The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

Queensland’s Education and Training Reforms for the Future

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Acknowledgements

A number of people assisted in the location of documents and information sourced in this report. In particular, we wish to thank Justine Cawley, Sharon Mullins, Margaret Redrup-May, Hongying Qi, Mona Shrestha and Tony Tranchida.

This project has benefited from the guidance and advice of a committed advisory group. The following people were represented on the Project Advisory Group:

Ainsley Barron (Department of the Premier and Cabinet); Paul Herschell (Queensland Studies Authority); Terry Creagh (Non-Government Schooling Sector); Andrea Cornwell, Andrew Walker, Sharon Mullins, Steve Armitage, Sue Fergusson (Department of Education and the Arts); and Siraj Ismail (Queensland Treasury).

Finally, we thank most sincerely the people who shared their knowledge and views of the development and implementation of the ETRP’s senior phase reform agenda. Of necessity, a select number of people were approached for interviews. Whether speaking on or off the record, informants graciously participated and generously gave of their time. This helped guide our way through the labyrinth of documentation that has informed this report.
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACACA</td>
<td>Australian Curriculum Assessment and Certification Authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTA</td>
<td>Australian National Training Authority</td>
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<td>AQTF</td>
<td>Australian Quality Training Framework</td>
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<td>CBRC</td>
<td>Cabinet Budget Review Committee</td>
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<td>CIS</td>
<td>Career Information Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Central Purchasing</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPU</td>
<td>Central Purchasing Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPCSE</td>
<td>Certificate of Post-Compulsory School Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>Department of Education and the Arts (Queensland)</td>
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<td>DET</td>
<td>Department of Employment and Training (Queensland)</td>
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<td>DETA</td>
<td>Department of Education, Training and the Arts (Queensland)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DYAP</td>
<td>District Youth Achievement Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>EQ</td>
<td>Education Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETRF</td>
<td>Education and Training Reforms for the Future</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GSFW</td>
<td>Get Set for Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>HECS</td>
<td>Higher Education Contribution Scheme</td>
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<td>ICTs</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technologies</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator</td>
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<td>KPIF</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>MADEC</td>
<td>Mackay and District Education Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCEETYA</td>
<td>Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (State, Territory and Australian Government Ministers of Education)</td>
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<td>MFO</td>
<td>Managing for Outcomes</td>
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<td>MLI</td>
<td>Minimal Level of Investment</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>NCVER</td>
<td>National Centre for Vocational Education Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>PMEC</td>
<td>Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>QCE</td>
<td>Queensland Certificate of Education</td>
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<td>QCM</td>
<td>Queensland Community Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>QCEC</td>
<td>Queensland Catholic Education Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>QCS</td>
<td>Queensland Core Skills (Test)</td>
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<tr>
<td>QSA</td>
<td>Queensland Studies Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>QTAC</td>
<td>Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>QTU</td>
<td>Queensland Teachers’ Union</td>
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1DETA was established from 1 October 2006, combining the Training Divisions of the former DET with the former DEA.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RYP</td>
<td>Registration of Young People System</td>
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<td>SPoL</td>
<td>Senior Phase of Learning</td>
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<td>SET Plans</td>
<td>Senior Education and Training Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAS</td>
<td>Student Transport Assistance Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEPA</td>
<td>Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERC</td>
<td>Training and Employment Recognition Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USI</td>
<td>Unique Student Identifier</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPR</td>
<td>Variable Progression Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>VQA</td>
<td>Victorian Qualifications Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YACCA</td>
<td>Youth and Community Combined Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YANQ</td>
<td>Youth Affairs Network (Queensland)</td>
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<tr>
<td>YSC</td>
<td>Youth Support Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>YSCI</td>
<td>Youth Support Coordinator Initiative</td>
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<td>YPET</td>
<td>Youth Participation in Education and Training</td>
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Chapter 1

Queensland’s Senior Phase Education and Training Reforms

*Our vision for the Smart State is to create a State of prosperity and social justice with a commitment to equality of opportunity. Education and training are at the heart of the Smart State vision and that means providing the very best learning opportunities possible for every young Queenslander regardless of their economic and social circumstances (White Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, Foreword by Ministers Anna Bligh, Matt Foley and Peter Beattie).*

Introduction

The Queensland Government’s senior phase education and training reforms were part of a larger change agenda that also encompassed the early years of learning and the middle schooling years. This is known as the Queensland Government’s Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF). This report was commissioned by the (then) Department of Education and the Arts. Its purpose is to tell a history—a chronicle—of the journey so far in the reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning as part of the ETRF change agenda from its policy inception in 2002 to the conclusion of its three-year trial phase (from 2003 to the end of 2005).

The ETRF’s senior phase reforms, discussed here, are about all young people in Queensland (i.e. 100 per cent of the cohort). In addition, this history discusses a serious problem facing Australian and other societies around the world. Youth disengagement from school-based learning is a growing matter of public concern. In exploring how the senior phase reforms are addressing this issue, this history rejects the conventional critiques that provide the predominant frame for interpreting education and training reforms. This is because in its senior phase reforms, the ETRF accepted, and continues to engage with, the challenges identified by young people who have disengaged from school-based learning. In seeking to intervene in, if not mitigate ‘cultural fatalism’ (Furedi, 2005), this history does not paint a picture of the ETRF’s senior phase reforms as all doom and gloom.

The available evidence suggests grounds for positive conclusions. Of course, there are inevitable limitations. However, many of the education, training, youth, community and business leaders involved at different levels have demonstrated the capacity to achieve worthwhile things with, for and through young people. Throughout Queensland, many such leaders have embraced the ETRF’s senior phase reforms. They continue to make worthwhile things happen for young people. The history offered here presents a strong sense of people’s capacity to act.

To meet the learning needs of all young people between 15 and 17 years of age, Years 10, 11 and 12 have been reconceptualised and redesigned. This was a policy-driven response to the need for a senior phase that valued school-based learning as much as a range of other accredited learning experiences. New legislation introduced in 2003 now prescribes that all young people (aged 15 to 17) must be engaged in the compulsory participation phase of senior education, training or full-time work. The Queensland Government initiated these reforms to its education and training system in 2002 because of its belief that:

... all young people should have every chance to reach their full potential. We want to ensure that no-one misses out simply because the current system cannot neatly accommodate them (White Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 16).
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Queensland’s reforms have led to innovative developments within and outside the prevailing school-based system of learning. The trials of changes to the Senior Phase of Learning sought to find new ways of accommodating every chance for all young people to realise their full potential.

Education and training reforms for the future

Internationally, bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) are interested in large-scale reforms to the senior phase of schooling. They are interested in examples of public policy making, how these influence the education agenda, and learning that might benefit other countries.

In this context, Queensland’s ETRF is an internationally significant undertaking. It shows the possibilities for meaningful learning opportunities for young people as they negotiate the linkages between education, training and work. It shows how leadership, collaboration and community involvement can improve flexibility and outcomes in young people’s education, training and transitions to work.

A new acronym entered public debates about education, training and work in Queensland. Parents, teachers, youth workers, senior managers in education, training, employment, and parliamentary representatives began talking about the ETRF the length and breadth of the state. For many people, the ETRF is connected with changes to the law. It means children entering formal learning earlier in a ‘prep year’ or the ‘new preparatory year of schooling’ before Year 1. For others, the ETRF means a new law to keep young people learning until they turn 17 years of age. Many people were aware that reform was taking to the air, but few fully anticipated where it might lead. Yet, the ETRF is infinitely more complex than these important legislative changes made by the State Government.

The ETRF is a policy-driven, research-based reform agenda that set out to change, in quite fundamental ways, compulsory education and training in Queensland. It is a key component of the Queensland Government’s ‘Smart State’ agenda aimed at encouraging worldly thinking through locally viable innovations (White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 6). However, the ETRF is not a substitute for strategies to create the jobs necessary to give Queenslanders a sense of security, dignity and other benefits (Apple, 1996, p. 102). The ETRF represented three significant and interrelated dimensions – one directed at each of the early, middle and senior phases of learning:

1. reforms to early phase learning included the introduction of a full-time preparatory year of schooling (in 2007) and an increase in the compulsory school-starting age by six months (in 2008)
2. reforms to the Middle Phase of Learning built on substantial curriculum, information and communication technologies (ICTs), literacy, and numeracy initiatives focusing on students from 10 to 15 years of age. This included the establishment of targets for national reading, literacy and numeracy benchmarks in Years 5 and 7
3. reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning, including a requirement for all Year 10 students or young people turning 15 years (whichever comes first) to be registered with the Queensland Studies Authority (White Paper–Queensland Government, 2006, p. 9).

With specific reference to the senior phase reforms, the Government proposed to introduce new laws that:

• make it compulsory for young people to stay at school until they finish Year 10 or have turned 16, whichever comes first
require young people to then participate in education and training for
- a further two years; or
- until they have gained a Senior Certificate; or
- until they have gained a Certificate III vocational qualification; or
- until they have turned 17

provide exceptions for young people who enter full-time work after they
have either completed Year 10 or turned 16.


This senior phase reform agenda grew out of the Queensland Government’s vision for
a prosperous and socially just Smart State (White Paper–Queensland Government,
2002b, Ministers’ Foreword). Importantly, the ETRF was not an instance of policy on the
run. In its crafting, the parliamentary processes for effecting change revolved around a
consultative process. The ETRF moved from a Green Paper (discussion paper) to a White
Paper (policy paper), via commissioned education research, through to the enactment
of legislation. The ETRF’s senior phase reforms were then stretched and elaborated
through a three-year trial implementation phase (2003–2005). This included an in-built
evaluation cycle that influenced successive iterations of the reform agenda.

The road to reform
Any account of the major influences on the ETRF’s senior phase reforms, must
necessarily start somewhere.

It is no secret that substantial social, economic and cultural changes have occurred in
the world of work over the last 20 years. The consequential impacts of these changes
for the education, training and employment of young people have been significant.
Subsequently, policy decisions were made in response to the effects of these changes.
The ETRF’s senior phase reforms were designed to provide increased direction and hope
to the future work/life trajectory of young Queenslanders.

At the macro level of senior phase policy reform in Queensland, key decisions revolved
around participation, retention, transitions between levels of education, and pathways.
Policy development on ‘transitions’ focused on the professional and personal challenges
young people encounter when moving from middle schooling to senior school; from
senior secondary school to work; and from school to further tertiary learning. Here the
issue of pathways became central to policy decisions. Successful transitions require
socially responsible pathways for education and training into the future. Collectively, the
reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning were intended to improve young people’s:

1. participation in learning and/or earning in the senior phase
2. retention from Year 10 to 12 with a learning provider for the senior phase
3. achievement of the Queensland Certificate of Education and/or a Certificate III
   qualification
4. destination to full-time work, full-time study or a combination of both (Department
   of Education and the Arts, 2006, p. 3).

Key findings
A key legacy of the development and trial implementation of the ETRF’s senior phase
reforms has been the tying together of social justice with concerns about prosperity; a
commitment to the education, training and work for young people as matters of public
good; and the representation of funding for education and training as a significant
public investment in the State’s socio economic future.

To date, major achievements of the Queensland Government’s ETRF senior phase
reforms include:

1. senior secondary schools themselves now manage young people’s access to
   creditable education and training opportunities with other learning providers
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2. inter-sectoral, cross-agency collaboration which has enabled:
   
   (a) highly student-focused decision-making, resource allocation and energy at a local (district) level, with the involvement of multiple agencies
   
   (b) local partnerships between education and training institutions and other stakeholders aimed at developing responses to central concerns of young people, through the District Youth Achievement Plan (DYAP) Management Committees

3. the goodwill and networking deliberately generated and mobilised through these reforms which have enhanced the social capital available to all participants for the benefit of young Queenslanders

4. a major shift in public debates about education, training, work and policies governing the socio economic security of young people within Australia

5. increased public interest and awareness of the relationships between education, training and work, and between government, society and the economy

6. strengthened leadership within Queensland’s education, training, youth, business and community sectors

7. new approaches to governance, change management, and interaction between organisational cultures, supported by increased accountability and a greater focus on evaluation

8. a greater emphasis on pathways that enable the two-way movement between different levels of education and training. Queensland’s reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning have interrupted the dual route from school to university, or school to work/training that prevailed under earlier labour market and economic policy frameworks. Increasingly, more students are entering university with various vocational education and training (VET) qualifications, and many university students are undertaking VET courses

9. increased harmonisation of young people’s learning with growth of the knowledge and service economies, and changing social conditions.

Researching a history of the senior phase reforms

The history of the ETRF told here provides a spotlight that brightens up key parts of its development and implementation. Like any spotlight, it necessarily leaves much in darkness, awaiting further investigation. In producing this history of the ETRF’s senior phase reforms it has been necessary to select, and in doing so, to include and exclude. Decisions had to be made about how much, and which aspects of the senior phase history to tell using publicly available sources, and which interpretations to apply. However, as Bauman (2004, p. 17) observes: “It is a grave misunderstanding, and injustice, to blame [histories] for favouring one part of the stage while neglecting another”. This illumination of the ETRF and its senior phase reforms casts shadows. In separating out what might be told in this history, much more has been left for future investigations.

Bauman (2004, p.18) reminds us that, “it is courtesy of the surrounding darkness that the light of knowledge illuminates”. For example, more research is required into the actual lived experiences of young people, their teachers, school administrators, youth workers and support coordinators who are involved at the grassroots level of senior phase implementation.

Accordingly, the meticulousness, thoroughness and practical value of knowledge about the ETRF’s senior phase reforms will grow as education researchers enlarge the size of these illuminated spots. Here the mind-boggling complexity of the Senior Phase of Learning has been reduced to a history of liveable proportions. From the complex shifts
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that constituted these senior phase reforms, we have given them a recognisable shape. Of course, this construction gives it more stability and certainty than its lived reality ever had. Like all histories this one carries a warning label. Making such a straightforward and comprehensible history robs the senior phase reforms of their gravity, complexities and opacity.

A key feature illuminated by this research is the ‘elements of good sense’ (Apple, 2001, p. 193) that were found within the various dimensions of the reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning in Queensland. These elements did not arise from a single framework nor was their trialling without contradictions or unforeseen consequences. The reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning embodied a rich mix of themes and multitude of thoughts. Now there is a need for forms of educational inquiry which name the world in ways that do not reproduce prevailing means, but identify emergent possibilities for positive innovations.

Apple (2001) gives a few reasons for spotlighting the rudiments of ‘good sense’ in the ETRF’s senior phase reforms, several of which apply here.

First, many of the people involved in the senior phase reforms, including young people, youth support coordinators, VET teachers, and educational leaders at school, district and State levels, have found the reforms relevant to improving their lives. The people we interviewed and the reports they had written expressed a deep understanding of the changing relations between the social, cultural and economic dimensions of society. Moreover, they appreciated the possibilities this presented for reinvigorating, revitalising and re-enchanting the education and training of young people. A key reason that many of the reforms have proven attractive is because they are connected to aspects of people’s lived experiences and hopes.

A second reason for illuminating aspects of good sense in Queensland’s reforms is the major accomplishments noted above. It shows just how important education and training are for giving us hope in the future. These reforms have provided new categories through which education and training provision might be deepened and extended. The policy development, legislative changes, research and initiatives developed by learning providers show what is possible. Consequently, this history provides a strategic account of the ETRF’s senior phase reforms by looking at what has been made possible within overarching constraints. It maps the elements of good sense that provide a possible centre of gravity for people’s hopes for the future of young people and Queensland, as much as their own sense of value and self-efficacy.

The Department commissioned this research to generate a history that spoke to the deep meanings of the ETRF’s senior phase reforms. What has made the work of this aspect of the ETRF meaningful and purposeful for Queensland’s education and training leaders?

This history of the senior phase journey so far provides an informed and reasoned understanding of the reforms from this perspective (Boyce, 1996). Collectively the documents and interviewees provided meaning and coherence to the order of things made possible through the senior phase reforms. Drawing on these sources, this history gives expression to the underlying themes, character and values that linked the meaning of the reforms to a multiplicity of leaders and their actions.

This history provides knowledge of these matters. This is good in and of itself. However, it also gives substance to what the reforms may mean for many educational leaders, from teachers and principals through to senior education and training policy makers, to participate in making a better future for young people.

Here education and training leadership are understood as being distributed and developed throughout many organisations.

Of course, as Furedi (2005, pp. 160–161) observes, “people live in a world not of their own making and in circumstances that often elude their aspiration to determine their affairs”. Apple (1996, p. 98) makes a similar point when he states, “not every group
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has equal power to define the terms of these conflicts or to move resolutions of them towards its own agendas”.

This is why the capacity for generating knowledge, reasoning and making critical judgements is an important expression of the human abilities manifested in the ETRF’s senior phase reforms. It is also why education and training are necessary.

Many people are involved in leading the reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning. They are responding to, and engaging with worldly changes not of their own making. In doing so they aspire to shape, even if they cannot decisively determine their life trajectory and that of the young people with whom they work.

The differences in the way people defined the origins of the senior phase reforms of the ETRF are reflected in their different ways of viewing historical realities.

We investigated the explanations, commitments and justifications of designated education and training leaders. Not surprisingly, we found that people differed in their perceptions of the senior phase reforms. Importantly, this provided useful insights into how particular education and training leaders, positioned at different levels in this large-scale reform, conceived and experienced aspects of the ETRF.

Rather than testing the gap between program intent and outcomes by making assumptions that hold preconceived notions of success, this study was sensitive to the necessary and inevitable changes in the senior phase reforms, purposes, initiatives and outcomes (Stake, 2004).

The large-scale reforms in senior phase learning worked iteratively to achieve resources-based capacity building and results-focused accountability. As in other environments, large scale changes in education and training involve complex undertakings and iterative processes of policy action and reflective learning rather than fixed linear developments.

The ETRF involved a cyclical process of agenda setting through conceptualisation and consultati

The data expressed in public documents and interviews speak to the differing structures that gave expression to the ETRF’s senior phase reforms at multiple levels and across multiple agencies. This particular history alludes to leaders challenging assumptions about senior phase learning. They examined its limitations in order to push the boundaries. They enlisted and listened to interests, forces and agencies beyond the bounds of Government Departments to shape the ETRF in general and the senior phase reforms in particular.
Moreover, it is to be expected that a complex array of relationships would manifest themselves across different levels and sites. The ETRF has certainly met this expectation, leading to complicated networks and webs of interconnected stakeholders.

