
25	Greece	Italy	Greece

(Source: OECD Programme for International Student Assessment – First Results from PISA 2000)

Appendix 9

YOUTH LABOUR FORCE BY REGION (TOTAL PERSONS 15-24 YRS)

Region	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Local Government Area						
Alpine (S)	1,301	116	1,417	557	8.2	71.8
Ararat (RC)	582	92	674	394	13.6	63.1
Ballarat (C)	6,633	1,526	8,159	4,376	18.7	65.1
Banyule (C)	9,330	982	10,312	5,176	9.5	66.6
Bass Coast (S)	1,003	200	1,203	821	16.6	59.4
Baw Baw (S)	2,315	332	2,647	1,555	12.5	63.0
Bayside (C)	5,117	528	5,645	3,448	9.4	62.1
Boroondara (C)	12,267	1,336	13,603	8,633	9.8	61.2
Brimbank (C)	12,655	2,395	15,050	9,299	15.9	61.8
Buloke (S)	323	31	354	304	8.8	53.8
Campaspe (S)	2,137	272	2,409	1,373	11.3	63.7
Cardinia (S)	3,380	350	3,730	1,828	9.4	67.1
Casey (C)	13,969	1,787	15,756	7,749	11.3	67.0
Central Goldfields (S)	572	128	700	496	18.3	58.5
Colac-Otway (S)	1,419	152	1,571	752	9.7	67.6
Corangamite (S)	904	84	988	644	8.5	60.5
Darebin (C)	8,218	1,582	9,800	5,945	16.1	62.2
Delatite (S)	1,511	232	1,743	1,031	13.3	62.8
East Gippsland (S)	1,893	370	2,263	1,542	16.3	59.5
Frankston (C)	8,545	1,385	9,930	4,332	13.9	69.6
Gannawarra (S)	687	61	748	435	8.2	63.2
Glen Eira (C)	7,783	953	8,736	5,328	10.9	62.1
Glenelg (S)	1,009	262	1,271	713	20.6	64.1
Golden Plains (S)	786	175	961	650	18.2	59.7
Greater Bendigo (C)	6,703	1,357	8,060	4,409	16.8	64.6
Greater Dandenong (C)	8,725	1,732	10,457	7,609	16.6	57.9
Greater Geelong (C)	13,494	2,597	16,091	8,502	16.1	65.4
Greater Shepparton (C)	4,026	687	4,713	2,367	14.6	66.6
Hepburn (S)	669	126	795	613	15.8	56.5
Hindmarsh (S)	319	33	352	230	9.4	60.5
Hobsons Bay (C)	5,067	878	5,945	3,422	14.8	63.5
Horsham (RC)	1,310	191	1,501	675	12.7	69.0
Hume (C)	9,604	1,783	11,387	7,170	15.7	61.4
Indigo (S)	637	102	739	664	13.8	52.7
Kingston (C)	9,465	1,029	10,494	4,980	9.8	67.8
Knox (C)	12,391	1,410	13,801	6,258	10.2	68.8
Latrobe (C)	4,469	1,159	5,628	3,439	20.6	62.1
Loddon (S)	346	49	395	342	12.4	53.6
Macedon Ranges (S)	2,170	279	2,449	1,608	11.4	60.4
Manningham (C)	8,263	799	9,062	5,770	8.8	61.1

Region	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Local Government Area						
Maribyrnong (C)	3,433	868	4,301	3,130	20.2	57.9
Maroondah (C)	8,362	922	9,284	3,637	9.9	71.9
Melbourne (C)	6,399	1,241	7,640	7,887	16.2	49.2
Melton (S)	4,636	747	5,383	2,620	13.9	67.3
Mildura (RC)	3,235	506	3,741	1,835	13.5	67.1
Mitchell (S)	1,894	230	2,124	1,443	10.8	59.5
Moira (S)	1,568	192	1,760	908	10.9	66.0
Monash (C)	12,690	1,690	14,380	9,051	11.8	61.4
Moonee Valley (C)	8,088	984	9,072	4,347	10.8	67.6
Moorabool (S)	1,619	210	1,829	1,086	11.5	62.7
Moreland (C)	9,677	1,664	11,341	5,841	14.7	66.0
Mornington Peninsula (S)	8,722	1,019	9,741	4,192	10.5	69.9
Mount Alexander (S)	808	164	972	635	16.9	60.5
Moyne (S)	880	86	966	543	8.9	64.0
Murrindindi (S)	670	93	763	536	12.2	58.7
Nillumbik (S)	5,204	532	5,736	2,790	9.3	67.3
Northern Grampians (S)	667	99	766	466	12.9	62.2
Port Phillip (C)	5,397	724	6,121	2,581	11.8	70.3
Pyrenees (S)	274	45	319	272	14.1	54.0
Queenscliffe (B)	127	15	142	91	10.6	60.9
South Gippsland (S)	1,330	178	1,508	1,119	11.8	57.4
Southern Grampians (S)	1,033	135	1,168	719	11.6	61.9
Stonnington (C)	6,910	859	7,769	4,408	11.1	63.8
Strathbogie (S)	399	51	450	340	11.3	57.0
Surf Coast (S)	1,148	163	1,311	738	12.4	64.0
Swan Hill (RC)	1,532	163	1,695	836	9.6	67.0
Towong (S)	225	27	252	247	10.7	50.5
Wangaratta (RC)	1,732	253	1,985	1,037	12.7	65.7
Warrnambool (C)	2,420	369	2,789	1,204	13.2	69.8
Wellington (S)	2,305	447	2,752	2,052	16.2	57.3
West Wimmera (S)	216	12	228	154	5.3	59.7
Whitehorse (C)	10,386	1,157	11,543	6,436	10.0	64.2
Whittlesea (C)	9,550	1,372	10,922	5,833	12.6	65.2
Wodonga (RC)	2,881	490	3,371	1,469	14.5	69.6
Wyndham (C)	6,826	980	7,806	4,052	12.6	65.8
Yarra (C)	5,773	879	6,652	2,697	13.2	71.2
Yarra Ranges (S)	11,500	1,351	12,851	6,080	10.5	67.9
Yarriambiack (S)	382	25	407	265	6.1	60.6