Appendix 1 contains a detailed timeline of historically significant events and key influences on senior phase learning in Australia. It also highlights the collective consequences that were instrumental in shaping and influencing the senior phase reforms.

**Overview**

This history of the senior phase journey so far is presented in the following four chapters. Chapter 2 explores major influences on the development of the ETRF agenda for the Senior Phase of Learning. The evidence is drawn from national and international policy studies, research projects, system protocols and legislation. This literature covers young people’s transitions from initial education to the worlds of learning and/or earning in their post-compulsory years. It explores key documents, initiatives, issues, drivers and agents in the development and implementation of policy for education and training reform.

Chapter 3 presents strategic change strategies mobilised by Government to enact the major senior phase reforms. The first section previews three of the key policy-making reports that influenced subsequent decisions and actions of the ETRF’s senior phase reform agenda. These Queensland-focused, research-informed reports paved the way for changes to State schooling, pathways for all young people into further education and training, and finally a new deal for what counts as learning in the senior phase. The next section identifies and discusses the systems that were integral to steering the ETRF change agenda. Here the spotlight illuminates new structures, bodies and processes established during the three-year trial period (from 2003 to 2005).

Chapter 4 presents vignettes of a necessarily selective array of initiatives. Some of these initiatives were made possible by the ETRF systems (described in Chapter 3) that steered the changes. The Chapter also highlights existing initiatives that were strengthened by ETRF’s funding and climate of cooperation.

In Chapter 5, this history concludes with an elaboration of the collaborative inter-sectoral work that contributed to the critical success factors for the enactment of the senior phase reforms. Chapter 5 also presents the signature strengths of the reform leadership and the attributes of a robust hope for future-oriented reforms to the senior phase learning.

The following Chapter shows that the ETRF initiatives for the Senior Phase of Learning (Years 10 to 12) were responses to the changing character of young people, the nature of work and learning. These forces, connections and imaginings continue to form, inform and transform the relationships between education, training and work for young people.
Chapter 2

The changing world of young people, work and learning

Today young people are often more independent and autonomous than their parents or grandparents. They also expect more from their education and training and are clear about what they like and what meets their needs. They face a world more complex and competitive than their parents or grandparents could have imagined (Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 7).

Introduction

Young people “live in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex world that demands more education and training throughout [their] lives” (Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 11). Queensland’s education and training reforms for the Senior Phase of Learning arose out of, and were informed by education and social research documenting the changing world of young people, work and learning (OECD, 1997; 2000; Australian Government, House of Representatives, 2004). The senior phase of the ETRF was informed by changes in the labour market, including changes in the nature of work itself which posed a threat to the welfare and livelihood of young people, especially those alienated from school-based learning (Bauman, 2004, p. 52).

The changes in education and training previously undertaken here in Australia and overseas were instrumental in informing the development of the ETRF’s Senior Phase of Learning. This Chapter provides some insights into the “gritty realities in the economy and the state” (Apple, 1996, p. xii) that the ETRF is engaging. It is structured around first, the complex transitions that young people encounter as they enter the worlds of work and/or further learning after completing their initial compulsory education. Second, it provides insights into the changing world of young people. The third and fourth sections elaborate on the changing worlds of work and learning in which these reforms were developed and trialled.

Complex transitions

In Australia, the youth labour market changed considerably between the 1970s and the 1990s, reflecting larger changes in the economy over that time (Robinson, 2000). Three interrelated trends became evident. First, participation in education and training by young people aged 15 to 24 years, increased. As this happened, there was a significant decline in young people’s full-time labour participation. This was matched with a corresponding increase in part-time youth employment (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996; OECD, 1997; Wooden, 1996). It is here that the changing nature of the transition period and its increasing complexity became apparent throughout Australia.

By the mid-1990s in Australia, the average lowest age at which young people transitioned from initial education to working life had increased to 22 years—up from 19 years in 1984 (OECD, 1997). In 1994, Australia’s labour-force participation rate for 15- to 24-year-olds was relatively high at 69 per cent compared with an OECD average of 53 per cent. In addition, Australia ranked equal third highest out of 19 countries for the proportion of young people in work. Australia’s youth unemployment rate of 17 per cent was below the OECD average of 19 per cent.

Nevertheless, the statistics indicated that the ratio of unemployed young people in the 15- to 24-year-old population cohort was comparatively high in Australia. These young people were “less fortunate than those in countries with strong vocational education and training systems (Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands) where the youth and
adult unemployment rates are very similar to each other” (OECD, 1997, p. 11). The relationship between education, training and youth labour market participation emerged as a salient policy consideration.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1996) indicated that unemployment rates for Year 12 graduates were substantially lower than for early school leavers. Generally, there is a positive relationship between the level of initial educational attainment and participation in on-the-job training. An OECD (1997, pp. 11–12) review concluded that, “as the norm of young people’s behaviour in Australia has shifted to completing year 12, those who leave school early have become even more marginalised”. This meant that serious policy work was required (Sweet, 1996). Longitudinal data reported that:

... around 20 per cent of 18- and 19-year-old Australians spent at least 12 months of the two-year period 1993 and 1994 in neither full-time employment nor full-time education. This proportion was even higher (about 30 per cent) for those who had low levels of academic performance in school, or who were from low socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, the longer that teenagers were outside of full-time education or full-time employment, the greater the likelihood that their mobility within this two year period was from one “marginal” activity to another such as from part-time work to unemployment or to another part-time job (OECD, 1997, p. 13).

From an Australian perspective, several decades of policy development, legislative changes, and education and social research have shaped the national agenda for education and training reform (Deveson, 1990; Finn, 1991; Carmichael, 1992; Mayer, 1992; OECD, 1997). The following are among the key principles to emerge from the extensive work undertaken during the 1980s to 1990s as part of this long journey:

1. industry training occurs within a national training framework, with nationally recognised standards for qualifications. This was associated with the establishment of the National Training Board in 1990; Australian National Training Authority in 1992; the Australian Qualifications Framework in 1994 and the formation of national, State and Territory industry advisory bodies.

2. Australia’s VET system is competency-based and not time-based. It includes a broad set of employability skills or key competencies.

3. VET sector reforms are supposed to be demand-driven, not supply-driven. However, there is much uncertainty about the nature of the former.

4. there should be multiple pathways and flexible delivery for learning in the transition years from initial education to employment, further education or training.

5. there should be a commitment to access and equity for young people who have traditionally “fallen through the cracks”. Where this is provided successfully, it occurs via a full service of intellectual, social and emotional development opportunities and supportive interagency initiatives.

6. there are many unresolved issues. Perhaps the most significant is the complex and contradictory State, Territory and Commonwealth funding relationships. There is also confusion around registration requirements for the provision of secondary schooling, vocational education, technical training and university education.

When the OECD (1997, p. 17) team visited Australia in the late 1990s, it identified three major strands needed in Australia’s policy reform strategy for school-to-work transitions. First, it called for a broadening of the senior secondary curriculum to encourage more young people to complete a Year 12 senior certificate.
Second, the team recommended strengthening inducements for industry to become a more active partner in the provision of education and training.

Third, the OECD report emphasised the importance of individual initiative and responsibility for shaping one’s own transition pathway.

Towards the end of the 1990s, Australia’s Ministers of Education agreed to a framework of national collaboration. This agreement was set out in *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 1999).

In Queensland at that time, a series of papers addressed particular aspects of transition, participation, retention and pathways (Cosier, 1999; Education Queensland, 1999; King, 1999; MCYEETA, 1999; Pitman, 1999; Schmidt, 1999; Teese & Charlton, 1999). Taken together, these reports found that:

1. to achieve OECD benchmarks for completion of senior schooling, the proportion of young people completing at least Year 12 of schooling in Queensland needed to grow from 67 per cent in 1998 to 88 per cent in 2010
2. state schools were losing public standing because of a range of complex factors
3. current levels of career advice available to young people were inadequate to meet the changing worlds of work and social life
4. full-time employment opportunities were decreasing as casual and part-time employment among young people was increasing
5. young people had lower than average incomes with higher levels of job mobility and an occupational profile that was concentrated in clerical sales and labourer occupations
6. clear and recognised broad pathways with multiple exit points were needed to increase the range of opportunities for young people to access post-compulsory education, training and employment.

Outlined here is a history of the way the ETRF’s senior phase reforms developed in Queensland as a response to, and an expression of, international changes and specific Australian issues.

The changing world of young people

For government, young people represent the future: “Queensland’s most precious resource is its children. When we nurture our children, we nurture our future” (Premier Beattie, *Green Paper*–Queensland Government, 2002a, p. i). The education, training and employment of young people are matters for which government, civil society and economic factors have a co-joint responsibility. Because young people matter, individually and collectively:

*We must do what we can to keep all of them in some form of learning or earning. We must take responsibility for what happens to young people now, so that they can lead satisfying lives and fully contribute to our society and economy* (*Green Paper*–Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 7).

Most students in schooling are finding their way into further education, training or work. A Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth found that for the past 30 years, the number of all Year 10 students in Queensland who continue on to Year 12 had been steadily increasing (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2001). This was so, even when taking into account the dip in retention that occurred during the 1990s. Approximately 70 per cent of Queensland students complete senior high school:

*We know that the majority of students move successfully from school and into further education, training or employment and, for them, no
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major change to the system is required ... Around 30 per cent of students eligible for an OP score go on to further study at university (Green Paper–Queensland Government, 2002a, pp. 7, 9).

The Australian Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) was introduced in 1989. Soon after, 15- to 17-year-olds were no longer eligible for unemployment benefits. Young people experienced lower levels of participation in the labour market as a percentage of the overall working-age population.

Even young people who were working faced significant issues in the latter part of the 1990s. They had lower than average incomes, and higher levels of job mobility.

With a reduction in full-time employment opportunities, young people experienced high rates of casual and part-time employment. Their occupational profile was different, with a higher concentration in clerical sales and labouring-type occupations (Cosier, 1999; King, 1999; Teese and Charlton, 1999).

However, unemployment rates for Year 12 graduates were substantially lower than for early school leavers. There was also found to be a positive relationship between level of initial education attainment and participation in on-the-job training (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996; Sweet, 1996).

In Queensland, research revealed that career education was inadequate to meet the rapidly changing world of work encountered by young people (Cumming, 1996; Education Queensland, 1999). These changes were contributing to multiple and nonlinear working and learning paths. Education and training providers had been responding to the consequential effects (Pitman, 1999; Gardner, 2002). By 2002, most 15- to 17-year-olds were already choosing:

... to stay in school for two years longer than the law requires [...] most Queensland students attend school longer than they are legally required, beyond the age of 15, because they and their parents recognise the benefits that come from senior schooling. Many young Queenslanders also participate in vocational education and training or work from 15 onwards (Green Paper–Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 11).

By 2000, the 11.5 per cent or 5000 Queensland students who left school at Year 11 were among the early school leavers who it was thought should be targeted through new initiatives (Gardner, 2002, chapter 3, pp 12–14). These initiatives included greater choice in subject areas and flexibility in the provision of learning opportunities. Research findings indicated that there was already remarkable flexibility and a range of pathways within the Queensland senior schooling system (Smith, Matters, Cosier and Watson, 2000). Despite this, not all young people were engaging in those learning options.

The Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce (2001) found many issues in making pathways work for all young people. The major ones were caused by weaknesses in the inter-governmental, cross-portfolio and cross-sectoral relationships and responsibilities at all levels.

The effects of early school leaving include an inability to access further education or training, and difficulties making successful transitions into employment (Gardner, 2002, p. 3). For many, poverty is a reality (Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 1998). For young people, leaving school early now has “much higher negative consequences than it once had, as more people engage with education and expectations of the skills needed for our future increase” (Gardner, 2002, Chapter 3, p. 37).

Of the 58 100 school leavers in Queensland in 2000, 28 per cent (16 400) were early school leavers. Some 76 per cent of these early school leavers were not in education or training. Twenty-nine per cent were unemployed. Those who did not complete Year 12 or other training were more likely to be unemployed than those who did.
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In 2002 there were approximately 103 000 young people aged 15 to 17 years in Queensland who were entitled to school, training or employment programs. 30 000 of them were enrolled in non-government schools and 55 000 were enrolled in state schools. 12 800 students were enrolled in vocational training programs. However, approximately 10 per cent of 15- to 17-year-olds had disengaged from full-time education, training or work:

As many as 10,000 young people [had] not completed Year 12 and [were] not working or undertaking further education and training. Many others [had] completed Year 12 but [were] not working or undertaking further education and training. It is these young people we need to focus our strategies on (Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 9).

For these 10 000 young Queenslanders, aged 15 to 17 years who were not engaged in either learning or earning the future was bleak. Socio economic disadvantage and/or other factors, inhibit young people’s capacity to “take advantage of opportunities in other areas, or affect the quality and range of what is available in the areas in which they live” (Gardner, 2002, Chapter 4, p. 54). There was a need to find better ways to help these young people to re-engage in learning and earning. This would enable them to gain the abilities and credentials needed to live and thrive (White Paper—Queensland Government, 2002b, pp. 6, 12).

We have some sense of the prospects for these 10 000 young people, as we too fear: Abandonment, exclusion, being rejected, blackballed, disowned, dropped, stripped of what we are, being refused what we wish to be. We fear being left alone, helpless and hapless. Barred company, loving hearts and helping hands. We fear to be dumped – our turn for the scrap-yard. What we miss most badly is the certainty that all that won’t happen not to us (Bauman, 2004, p. 128).

The Queensland Government was aware that not all students are successful at school. Some young people leave school early and do not find a way into work, training or further study.

... many early school leavers are alienated and disaffected with school. They believe the studies offered by schools are irrelevant to what they might want to do in [the] future and they have difficulty accepting school environments. Some do not cope with the requirements and structure of senior schooling and systems of assessment ... these perceptions of school are very real to some of our young people (Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, pp. 7, 8).

Here is a concern for the reality of the lives of young people, rather than obsession with economic abstractions. School-based learning does not work for all students (Australian Council for Education Research, 2001). Likewise, some young people find it difficult to participate in the social, cultural and economic life of the community:

This can be due to poor family relationships, poverty, homelessness and other problems. Often, these problems are beyond the control of young people but prevent their full participation in education and training. We know the current education and training system does not suit all young people (Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 17).

For these young people, the Government wanted “more flexible ways of learning and training tailored to individual needs, as well as school-based education as it currently operates” (Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 17). Those students who leave school early are likely to require other settings for education and training. This is part of a trend to divest schools of their “industrial age and bureaucratic restraints
to reinvent [them] as dynamic ‘learning organisations’ in ‘learning communities” (QSE 2010, 2000, p. 10). To retain and engage students who are at risk of leaving school early requires “settings that provide for more part-time study and an easier combination of work and study than is currently the case” (Gardner, 2002, Chapter 3, p. 13).

The Queensland Commission for Children and Young People (2002, p. 14) argued that those disengaged from schooling needed something other than linear pathways. These young people needed iterative transitions from school to training to work, and vice versa:

> The Commission considers that the success of the education and training reforms in ‘capturing’ the 10 000 or so young people not in education, training or employment will be critically linked to the flexibility and ongoing accessibility of the education system. The reforms must not only provide a range of education, training and employment pathways, but also allow young people to change pathways if their circumstances or interests change (The Queensland Commission for Children and Young People, 2002, p. 14).

The Commission gave the example of a young person who left school at age 15 to commence a traineeship. The Commission recommended that if the job did not work out, the young person should receive advice and support to obtain a new job, return to school or undertake training:

> Formal education and certification, in particular, would need to be sufficiently flexible in order to enable young people to reintegrate back into schooling mid-year or mid-semester. Schools may need to offer at least some components of the curriculum based on self-paced modules, which allow young people to recommence their studies at any time (The Queensland Commission for Children and Young People, 2002, p. 14).

In this sense, the ETRF did not construct these young people as beyond hope. They were held to be persons deserving human compassion. This spurred the desire to help them and their peers. In doing so, the State Government also laid claim to its important role in the economic arena and the necessity for its important social role in strengthening the well being of its citizens (Bauman, 2004, p. 68).

The ETRF intended to offer mechanisms by which alienated young people could be assimilated into the emerging patterns of education, training, work and social life. With its package of initiatives for the Senior Phase of Learning, the ETRF was designed to support all young people.

At some stage in the journey of hope, everyone and every institution is ‘at risk’. Because of changes to work, people are realigning their imaginings of how the concern for the local creation and expansion of meaningful jobs fits into larger global processes affecting the youth labour market. Apple (1996, p. 72) argues that “no serious discussion of educational concerns in general and of dropouts specifically can go on unless we situate these issues within what is happening outside the school”.

The changing world of work

Contemporary transitions in globalisation are evident in the restructuring (and de-structuring) of work. These changes are born of the technological developments commonly associated with the emergence of the information or knowledge-based economy.

Today, people face the “increasing dominance of the free market capitalist system around the world and an extraordinary increase in the rate at which new products and services are coming onto the market” (Robinson, 2000, p. 4).
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Key characteristics of the ‘old economy’ included high-volume production of identical items. Managers at the top made all the decisions with support from professionals in banking, accountancy and engineering. Workers were obliged

... to follow the orders set by management according to the requirements of stable and reliable production systems. These methods of production required rigid work rules and job classifications. In this ‘old economy’ most education and training is geared to implementation of instructions and specialised training in jobs tasks (Robinson, 2000, p. 2).

As the old economy is being reworked, a new economy is emerging. Corporate managerial traits from the past are being reinvented. The latter part of the twentieth century saw the emergence of the “information” or “knowledge-based” economy. This new world order is evident in the spread of computers, excitement over the rise of the internet, and increases in the trans-national migration of knowledge workers. Not surprisingly, the ‘new economy’ poses challenges for older industrialised, resource-based economies to:

... cut wages to match those of emerging industrial economies elsewhere [and/or] compete on the basis of how quickly and well they can transform ideas into better goods and services (Robinson, 2000, p. 2).