Region	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Labour Force Region						
Outer Western Melbourne	40,705	6,852	47,557	26,870	14.4	63.9
North Western Melbourne	19,281	3,447	22,728	13,011	15.2	63.6
Inner Melbourne	21,207	3,306	24,513	15,200	13.5	61.7
North Eastern Melbourne	32,302	4,468	36,770	19,744	12.2	65.1
Inner Eastern Melbourne	43,606	4,982	48,588	29,890	10.3	61.9
Southern Melbourne	25,637	2,907	28,544	16,129	10.2	63.9
Outer Eastern Melbourne	32,244	3,683	35,927	15,949	10.3	69.3
South Eastern Melbourne	26,074	3,869	29,943	17,186	12.9	63.5
Mornington Peninsula	17,267	2,404	19,671	8,524	12.2	69.8
Metropolitan Total	258,323	35,918	294,241	162,503	12.2	64.4
Barwon-Western District	23,220	4,037	27,257	14,556	14.8	65.2
Central Highlands-Wimmera	12,671	2,357	15,028	8,531	15.7	63.8
Loddon-Mallee	16,376	2,738	19,114	10,900	14.3	63.7
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	18,981	2,745	21,726	11,972	12.6	64.5
All Gippsland	13,397	2,690	16,087	10,562	16.7	60.4
Non-Metropolitan Total	84,645	14,567	99,212	56,521	14.7	63.7
Victoria	342,968	50,485	393,453	219,024	12.8	64.2

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing)

Appendix 10

TEENAGE LABOUR FORCE BY REGION (TOTAL TEENAGERS 15-19 YRS)

Region	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Local Government Area						
Alpine (S)	518	67	585	472	11.5	55.3
Ararat (RC)	271	43	314	292	13.7	51.8
Ballarat (C)	2,655	813	3,468	3,178	23.4	52.2
Banyule (C)	3,378	505	3,883	3,897	13.0	49.9
Bass Coast (S)	467	98	565	666	17.3	45.9
Baw Baw (S)	1,110	182	1,292	1,311	14.1	49.6
Bayside (C)	2,152	270	2,422	2,735	11.1	47.0
Boroondara (C)	3,989	594	4,583	6,046	13.0	43.1
Brimbank (C)	4,243	1,027	5,270	6,933	19.5	43.2
Buloke (S)	157	21	178	262	11.8	40.5
Campaspe (S)	1,039	136	1,175	1,122	11.6	51.2
Cardinia (S)	1,587	203	1,790	1,502	11.3	54.4
Casey (C)	5,746	976	6,722	6,057	14.5	52.6
Central Goldfields (S)	253	67	320	404	20.9	44.2
Colac-Otway (S)	685	65	750	614	8.7	55.0
Corangamite (S)	382	39	421	535	9.3	44.0
Darebin (C)	2,362	630	2,992	3,739	21.1	44.5
Delatite (S)	753	147	900	902	16.3	49.9
East Gippsland (S)	953	200	1,153	1,272	17.3	47.5
Frankston (C)	3,577	735	4,312	3,145	17.0	57.8
Gannawarra (S)	327	36	363	365	9.9	49.9
Glen Eira (C)	2,459	375	2,834	3,576	13.2	44.2
Glenelg (S)	477	146	623	590	23.4	51.4
Golden Plains (S)	397	103	500	555	20.6	47.4
Greater Bendigo (C)	2,976	686	3,662	3,172	18.7	53.6
Greater Dandenong (C)	2,789	722	3,511	5,408	20.6	39.4
Greater Geelong (C)	5,367	1,322	6,689	6,500	19.8	50.7
Greater Shepparton (C)	1,844	321	2,165	1,820	14.8	54.3
Hepburn (S)	316	70	386	502	18.1	43.5
Hindmarsh (S)	116	18	134	203	13.4	39.8
Hobsons Bay (C)	1,665	388	2,053	2,524	18.9	44.9
Horsham (RC)	621	96	717	521	13.4	57.9
Hume (C)	3,680	842	4,522	5,341	18.6	45.8
Indigo (S)	361	58	419	546	13.8	43.4
Kingston (C)	3,449	469	3,918	3,771	12.0	51.0
Knox (C)	4,990	778	5,768	5,006	13.5	53.5
Latrobe (C)	1,988	588	2,576	2,573	22.8	50.0
Loddon (S)	161	23	184	288	12.5	39.0
Macedon Ranges (S)	1,055	167	1,222	1,401	13.7	46.6

Region	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Local Government Area						
Manningham (C)	2,924	395	3,319	4,353	11.9	43.3
Maribyrnong (C)	893	328	1,221	1,960	26.9	38.4
Maroondah (C)	3,315	489	3,804	2,864	12.9	57.0
Melbourne (C)	1,395	426	1,821	3,507	23.4	34.2
Melton (S)	1,809	390	2,199	2,022	17.7	52.1
Mildura (RC)	1,420	264	1,684	1,430	15.7	54.1
Mitchell (S)	792	113	905	1,244	12.5	42.1
Moira (S)	743	92	835	730	11.0	53.4
Monash (C)	4,128	738	4,866	5,805	15.2	45.6
Moonee Valley (C)	2,489	418	2,907	3,130	14.4	48.2
Moorabool (S)	753	126	879	897	14.3	49.5
Moreland (C)	2,518	632	3,150	3,717	20.1	45.9
Mornington Peninsula (S)	4,118	541	4,659	3,370	11.6	58.0
Mount Alexander (S)	410	90	500	486	18.0	50.7
Moyne (S)	398	49	447	471	11.0	48.7
Murrindindi (S)	331	49	380	463	12.9	45.1
Nillumbik (S)	2,244	337	2,581	2,423	13.1	51.6
Northern Grampians (S)	302	44	346	376	12.7	47.9
Port Phillip (C)	936	176	1,112	1,424	15.8	43.8
Pyrenees (S)	129	24	153	229	15.7	40.1
Queenscliffe (B)	68	9	77	76	11.7	50.3
South Gippsland (S)	672	80	752	955	10.6	44.1
Southern Grampians (S)	496	75	571	612	13.1	48.3
Stonnington (C)	1,519	298	1,817	2,637	16.4	40.8
Strathbogie (S)	195	27	222	281	12.2	44.1
Surf Coast (S)	472	81	553	594	14.6	48.2
Swan Hill (RC)	678	76	754	668	10.1	53.0
Towong (S)	108	15	123	228	12.2	35.0
Wangaratta (RC)	850	145	995	842	14.6	54.2
Warrnambool (C)	1,064	186	1,250	830	14.9	60.1
Wellington (S)	1,070	226	1,296	1,576	17.4	45.1
West Wimmera (S)	89	6	95	136	6.3	41.1
Whitehorse (C)	3,720	565	4,285	4,548	13.2	48.5
Whittlesea (C)	3,447	677	4,124	4,398	16.4	48.4
Wodonga (RC)	1,245	283	1,528	1,080	18.5	58.6
Wyndham (C)	2,655	509	3,164	3,078	16.1	50.7
Yarra (C)	966	213	1,179	1,363	18.1	46.4
Yarra Ranges (S)	5,107	772	5,879	4,994	13.1	54.1
Yarriambiack (S)	186	11	197	235	5.6	45.6
Labour Force Region						
Outer Western Melbourne	13,754	3,060	16,814	19,647	18.2	46.1
North Western Melbourne	6,198	1,474	7,672	9,058	19.2	45.9
Inner Melbourne	3,886	954	4,840	7,416	19.7	39.5
North Eastern Melbourne	11,431	2,149	13,580	14,457	15.8	48.4
Inner Eastern Melbourne	14,761	2,292	17,053	20,752	13.4	45.1
Southern Melbourne	8,990	1,273	10,263	11,597	12.4	46.9

Region	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Labour Force Region						
Outer Eastern Melbourne	13,408	2,039	15,447	12,841	13.2	54.6
South Eastern Melbourne	10,122	1,901	12,023	12,967	15.8	48.1
Mornington Peninsula	7,695	1,276	8,971	6,515	14.2	57.9
Metropolitan Total	90,245	16,418	106,663	115,250	15.4	48.0
Barwon-Western District	9,806	2,075	11,881	11,377	17.5	51.1
Central Highlands-Wimmera	5,438	1,249	6,687	6,569	18.7	50.4
Loddon-Mallee	7,437	1,430	8,867	8,476	16.1	51.1
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	8,779	1,453	10,232	9,730	14.2	51.3
All Gippsland	6,270	1,376	7,646	8,382	18.0	47.7
Non-Metropolitan Total	37,730	7,583	45,313	44,534	16.7	50.4
Victoria	127,975	24,001	151,976	159,784	15.8	48.7

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing).