This raises questions about the economic disenfranchisement or dislocation of young people, not just questions problems of students ‘at risk’ of disengaging from schooling (Apple, 1996, p. 70).

These larger socio economic changes must be a key consideration in the development of any comprehensive education, training, employment and welfare reforms. In its latest iteration, Queensland’s Smart State Strategy directly engages with the knowledge economy. Smart Queensland: Smart State Strategy 2005–2015 sets out the skills, productivity, innovation and economic fundamentals that are driving State policies for the next decade.

Through its skills reform agenda, the Queensland Government seeks to better match the skills needs of twenty-first century businesses and industries with workers’ skills and dispositions (Department of Employment and Training, 2005a). The Government identified six priority areas for action: tackling the shortage of skilled tradespeople; reforming TAFE institutes; improving the profile of VET qualifications and customer-focused VET systems; establishing new engagement strategies with Queensland’s major industries; encouraging older Queenslanders to continue learning and earning; and new skilling strategies for those at risk of disengagement from the labour market. Proposals in the Skills for Jobs and Growth Green Paper and Skills Plan White Paper were informed by significant quantitative research (Department of Employment and Training, 2005).

Skills for Jobs and Growth identified multifaceted and changing employment trends that make it “difficult to predict jobs demand even one or two years into the future” (Department of Employment and Training, 2005, p. 6). It explored the effects of globalisation and technological change, the growth of non-standard work, and complex shifts from low-skill labouring jobs to high-skill professional jobs in Queensland (Department of Employment and Training, 2005, pp. 6–8).

Labour market trends “indicate that more than half of the jobs currently held by Australians did not exist in 1965” (White Paper—Queensland Government, 2002b, p.12). There has been an increase in new symbolic analytical jobs in biotechnology, information systems and communication technologies. Like other advanced economies, the Queensland labour market is “moving towards globally traded service industries and a range of niche and highly specialised value-added manufacturing and process industries” (Department of Employment and Training, 2005, p. 7). Consequently, there is no standard form of employment which can be regarded as the norm.
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Today the Australian labour market is characterised by two key features. First, people are now older when they first enter full-time employment. Second, young people are combining part-time and casual work while at school, or even as they engage in vocational education and training, and whilst undertaking university study (Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 7). About half of all young people work on a casual basis. Queensland has the nation’s highest rate of casual employment. There has been a decrease in full-time employment among young people and an increase in their casual employment:

In 1981–1982, around 34 per cent of 15- to 17-year-olds were in full-time employment. By 2001–2002, this had reduced to 8.4 per cent. Part-time employment for this age group rose from 15 per cent to 36.2 per cent in the same period (White Paper—Queensland Government, 2002b, p.12).

The ETRF represents a set of policies for equipping young people for the globalisation of the local knowledge and service economies. Similarly, the Queensland Skills Plan supports a long-term view of the role of employers engaging in comprehensive workforce management strategies, including collaborative partnerships with schools, training and higher education organisations.

The local pressures born of contemporary transitions in globalisation are changing the character of the Senior Phase of Learning as much as that of work. This is especially so for the changes made possible by the ever-advancing technological developments associated with the knowledge and service economies. The response to youth unemployment as much as the skill shortages is “through strategies aimed at increasing participation in ... education and training” (Department of Employment and Training, 2005, p. 26).

Changing the world of learning

Providers of the Senior Phase of Learning are expected to do much more than in the past. Changes in the global economy present great challenges to education and training providers:

For the future we are demanding more [of our educational systems]. Education and training that prepare the overwhelming majority of our young people with the attributes to contribute actively to an internationalised, rapidly changing economy. Education and training to create the knowledge and outcomes on which our future will be based (Gardner, 2002, p. 6).

In this century, workers need a high level of skills and competencies. In particular, they need skills that contribute to a services-oriented knowledge or information economy.

Queensland’s focus is on the education and training that equips young people for employment in new and emerging industries as well as established industries that are themselves being transformed and modernised. The new economy is now recognised as supplementing rather than replacing the old economy. Therefore, young people need to be able to “compete for and create jobs in emerging fields, and revitalised traditional industries” (White Paper—Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 6). Moreover, not all educators have been persuaded to forgo a liberal education for training. For instance The Association of Independent Schools of Queensland (2004, p. 2) argued that it is important for young people to develop

... higher-order thinking skills, problem-solving skills and meta-cognitive skills and these are developed, generally, during the learning of liberal, academic subjects.

In the press to connect the Senior Phase of Learning to the changing ‘old/new economies’ through processes of reform, “there are elements that should not be
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changed but need to be kept and defended” (Apple, 1996, p. xv). There is a need for a clear appraisal of what progressive policies, knowledge, and pedagogies already exist and are worth maintaining. The Association argued that because people are changing careers a number of times, young people need a liberal education rather than just training:

They need to be educated in such a way that they develop the skills and gain the required knowledge base to be able to switch careers when necessary. In addition, to enter programs leading to careers that have undergone ‘credential creep’, students will need to have undertaken general, academic education to have the capacity to enrol and succeed in further or higher education programs (The Association of Independent Schools of Queensland, 2004, p. 2).

The future of these young people is likely to depend on them gaining higher-level qualifications and continuing to learn and earn throughout their working life (White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 12). There are new foundation or basic skills in which young people now require considerable strengths:

... such as critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative learning, and communication. They must be able to read and write, and work with figures, as well as master new technologies. They must be ready for lifelong learning so they can pick up new skills and knowledge and adapt as the nature of work continues to change (White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 12).

These ever-changing learning and earning needs have been prominent in deliberations about education and training policy for young people across Australia during the past three decades. Australia’s education and training systems have been adapting to reflect these debates, through:

1. measures aimed at raising the level of participation and retention in all forms of formal education and training beyond the compulsory years of schooling
2. better preparation of young people for entry into the labour market
3. developing new pathways and improving the processes of transition from school and other forms of education and training to the workforce (Robinson, 2000, p. 11).

In the transition from education or training to work, Spierings (2004) found that there were still 14 per cent of 15- to 19-year-olds (i.e. 193 000 young people in Australia) who were not engaged in full-time education or full-time employment or in a combination of part-time education and part-time employment. This was despite the substantial gains that had already been attained in education and training for young people. Robinson (2000, p. 13) claimed that these improvements had “not been sufficient to offset the deteriorating labour market situation for ... the most disadvantaged groups of young people”. The slump in the involvement and achievement by 18-year-olds was mainly due to recent declines in Year 12 retention rates. This meant that the Finn Report (1991) target for 19-year-olds participation in post-compulsory education by 2001 was not met (Robinson, 2000, p. 14).

The rushing pace of change has challenged the steadiness and direction of many in the education and training sector.

From 1999 to the present, the Australian Council for Educational Research has been conducting the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY). One report from this project presented a comparative study between the United States of America and Australia on the early employment and further education experiences of high school ‘dropouts’ (Rumberger and Lamb, 1998). The report examined the complex relationship between young people’s learning and earning through the experiences of ‘dropouts’ in the first two years after high school. It found that a high proportion of young people who
drop out of high school ultimately complete a secondary school certificate. The data analysis revealed substantial differences in the post-school education and employment experiences of three groups of young people. There were those who dropped out but who eventually completed high school; those who did not complete high school; and those who returned to school and graduated with their senior certificate.

A key finding was that school dropouts experienced much longer periods where they were neither employed nor in further education and/or training.

Comparisons with interstate and OECD completion rates for secondary schooling suggested room for improvement:

Across Australia, 67 per cent of young people complete secondary schooling. Queensland is ranked third, with a 73 per cent completion rate, behind the ACT and Tasmania. The most successful European countries have much better secondary school retention rates than Queensland [Germany–92 per cent, Denmark–90 per cent]. ... most OECD countries also provide two to four years more schooling than Queensland (Green Paper–Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 9).

A direct comparison of where Australia sits internationally in terms of participation in education and training is not possible using OECD data. There is need for caution, because making “international comparisons is complex, given differences between systems and in data collection” (Gardner, 2002, Chapter 3, p.5). However, indications are that

... Australia experiences relatively poor levels of participation in education and training by young people aged 15 to 19 years. Australians in their 20s, 30s, 40s and beyond have very high rates of participation in education and training compared with adults in other OECD countries. Only 42 per cent of Australians aged 25 to 64 years having a tertiary qualification. This places Australia 16th of the 30 OECD countries (Department of Employment and Training, 2005, pp. 9, 10).

During the late 1990s, the OECD commenced a Thematic Review of the Transition from Initial Education to Working Life (OECD, 2000). Fourteen member countries, including Australia, took part. The review emerged from a wide range of concerns among OECD countries. Much of this unease centred around the social and personal costs of youth unemployment and those young people at risk of ‘dropping out’ in the transition from initial education to working life.

The transition from initial education (Years P to 9) to working life is just one of many changes that young people will need to make successfully throughout their lives of learning and earning. During the 1990s the OECD wanted to better understand the ways in which transitions worked for all young people. There was a desire to identify and understand the kinds of national policies and programs that underpinned successful transition outcomes for young people who:

1. enter working life after tertiary study as well as those who enter it after upper secondary education
2. take general education pathways as well as students in vocational education pathways
3. appear to make successful transitions as well as those who struggle to get a secure foothold in the labour market (OECD, 2000, p. 3).

Significantly, the review was also concerned with the connections between education, employment, labour, welfare and social policy domains (OECD, 2000). Underpinning this research was an assumption that young people will be engaged in some form of learning throughout their lives.
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The review investigated two issues believed to be fundamental to policy formation and implementation in this area:

1. how has young people’s transition from initial education to working life been changing during the 1990s?
2. what policies and programs – education, employment and social – deliver effective transition outcomes for young people (OECD, 2000, p. 7)?

Five major trends were established from this review (OECD, 2000). First, there was a relationship between a country’s economic conditions and transition outcomes. In particular, there was also a relationship between equity and transition outcomes. Second, transition processes varied from country to country and became both blurred and more uncertain during the 1990s. Third, key features of effective transition systems included well-organised pathways; workplace experiences combined with education; tightly woven safety nets for those at risk; good information and guidance; and effective institutions and processes. Fourth, the transition phase could promote learning throughout life through two complementary approaches: a concentration on education institutions and structures; and learner-centred approaches. Fifth, policy implications arise from a spreading of education over a wider period of working life, which was one of the logical consequences of ‘lifelong learning’.

In some countries, new and emergent transition patterns were developing. While not universal, they were sufficient to generate the question of whether, “in 20 years time, we will be able to look back on present transition patterns and see them as being as unusual as we now regard the transition patterns of young people 20 years ago” (OECD, 2000, p. 150).

The trends across industrialised countries are similar. For instance, Taylor (2005) examined the school to work transition policies of provincial governments in Canada. She ascertained that transition programs relied on voluntary partnership models that were intended to increase the responsiveness of local educational institutions and employers through relationships coordinated by brokers. Taylor’s study warned of a danger that, no matter how well intended, policies may ‘re-culture’ at-risk students by encouraging them to stream themselves more efficiently.

Various studies have questioned the legitimacy of the secondary school as a mechanism for distributing life opportunities (Shapiro, 1990; Livingstone, 1999). Taylor found that effective policies focused on increasing opportunities for all students to understand, engage in and determine the practices that define their lives.

The UK Government canvassed the possibility of “a new certificate that is awarded at age 19 and which would recognise achievements both in formal qualifications and activities such as voluntary work, arts, sport and music” (Green Paper – Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 10). That Government’s White Paper, 14–19 Education and Skills is a ten-year reform program (see www.dfes.gov.uk). It sets out a focus on the 3Rs; vocational routes for qualifications with practical experience; flexibility within the system for accelerated learning or longer learning for higher standards; and tackling disengagement.

In England, the Tomlinson Report (2004) into study options and certification for 14- to 19-year-olds investigated the idea of a new overarching diploma. Unlike Queensland, “the core principles of a single overarching qualifications framework for both academic and vocational courses was rejected” (Baker, 2005, n. p.).

Scotland released a Green Paper in February 2002. Lumby and Wilson (2003) reported that in seeking to meet the learning needs of all young people, Scottish schools perceived problems in providing flexibility.

Wales responded to the challenges of learning pathways for 14- to 19-year-olds through proposals that encompassed: individual learning pathways; wider choice and flexibility with a core of subjects to learn; coaching support for learning and for personal issues;
The notion of a ‘Youth Guarantee’ emerged in the Nordic countries in the 1970s (Hummeluhr, 1997). Denmark’s youth guarantee was initiated in 1979 for young people less than 25 years. It required by law, a guidance session at least twice a year for any young person leaving school up to the age of 25. Among the 27 different types of counselling available, the starting point is to assist each person to understand available education and employment possibilities (see www.logos-net.net).

Norway implemented a youth guarantee in 1985. Any young person under the age of 20 years who has been unemployed for over six months must be offered further education and/or training.

The Norse learned that these programs are beneficial when individually tailored; when there is a variety of programs available, and when financial support is provided to assist young people to access education (see www.odin.dep.no; and www.cmec.ca).

Robinson (2000, p. 27) found that Australia was “not investing in education and training at a level high enough to put it amongst those countries with the very highest levels of commitment to education and training”. Countries such Israel, Canada, the United States, France, South Korea and those in Scandinavia invested more than Australia. These countries were “devoting a higher proportion of their GDP to education and training than is Australia” (Robinson, 2002, p. 30). In the 1990s, Australia experienced a decline in the investment of public money in education and training as a proportion of its GDP.

The Dusseldorp Skills Forum commissioned the studies *Australia’s Youth: Reality and Risk* (1998) and the *How Young People are Faring* (2003) to understand more about young people in this era. Findings confirmed that a significant proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds who had left school without gaining qualifications were more likely to have discontinuous transitions to further study and/or work. The consequent result was poverty and social dislocation.

Another Dusseldorp Skills Forum research report estimated that the lifetime cost (discounted to 1999 terms) to Australia of each early school-leaver was $74 000 (King, 1999). Furthermore, it was found that half this cost was a direct monetary cost, borne partly by the individual and partly by governments. The remaining half was a social cost, which falls across the individual, governments and the whole community. In total, the overall cost to Australia of one year’s early school-leavers was an estimated $2.6 billion. In financial terms, reducing the number of early school-leavers nationally would yield an estimated 12.5 per cent rate of return.

Curtain’s (2000) report for Australia’s Dusseldorp Skills Forum found considerable complexity in the transitions of young people. Issues relating to retention and pathways cannot be viewed through a singular statistical lens such as the youth unemployment rate. As is occurring in other OECD countries, Curtain (2000, p. 3) found that:

Moving from education to work for many young people is not a single step of leaving the educational system and entering the world of work. The transition process can extend for some time with neither an obvious starting point nor a clearly defined end. Several steps forth and back between education and work are likely to happen. Young people may be engaged in job search and waiting times, involuntary unemployment or chosen time off for leisure, travel or other activities.

To support successful transitions, significant reform of senior phase learning pathways and support structures was necessary. This is expected to increase the likelihood of participation in education, training or work by all young people.

In this context, policy reform was also necessary. Changes were needed to assist schools
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

and communities to prepare young people to be local/global citizens. This meant forming and informing their capacity to participate in the civic, political and economic life of their community and state. This indeed was a challenge. Nevertheless, there were a number of significant incentives for education and training reforms during the mid-to late-1990s in Queensland (ABS, 1996; Cumming, 1996; OECD, 1997; Cosier, 1999; MCEETYA, 1999; Schmidt, 1999; Teese and Charlton, 1999). Specifically:

... there were concerns about increasing pockets of poverty in parts of the State, particularly in rural and regional areas, and a decline in school retention rates. There were also the effects of changes in the Commonwealth’s funding arrangements, which were placing increased pressures on State systems, with, in turn, concerns about public perceptions about State schooling in Australia. Related, in Queensland there were concerns about ‘a shift in enrolment trends’ due to an increasing drift to private schools in the new [quasi-]market context (Taylor and Henry, 2003, p. 339)

Similar issues and concerns can be discerned through a review of reports, policies and legislative initiatives in the Federal arena and across Australia’s States and Territories from 1999 to 2006. To varying degrees, changes have taken place in the areas of youth and education, vocational education and training and senior schooling reforms. Victoria has been active in these areas since 1999 while in comparison, New South Wales has not progressed to the same extent. Queensland and South Australia have been making changes since 2001. Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory are joining the momentum to review these areas of education and training.

Nationally and locally, options in the Senior Phase of Learning are becoming broader and more relevant to young people’s interests and capabilities. The development of vocational education and training in schools has resulted in an expansion of curriculum offerings at the senior level. More commonly, however, this has occurred via a range of formal and informal knowledge networks. These involve partnerships among schools, registered training organisations and non-government organisations. The establishment and maintenance of a range of tertiary link programs is also contributing to the richness in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment that moves beyond school-based learning. More universities have connected proactively with local secondary schools to offer learning options to young people in their Senior Phase of Learning.

Engagement in paid work has been a necessity for many young people. In most instances, this work has been casual, part-time shift work with consequent effects on school attendance and learning capabilities. Innovative leaders in the education and training sectors are seeking ways to accredit learning gained through such work experiences.

This has been accompanied by shifts in approaches to teaching and learning. It is now formally recognised that worthwhile, creditable learning is not school-dependent. In addition, school administrators have sought to accommodate these changing needs and choices of students through flexible timetabling, split-shifts and class organisation arrangements.

Ongoing research has confirmed significant concerns around youth transition and support services with strong recommendations for intervention (for example, see the Eldridge Report, *Footprints to the Future*, 2001). In Victoria, the Kirby Report (2000) into “post-compulsory” education and training found that over 20 per cent of young people left school without formal qualifications. It recommended increased participation in vocational education and training. This is expected to enhance workforce capability through improvements to the skills base of young people and produce workers with increased community participation in transition initiatives. Furthermore, arising from the recommendations of Kirby’s report a new Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA) was established. It was found that, at the time, “both NSW and Victoria, in different
ways, provide for a greater emphasis on work placement and experience than the current model in Queensland” (Gardner, 2002, p. 11).