Appendix 11

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES AND PARTICIPATION RATES BY GENDER AND AGE COHORT

Region	Unemployment Rates (%)				Participation Rates (%)			
	15-19 (M)	15-19 (F)	20-24 (M)	20-24 (F)	15-19 (M)	15-19 (F)	20-24 (M)	20-24 (F)
Local Government Area								
Alpine (S)	12.1	10.8	6.9	4.6	34.7	58.0	48.3	87.3
Ararat (RC)	13.7	13.7	13.2	14.2	33.9	52.4	45.6	71.4
Ballarat (C)	25.6	21.7	18.3	12.1	32.7	55.6	45.4	76.4
Banyule (C)	13.1	12.9	7.9	6.9	32.1	52.7	45.8	82.2
Bass Coast (S)	15.7	19.1	16.2	15.7	31.1	46.7	47.0	72.2
Baw Baw (S)	14.1	14.1	11.0	11.1	32.4	51.5	46.9	80.8
Bayside (C)	12.2	10.2	8.6	7.4	31.1	48.8	44.5	83.9
Boroondara (C)	14.2	11.9	10.1	6.5	28.2	47.0	43.1	79.8
Brimbank (C)	20.5	18.6	15.3	12.6	29.2	45.2	45.5	77.6
Buloke (S)	12.7	10.5	5.7	5.6	28.9	40.2	48.0	62.8
Campaspe (S)	11.5	11.7	10.0	12.3	34.6	49.1	47.8	74.3
Cardinia (S)	10.9	11.7	7.8	7.3	34.8	55.4	47.6	80.2
Casey (C)	14.1	14.9	9.3	8.6	34.2	53.3	47.0	79.8
Central Goldfields (S)	16.5	26.0	15.8	16.4	30.7	44.0	47.6	70.2
Colac-Otway (S)	8.0	9.5	10.0	11.4	37.5	49.4	48.1	77.4
Corangamite (S)	7.8	11.1	8.0	7.9	31.2	42.5	47.6	76.0
Darebin (C)	21.7	20.5	16.0	12.0	30.1	45.9	43.3	74.6
Delatite (S)	15.0	17.8	10.7	9.4	33.4	49.6	48.4	79.5
East Gippsland (S)	19.0	15.8	17.5	12.6	30.8	50.8	46.5	73.5
Frankston (C)	17.5	16.5	12.4	10.7	36.4	58.5	46.3	78.9
Gannawarra (S)	8.6	11.2	4.4	10.4	33.1	50.3	48.0	73.2
Glen Eira (C)	14.4	12.2	10.7	8.9	29.0	47.5	43.2	78.1
Glenelg (S)	23.1	23.9	17.3	18.8	33.5	52.5	48.0	74.5
Golden Plains (S)	19.3	21.9	16.6	14.0	31.1	49.9	46.7	76.4
Greater Bendigo (C)	18.8	18.7	17.2	13.1	34.6	54.3	45.4	73.0
Greater Dandenong (C)	21.7	19.4	15.2	13.8	27.9	40.1	44.2	72.6
Greater Geelong (C)	20.8	18.8	15.3	11.7	32.7	52.9	46.0	79.7
Greater Shepparton (C)	17.3	12.2	15.9	12.6	34.9	55.1	47.0	75.8
Hepburn (S)	19.4	16.8	15.3	11.7	30.3	43.4	46.2	71.1
Hindmarsh (S)	17.1	9.4	3.0	13.3	29.7	37.4	48.9	79.8
Hobsons Bay (C)	19.1	18.7	14.3	10.8	30.6	45.6	45.8	78.2
Horsham (RC)	15.1	11.5	15.2	8.5	35.8	60.6	47.1	78.1
Hume (C)	19.6	17.6	15.4	11.7	31.5	45.7	45.9	73.0
Indigo (S)	13.1	14.5	15.1	11.7	28.9	46.2	42.9	70.3
Kingston (C)	13.2	10.8	9.5	7.5	33.0	52.7	46.2	83.1
Knox (C)	14.3	12.7	9.2	6.4	34.2	55.2	46.8	85.0
Latrobe (C)	23.9	21.8	21.1	16.0	32.6	51.7	46.1	70.8

Region	Unemployment Rates (%)				Participation Rates (%)			
	15-19 (M)	15-19 (F)	20-24 (M)	20-24 (F)	15-19 (M)	15-19 (F)	20-24 (M)	20-24 (F)
Local Government Area								
Loddon (S)	10.7	14.8	12.3	12.3	29.0	36.8	47.4	65.2
Macedon Ranges (S)	15.4	12.0	8.3	10.1	31.3	47.6	47.2	81.7
Manningham (C)	13.0	10.9	8.5	5.4	28.6	46.6	44.4	80.8
Maribyrnong (C)	27.0	26.8	19.1	15.8	26.9	40.0	42.3	71.5
Maroondah (C)	12.3	13.4	8.5	7.3	35.9	58.0	47.4	85.1
Melbourne (C)	23.6	23.2	15.5	12.7	23.9	36.6	35.7	58.4
Melton (S)	18.3	17.1	11.9	10.4	34.6	51.2	47.6	77.7
Mildura (RC)	16.6	14.7	13.0	10.3	35.4	53.3	47.6	76.1
Mitchell (S)	10.0	15.3	8.2	11.6	29.8	41.7	48.2	77.3
Moira (S)	9.9	12.4	11.3	10.2	35.3	51.9	47.6	75.7
Monash (C)	16.2	14.2	11.4	8.5	29.5	49.5	42.5	75.4
Moonee Valley (C)	15.6	13.4	10.7	7.7	30.5	52.4	45.8	82.6
Moorabool (S)	14.0	14.7	9.4	8.1	33.5	48.6	47.1	77.3
Moreland (C)	21.1	19.1	14.4	10.9	31.0	46.8	44.7	78.1
Mornington Peninsula (S)	12.0	11.2	10.0	8.6	36.9	57.7	47.6	80.6
Mount Alexander (S)	20.1	15.9	15.7	15.7	32.7	53.1	43.8	73.6
Moyne (S)	10.2	11.9	6.8	7.7	34.6	44.2	48.0	82.0
Murrindindi (S)	9.7	15.9	12.2	10.4	30.9	45.5	46.7	79.0
Nilumbik (S)	14.3	11.9	6.9	5.4	33.1	53.8	46.9	91.0
Northern Grampians (S)	12.0	13.5	14.6	10.9	33.5	45.2	47.2	74.0
Port Phillip (C)	16.8	15.0	12.8	9.4	29.1	46.4	44.6	82.0
Pyrenees (S)	14.3	17.4	13.0	12.1	28.9	39.4	45.2	74.4
Queenscliffe (B)	20.9	0.0	7.7	11.5	34.1	48.6	45.3	78.8
South Gippsland (S)	10.1	11.2	12.3	14.0	31.0	43.2	47.1	73.6
Southern Grampians (S)	13.3	13.0	10.7	9.2	32.1	49.4	47.7	77.2
Stonnington (C)	19.2	14.1	10.8	8.2	27.6	43.3	42.9	78.7
Strathbogie (S)	14.0	9.9	9.4	12.0	31.8	41.6	46.4	71.9
Surf Coast (S)	15.1	14.3	13.8	6.9	30.7	52.2	46.3	81.4
Swan Hill (RC)	8.9	11.5	8.1	10.7	35.5	50.8	48.4	75.8
Towong (S)	12.7	11.7	10.3	7.8	26.4	34.3	48.1	79.7
Wangaratta (RC)	15.7	13.3	9.8	12.1	35.4	53.4	47.0	78.6
Warrnambool (C)	13.0	16.9	12.2	11.5	37.0	61.6	45.7	77.0
Wellington (S)	16.8	18.1	17.0	12.7	31.4	44.5	43.4	73.7
West Wimmera (S)	4.5	10.7	3.8	5.7	33.2	29.2	47.6	84.1
Whitehorse (C)	14.4	12.2	9.6	6.7	31.1	51.7	43.9	80.5
Whittlesea (C)	17.1	15.8	11.4	8.9	31.9	50.0	45.9	80.1
Wodonga (RC)	18.1	19.0	11.5	10.8	37.6	56.9	47.0	76.0
Wyndham (C)	17.8	14.3	11.2	9.0	33.6	50.7	45.6	81.3
Yarra (C)	21.0	15.8	15.3	9.6	30.0	49.6	44.3	81.1
Yarra Ranges (S)	13.7	12.5	9.0	7.5	34.9	54.6	47.3	83.1
Yarriambiack (S)	6.9	3.7	8.0	4.7	32.7	42.0	48.8	78.0

Region	Unemployment Rates (%)				Participation Rates (%)			
	15-19 (M)	15-19 (F)	20-24 (M)	20-24 (F)	15-19 (M)	15-19 (F)	20-24 (M)	20-24 (F)
Labour Force Region								
Outer Western Melbourne	19.2	17.3	13.7	10.9	30.9	47.6	45.5	78.6
North Western Melbourne	20.2	18.2	14.9	11.3	31.3	46.2	45.3	75.9
Inner Melbourne	21.1	18.6	13.9	10.3	26.9	41.9	41.2	72.9
North Eastern Melbourne	16.4	15.2	11.1	8.8	31.7	50.4	45.3	80.1
Inner Eastern Melbourne	14.6	12.4	10.1	6.9	29.4	48.7	43.3	78.8
Southern Melbourne	13.7	11.2	9.9	7.9	30.8	49.3	44.3	80.6
Outer Eastern Melbourne	13.6	12.8	8.9	7.0	34.9	55.7	47.1	84.4
South Eastern Melbourne	15.9	15.8	11.4	10.5	32.1	48.9	45.9	76.9
Mornington Peninsula	14.6	13.8	11.2	9.7	36.6	58.1	46.9	79.6
Metropolitan Total	16.1	14.7	11.6	9.1	31.7	49.8	44.8	78.5
Barwon-Western District	17.6	17.4	13.9	11.5	33.3	52.3	46.4	78.9
Central Highlands-Wimmera	19.4	17.9	15.2	11.1	32.9	51.9	46.1	76.2
Loddon-Mallee	16.2	16.0	13.4	12.0	33.7	51.4	46.5	74.5
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	14.2	14.2	11.4	11.0	34.0	50.9	47.3	76.9
All Gippsland	18.2	17.8	16.8	14.0	31.8	48.9	45.9	73.5
Non-Metropolitan Total	16.9	16.6	13.9	11.8	33.2	51.1	46.5	76.4
Victoria	16.4	15.2	12.1	9.7	32.2	50.2	45.2	78.1

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing)

Appendix 12

**INDIGENOUS YOUTH LABOUR FORCE BY REGION
(TOTAL INDIGENOUS PERSONS 15-24 YRS)**

Region	No. Employed	No. Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Local Government Area						
Alpine (S)	3	-	3	6	-	-
Ararat (RC)	-	-	-	11	-	-
Ballarat (C)	57	28	85	79	32.9	51.8
Banyule (C)	38	9	47	45	-	-
Bass Coast (S)	7	-	7	6	-	-
Baw Baw (S)	15	7	22	27	-	-
Bayside (C)	14	3	17	5	-	-
Boroondara (C)	27	4	31	16	-	-
Brimbank (C)	32	16	48	38	-	-
Buloke (S)	3	-	3	3	-	-
Campaspe (S)	22	18	40	47	-	-
Cardinia (S)	9	6	15	12	-	-
Casey (C)	75	16	91	57	17.6	61.5
Central Goldfields (S)	5	-	5	11	-	-
Colac-Otway (S)	6	3	9	7	-	-
Corangamite (S)	-	-	-	3	-	-
Darebin (C)	68	23	91	113	25.3	44.6
Delatite (S)	15	6	21	33	-	-
East Gippsland (S)	50	23	73	75	31.5	49.3
Frankston (C)	54	16	70	44	22.9	61.4
Gannawarra (S)	6	-	6	14	-	-
Glen Eira (C)	23	3	26	9	-	-
Glenelg (S)	14	9	23	23	-	-
Golden Plains (S)	3	-	3	3	-	-
Greater Bendigo (C)	51	21	72	83	29.2	46.5
Greater Dandenong (C)	27	11	38	32	-	-
Greater Geelong (C)	85	51	136	116	37.5	54.0
Greater Shepparton (C)	89	35	124	126	28.2	49.6
Hepburn (S)	3	3	6	6	-	-
Hindmarsh (S)	3	-	3	-	-	-
Hobsons Bay (C)	20	6	26	31	-	-
Horsham (RC)	14	-	14	16	-	-
Hume (C)	45	16	61	60	26.2	50.4
Indigo (S)	-	-	-	3	-	-
Kingston (C)	29	4	33	14	-	-
Knox (C)	21	7	28	21	-	-
Latrobe (C)	19	18	37	73	48.6	33.6
Loddon (S)	-	3	3	3	-	-
Macedon Ranges (S)	7	3	10	8	-	-
Manningham (C)	9	3	12	6	-	-