The provision of sustainable, safe and reliable transportation arrangements has continued to be a challenge to schools with a primary duty of care at the local level. Ongoing innovations in transport policies and procedures is necessary to enable young people to successfully participate in diverse learning opportunities.

Formal recognition of the diversity of learning experiences has also challenged senior secondary certification processes in most states and territories. Historically, senior certification was exclusively designed to meet the tertiary entrance requirements of universities. The demand for formal recognition of alternative learning such as vocational and technical training has resulted in major efforts to design certification systems that recognise and reward individual achievements in a portfolio of learning.

An aggressive national VET system has successfully promoted school-based traineeships and apprenticeships. Its competency-based assessment system operationalised through the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), has presented significant challenges for the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA). They are seeking to integrate the two assessment regimes.

Across Australia, policy responses have been markedly similar and report findings reflecting international studies. For example, ACACA (1999, p. 4) produced a set of principles for the integrity, quality and long-term credibility of certificates of achievements. Meanwhile, VET in schools is making a difference to retention and completion of qualifications. Nationally, participation in school-based VET programs has grown from 60 000 students in 1996 to 211 000 completing senior in 2004 (MCEETYA, 2004, p. 4).

The Whittlesea Youth Commitment in Victoria saw the benefits of cooperation between schools, vocational education and training providers and other community organisations. The aforementioned Nordic youth guarantee model influenced the Whittlesea Youth Commitment. Twelve months were spent developing strategies with local learning providers. As part of the program, schools identified students who were leaving without a job and/or education and training place. Three ‘transition brokers’ for eight schools worked on a case management model. There was a commitment to contact every school leaver at least twice in the first year after leaving school and to develop individualised action plans. The plans formed the basis of a ‘passport’ which included a resume and education details. The passport ‘travelled’ with the young person as she/he moved between agencies and/or learning providers (Fanebust, 2001; Kellock, 2001).

Tasmania: A State of Learning (2003) focused on participation and outcomes in senior secondary education and training. It too recommended the development of a new senior completion process and certificate. Tasmania also established a qualifications authority with a similar purpose to those of Victoria and Queensland.

New South Wales reviewed its High School Certificate (McGaw, 1997) with findings that led to a new standards-based assessment system as well as VET related curriculum development. For the first time, there was recognition for VET in meeting requirements for tertiary entrance.

Throughout Australia, there has been much engagement in reforms to education and training for the last three decades. For many it does not seem that a conclusion has been brought to any one of these. Recent research has found that the VET in schools initiatives have not significantly improved overall retention (Anlezark, Karmel, and Ong, 2006). These initiatives have not markedly improved alignments among school to work transitions for some young people. Throughout the research literature, there is evidence of continuing challenges for policy makers to design sustainable systems that are adequately resourced, that directly support school and community initiatives and that help young people (Gardner, 2002, p. 26).
Conclusion

The challenges for policies governing education, training and work are now more complex and exciting. Reforms to Australia’s systems of education, training and work have been necessary to enable workers to become “totally engaged with the global environment or face obsolescence” (Robinson, 2000, p. 6). Many people achieve a sense of well being in and through paid work. Thus, it is not surprising that the power and wealth of the Queensland Government has been directed through the ETRF to increasing the number of young people able to secure employment in the changing ‘old/new economies’. The Government addresses these issues because:

... erratic conditions of employment buffeted by market competition [are] the major source of the uncertainty about the future and the insecurity of social standing and self-esteem that [haunt] citizens. It [is] primarily against that uncertainty that the [State undertakes] to protect its [citizens] – by making jobs more secure and the future more assured (Bauman, 2004, p. 90).

The ETRF initiatives for the Senior Phase of Learning (Years 10 to 12) were developed in response to the changing worlds of young people, work and learning. It was these forces which informed, formed and transformed the relationship between education, training and work for Queensland’s young people. Chapter 3 summarises key findings from the reviews commissioned by the Queensland Government as part of the process that formed and informed the senior phase of the ETRF.
Chapter 3

Strategic Change Strategies

The Queensland Government is reforming the system because we believe all young people should have every chance to reach their full potential. We want to ensure that no-one misses out simply because the current system cannot neatly accommodate them (White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p.16).

Introduction

Innovation was already occurring in senior secondary schooling. Accordingly, the ETRF’s senior phase reforms stood for continuity as much as change. The reforms reasserted, reaffirmed and resurrected innovations grown in schools and local communities. For example, the Government was able to draw on efforts in Indigenous communities to inform further possibilities for reform:

Already, we are trying to work in a different and more effective way with these communities – through the Cape York Partnership Strategy, the Partners for Success policy in Education Queensland, and the Cape York Training and Employment Strategy in the Department of Employment and Training (White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 18).

Likewise, the Skilling Queensland 2001–2004 Strategy showed possibilities for linking education and training with schools. Through this Strategy, young people were encouraged to combine their liberal education with vocational training, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. As a result, schools were working on joint ventures with “training providers such as TAFE institutes to provide practical and relevant access programs while they are at school” (Green Paper–Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 9). Successful experiences such as school-based traineeships and apprenticeships informed the vision of the ETRF’s senior phase.

It would therefore be a mistake to characterise these education and training reforms as a simple top-down process. The senior phase reform agenda captured some of what learning providers were already doing. In addition, it generated ideas for system-wide innovations. In this way ETRF’s senior phase gave expression to an interactive, multi level approach to reform.

Six strategies have been distilled and are presented as integral to the strategic change process initiated by the Queensland Government:

1. commissioning of reviews of key issues
2. community consultation and engagement through the Green and White Papers
3. decisions on the key initiatives that will deliver policy outcomes
4. establishment of the necessary legislative and governance arrangements
5. allocation of funding and designing accountability mechanisms
6. trials and evaluation of key initiatives.

In this Chapter significant aspects of each of these strategies are explored, acknowledging their interconnections in the enactment of this complex reform process. First, we examine three major reports that influenced the reforms. Second, we identify and explore further change strategies. Finally, we examine decisions that were made around senior phase certification.
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

Influential Reports

The Government commissioned a number of reviews as part of the processes for forming and informing the ETRF. Information from three key reports directly influenced the reform agenda for the Senior Phase of Learning. These were Queensland State Education 2010 (QSE, 2000), the Pitman Report (2002) and the Gardner Report (2002).

Each in its own way contributed to subsequent policy decisions about the Senior Phase of Learning. These reviews speak to the role of capable governments in creating and maintaining the common good in and through the education, training and work of the public (Apple, 1996, p. 11). However, there is no way of guaranteeing how such reports might be used, what their effects might be, which interests they might serve, or what benefits they might realise. We would commit the “genetic fallacy” (Apple, 2001, pp. 25, 204) if we assumed that the import and meaning of the ETRF’s senior phase reforms were totally determined by its grounding in any one of these reports.

Queensland State Education 2010

By the late 1990s, the resourcing and delivery systems of the State school sector were being challenged. It had to provide: (1) curriculum that keeps pace with rapid local/global changes; (2) schools of excellence; (3) high-quality vocational preparation; (4) quality remedial literacy and numeracy teaching, learning and assessment; (5) high-quality provision for the special needs of students; and (6) the attitudes and values needed to build sound social futures (Pitman, 1999; MCYEE, 1999; Schofield and Associates, 1999; Schofield, 1999).

Queensland State Education 2010 (QSE 2010, 2000) was presented as a futures-oriented strategy for schools. Here the crucial role of the Government in underwriting the education of the Queensland public was acknowledged. Yet it also recognised that:

Government’s more traditional role to act in the public interest, promoting participatory citizenship, equity and community trust is continually challenged. When linked to a dogmatic view that government is ‘only a purchaser of services’ in open markets, the traditional value of public education is undermined and state schools are disadvantaged (QSE, 2000, p. 7).

In arguing for a strong system for the education of the Queensland public, QSE 2010 explored a complex diversity of changing family structures; information technologies; and cultural, economic and workplace uncertainties affecting students. It anticipated that these would have continuing long-term consequences for their future. QSE 2010 explicitly identified the importance of the changing conditions of teachers’ work; the need to increase Year 12 participation rates and fostered the notion of schools as embedded in learning communities.

In its response to the QSE 2010 report, the Queensland Government committed itself to increasing “the number of young people who complete Year 12 or its equivalent from 68 per cent to 88 per cent across all school sectors by the year 2010” (Queensland Studies Authority, 2004, p. 5). Later initiatives of the ETRF senior phase reform agenda had their genesis in QSE 2010 (2000, p. 7). In particular, it called for whole-of-government coordination of education, training, employment and youth services, and the explicit and concerted community-led development of trust and social capital.

The Pitman Report

As a former head of the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, Pitman’s (2002) commissioned report, The Senior Certificate: A New Deal, reflected considerable breadth and depth of understanding about the Senior Phase of Learning. The report proposed initiatives to improve the learning opportunities available to young people; opportunities, which would deliver sustained improvements in participation and completion rates.
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

Pitman’s (2002) research findings suggested that the number of young people in Queensland who are:

... ‘seriously at risk’ of not completing senior schooling in its current form (Years 11 and 12) is at least 20 per cent of any one cohort. Approximately the same percentage fails to partake of, or be successful at, senior schooling. (2002, pp. 24 to 25)

Pitman confirmed that while many young people are disengaged from school-based learning, not all of them are necessarily alienated from learning:

The need [is] to support non-school based learning and to capture achievement in it ... the school facilitates, coordinates, monitors and records assessment in all Worthwhile Learning, including that which occurs outside the school fence ... [this means using] local resources to maximise students’ opportunities to acquire skills, knowledge and dispositions for the Smart State (Pitman, 2002, p. 84).

Thus, the possibility of senior phase learning occurring in a range of sites emerged. The report claimed that some learning would occur within schools, while other Worthwhile Learning could be undertaken beyond the school fence. The expectation that schools will deliver all senior phase learning was now at an end:

There has already been a move throughout Australia towards recognising the learning that occurs outside the school. Many Queensland students are enrolled in VET courses and ... subjects that include learning occurring outside the school (Pitman, 2002, p. 84).

Pitman (2002, p. 84, emphasis in original) proposed making these “learning experiences accessible to all students as part of their senior studies, and [allow] them to be central to the learning of those students for whom this is desirable”. In terms of the organisation of students’ learning, they would “receive tuition and learning experiences in many sites [with] the school [taking] a central role in recognising and recording achievements for the senior certificate” (Pitman, 2002, p. 86).

A plan for implementation was proposed. Five principles informed these proposals:

1. there should be flexible entry and exit points to the Senior Phase of Learning
2. there should be variable rates of progression so that students would be able to complete satisfactorily their Senior Phase
3. to provide flexibility and diversity in curriculum offerings, sites of learning for young people should be broadened to include “schools, communities, workplaces, training institutions, tertiary institutions or combinations of them” (Pitman, 2002, p. 48)
4. because of the increasingly complex concerns of work, social and family life, it is necessary to establish a system to support young people to exercise choices in making the transition between education, training and work
5. there should be a mechanism for young people to make individualised commitments to learning in their Senior Phase.

At that time, the subject options and pathways available through the (then) Board of Senior Secondary School Studies were enormous. There were 60 Board subjects, 20 Study Area Specifications and other vocational certificates. However all of these offerings were geared to one purpose on the Senior Certificate, namely the calculation of an Overall Position for entry into tertiary studies.

In this new deal, the notion of a Senior Phase of Learning was reconceptualised. It was argued that a ‘quantum of learning’ should be counted towards a new senior certificate. For Pitman (2002, p. 26) this meant the creation of an inclusive Certificate that could
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“embrace students who (at least up to now) have been considered atypical or who have had or require atypical [learning] experiences”.

While the new Certificate would accredit a broader range of learning experiences, it also needed to be a valued, credible qualification. This would be done by “tightening up on the quality and quantity of learning stipulations” (Pitman, 2002, p. 27). For instance, vital learnings in literacy and numeracy “which may have been missed in the Initial Phase of Education [Years P to 9] for some students, not only can (but must) still be incorporated in their senior program” (Pitman, 2002, p. 28).

The new deal for the Senior Phase of Learning proposed that each student enter into an agreement that sets out his or her plan for achieving the new Certificate. To facilitate such learning, it was recommended that stronger school community links be developed at the local level.

A major challenge emerging from the findings was the recommendation to design a system for ranking tertiary entrance that would be compatible with the certification of this new Senior Phase of Learning.

The Gardner Report

In her commissioned Review of Pathways Articulation, Gardner (2002) set out to provide advice on ways of improving the articulation and credit transfer among schools, TAFE colleges, private training providers, universities and industry training sites. In addition, the review identified the means by which the resultant recommendations could affect opportunities for young people’s labour market participation and potential for lifelong learning. Together with the policy officers who worked on the project, Gardner concluded that achievement of these outcomes would require “redrawing the relationships between the major education and training sectors” (Gardner, 2002, Chapter 1, p. 6).

The findings from the Gardner (2002) review concurred with previous studies that young people who left school early and did not enter further work or study were disadvantaged in their future life/work trajectories and opportunities (Sweet, 1996; King, 1999; OECD, 2000).

Like Pitman (2002), Gardner (2002) called for greater flexibility in the Senior Phase of Learning with variable delivery mechanisms, rates and paces of progression and locations for learning to meet individual students’ needs and aspirations. She identified inconsistencies in: (i) what counts as learning; (ii) how it is funded; (iii) how it is coordinated; and (iv) how it is recognised among schools, the technical and vocational education sector, universities and workplaces.

Gardner’s report drew attention to the particular learning needs of young people in rural and remote areas, from communities suffering socio economic adversity and Indigenous students. Taken together, these findings highlighted the need for new and improved career guidance and advice for students, parents/guardians, employers and the community.

Consistent with other Australian and international studies reported in the previous Chapter, Gardner (2002) found that transitions from school to work and/or further study are not linear. Her findings confirmed that structural change is complex and multi-dimensional.

Structuring Change

At the strategic level, Government structured the major changes required for the senior phase reforms around existing democratic processes of our civil society. For example, the move from Green to White Papers to legislative change is an expected change process. In addition, the Government devised specific intervention tactics designed to deliver on policy intentions.

From Green to White Paper via Public Consultations
The ETRF reforms followed an accepted process – from research-based reports, to a *Green Paper* for formal consultations, then a *White Paper* announcing the suite of reforms, followed by the introduction of legislation.

The ETRF’s senior phase proposals emerged with the key purpose of “engaging young people in learning, re-igniting their interest if it has waned, and supporting schools and young people” (*White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p.14*).

Some things were explicitly not part of the ETRF’s senior phase. First, it was “not about forcing reluctant or disruptive students to remain in classrooms. Second, it was not about lowering the standards of behaviour we expect from young people” (*White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 14*).

In other words, the ETRF agenda recognised that the current system of senior secondary schooling could not accommodate all students. In part then, the senior phase reforms were about providing young people with opportunities for education and training in environments that more effectively suited their needs. The Queensland Government’s stated purpose for reforming its education and training system was based on the premise that all young people should have the chance to fulfill their potential, and it was argued that something more than the current system was needed to accommodate them (*White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 16*).

The resultant change strategies were formed and informed by public debates about the measures to be taken. This was a public policy process that was moved by the belief that citizens can figure out what is in the interests of the common good of young people (Furedi, 2005, p. 162). Extensive community consultations proved to be a strength of the reform process.

Community consultations and successful existing programs have made it clear that the best way to achieve local solutions that work for local communities is to use local knowledge and expertise (*White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 24*).

Students, parents and guardians, teachers, educators, training providers, business leaders, employers, trade unions and other members of the Queensland community were consulted about the issues confronting the education and training of young people. Apple (1996, p. 19) points to the wisdom of such practices, observing that

… a government that doesn’t listen, that assumes it always knows more than its ordinary citizens, that establishes ways of divorcing itself from the deeply felt concerns of these citizens, is not wise.

The move from *Green* to *White* Paper was accomplished over a 12-month period in 2002. By the end of that year, an implementation model and governance framework, an ETRF Board and an ETRF implementation team had been established to focus on the senior phase reform initiatives. The change process continued.

**Legislative Change**

Of the 19 Actions proposed in the *White Paper*, the following drove the legislative reforms to the Senior Phase:

1. all young people should be learning and/or earning
2. Year 10 should provide a seamless transition period to Year 11 and beyond
3. there should be a reshaping of the notion of Senior Phase of Learning to encompass Years 10, 11 and 12
4. the Senior Phase of Learning should be characterised by flexible pathways and broader opportunities for young people to learn and/or earn
5. increased support will be necessary to assist young people to complete their
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education and training commitments under the proposed law

6. new community partnerships are necessary to make these changes work.

Laws governing the provision of universal education; compulsory participation in education, training or work, and the protection of child labour are about delivering social justice and prosperity locally.

Timeline of advancing achievements in provision of universal education in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>School leaving age set at 12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Leaving age raised to 14 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Leaving age became 15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Leaving age now 16 years (with a two year compulsory participation phase after this period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In October 2003, the Queensland Parliament passed the *Youth Participation in Education and Training Act 2003* (the ‘YPET’ Act) and the *Training Reform Act 2003*. The YPET Act has very recently been incorporated into the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* which is the primary legislative instrument for education in Queensland.

The YPET Act provided the first major shift in the delivery of education in Queensland in more than 40 years. It supplied a legislative framework for the Senior Phase of Learning to ensure that Queensland’s young people are either “learning or earning”. Section 58\(^2\) outlined that the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and Association of Independent Schools Queensland (AISQ) must be consulted during development of any regulations regarding:

1. section 40 (i) regarding how a student account is opened
2. section 44 (2) regarding obligations to notify the Queensland Studies Authority of other matters
3. section 59 regarding aggregated information.

The information is to be gathered to support the goals of the YPET Act. These goals relate to:

1. opening student accounts
2. keeping account information up to date
3. providing information for re-engagement activities
4. providing information for planning activities.

The provisions under the Act (and its amendments) for the preservation of individual privacy and the nature of data that can be provided for tracking, planning and evaluation purposes are significant elements of the ETRF’s legislative framework for the senior phase reforms. These new laws were designed to provide a blueprint that mapped, signposted and circumscribed the possibilities for education and training reform. They gave order to governing what could happen.