Region	No. Employed	No. Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Local Government Area						
Maribyrnong (C)	10	10	20	22	-	-
Maroondah (C)	32	8	40	18	-	-
Melbourne (C)	19	-	19	38	-	-
Melton (S)	22	14	36	22	-	-
Mildura (RC)	65	28	3	112	30.1	45.4
Mitchell (S)	20	7	27	24	-	-
Moira (S)	15	-	15	10	-	-
Monash (C)	35	9	44	11	-	-
Moonee Valley (C)	31	4	35	15	-	-
Moorabool (S)	5	3	8	8	-	-
Moreland (C)	38	19	57	45	33.3	55.9
Mornington Peninsula (S)	44	15	59	39	-	-
Mount Alexander (S)	-	-	-	8	-	-
Moyne (S)	11	6	17	6	-	-
Murrindindi (S)	4	3	7	8	-	-
Nillumbik (S)	14	-	14	20	-	-
Northern Grampians (S)	6	3	9	12	-	-
Port Phillip (C)	27	7	34	13	-	-
Pyrenees (S)	3	-	3	3	-	-
Queenscliffe (B)	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Gippsland (S)	10	-	10	12	-	-
Southern Grampians (S)	6	6	12	6	-	-
Stonnington (C)	19	3	22	7	-	-
Strathbogie (S)	6	6	12	7	-	-
Surf Coast (S)	-	-	-	7	-	-
Swan Hill (RC)	60	11	71	50	15.5	58.7
Towong (S)	3	-	3	-	-	-
Wangaratta (RC)	18	6	24	10	-	-
Warrnambool (C)	26	8	34	14	-	-
Wellington (S)	15	7	22	26	-	-
West Wimmera (S)	-	-	-	3	-	-
Whitehorse (C)	27	7	34	12	-	-
Whittlesea (C)	49	19	68	59	27.9	53.5
Wodonga (RC)	22	14	36	26	-	-
Wyndham (C)	33	8	41	51	-	-
Yarra (C)	18	6	24	20	-	-
Yarra Ranges (S)	43	5	48	82	10.4	36.9
Yarriambiack (S)	3	-	3	7	-	-
Labour Force Region						
Outer Western Melbourne	148	59	207	179	28.5	53.6
North Western Melbourne	83	35	118	105	29.7	52.9
Inner Melbourne	76	15	91	74	16.5	55.2
North Eastern Melbourne	169	51	220	237	23.2	48.1
Inner Eastern Melbourne	98	20	118	45	16.9	72.4
Southern Melbourne	73	12	85	33	14.1	72.0
Outer Eastern Melbourne	96	19	115	121	16.5	48.7
South Eastern Melbourne	111	30	141	101	21.3	58.3

Region	No. Employed	No. Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Labour Force Region						
Mornington Peninsula	98	31	129	83	24.0	60.8
Metropolitan Total	952	272	1,224	978	22.2	55.6
Barwon-Western District	156	81	237	180	34.2	56.8
Central Highlands-Wimmera	89	44	133	143	33.1	48.2
Loddon-Mallee	201	70	271	289	25.8	48.4
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	217	93	310	300	30.0	50.8
All Gippsland	115	59	174	218	33.9	44.4
Non-Metropolitan Total	778	347	1,125	1,130	30.8	49.9
Victoria	1,730	619	2,349	2,108	26.4	52.7

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing)

*Unemployment rates and participation rates have not been calculated for local government areas where the sum of the total labour force and not in labour force is less than 100.

Appendix 13

**LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY YOUTH BORN IN A NON-MAIN
ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRY* (TOTAL PERSONS 15-24 YRS)**

Region	No. Employed	No. Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Local Government Area						
Alpine (S)	25	-	25	12	-	-
Ararat (RC)	3	-	3	5	-	-
Ballarat (C)	55	12	67	121	17.9	35.6
Banyule (C)	423	108	531	678	20.3	43.9
Bass Coast (S)	10	3	13	19	-	-
Baw Baw (S)	18	-	18	26	-	-
Bayside (C)	233	42	275	370	15.3	42.6
Boroondara (C)	1,232	306	1,538	2,418	19.9	38.9
Brimbank (C)	2,297	796	3,093	3,016	25.7	50.6
Buloke (S)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Campaspe (S)	12	-	12	14	-	-
Cardinia (S)	50	-	50	42	-	-
Casey (C)	1,688	339	2,027	1,828	16.7	52.6
Central Goldfields (S)	3	3	6	6	-	-
Colac-Otway (S)	3	-	3	13	-	-
Corangamite (S)	7	-	7	6	-	-
Darebin (C)	1,012	351	1,363	1,772	25.8	43.5
Delatite (S)	23	9	32	43	-	-
East Gippsland (S)	20	3	23	24	-	-
Frankston (C)	309	76	385	433	19.7	47.1
Gannawarra (S)	3	3	6	3	-	-
Glen Eira (C)	1,045	268	1,313	1,671	20.4	44.0
Glenelg (S)	5	3	8	6	-	-
Golden Plains (S)	3	-	3	9	-	-
Greater Bendigo (C)	71	30	101	135	29.7	42.8
Greater Dandenong (C)	2,707	796	3,503	3,849	22.7	47.6
Greater Geelong (C)	254	109	363	601	30.0	37.7
Greater Shepparton (C)	53	29	82	140	35.4	36.9
Hepburn (S)	6	-	6	7	-	-
Hindmarsh (S)	3	-	3	4	-	-
Hobsons Bay (C)	490	133	623	637	21.3	49.4
Horsham (RC)	3	-	3	12	-	-
Hume (C)	1,025	327	1,352	1,478	24.2	47.8
Indigo (S)	4	-	4	6	-	-
Kingston (C)	988	188	1,176	1,151	16.0	50.5
Knox (C)	853	156	1,009	1,101	15.5	47.8
Latrobe (C)	83	33	116	175	28.4	39.9
Loddon (S)	-	-	-	4	-	-

Region	No. Employed	No. Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Local Government Area						
Macedon Ranges (S)	14	-	14	17	-	-
Manningham (C)	879	171	1,050	1,630	16.3	39.2
Maribyrnong (C)	953	343	1,296	1,419	26.5	47.7
Maroondah (C)	294	53	347	357	15.3	49.3
Melbourne (C)	1,227	655	1,882	5,585	34.8	25.2
Melton (S)	247	64	311	257	20.6	54.8
Mildura (RC)	57	31	88	58	35.2	60.3
Mitchell (S)	16	3	19	132	15.8	12.6
Moira (S)	12	7	19	23	-	-
Monash (C)	1,885	531	2,416	3,920	22.0	38.1
Moonee Valley (C)	592	233	825	965	28.2	46.1
Moorabool (S)	18	-	18	12	-	-
Moreland (C)	1,039	343	1,382	1,561	24.8	47.0
Mornington Peninsula (S)	108	18	126	211	14.3	37.4
Mount Alexander (S)	6	6	12	9	-	-
Moyne (S)	6	-	6	6	-	-
Murrindindi (S)	10	3	13	27	-	-
Nillumbik (S)	106	9	115	88	7.8	56.7
Northern Grampians (S)	9	-	9	-	-	-
Port Phillip (C)	651	184	835	1,049	22.0	44.3
Pyrenees (S)	-	-	-	3	-	-
Queenscliffe (B)	3	-	3	3	-	-
South Gippsland (S)	10	-	10	8	-	-
Southern Grampians (S)	3	-	3	20	-	-
Stonnington (C)	838	300	1,138	1,667	26.4	40.6
Strathbogie (S)	3	-	3	3	-	-
Surf Coast (S)	18	6	24	11	-	-
Swan Hill (RC)	38	10	48	28	-	-
Towong (S)	3	-	3	-	-	-
Wangaratta (RC)	21	6	27	23	-	-
Warrnambool (C)	15	9	24	37	-	-
Wellington (S)	24	10	34	71	29.4	32.4
West Wimmera (S)	-	-	-	3	-	-
Whitehorse (C)	1,076	265	1,341	2,135	19.8	38.6
Whittlesea (C)	1,066	235	1,301	1,216	18.1	51.7
Wodonga (RC)	44	11	55	45	20.0	55.0
Wyndham (C)	469	95	564	566	16.8	49.9
Yarra (C)	566	232	798	936	29.1	46.0
Yarra Ranges (S)	183	31	214	266	14.5	44.6
Yarriambiack (S)	-	-	-	-	-	-

Region	No. Employed	No. Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	Participation Rate (%)
Labour Force Region						
Outer Western Melbourne	5,048	1,664	6,712	6,860	24.8	49.5
North Western Melbourne	2,064	670	2,734	3,039	24.5	47.4
Inner Melbourne	2,953	1,251	4,204	8,458	29.8	33.2
North Eastern Melbourne	2,607	703	3,310	3,754	21.2	46.9
Inner Eastern Melbourne	5,072	1,273	6,345	10,103	20.1	38.6
Southern Melbourne	2,595	618	3,213	3,971	19.2	44.7
Outer Eastern Melbourne	1,330	240	1,570	1,724	15.3	47.7
South Eastern Melbourne	4,445	1,138	5,583	5,719	20.4	49.4
Mornington Peninsula	417	94	511	644	18.4	44.2
Metropolitan Total	26,531	7,651	34,182	44,272	22.3	43.6
Barwon-Western District	314	133	447	707	29.8	38.7
Central Highlands-Wimmera	100	16	116	166	13.8	41.1
Loddon-Mallee	193	79	272	259	29.0	51.2
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	223	69	292	464	23.6	38.6
All Gippsland	168	56	224	324	25.0	40.9
Non-Metropolitan Total	998	353	1,351	1,920	26.1	41.3
Victoria	27,529	8,004	35,533	46,192	22.5	43.5

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing).

*Main English speaking countries are Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Ireland, USA, Canada and South Africa.

*Unemployment rates and participation rates have not been calculated for local government areas where the sum of the total labour force and not in labour force is less than 100.

Appendix 14

**LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY YOUTH WHO SPEAK A LANGUAGE
OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME (TOTAL PERSONS 15-24 YRS)**