**Governance**

A senior phase governance structure was established to oversee the implementation of a three-year trial period (from January 2003 to December 2005 inclusive). There were two levels at which this governance structure operated. First, there was the statewide, strategic leaders committee representative of all key stakeholders in the ETRF senior phase reform agenda. Second, there was a localised, community constructed governance structure known as District Youth Achievement Plan (DYAP) management committees.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the key state-level governance groups and identifies those

\(^2\)Section 267 of the EGPA 2006 now corresponds
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with decision-making and those with advisory powers. The ETRF Board consisted of the Directors-General of the [then] Departments of Education and the Arts (Chair), Employment and Training, Communities, Premier and Cabinet and the Under-Treasurer, Queensland Treasury.

Figure 3.1 Senior Phase Governance Structure

( Source: ETRF Senior Phase of Learning Trial – Phase 5 Evaluation Summary, 2006, p. 18 )

In addition, other committees and reference groups were established to progress individual projects such as transportation, community mentoring and the Youth Support Coordinators initiative. Two of these committees supported significant funding initiatives and interagency cooperation — the Queensland Studies Authority information technology projects and the Youth Support Coordinators initiative. Formal memoranda of understanding were established between the Department of Education and the Arts and other agencies.

Protocols, responsibilities, powers and reporting relationships for both the Board and an ETRF Inter-sectoral Advisory Committee were also established. The Advisory Committee consisted of nominees from the government departments mentioned above; the Catholic Education Commission; the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland; the Queensland Studies Authority; Commerce Queensland; Parents’ Associations; TAFE Queensland; Learning Network Queensland; Australian Council for Private Education and Training; the State Manager of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training; and the Local Government Association of Queensland. The leader of the ETRF Implementation Team was also noted as a member of the Inter-sectoral Advisory Committee.

The Strategic Implementation Branch was charged with coordinating these activities across all sectors. For the first time, the Government funded a representative from the non-government school sector to participate as a member of the team. Representing both the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland (AISQ), Terry Creagh recalled her time on the team as a positive experience. Terry was the non-government sector representative throughout the whole trial period and brought a unique perspective to this history because she lived through the many staffing changes, ongoing negotiations and accommodations as government and non-government people worked together at both strategic and operational levels. In one of her reports, she noted that:

Student experiences will be different from the earliest to the last stages of schooling, some families will face new challenges, some schools will be different, some areas of teaching will definitely change and educational authorities will be called upon to support their staff, students and families in different ways (Report to QCEC, 19 November, 2002).
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Over the following three years, the Implementation Team managed the ETRF project on a day-to-day basis. As the governance groups went about their work, the importance of planning for, and the management of, staff turnover and structural re-organisations in stakeholder agencies was noted (Phase 5 Evaluation Summary, 2006). In the move to full implementation in 2006, the challenge of maintaining ongoing organisational commitment to cross-sectoral governance remains.

District Youth Achievement Plans

The Government committed itself to using ETRF to foster “community commitment to young people by building partnerships at the local level” (White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 24). This was done through the development of “District Youth Achievement Plans that will set local targets for participation, retention and attainment in education, training or employment programs” (White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 24). The District Youth Achievement Plans (DYAPs) provided the Government with an important mechanism for coordinating

... programs and services at the local level, across state and non-state schools, vocational education and training providers and other services to cut duplication, use resources more efficiently, and close gaps in services (White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 24).

To do this work, DYAP management committees were established. At the local level, these management committees included government and non-government officials from education, training and employment sectors; local community members; community organisations; parent organisations; the private sector of business and industry; and in some instances, students. As the trial progressed, the term ‘DYAPs’ entered the common language of Queensland education and training. By the time of full implementation in 2006, ‘the DYAPs’ had come to refer to both the local management committees and the planning documents produced by these committees.

DYAPs are the ETRF’s binding mechanism. They linked planning, resource allocation and integrated service delivery. Together they gave form to flexible, responsive learning programs across the school, college and industry sectors and community agencies.

While the layout of DYAP documents varied across the State, each plan outlined the goals and key priorities for young people in the local area. Regional (or district/cluster) profiles were developed and incorporated into the planning documents. Ongoing profile monitoring reflected the demographic, sociocultural, transport, communication, health, educational, employment and training opportunities and challenges affecting young people. Local priorities, activities and outcomes were mapped against the ETRF senior phase agenda objectives. In some cases, the relationship to Queensland’s systemic priorities, goals, initiatives and performance indicators was also made explicit.

The cultural changes that underpinned the operations of the DYAP management committees played a critical role in the functioning of ETRF senior phase reform initiatives at the local level. In the move from the trial to full implementation, meaningful community and inter-agency engagements and sustainability of funding have been identified as both critical success factors and challenges in future outcomes for governance at this level. The coordination of the DYAPs was one area that evaluations showed could have been given more time, personnel and thus financial support. In addition, the challenge has been to retain decision-making agility in response to young people’s changing needs on the one hand and a continuity and consistency of delivery on the other.

As an apparatus for localised decision making, the DYAP committees point to the sense of social responsibility, capabilities and accountability mechanisms that exist for institutionalising participatory democracy. In their operations, they offered insights into possibilities for extending and enhancing public discussions, debates and negotiations around the education, training and employment of young people. They created an
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expectation of something more structural than cosmetic. The resulting structures that were developed were only as effective in achieving the desired outcomes as the people on the ground enabled them to be.

**Investing in Reform**

A key element of the Government’s strategy for the senior phase reforms was the provision of funding. A “flexible allocation model” was created “to ensure performance-based allocation of funds between schools, vocational education and training and employment programs” (*Green Paper*—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 17). Importantly, the funding of ETRF was viewed as a necessary investment in the State’s future social and economic viability:

> This is an investment in Queensland’s future which will ensure we take our rightful place in this new and dynamic century and the highly competitive global economy. It will ensure jobs and prosperity for our children. Our Smart State Strategy is about creating 21st century jobs and a diversified economy with a major investment in traditional and new industries (Premier Beattie, *Green Paper*—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. iii).

In the late 1990s, the OECD (1997) review team that visited Australia identified a number of problems for young people in their transitions from initial education to work. Notable among these problems were the complex, confusing and contradictory state, territory and Commonwealth funding relationships and registration requirements for secondary school, vocational education, training and university education in Australia (OECD, 1997). A series of cross-sectoral funding issues created barriers, as well as offering opportunities for improving pathways. For instance, policies preventing ‘double dipping’ (enrolment in both school and TAFE) actually contributed to the duplication of VET provision. This was an inefficient and wasteful use of resources (Gardner, 2002, p. 76). This problem was further compounded by:

1. overlap between vocational education and training provided in schools, through TAFE and other providers
2. opportunities to improve capital planning collaboration across sectors
3. the effect of different fee regimes on maximising pathways (Gardner, 2002, pp. 75–76).

The Government was aware of the need for greater funding flexibility, acknowledging that “there was strong support for schools and TAFE to have greater flexibility to spend funds as required to meet the needs of the young people in their local communities” (*White Paper*—Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 23). The Government also committed itself to investigating “ways of giving young people equitable, affordable access to vocational education and training in schools and TAFE” (*White Paper*—Queensland Government, 2002b, p.21).

In 2003, the Government investigated “how to make student fees for vocational education and training consistent for 15- to 17-year-olds, whether they are enrolled in a school or in TAFE” (*White Paper*—Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 22). The Government was of the view that:

> ... vocational education and training must be affordable for young people. We want to ensure that students studying vocational education and training in schools and students enrolled in TAFE are able to access vocational education and training on equal terms and at reasonable rates (*White Paper*—Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 22).

By the end of the trial period, this long contentious issue of ‘double dipping’ was resolved through a resourcing framework that provides all young people with access to their first VET qualification at TAFE. With provisos of budget constraints, local and
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State priorities, the Government has committed to fund nationally recognised VET qualifications as part of senior schooling and students “will pay no tuition fees where the qualification is part of, or progresses towards, a Certificate III or higher level qualification” (Department of Education, Training and the Arts, 2006, p. 37).

Government funding was also invested in the Queensland Studies Authority which incorporated the work previously undertaken by the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (BSSSS), the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) and the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority (TEPA). The QSA was funded to “design a system so that students’ achievements can be ‘banked’ with the Authority” (White Paper – Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 17). The Authority was also funded to provide students and their parents or caregivers with readily accessible information about their progress towards achieving the new Queensland Certificate of Education (White Paper – Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 17).

Two particular funding mechanisms were designed to drive change at the local level through the DYAPs: Central Purchasing Unit funding and Access to Pathways funding. This investment strategy included funding for:

1. supporting schools to provide a range of education programs in new learning environments for those students not suited to traditional schooling

Central Purchasing Unit Funding

In December 2003 the Government decided to trial a Central Purchasing (CP) mechanism that would provide flexibility in funding ETRF initiatives for the re-engagement of disengaged young people aged 15 to 17 years.

The CP mechanism operated in parallel with the current funding and resourcing arrangements for schools. It was trialled from 2004 until June 2006 with an allocation of $4 million to purchase programs and services for disengaged young people.

As part of the trial, the Department of Education and Training (DET) delivered flexible programs to meet the needs of young people through its Minimal Level of Investment (MLI) for 15- to 17-year-olds. Where DET had no capacity to redirect its normal funding processes, CP trial funds were accessed. This enabled extra services to be purchased for young people through TAFE.

The majority (70 per cent) of the young people who participated in the 2004–05 CP trial had disengaged from school at, or before, reaching 15 years of age. Why had they disengaged? The majority of participants in the CP trial had multiple reasons for disengagement from schooling. These included family issues, high mobility, homelessness, a desire for independent living, health issues and securing employment. Around 70 per cent of the young people engaged in the trial had completed Year 9 or below as their highest level of schooling prior to disengagement. A significant number disengaged just after Year 10 (23 per cent). The evaluation report of the CP trial (Queensland Government, 2006b, p. 8) stated:

... there is a need for earlier intervention to assist those at risk of disengagement prior to turning 15 years of age. Targeting young people who are 14 years of age could assist them in transition into the Senior Phase of Learning.

While for some students, the senior years may be characterised by failure, disillusionment and eventual non-completion, Pitman (2002, p. 44) also found that “this same syndrome ... has led many other students to their choice not to complete Year 10 or not to proceed to senior education”. Similarly, the Youth Affairs Network Queensland (2003, p. 2) raised concerns about the disengagement of young people before Year 10:
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... many children leave the school system well before Year 10. What provisions have been made to retain children who are dropping out in Years 8 and 9? YANQ is concerned that children leaving school this early may be, and in many cases already are, consigned to the "too hard basket" and few if any educational resources will be directed at them.

During the trial, state sector (25) and non-state sector (5) schools, colleges and community learning centres supported 1273 disengaged young people. These young people were predominantly male (56 per cent) with English being the main language spoken at home (85 per cent). Young people identifying as Indigenous were more evident in the non-state sector (60 per cent) than in the state-sector (28 per cent) trials. Young people with disabilities (6 per cent) also participated in this trial. It is significant that data on these characteristics of the demographics of young people were documented as part of the evaluation of the CP trial.

Local government authorities involved in the CP trial included the Brisbane City Council’s Albert Park Flexi-School and the Cooloola Shire Youth Development Unit. Off-site units of schools were represented by Kingston College's Centre for Continuing Education, the Keppel Education Pathways and Centenary Heights State High School Flexi-School. Some of the non-government organisations participating in the trial included the Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service; the Caboolture Area Youth Service; Mercy Family Services; Wesley Community Centre; Toowoomba Youth Service; Anglicare; Primary After Schools Sports; and Scriptures Union. Participation by State Government Departments came through the Brisbane School of Distance Education and Youth Justice Education and Training. Vocational education and training providers were also involved: the Gold Coast Community Hub; Fraser Coast Training and Employment Support Services; Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE; the Open Learning Institute of TAFE; Creative Minds Arts Association (Inc.); and Challenge Employment and Training.

The CP trial demonstrated that alternative funding mechanisms can make a difference when partnerships between providers work well. Funds for mobilising the goodwill and organisational capabilities of staff in schools, community organisations and government agencies, at the local level, were essential for the success of this initiative.

Access to Pathways Funding

The Access to Pathways Grants Program was developed in response to Action 16 of the White Paper (White Paper—Queensland Government, 2002b) which focused on assisting young people to improve participation in learning and achieve qualifications.

Between 2003 and 2006, $11.7 million was invested in innovations under the Access to Pathways Program. From July 2003 to December 2005 193 initiatives across all DYAPs throughout Queensland were funded. Initiatives trialled included:

1. workplace learning
2. community-based learning activities
3. new school-based learning environments
4. support for young people engaged in work or schooling away from home
5. brokers to assist young people negotiate transitions to work or further learning
6. purchasing industry or vocational education and training expertise
7. engaging experienced, knowledgeable mentors to work voluntarily with young people at risk and
8. using the arts, including music.

Access to Pathways funding helped provide services that were designed to retain students who were at risk of disengaging from learning. It assisted young people to attain their Senior Certificate or vocational qualifications through flexible learning.
options. In some DYAP districts, demand for services far exceeded expectations and the management committees had to place a cap on the number of young people serviced. In some districts, multiple funding sources were mobilised to fund initiatives for more marginalised youth who required more intensive support services.

Through the DYAPs, people planned innovative actions and decided on strategic priorities in the education, training and employment of young people in their local areas. Managing these key relationships was critical to the success of these funded programs. This provided opportunities to coordinate resources, identify gaps in service delivery, reduce unwarranted duplication and maximise resource usage. The DYAP Management Committees were the governing body charged with administrative roles and responsibilities, including matters relating to the in/eligible uses for Program funding, the eligibility of proponents, accountability arrangements and approval processes.

The Program’s funding methodology was a key factor in its success. First, an equivalent based level of funding enabled all districts throughout the State to participate in the Program. Second, it enabled local priorities to be identified and actioned through experimentation with relevant initiatives. Third, resources were allocated to districts to address the needs of young people disengaged from learning, or at risk of becoming so, based on an assessment of their needs using data on early school leavers.

Finally, experiences from the ETRF senior phase trials suggest that there is still work to be done in this area. In its response to the initial senior phase proposals, the Queensland Teachers’ Union (QTU) also shared its interests in these issues:

- Both Gardner and Pitman acknowledge that the present system works perfectly for a large majority of students. The recommendations are attempts to provide a better system for all students, particularly those who do not do well in the traditional setting ... these are fine sentiments and none of the recommendations are outrageous (Young, 2002, n.p.).

The Queensland Teachers’ Union observed that the cost of implementing the recommendations from the Gardner and Pitman reports would require a considerable boost in funds. However, it also noted that:

- The only references to the provision of additional resources are in the Budget Papers with provision of only $40.3 million over a three-year period beginning in the 2003–2004 financial year. This is an inadequate amount in the context of changing Senior Schooling across the State. Because of limited funding, the danger is that the Department will pick and choose the most desirable aspects of each report from a cost perspective (Young, 2002, n.p.).

As for all wide-ranging reforms, there is a constant need for governments to juggle priorities for funding. Importantly, the funding of the ETRF’s senior phase reform agenda will continue to be a necessary investment in the State’s future social and economic viability.

Key Performance Indicator Framework
Accountability for the short and long-term outcomes from the ETRF’s senior phase reforms was important. The ongoing development of a Key Performance Indicator Framework (KPIF) is an attempt to quantitatively measure reform outcomes so that there is accountability for the expenditure of public funds. The KPIF was produced for the ETRF Senior Phase of Learning in accordance with the Managing for Outcomes (MFO) Performance Management Framework and the Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility. There are six KPIs in the Framework:

1. progression of young people from Year 10 to a learning provider for the Senior Phase of Learning
2. student satisfaction with pathways in the Senior Phase of Learning
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3. staff satisfaction with their professional competencies and opportunities to engage in educational reform pathways

4. participation of young people in the Senior Phase of Learning

5. young people attaining a Senior Certificate and/or an AQF Certificate III level qualification or above.

6. 15- to 19-year-olds in full-time work, full-time study, or combinations of both.

Key performance areas for which data sources were already available were: progression, participation and satisfaction. However this data was available only for the state school system. VET student satisfaction data was also available through the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

A range of impediments to performance reporting through the KPIF have been identified and documented. Major impediments have included:

1. the complexity of integrating the range of existing data and drawing meaningful conclusions from the resulting data
2. the lack of available data from the non-state schooling sector
3. the lack of available data to report matters of attainment and satisfaction.

Particular information gaps included “the inability to identify individual students in the non-state education sector, and the lack of access to labour market employment data” (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 32). Education Queensland’s “unique student identifier” stored within the Department’s Corporate Data Warehouse has had to deal with data matching issues: “consistency of entry of student names; misspelling of names; presence of incorrect unique student identifiers” (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 32).

The Department’s School Surveys were judged to be an appropriate tool for measuring “student satisfaction with [SPoL] pathways”, and “staff satisfaction with their professional competencies and opportunities to engage in educational reform” (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 24). The lack of readily available data in relation to attainment, labour market participation and education status impeded progress. Here there was a requirement to generate data about young people attaining a Senior Certificate, now the QCE, and/or an AQF Certificate III level qualification, as well as data on 15- to 19-year-olds in full-time work, full-time study, or combinations of work and study. “Baseline data are important in assessing the net impact of the ETRF Senior Phase of Learning initiative on the Queensland education and training [and work] experience[s] of post-Year 10” (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 32).

Issues associated with data ownership and disclosure were a challenge because of the:

... lack of clarity associated with responsibility for reporting on ETRF Senior Phase of Learning performance measures for the initiative on an ongoing basis. It is not yet known which agency will be responsible for conducting the assessment of the net impact of the ETRF Senior Phase of Learning policy implementation across all sectors. (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 30)

The accurate measurement of progression rates is another challenge as “students may take a variety of pathways within any timeframe and data will not be collected by agencies at the same point in time” (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 27). Also in relation to the timing of data collection, the “timing of enrolment and achievement information provisions for the QSA differs between the state and non-state schooling sector” (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 30). ABS Census of Population and Housing data is only generated once every five years although the annual ABS Education and Work Survey and its supplement, the ABS Labour Force Survey, provide intercensal estimates each May (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 31).
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Whether the KPIF should refer to all young people in the Senior Phase of Learning or only those in the compulsory participation phase was also a consideration. Likewise, because the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Education and Work Survey typically has a measurement precision of plus or minus 5, smaller improvements in participation rates could be masked by the imprecision in its data analysis. Similarly, there were decisions to be made about the suitability of single-aged population estimates and the use of estimated resident population data from the Forecasting Unit of the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation.

Trialling and Evaluating

The Government’s decision to implement a three-year trial period that would include ongoing evaluation of key initiatives undertaken at the state and community levels was of significance in the ETRF’s senior phase strategic change strategy.

Beginning in 2003, the Government wanted to see what worked “in terms of educational outcomes for students, meeting the needs of parents and cost effectiveness” (Premier Beattie, Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. ii).

Initially, the reform initiatives were trialled in seven selected areas across the State. By the end of 2005, this had grown to encompass the whole State with 15 DYAP areas participating in the Senior Phase of Learning trials. The fortnightly trial area leaders’ newsletters and quarterly reports from the DYAPs tell the stories from the many and varied activities undertaken during 2002 to 2005.

Evaluation of all senior phase initiatives was integral to the strategic change strategy. Qualitative in nature, this five-phase evaluation process was designed to be conducted at six-monthly intervals from July to December 2003 until the end of the trial period in December 2005. The final Phase 5 report was published in 2006. Each phase evaluated particular aspects of, and issues emerging from, the senior phase trials. Table 3.1 summarises the focus activities of each phase.

Table 3.1: A five-phase evaluation process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Focus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>Processes of establishing the first seven trial areas, and the impacts and outcomes of the reform implementation in those trial areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Senior Education and Training (SET) planning processes within schools, and community engagement processes of District Youth Achievement Plan (DYAP) management committees and trial areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>On the implementation of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative (YSCI) and the ETRF Senior Phase of Learning Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4</td>
<td>Senior phase initiatives not examined in previous evaluations. Twenty-one (21) initiatives examined in this phase covering ETRF White Paper Actions 4 to 16. Plus, three additional initiatives identified by PMEC for further in-depth analysis: 1. Implementation of flexible education and training options 2. Access to Pathways grants program 3. Innovative Transportation Options The following activities were not examined because they were being evaluated through other processes: SET Plans (examined under Phase 2); Determination of VET fees (reporting directly to Government).</td>
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</tbody>
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(Source: Phases 1–5 ETRF Evaluation Reports, Department of Education and the Arts, Department of Employment and Training, 2003–2006)
This information illustrates the Government’s conceptualisation of what counted in the senior phase reform process during this time. It also demonstrates the iterative processes of policy implementation at the strategic statewide level. For example, Phase 4 already had a focus of examining all initiatives not covered in the previous three phases of evaluation, yet based on findings from those phases; the PMEC requested further in-depth analysis of three particular initiatives.

**Certification of Senior Phase Learning**

In this newly crafted ‘senior phase’ of secondary schooling, it was proposed that learning achievements beyond school would be recognised as contributing to a new senior education certificate. Planning for learning that would be recognised for certification would begin in Year 10.

In this section, the senior phase planning process is outlined. This is followed by a description of the system for registering this learning with the Queensland Studies Authority. The section concludes with an overview of the proposed new Queensland Certificate of Education which is the culmination of all accredited senior phase learning.

**Senior Education and Training Plans**

The ETRF has re-positioned Year 10 as a foundation for the Senior Phase of Learning. Year 10 is now built into the Senior Phase of Learning. Initially, it was conceived as a ‘stocktake’ year but this term did not prove widely acceptable. As the Queensland Studies Authority was establishing itself, school communities played a key role in determining the development of Year 10:

- Individual schools and communities will determine how Year 10 is developed as the transition to the Senior Phase of Learning. Flexibility in the Senior Phase of Learning will mean that schools will be able to better prepare young people in Year 10 for their future studies (*White Paper*—Queensland Government, 2002b, pp. 15–16).

In Year 10, students undertake a career planning exercise by reviewing their achievements and documenting their aspirations. Students’ Senior Education and Training (SET) Plans (as they are known in the state schooling sector) provide a review of “past achievements and provide an individual learning plan of action for the Senior Phase of Learning” (*White Paper*—Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 16).

The idea is that learning providers work with students to develop plans “that link to other learning options beyond Year 10. This may involve linking with another school or a vocational education and training provider” (*White Paper*—Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 16). In a move similar to that of the Whittlesea Project in Victoria, it was the intention that learning providers update the SET Plans as “young people change between learning options or move into employment their plans will be updated by the relevant provider” (*White Paper*—Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 16).

At the operational level, SET Planning was to become a key transition planning tool. Some schools chose to integrate the SET Planning processes within career education and/or other curriculum-oriented learning activities. Other schools chose stand-alone activities with, in some instances, specific guidance for students most at risk of not completing Year 10 or continuing with a Senior Phase of Learning. Teachers and principals seek to involve all young people and their parents/guardians in the process. As well, they actively recruit other education and training providers, industry representatives, business people and community members to contribute their knowledge and understanding of work and study available both within and beyond the school fence.
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The Association of Independent Schools of Queensland (AISQ) (2004, p. 4) observed that the:

... rapid changes in society and technology, the mobility of students and the increasing likelihood of students spending some of their working life overseas all must be taken into account when mapping career plans. Students need also to know that they can be expected ‘to change jobs about ten times and career fields three times in the course of their lives’; and that they will be expected to perform jobs in the future that ‘have not been created or even conceived of today.’

In the Phase 2 Evaluation of the ETRF’s senior phase implementation trial, a three-tier evaluation of the SET Plans was conducted. This consisted of open-ended telephone interviews with administrators and teachers in a representative sample of 20 government and non-government schools. It included questionnaires from 87 Year 10 students, 64 Year 11 students and 64 parents from those schools. The quarterly reports submitted by DYAP management committees were also reviewed for information relating to the SET Plans. Successes were celebrated:

'It gave our daughter many things to consider for her senior subjects to get into the career she wants. It involved us as parents and as a family and let us know what is available.' Capella State High School – parent.

'It's a good process allowing us to really think through our future. If I didn't have this SET Planning process I wouldn't know where to begin.' Downlands Sacred Heart College – Year 10 student.

(Senior Phase of Learning Trial – Phase Five Evaluation Summary, 2006, p. 17)

In relation to SET Planning, the evaluation identified challenges in three key areas:

1. facilitating parental involvement
2. enhancing student perceptions of the value of the SET Planning process
3. providing ongoing professional development for school staff (e.g. management of staff turnover and maintaining up-to-date knowledge of education, training and work opportunities beyond Year 12).

The SET Planning process provides students with informed advice and guidance about how small steps, sustained over the long-term, lead towards distant results.

Registration of Young People System

Developing ways of recording young people’s learning and packaging it into desired qualifications is integral to the ETRF’s senior phase reforms. Robinson (2000, p. 29) proposed doing this through “learning records or skills passports which record the formal learning people undertake and successfully complete over their lifetimes”.

This was extended to the creation of a system having a unique student identifier (USI) that could be used across schools, vocational education and training providers and universities. Such a system would record learning achievements gained through these various learning providers and would “capture those data over a long period for a single individual” (Gardner, 2002, Chapter 3, p. 20). The State would benefit from such a well-managed and up-to-date database. Pitman (2002, p. 37) observed that a system should provide statistical data “to facilitate forward planning, allow identification of trends associated with factors affecting youth, and might even suggest action to address specific problems”.

Pitman (2002, p. 22) argued for a new deal in senior education in Queensland because “what is meant by the ‘senior stage’ is not a matter of saying the same thing differently ... rather, the very framework for offering and taking up senior education must be different”.

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This would enable students to embark upon worthwhile learning journeys, which are neither cohort defined nor time dependent. If the Senior Certificate was to encompass ‘learning beyond the school fence’, then a system was needed to register the quality and quantity of learning undertaken by individual students over the period of their Senior Phase of Learning.

The Queensland Studies Authority was given responsibility for developing ‘an assessment and recording framework for lifelong learning skills as part of the transition to the Senior Phase of Learning’ (White Paper—Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 16). The Registration of Young People System (RYPS) was first trialled in 2003 and began full implementation as a combined Registration and Banking system in January 2006. The first data in the RYPS will be available in 2008. This student tracking system covers the compulsory participation phase for students who enter Year 10 from 2006 onwards. The system involves schools, TAFE institutes and other learning providers initiating and then monitoring a three-stage process that involves:

1. planning for senior phase learning during Year 10 or before a young person reaches 16 years of age
2. registering that learning plan with the Queensland Studies Authority
3. banking credits from that learning as the senior phase progresses.

Initially, processes for schools in the trial areas proved challenging in terms of timelines, technology issues and the resources required (Trial Implementation Evaluation Report Phase 1, July to December 2003).

**Learning accounts: Banking learning achievements**

An individual learning account is opened for all Year 10 students in Queensland when they register with the QSA. Their learning providers then commence banking all learning achievements in courses of study that meet the QSA’s Quality Criteria. Students can download a copy of their learning account whenever they desire to check on their progress. The timeline, technology and resourcing challenges encountered at each level of RYPS implementation have not disappeared. Responsibility for the coordination of the SET Plans and registration of young people’s individual online learning accounts on the QSA database will rest with the main learning provider with which they are enrolled. The QSA (2004, p. 16) states:

A learning account will only be closed when a young person is awarded the new Queensland Certificate of Education ... Young people’s individual learning accounts will remain open regardless of whether a young person is in the compulsory participation phase or not. This flexibility will allow young people to study full-time, part-time or return to study for the new Queensland Certificate of Education sometime latter.

The Queensland Registration of Young People System (RYPS) will provide the best available data sources to track the participation, retention and attainment of young people across all education and training sectors.

**Queensland Certificate of Education**

Anna Bligh (MP), then Minister for Education and the Arts, wanted a new and more valuable qualification to mark students’ success and to assist with their post-school pathways. She wanted to advance widespread consensus in Queensland for a new Certificate of Education that:

Recognise(s) a broader range of learning achievement, has set standards for literacy and numeracy, and has rigorous quality control to ensure that only learning of an appropriate standard would count (Bligh cited in QSA, 2004, Foreword).
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In terms of the need for new learning pathways and new learning options, Robinson (2000, p. 29) proposed “breaking down the divide and the barriers currently existing between work and formal learning so that they become seamless”. For much of the population these endeavours would continue throughout their lifetimes. To this end Robinson (2000, p. 29) argued for “highly developed cross-sectoral approaches to seamless assessment, credit transfer and recognition of prior learning”. This is expected to facilitate learning by young people who combine offerings from universities, vocational education and training providers, and/or from overseas institutions.

Throughout Australia, new Senior Certificates were in various stages of development and implementation, for example not only in Queensland, but also in South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia and Victoria. While Queensland decided not to stream students into VET and academic strands, it did provide specifically for young people with special learning needs. The requirements of young people with special needs are met through the Certificate of Post-Compulsory School Education (CPCSE). This Certificate is for young people with "either an impairment or difficulties in learning that are not primarily due to socioeconomic, cultural and/or linguistic factors" (QSA, 2004, p. 17). Young people who are eligible for the CPCSE are also eligible for a Senior Statement and eventually a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE).

In Queensland, a single, integrated Certificate for all students successfully completing Year 12 was the preferred choice. This led to the QCE being proposed as a comprehensive, universal qualification for all students. The QCE is an academic qualification with specified minimum requirements. It includes recognition of VET, university, school subjects and other approved learning.

All young people who “achieved an agreed amount of learning, including the literacy and numeracy requirement will be awarded the new Queensland Certificate of Education” (QSA, 2004, p. 13). With respect to areas of learning the QCE will recognise “learning designed to meet the needs of a modern, economically diverse, technologically advanced and culturally inclusive society” (QSA, 2004, p. 7). It will enable the tailoring of learning programs to individual students’ needs and ambitions. Students are able to “bank learning achievements” from a broader range of learning than was recognised on the former Senior Certificate.

The areas of learning recognised in the QCE included the existing arrangements governing subjects developed, approved, accredited or registered by the QSA. Among the options for study that contribute to the QCE is vocational education and training for students enrolled in schools. This includes VET certificates available through “a nationally endorsed training package qualification or courses accredited by the Training and Employment Recognition Council (TERC): (QSA, 2004, p. 9). It now extends to:

1. all VET recognised by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
2. school-based apprenticeships and traineeships
3. an employment skills and development program that prepares young people for work (QSA, 2004, p. 8).

Further, the QCE incorporates all courses, subjects, awards and certificates recognised and/or otherwise validated by the QSA (2004, p. 8), including:

1. university courses undertaken while at school
2. international learning programs
3. training programs tailored to an individual's needs
4. a locally developed course of study offered by a community organisation
5. a project undertaken in a workplace, community organisation or that is self-directed.
The strategy here goes beyond schools and beyond retention rates. This is because:

... retention is not enough. To increase retention further will require greater flexibility in schooling, its modes and its pace, to engage students in an educational experience that is an effective transition to work or further education (Gardner, 2002, p. 37).

The QCE has yet to be fully tested with the community and business sectors. Its development has also led to a review of tertiary entrance procedures. The ramifications of this are yet to be known.

Of course, the range of education and training options that schools could broker among learning providers varies depending on circumstances:

Different capacities and potentials for engagement across sectors by region or local area must be considered. The inter-sectoral possibilities in Mt Isa will vary from those of Cape York, as will those of Caboolture from Logan (Gardner, 2002, p. 53).

With the broadening of the notion of what counts as ‘learning in the senior phase’ the sites in which that learning can take place are necessarily broadened too. Hence the definition of ‘senior schooling’ was expanded to cover a broader variety of learning prospects. These include:

1. all senior subjects taken only in school, as at present
2. senior subjects in school, TAFE, or alternative settings
3. vocational education and training undertaken in school, TAFE institutes, agricultural colleges or with other training providers
4. apprenticeships and traineeships
5. a combination of education or training and part-time employment
6. an employment program that prepares young people for work;
7. training programs that are tailored to individual student needs, such as literacy and numeracy programs
8. virtual or online schooling or vocational education and training
9. international learning programs
10. university subjects undertaken while students are at school


The role of TAFE

TAFE was positioned as a key player in the ETRF senior phase reform agenda. The government commitment to young people in the Senior Phase of Learning included “providing them with access to learning in a wide range of settings. Vocational education and training is a major option—through both schools and TAFE” (White Paper—Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 22).

TAFE Queensland committed itself to making the ETRF senior phase reforms a reality. TAFE Queensland is the State’s main provider of vocational education and training programs. It plays a vital role in implementing the ETRF by working with

... schools, employers, community organisations and other education and training providers, TAFE institutes will create innovative local solutions for young people. TAFE [has] develop[ed] new services and adapt[ed] existing ones to create relevant and flexible training options specially targeted to the needs and preferences of 15- to 17-year-olds (TAFE Queensland and Queensland Government Department of Employment and Training, 2002, p. 4).
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

TAFE promised to further develop support for students to assist them to decide on appropriate training and education opportunities, to do well in their training, and progress to work or further education. To do so, TAFE pledged to engage in "collaborative planning and delivery to develop strong partnerships that lead to greater outcomes for young people" (TAFE Queensland and Queensland Government Department of Employment and Training, 2002, p. 4). TAFE’s core business was to provide people of all ages with the skills needed to start work, to maintain and update their skills, or to change occupations. The ETRF presented TAFE with opportunities “to play a much greater role with the 15- to 17-year-old age group, providing a valid alternative for young people in the Senior Phase of Learning” (TAFE Queensland and Queensland Government Department of Employment and Training, 2002, p.4). In 2003, some 14,000 young people (15 to 17 years) were studying at TAFE Queensland institutes. Many of them participated in programs with older, independent learners. However, TAFE acknowledged:

... that a supportive environment is needed to help younger students succeed, and this will be a key focus of change. Over the years [2003–2005], TAFE [worked] closely with schools, government, industry, communities and young people themselves to build an education and training system that is flexible, responsive and supportive (TAFE Queensland and Queensland Government Department of Employment and Training, 2002, p. 4).

Supporting all young people through personal and professional transitions is vital at this crucial stage of their lives. Indeed, all young people are 'at risk' of disengaging from learning and/or earning at some time/s during their journey from adolescence to adulthood. For young people who have already disengaged from school-based learning and those who are at risk of disengaging, extra support is necessary.

Conclusion

Such then were the preparations necessary for managing the changes set in play by the ETRF’s senior phase reforms. The ETRF has had to do much to win legitimacy throughout the State. Through collective action it has shown possibilities for improving the education, training and work lives of all young people. Through working together across education systems, government agencies, the public and private sectors, ETRF demonstrated possibilities for not only engaging young people but also enabling people from different spheres and sectors in local communities to engage in decision making. The drive to improve education, training and work for the rising generation of citizens was organised around three key values. These were a commitment to the common good of young people; a view that linked parliamentary representation with participatory democracy, and a belief in bridging social interests ahead of promoting sectional interests.

Through the ETRF’s senior phase reforms, the Queensland Government sought to sponsor a more prosperous and just future for young people. It licensed the generation of imaginative ideas for redefining the provision of learning opportunities. In doing so, the ETRF has shown that the State is a relatively capable institution for producing efficacious policies for dealing with societal problems such as the alienation of young people. At the heart of the ETRF is the assumption that together the State, members of civil society, and business are capable of making progress towards improving the condition of fellow human beings.

The following Chapter highlights initiatives that directly impact on young people, their teachers, school administrators, families and community members. It illustrates the re/positioning of schools as brokers of learning providers for young people and the mechanisms by which that was to be achieved.
Chapter 4
Repositioning Senior Secondary Schooling

For students to leave [the Senior Phase of Learning] equipped to function successfully in the world, support must come from at least three levels: the State, through governments, systems and statutory authorities; local communities, through schools, industry, local support networks and community organisations; individuals, through teachers, parents/caregivers, mentors and employers (Pitman, 2002, p. 24).