Region	No. Em- ployed	No. Unem- ployed	Total Labour Force	Not In Labour Force	Unem- ployment Rate (%)	Partici- pation Rate (%)
Local Government Area						
Alpine (S)	63	6	69	30	*	*
Ararat (RC)	3	-	3	3	*	*
Ballarat (C)	106	25	131	160	19.1	45.0
Banyule (C)	967	166	1,133	1,082	14.7	51.2
Bass Coast (S)	22	6	28	20	*	*
Baw Baw (S)	28	11	39	35	*	*
Bayside (C)	411	63	474	497	13.3	48.8
Boroondara (C)	1,555	341	1,896	2,763	18.0	40.7
Brimbank (C)	5,832	1,376	7,208	5,427	19.1	57.0
Buloke (S)	-	-	-	-	*	*
Campaspe (S)	33	3	36	30	*	*
Cardinia (S)	93	10	103	74	9.7	58.2
Casey (C)	2,319	430	2,749	2,309	15.6	54.3
Central Goldfields (S)	8	3	11	7	*	*
Colac-Otway (S)	21	-	21	16	*	*
Corangamite (S)	9	-	9	9	*	*
Darebin (C)	2,980	611	3,591	2,987	17.0	54.6
Delatite (S)	43	10	53	63	18.9	45.7
East Gippsland (S)	30	3	33	41	*	*
Frankston (C)	406	105	511	502	20.5	50.4
Gannawarra (S)	8	3	11	9	*	*
Glen Eira (C)	1,609	329	1,938	2,070	17.0	48.4
Glenelg (S)	8	-	8	10	*	*
Golden Plains (S)	18	-	18	13	*	*
Greater Bendigo (C)	86	37	123	173	30.1	41.6
Greater Dandenong (C)	3,738	1,010	4,748	4,998	21.3	48.7
Greater Geelong (C)	810	215	1,025	930	21.0	52.4
Greater Shepparton (C)	221	65	286	243	22.7	54.1
Hepburn (S)	16	-	16	18	*	*
Hindmarsh (S)	3	-	3	3	*	*
Hobsons Bay (C)	1,349	321	1,670	1,320	19.2	55.9
Horsham (RC)	11	3	14	10	*	*
Hume (C)	2,690	760	3,450	3,206	22.0	51.8
Indigo (S)	4	-	4	3	*	*
Kingston (C)	1,816	287	2,103	1,695	13.6	55.4
Knox (C)	1,272	224	1,496	1,383	15.0	52.0
Latrobe (C)	180	61	241	226	25.3	51.6
Loddon (S)	3	-	3	3	*	*

Macedon Ranges (S)	38	7	45	35	-	-
Manningham (C)	2,085	303	2,388	2,571	12.7	48.2
Maribyrnong (C)	1,490	472	1,962	2,025	24.1	49.2
Maroondah (C)	442	71	513	437	13.8	54.0
Melbourne (C)	1,291	651	1,942	5,228	33.5	27.1
Melton (S)	589	116	705	441	16.5	61.5
Mildura (RC)	170	56	226	159	24.8	58.7
Mitchell (S)	39	4	43	150	9.3	22.3
Moira (S)	56	13	69	43	18.8	61.6
Monash (C)	3,184	684	3,868	4,540	17.7	46.0
Moonee Valley (C)	1,767	395	2,162	1,642	18.3	56.8
Moorabool (S)	36	4	40	31	-	-
Moreland (C)	3,211	754	3,965	3,025	19.0	56.7
Mornington Peninsula (S)	225	29	254	267	11.4	48.8
Mount Alexander (S)	11	6	17	7	-	-
Moyne (S)	8	-	8	-	-	-
Murrindindi (S)	23	4	27	40	-	-
Nillumbik (S)	275	23	298	172	7.7	63.4
Northern Grampians (S)	4	-	4	7	-	36.4
Port Phillip (C)	890	220	1,110	1,217	19.8	47.7
Pyrenees (S)	-	-	-	4	-	-
Queenscliffe (B)	3	-	3	3	-	-
South Gippsland (S)	29	3	32	19	-	-
Southern Grampians (S)	6	-	6	23	-	-
Stonnington (C)	1,060	311	1,371	1,815	22.7	43.0
Strathbogie (S)	3	-	3	10	-	-
Surf Coast (S)	24	6	30	10	-	-
Swan Hill (RC)	95	14	109	84	12.8	56.5
Towong (S)	7	-	7	3	-	-
Wangaratta (RC)	53	11	64	36	17.2	64.0
Warrnambool (C)	24	11	35	38	-	-
Wellington (S)	19	16	35	38	-	-
West Wimmera (S)	-	-	-	6	-	-
Whitehorse (C)	1,625	337	1,962	2,520	17.2	43.8
Whittlesea (C)	3,888	644	4,532	2,894	14.2	61.0
Wodonga (RC)	62	20	82	55	24.4	59.9
Wyndham (C)	959	171	1,130	839	15.1	57.4
Yarra (C)	824	281	1,105	1,252	25.4	46.9
Yarra Ranges (S)	386	45	431	358	10.4	54.6
Yarriambiack (S)	-	-	-	3	-	-

Labour Force Region						
Outer Western Melbourne	11,986	2,851	14,837	11,694	19.2	55.9
North Western Melbourne	5,901	1,514	7,415	6,231	20.4	54.3
Inner Melbourne	3,603	1,332	4,935	8,653	27.0	36.3
North Eastern Melbourne	8,110	1,444	9,554	7,135	15.1	57.2
Inner Eastern Melbourne	8,449	1,665	10,114	12,394	16.5	44.9
Southern Melbourne	4,298	810	5,108	5,121	15.9	49.9
Outer Eastern Melbourne	2,100	340	2,440	2,176	13.9	52.9
South Eastern Melbourne	6,150	1,450	7,600	7,381	19.1	50.7
Mornington Peninsula	631	134	765	769	17.5	49.9
Metropolitan Total	51,228	11,540	62,768	61,554	18.4	50.5
Barwon-Western District	929	237	1,166	1,050	20.3	52.6
Central Highlands-Wimmera	181	36	217	241	16.6	47.4
Loddon-Mallee	419	122	541	477	22.6	53.1
Goulburn-Ovens-Murray	611	142	753	705	18.9	51.6
All Gippsland	314	103	417	383	24.7	52.1
Non-Metropolitan Total	2,454	640	3,094	2,856	20.7	52.0
Victoria	53,682	12,180	65,862	64,410	18.5	50.6

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing).

**Unemployment rates and participation rates have not been calculated for local government areas where the sum of the total labour force and not in labour force is less than 100.*