Introduction

Pitman (2002, p. 24) proposed that “each school move towards continuing and extending its role as a learning provider while acting as the case manager of the individual students who, under its auspices, are qualifying for the award of the [Queensland Certificate of Education].” Under the ETRF senior phase reform agenda, schools continue in their important traditional work of learning provision for students in Year 10, 11 and 12. In addition, they are now also responsible for brokering with learning providers educational and training opportunities for young people.

Schools [are] the local coordinators for learning, working with students on their individual requirements and liaising with further education and training institutions and [...] potential employers (Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 16).

The Government planned for young people to be enrolled ‘with’ but not required to learn ‘at’ school. Thus, a young person can be

... enrolled with his or her school and attend school part-time, while also obtaining some learning or training at another place, such as TAFE. Or the [young person can be] enrolled with his or her school but attend full-time at another learning and training provider, such as TAFE, or linked to an employment program to develop work-related skills (Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 16).

In the White Paper (White Paper—Queensland Government, 2002b, p. 23), the primary responsibility for coordinating each young person’s learning opportunities in her/his Senior Phase of Learning will rest with the main learning provider with which that young person is enrolled e.g. a school, TAFE institute or other participating provider. The Government made possible the broadening range of learning providers young people might access. Multiple learning providers allow for a range of learning options. These include:

... part-time school-based education and part-time work; part-time school-based education and part-time further education; part-time school-based education and a part-time apprenticeship; full-time further education with a provider such as TAFE; part-time further education and part-time employment; and of course full-time employment (Green Paper—Queensland Government, 2002a, p. 17).

This Chapter explores the repositioning of schools as learning providers and brokers of learning with other providers and the consequences of this for the notion of ‘schooling’ in the Senior Phase of Learning. To do so, we present a selection of the career and personal support initiatives that were scaffolded around this learning. Then we identify key initiatives in the significant extension and elaboration of industry school engagement strategies.
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

Career and Personal Support

The ETRF’s senior phase reforms supported a range of “early intervention and prevention programs aimed at supporting young people at risk of disengaging from learning to successfully make the transition into and through the Senior Phase of Learning” (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 7). Prior to the implementation of these initiatives the support networks available to young people were difficult to identify, often limited by geographic isolation, agencies not working collaboratively, uncoordinated and ad hoc service provision, agencies not operating within schools, and schools making limited use of community networks and partnerships (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 13).

In the years prior to (and during) the trials, a number of services were developed to provide holistic education and socio economic support for young people disengaged from schooling, or at risk of doing so (Queensland Government, 2004). Reforms in career and personal support were of particular benefit to young people characterised by the following attributes:

1. very poor literacy and numeracy skills
2. problems of conforming with requisite school behaviour
3. exclusions and extended unexplained absences from school
4. inter-generational history of early school leaving and/or unemployment
5. engaging in substance abuse
6. family conflict and/or lack of support
7. disability, including intellectual impairment or mental health issues
8. pregnant or young parents
9. homelessness and high mobility
10. contact with the juvenile justice system.

Some community groups were already active in supporting young people aged 10 to 17 through the Queensland Department of Communities' Youth and Community Combined Action (YACCA) program. With the senior phase reforms focusing on 15- to 17-year-olds, the work of many agencies was supplemented through Youth Support Coordinators (YSCs), the Queensland Community Mentoring Program (QCMP), career guidance and information services, the Get Set for Work Program, and flexible learning services. This section provides an overview of each of these initiatives. Vignettes are used to illustrate the ways in which multiple funding sources were used to benefit young people who were disengaged or at risk of disengaging from learning and/or earning required for sustainable employment in the 21st century.

Youth Support Coordinators

Youth Support Coordinators (YSCs) were employed to focus on young people at risk of not transitioning into the Senior Phase of Learning or at risk of disengaging from this phase. YSCs were flexible and able to work with students from Years 8 and 9 onwards. The YSC initiative was initially piloted in July 1997, being funded jointly by the Department of Education and Arts and the Department of Communities. At that time, the focus was on youth homelessness and early school leaving. From 2003, extra YSCs were progressively employed so that by June 2005, there were 113 YSCs across Queensland. The objectives of the YSC initiative were to:

1. enhance access by young people and their families to support and assistance
2. resolve issues contributing to young people not transitioning into and completing the Senior Phase of Learning
3. develop supportive school/TAFE environments for young people at risk of not transitioning into and completing the Senior Phase of Learning
4. assist young people to develop social and personal skills for independent and successful community living
5. encourage and support community services to respond to the needs of such students and their families.

The Department of Communities funded non-government community organisations to deliver on these objectives.

It was necessary to avoid the YSC role being misunderstood or subsumed into the school welfare teams. The Department of Communities’ YSC initiative had been conducted through the Office of Youth for at least six years. It provided for:
1. immediate support and response to individual needs
2. group work with youth and families or the broader communities
3. community project work – covering community development and education (Interview, 6 April 2006).

Depending on the need, each YSC agency could have up to five workers, looking after up to 20 schools in their district cluster. They generally use three different models to do their job.

The first model is site-specific. This was the easiest for the schools to digest when YSCs first came onto the scene because each school had its ‘own’ YSC. For example, if there were three YSCs and 10 schools in a district cluster, each YSC would work specifically with three schools and they would share the other one. So the YSC was programmed to turn up at a particular school on a set day each week.

The second model was geographic. For example, three YSCs would look at their individual skills and strengths and experience—for example, one worker who was good with engaging Indigenous youth, while another might be strong in community development and the third would deal with young people from new and emerging immigrant groups. In this model, the three YSCs worked across all 10 schools, but each would focus on her/his own speciality among the schools. In this example, which was adopted in the Mt Gravatt/Cooper Plains Cluster, it was identified that there was a need for support for refugee youth, the Indigenous youth and the other poor, working-class youth. Therefore, when the tender was developed, these needs were clearly articulated and agencies Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) were selected on their ability to address these needs. The consequence in this instance was that three separate agencies were selected to work with three different groups of young people, capitalising on their particular strengths.

The third model is a hybrid of the first two. In this instance, there were site-specific YSCs and other YSCs who were working on a particular need within the district.

As the number of YSCs increased, so too did the need for communication and support. ‘Hub facilitator’ positions were trialled by the Department of Communities, Office of Youth to provide support for the YSCs. Hub facilitators now provide peer support mechanisms and resources to enable the YSCs to do their jobs better. They hold regular meetings to encourage networking and discussion about the issues facing the YSCs. While the NGOs manage the YSCs, the hub facilitators provide professional support for Coordinators throughout Queensland.

The specific activities of individual YSCs were dependent on the NGOs that employed them and the advice provided by the local DYAP management committees. YSCs responded to geographical considerations; identified needs; serviced schools, TAFE and students in their cluster; and accessed other services for young people in need.
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

The role of YSCs was flexible, being renegotiated following feedback from stakeholders. Local cross-sectoral groups developed standard referral processes. Schools and community agencies used these processes when referring young people to the YSC for support.

In some instances, the YSC role was considered unmanageable due to “expectations associated with caseload, geographic issues, number of sites and/or target groups to be supported” (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 12). The expectation of “the YSC to be visible in school [failed to] take into consideration that a core part of the YSC role is to work outside the school to undertake community development work, and to assist young people and their families” (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 14). Some in the school education sector wanted control over the YSCs by employing them through DYAP management committees.

Where YSCs were invited to be directly involved in local DYAP management committees, the sharing of information was maximised. The value of the YSC positions is in their credibility for getting on with young people. Here the cultures of schools and youth workers came together to work for young people.

When individual YSCs move on, knowledge about the workings of the local area and new relationships of trust have to be established with the young people and also the school community. Likewise, when new school principal/s move in, the YSC needs to renegotiate relationships and develop new levels of trust to keep initiatives progressing.

Towards the end of 2005 the Directors-General of three departments: the Departments of Communities; Education and the Arts; and Employment and Training approved the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative — Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Working in State Schools, TAFE Institutes and Non-Government Schools and the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative Operational Guidelines. After a period of consultation the MOU was officially launched in April 2006.

At the time of its evaluation as part of the ETRF trial, positive results of the YSC initiative (ETRF PMEC, 2005, p. 14) included:

1. providing young people with an accessible resource person
2. improving relationships between YSCs and TAFE programs, schools and auspicing organisations
3. helping young people at risk of disengaging, staying at school or in training with improved engagement in learning
4. improving community awareness of support available to young people;
5. dealing with self-referrals from students
6. solving problems for young people with housing crises
7. reducing the number of exclusions from schools.

Of course it is not possible to draw direct conclusions from these stated outcomes and the work of individual YSCs due to the number of variables involved. In the instances where YSCs were working effectively as members of a local support team, these outcomes represent important achievements. In addition to YSCs, mentors were another integral component of the support services for young people.

Queensland Community Mentoring Program

Mentoring is not a new idea. It is an effective means of building social capital for young socially, economically and/or geographically disadvantaged youth. Gardner (2002, Chapter 6, p. 124) recognised the importance of mentoring in relation to knowing and accessing career pathways because:
Lack of information is significant for rural and remote students and students from low socio economic groups—the most vulnerable groups. There needs to be provision within guidance services for more specialised mentoring and assistance to young students who are at risk and have less access to advice from others.

Furthermore, Pitman (2002, p. 16) recommended that “mentors be used extensively to support students at risk of not completing Senior”. The Queensland Government also supported mentoring assistance schemes such as the Youth Arts Mentoring program.

Mentoring is necessary for both young people and those working with them to develop alliances with government institutions, civic organisations and labour market networks. Since its inception in 2005, the Queensland Community Mentoring (QCM) Program has generated a wealth of knowledge about community mentoring. Training manuals and a forum for sharing knowledge about this program are available through the Department of Education, Training and the Arts (www.learningplace.com.au). Mentors are volunteers. Because they are working with young people, they must pass a criminal check before working with children.

The QCM Program was managed by Jobcare which is an employment and training outreach service of Anglicare. Partners in the QCM Program have also included: St Vincent de Paul, Mackay and District Education Centre Ltd (MADEC), Integrated Family and Youth Service, Regional Extended Family Services, South Burnett Community Training Centre, and the Townsville District Office of the Queensland Department of Education and the Arts. The QCM Program collaborated with registered training organisations to deliver accredited training to mentors. Bremer TAFE (Moreton Education Region), Townsville District (DEA), and IMPACT (Bundaberg) did this by merging funds from the QCM Program and Access to Pathways program. Meanwhile, the Youth Development Officer at Emerald Shire Council established a mentoring program to support young people at risk of disengaging from school. This mentoring program began with students making the transition from Year 7 to 8. It has been integral to the development of resilience in these young people.

Separately, Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd working under the auspices of Central Queensland Volunteering, provided mentoring for students in flexible learning programs. Comalco and Queensland Alumina Ltd were involved in this initiative. The Murrumba Regional Extended Family Services worked with agencies such as the Caboolture and Redcliffe Multicultural Forum to liaise with the elders of the Pacifika community. Together they developed a school community mentoring capacity focusing on improving students’ English language skills and integrating Pacifika culture into the work of schooling.

St Vincent de Paul managed and provided training for the mentoring programs at Woodridge and Kingston State High Schools. Pacifika boys were among those who benefited from one-to-one interactions and communal gatherings around meals and games. Refugee students from Sudan also participated in social activities and communal events. At Coorparoo Secondary College, a partnership with The Smith Family provided a mentoring program for refugee students from Africa. Resources made available through the [then] Department of Employment and Training’s Get Set for Work Program were used for this purpose.

Career Guidance and Information Services
Accurate information about the range of career pathways and options for compulsory learning and/or earning is important for young people and their parents. This is especially so, given the reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning. With the highest rate of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in the country, Queensland teachers, students and their families were well positioned to understand the new ways in which Years 10, 11 and 12 could be used (White Paper–Queensland Government, 2002b).
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

However, the very flexibility of the system and many of the innovative trials, meant that the new Senior Phase of Learning was complex to understand and navigate; not only for students but also for their parents/guardians. When interviewed about his book, Schools That Learn, management guru Peter Senge declared that, “parents [...] are the greatest force preserving the status quo in education” because “we all went to school together [...] we all share strong common assumptions about how school is supposed to work” (Sparks, 2001, n.p.).

Changes to the world of work that impacted on the nature of careers and the ways in which senior schooling was adapting to engage with these changes, challenged many assumptions that parents/guardians and the general community held about what counted as a worthwhile senior secondary education. Accordingly, early in the trial of the reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning, it was recognised that accurate and continuous ‘just-in-time and just-enough’ career information and advice needed to be an ongoing feature of the ETRF communication strategy.

The notion of a ‘career for life’ was being challenged. Given the increasing complexities of the relationship between learning and earning, career education is indeed vital.

The combined pressures of globalisation and rapid technological changes are revolutionising the nature of work and signalling its requirement for continuous new learning and skilling at a rate never before experienced in human history. (Robinson, 2000, p. 30)

This required more than the provision of a part-time, incidental guidance from the margins of the school curriculum (Australian Government, 2004). DYAP Management Committees were aware of the need for improved career guidance and information for young people and their parents/guardians. At the local level, funds were allocated to various brokerage services for school-to-work transitions and to inform communities about the achievements of the young people in their midst.

In 2005, the Queensland Studies Authority’s Career Information Service (CIS) (www.cis.qsa.qld.edu.au) was established. This website provides links to other career information services. It is the first phase of the QSA’s on-line career information strategy which will include a free-call service. Eventually, the CIS will provide an individualised service linked to each student’s electronic Learning Account. Personalised career pathways will be developed using the career information and planning tools accessible through this website. This is in addition to the extensive work of schools in preparing Year 10 students for their Senior Education and Training (SET) Plans.

Those young people who had left school early and who did not have a job required additional support. Under the Government initiative for Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, Queensland’s Department of Employment and Training funded a number of programs—pre-eminent among them by 2004 was the Get Set for Work (GSFW) program.

Get Set for Work Program

Under the GSFW program, NGOs were funded to help young people (aged 15 to 17) to rejoin education, training or employment. In each GSFW program, group and individual activities were tailored for the local labour market. Young people’s social skills for work were developed through personal development and team-building activities. Referrals were made to support services for personal and social issues. Literacy and numeracy development was also supported, along with vocational advice, work experience and community work. Participants were trained in job preparation and job-searching. Placements in training and jobs were offered and post-placement support was provided to help sustain participation.
In July 2004, GSFW was extended to the seven ETRF trial areas and by 2006, it had been expanded to provide support to 1500 youth ‘at risk’ of not participating in formal education, training or employment. GSFW was used as a ‘safety net’ for these young people. Local officers from the Department of Employment and Training who were represented on DYAP management committees, provided advice on the sorts of programs, funding terms and conditions attached to them.

Partnerships among providers enabled the trialling of flexible learning options which were funded through multiple sources. Such programs were run by incorporated NGOs, TAFE Institutes, State secondary schools and private training providers from Townsville to Childers; from Hervey Bay to Roma and in urban metropolitan sites such as The Spot in the Logan District. DYAPs throughout the State recorded many successes under this program.

These trial projects incorporated six key elements:

1. early intervention for young people who had left school or those at ‘high risk’ of leaving without completing a senior or vocational qualification and who were more likely to experience unemployment
2. a combination of practical hands-on skills-based learning with integrated literacy and numeracy training and social and interpersonal skills development
3. coordination and linkages with other youth and community services to promote successful transitions into work and/or further learning opportunities
4. allowed for paid part-time work (e.g. up to 15 hours per week) through traineeships or apprenticeships or the Community Jobs Plan Work Placement; in these instances, employers were eligible for the Youth Training Incentive which provided wage subsidies
5. involvement of local communities in the development and delivery of the GSFW programs. This included agencies associated with youth, industry, education, training, employment, regional development and all levels of government
6. through representation on their local DYAP management committees, DET personnel ensured that GSFW funds were targeted at programs that addressed current issues faced by young people in their local community.

Organisations which received funding under GSFW demonstrated a good understanding of their local district and/or region, strong interagency and community networks and experience in the delivery of services to young people. Furthermore, they were familiar with the DYAP's local targets for participation, retention and attainment for young people and identified these in their submissions. Because of finite funding considerations and in the spirit of local cooperation and non-duplication of services, organisations formed cooperative relationships and partnerships for localised delivery. Not only did the organisations demonstrate capacity for interagency collaborations, but they also proved their ability to deliver desired outcomes for both the Department and the local DYAP committees.
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

**Community service providers educating young people**

Cameron Bani, aka Edukate, is an 18-year-old Torres Strait Islander, who has overcome a rough start in life and—with the help of a State Government-funded Get Set for Work (GSFW) program—turned his life around. His idol is American hip-hop legend Tupac Shakur, and, like Tupac, music has given Cameron a voice and changed his life. "Tupac spoke about what was on his mind and told people to look for a better way." This attitude appealed to Cameron who admits that a few years ago he was "a little rebel. I was serving two years probation when my case worker told me about the GSFW program."

"I had no idea I would end up in a recording studio," said Cameron. "I was stoked to be able to do this on the program and really surprised." Through the GSFW program Cameron spent six months with a (Brisbane) Browns Plains-based community organisation on writing, researching and recording his songs. The Spot Community Services provided Cameron with mentoring and support that turned into ongoing friendships. "It is a friendly environment and they let you know you can trust them," he said. "They really helped me. They told me things that I had heard before but put it in a way that I could relate to."

The Spot coordinator, Dan Hannaford, said Cameron was one of the star pupils of the year’s program. "He was extremely good at relating to others and dealing with the consequences of his past choices," Mr Hannaford said. "He realised he had more to offer than the choices he was making. Through the GSFW program we were able to provide him with the opportunity to express himself through his music."

Cameron’s song ‘Overcrowded’ examines the issues facing the world as well as on our doorstep in southeast Queensland with large numbers of people continuously moving into the region. "There will be no water, no space and we will end up like other overcrowded countries with disease striking." Cameron has now successfully found work as a cleaner while he pursues his music career. However, as long as he can convey his message in an attempt to create change he is happy. "I hope when I am dead people are still talking about the positives I achieved."

The Spot Community Services began in 1996 as an initiative of Southside Community Church. Initially it was a youth centre based in an empty warehouse with a volunteer staff of five people. As well as the GSFW funding, The Spot also receives Access to Pathways funding along with other funds from a range of government and corporate bodies. Youth Support Coordinators are located with The Spot and they smooth the transition processes for young people into a range of learning and/or earning programs. The workability and sustainability of The Spot service is demonstrated through a ‘cross-pollination’ of learning programs and funding sources that are now available.

As this vignette illustrates, GSFW assists young people who are at risk of not breaking into the employment cycle. Community organisations use GSFW in conjunction with other sources of funding to leverage enhanced learning and earning outcomes for alienated and disaffected young people.

The success of these active learning centres throughout the state challenges prevailing conceptions of what constitutes schooling. With the introduction of compulsory participation in learning and earning for young people, the provision of flexible learning services has gained increasing relevance and legitimacy.

**Flexible Learning Services**

The Commonwealth Government changed the criteria for unemployment benefit in the 1990s. Young people who were previously able to access unemployment benefits were no longer eligible. Around the same time, the Commonwealth Government released funding for alternative learning options for disadvantaged young people. Flexible socio academic services were provided through school-based transition programs, school annexes, community-based youth services and TAFE institutes. Within Queensland, some students enrolled in the Brisbane School of Distance Education, while others completed English and Maths papers under the tutelage of a registered teacher who liaised through cooperative arrangements with a local high school.

The flexibility of these learning services also assisted young people who were pregnant or parents, enabling them to stay engaged in learning through flexible timetabling, home tutorials, alternative learning environments, and access to parent/child services.
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

Short-to-medium term programs were offered via TAFE and other registered training providers, through the Youth Access Program. These programs equipped young people with skills such as literacy and numeracy to obtain employment, apprenticeships, traineeships or access to further education. On referral, community agencies provided short-term behaviour management programs for young people who had been suspended from schools.

Many flexible learning providers focused on customised vocational education and training, especially the development of students’ work readiness and employability skills. In terms of governance, most service providers were auspiced by a school, community or religious organisation. They offered flexibility in hours, timetabling and compulsory attendance for students who were managing issues such as homelessness, parenting or addiction.

Focused, flexible, individualised support for young people
At the Rockhampton Skills Centre, Get Set for Work funding provided two part-time positions ($58 000) to assist young people prepare for work. This came on top of a trainee youth worker position ($12 000) that was funded by the Department when the Skills Centre first opened in 2004 at a shed in Dooley Street, North Rockhampton. Later the Centre moved to new air conditioned premises in William Street; this office space was provided rent-free by the Rockhampton City Council.

The local DYAP management committee allocated some Access to Pathways funding every year for three years of the ETRF trial. Central Purchasing Unit funds (now known as Flexible Learning Service funds) were also allocated for a registered teacher to work at the Centre on literacy and numeracy related activities.

The Police and Citizens Youth Club is the auspicing body for the Department of Communities’ Youth and Community Combined Action funds which provide wages for the centre manager. Donations and in-kind resources have also been contributed by local community groups and individuals.

The charts on the wall at the Rockhampton Skills Centre record students’ progress in Year 10 Maths and English. Students cook their own lunch in the kitchen, play their own music and learn various mechanical, woodworking, bike repair and other practical and social skills on a daily basis.

A holistic understanding of each student’s circumstances is necessary for providing focused support. The complex and often extreme support needs of particular young people require collaboration across a range of agencies. Some providers invest considerable resources in “organising support and referrals for students for accommodation, welfare assistance, transport, and counselling” (Queensland Government, 2004, p. 14). These services have strong links to local, state and federal agencies, TAFE Institutes, schools, Indigenous organisations, local industry as well as services for youth, health, community corrections, police, welfare, drugs and alcohol.

In addition to recurrent funding and one-off grants provided by the State and Commonwealth Governments, schools and TAFE Institutes provide in-kind support such as:

1. ascertainment of young people with special needs
2. guidance and counselling
3. staff professional development
4. access to teaching, training or youth work staff
5. computers and textbooks
6. access to Work Experience or Jobs Pathways Programs
7. access to library, arts, science, sporting and audiovisual facilities.
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

The intention of the ETRF’s agenda for reforming the Senior Phase of Learning was “not to see a wide expansion in the number of independent flexible learning programs, but rather to continue to reform mainstream schooling to better respond to the broader range of student needs” (Queensland Government, 2004, p. 3).

In terms of accountability for quality educational outcomes there are several telling achievements of flexible learning services. For students who had a history of exclusion from school or long and unexplained absences, regular attendance represented a significant milestone. Individuals achieved learning goals such as re-establishing self-esteem, learning to manage personal issues, regaining an interest in learning, and building a focus on personal work life goals. Improved literacy and numeracy skills were another key outcome for most participants. This meant some of these young people were able to complete Year 10, while others obtained a Senior Certificate, a few gained OP eligibility, some gained work readiness skills, a number commenced apprenticeships or traineeships, and others gained a vocational qualification. Some young people engaged in short-term behaviour management programs and then re-entered schooling.

Flexible learning services were an important risk management provision for these young people. Critical success factors included: knowing each student and their community; establishing links with other services; continuity of base funding; accessing resources from other agencies; recruiting and retaining staff with the right skills mix; providing flexibility in delivery; ensuring rigour in educational outcomes, and maintaining governance arrangements.

In order to re-engage in learning, young people required “a range of re-entry points into the education [and training] system” (Queensland Government, 2004, p. 7). Further, “access to a sustainable funding base, and flexibility in the application of [financial] resourcing” (Queensland Government, 2004, p. 12) was also found to be more efficient and effective than one-off funding. Flexible learning providers reported that recurrent base funding meant the coordinator’s time could focus on service delivery rather than chasing funds (Queensland Government, 2004, p. 12). Recurrent base funding also enabled a focus on meeting the demand from young people for accommodation, child-care and education provision. It was also found that “increased collaboration and flexibility ... in terms of funding from Government agencies ... improved outcomes at flexible learning services (Queensland Government, 2004, p. 12).

Staffing arrangements had an important influence on program outcomes. Organisations providing flexible learning services required staff with mixed skills sets. The capacity to attract and retain qualified staff was crucial to ensuring the delivery of quality socio academic services. Access to targeted professional development, career planning, expanded career pathways, recognition, relief and the capacity to back-fill staff during absences were important to attracting and retaining good staff. People have to want to work in these alternative learning environments and want to work with the young people for whom they are designed. The personal and professional attributes of staff running flexible learning services were key determinants of their success, at least in the eyes of the young people.

Transport is another significant issue for enabling students’ access to education, training and work, including flexible learning services. Great programs can be developed, but young people still have to be able to travel to participate in them. Some young people who were eligible to access flexible learning services did not have student cards and were not full-time students. These students required assistance to access travel concessions. For service providers, the choice of location was a key consideration and some services relocated to ensure transport was available to their young clients (Queensland Government, 2004, p. 15).
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

Getting to learning
The rules of the Student Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS) require young people to be enrolled in a school and provide transport only to and from that school at pre-set times. Rule changes were required to enable young people to access transport from home to TAFE where the service passed the TAFE institute. Likewise, provision had to be made to enable students who would normally catch a school bus at around 3.10 p.m., to catch a bus from TAFE classes that went until 5 p.m. or later. In country regions, shire councils, parents, mining companies and community groups worked together to enable existing transport arrangements to be shared with young people participating in vocational education, work and/or community service.

DYAP management committees developed local responses to support flexible learning pathways for young people. In addition, state-level leadership was required to give carriage to the full range of opportunities that flexible learning services offer young people. These flexible learning services provide important models for building young people’s social, cultural and human capital for these changing times.

Putting it all together
The Glendyne Education and Training Centre is an independent school located on a farm at Hervey Bay. It provides alternative education programs for students who have been suspended from mainstream school, or who have not been attending school due to a range of personal issues including drug and/or alcohol abuse, family breakdown, or problems with the law. The whole focus of Glendyne’s operation is behavioural change within the context of a caring and supportive environment so that students can have a better life.

Ray Kruger is the founding principal of the Glendyne Education and Training Centre. The year levels offered are mainly those of the Senior Phase of Learning, that is Years 10, 11 and 12. Glendyne has as its core business the ‘supported student’ (see Figure 4.1 below).

Figure 4.1: The Supported Student
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

Working Together at Glendyne: School, Community and local Industry

Learning Environment

Key features include:

- The small school size, maximum of ninety, enables a family atmosphere which provides a stable link in students' lives, and in many cases, the only stable link.
- Small class sizes, with an average of seven students and maximum of ten per class, enable more personalised attention. One-on-one assistance is provided where necessary.
- A self-paced individual learning program allows each student to progress at their own rate.
- A youth worker, mentor or teacher aide works within each class each period, to support the special needs of each student.
- Teachers and youth workers prepare case notes on students after every period to monitor issues and progress.
- Teachers debrief every morning and meet for a three-hour staff briefing each Thursday, to discuss individual student needs and staff support.
- Close playground supervision is provided during morning tea and lunch breaks.
- Reports are provided to parents/carers within one day of any incident including positive outcomes. This keeps parents well informed of progress.
- A positive rewards program is used to raise boys' self-esteem. Students are able to redeem points for special prizes e.g. Fishing rods and MP3 players.

Distinctive curriculum offerings:

- The school focuses on Life Skills development, aims to increase self-esteem and self-control, and supports students to become worthwhile citizens.
- There is a focus on integrating Life Skills across the curriculum and a special emphasis on Student Reward Day activities.
- Practically based hands-on learning is provided across the curriculum including VET units in: Maths, English, SOSE, Art, Carpentry, Welding, Technology, Computers, Marine and Sport.

Interagency and Community Support

- Local community groups and charities assist across all areas including fundraising. (More than $300 000 in fund-raising per year is required.)
- Networking with other youth agencies allows the school to address issues as they arise. These include: Department of Communities with relation to homelessness or family issues; working with Juvenile Justice referrals; Reconnect, dealing with health and family breakdown and aggression programs; Lifeline; Mental Health; the prison youth crime prevention program with the Maryborough Detention centre where the boys go inside the prison and talk with selected inmates to deter a life a crime.
- Staff work closely with selected local employers who offer traineeships and general employment specific to students.
- Glendyne is partnering with local engineering businesses to start a production workshop for its VET students.

Glendyne Advisory Committee:

Glendynes local advisory committee provides direction and support to the Principal. This group comprises a range of local representatives including:

Manager, Mitre 10; Manager, GS Engineering; Pastor, Hervey Bay Baptist Church, Youth Development Officer, Hervey Bay City Council; Principal, Hervey Bay High School; Director, Hervey Bay TAFE; Senior Constable, Hervey Bay Police Station; Indigenous Elder, Batchulla People; Vice President Hervey Bay RSL; Executive Manager Queensland Baptist Care.

Industry—School Engagement Strategies

Strategically, the ETRF senior phase reform initiatives were integral to the Government's Smart State priorities:

1. building on the state’s traditional strengths and industries such as mining, tourism and agriculture and supporting the transformation of these industries through innovation and international competitiveness

2. encouraging the development of the emerging industries of the future and growing these new sectors to take the state’s economy into the information age (Department of Employment and Training, 2005, p. 1).

The Dusseldorp Skills Forum (1998) found that businesses benefit from investing in industry-school engagement. The benefits include increased productivity, an enhanced skills base, more efficient and effective recruitment, community recognition, personal satisfaction, and an improved bottom line. The ETRF drew upon the success of local
initiatives to encourage schools and industry to develop relationships to benefit students and businesses. Certainly it could be argued that the ETRF made these connections easier by articulating the expectation that innovative solutions occur.

The industry-school engagement strategy enhanced industry/school relationships and labour skills solutions for businesses and schools. With an aging workforce and strong employment opportunities in the current labour market it is possible for employers to use industry-school engagement initiatives to inform young people about the range of industries they may choose to work in, and to promote themselves as an employer of first choice.

Throughout Queensland, real partnerships between schools and industries have been established during the last decade’s extensive work in technical, vocational, career and enterprise education in schools. An overview of the latest industry-school engagement strategy is now presented, followed by a review of the learning and earning opportunities that young people are accessing through VET.

**State-level partnerships with emerging industries**

Key elements of the Government's new industry-school engagement strategy include:

1. governance structures
2. the appointment of ‘Industry Heads of Department'
3. the concept of ‘Gateway Schools’.

Centres of excellence were formed as hubs in specialist, high profile schools. These were linked to ‘gateway schools’. Both state and non-state schools are part of this initiative. The underpinning philosophy for the Education Queensland Industry School Engagement Strategy is best summarised as ‘It’s about the kids’.

Two projects which illustrate such partnerships are the Aerospace Project and the ICT Industry Partnership Project.

**Aerospace Project**

In January 2004 the Aerospace Project was forged through a partnership between Education Queensland, Boeing Australia and Aviation Australia. The latter, a registered training organisation, was established at the Brisbane Airport after Premier Beattie put together a package of tax concessions and industrial relations provisions to attract Virgin Blue and other aerospace industries. This training centre, which is neither a non-government nor a quasi-government organisation, drew on User Choice funding through the Department of Employment and Training. In 2006, Aerospace Australia, Smiths Aerospace and the Brisbane Airport Corporation also joined the Aerospace Project.

The Aerospace Project was the first of the new wave industry-school engagement models that embody new governance mechanisms, Industry Heads of Department and gateway schools. In governance matters, a key success factor has been the involvement of high level industry representatives through regular attendance, participation and contributions to committee meetings.

Aviation High School has close working relations with Boeing Australia and Aviation Australia. The position of Industry Head of Department is co-sponsored and co-funded by the Queensland Department of Education and the Arts and the aviation and aerospace industry. A special syllabus has been created for aerospace studies, focusing on physics, science, mathematics and business studies. The syllabus covers a range of careers in the industry including engineering, administration, maintenance, flight crew, air traffic control, cabin crew, security and emergency services.

The QSA advised that nine Aerospace Gateway schools have been trialling Aerospace Studies since January 2006 (one non-state and eight state high schools). In addition, a further nine schools have been accepted to join the trial with Year 11 students commencing January 2007.
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

ICT Industry Project
The ICT Industry Project is another example of the Department’s industry—school engagement strategy. There are currently two major partners in the project – the Australian Information Industry Association and Microsoft Australia. The project encourages students in Years 10, 11 and 12 to pursue careers in ICT. If successful, the program will be implemented in other schools throughout Queensland.

The ICT Industry Project may eventually redesign curriculum by providing new subject choices and certification aligned to industry standards. This will be supported by industry through sponsored work placements, traineeships, cadetships, scholarships, and other “in-industry” learning opportunities. The six schools involved in the project will be branded as ‘gateway schools to the ICT industry’: Chancellor State College (Sunshine Coast), Harristown State High School (Toowoomba), Smithfield State High School (Cairns), John Paul College (Daisy Hill), Mt Gravatt State High School (Mt Gravatt) and Lourdes Hill College (Hawthorne). These schools will work closely with industry to share ideas, expertise and experience and offer students unique pathways and insights into the ICT sector.

Queensland Academies
The new Queensland Academies were announced by the Premier in April 2005 as part of the second stage of the Smart State initiative and will open in 2007. In their first year of operation, the academies will serve students in Years 10 to 11, extending to Year 12 in 2008. Students will pay fees to attend these Academies, representing a new era in public education, in effect establishing a third market place which is neither private nor free state schooling.

The Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 creates the possibility for establishing fee-charging state education for specialist programs. However, any incapacity to pay will not necessarily disallow participation by young people who demonstrate merit. As selective entry institutions, students will be chosen on academic merit using independent testing. Students in these Academies will study the International Baccalaureate (IB). The establishment of the Academies has led to negotiations with the Queensland Teachers’ Union (QTU) about new ways of employing staff including different ways to recruit teachers who can support the cultural change being investigated.

The Queensland Academy for Science, Mathematics and Technology will be based on the redeveloped Toowong State College site and will work in partnership with the University of Queensland. A Queensland Academy for Creative Industries will be established at Kelvin Grove in partnership with the Queensland University of Technology. Griffith University will also be working with the Academies to offer students opportunities within specialist programs.

State-level partnerships with transformed industries
ETRF has emphasised the importance of schools working with industry and businesses to ‘provide work experience and ultimately jobs for our young people’ (Queensland Government, 2002, p. 9). This has included the provision of

... more school-based apprenticeships and traineeships [to] allow senior school students to combine studies towards their Senior Certificate with training as a paid employee for a nationally recognised vocational education and training qualification (Queensland Government, 2002, p.21).

At the State level, the Queensland Government partnered with two of Queensland’s growth industries to deliver new education and training initiatives through the:

• Queensland College of Wine Tourism
• Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy.
Wine Tourism

Transformations in Wine Tourism on the Darling Downs

While in Year 11 at Stanthorpe State High School in 2004, Gabriel Cattarin started a school-based traineeship at Casley Mount Hutton Winery. After initially thinking he might like a career in hospitality or information technology, Gabriel took advantage of the school's Wine Tourism Industry Links Program to start his traineeship. While in Year 11, he became involved in wine tasting events held to showcase the school's Banca Ridge winery. He also assisted at catering functions and promotional events for the school. Gabriel reports that he enjoyed the experience of working with customers and wine so he decided to focus on wine tourism as a career.

In 2005, he was on the team of staff and students that successfully presented the school's submission for a Showcase Award. The awards are conducted annually by the Department of Education and the Arts with the purpose of recognising and rewarding State schools for education practices that significantly improve learning outcomes for students. The school took out the Courier-Mail Showcase Award for Excellence in Innovation for its Banca Ridge project. Later that same year, Gabriel was asked to present at the inaugural Industry Links Conference.

At the end of 2005, Gabriel secured a permanent full-time position at the winery when he finished Year 12. Casley Mount Hutton is a small winery that was first planted in 1996 and opened its cellar doors to the public in 2000. It has experienced strong growth in sales and visitor numbers since that time, which has helped secure Gabriel's full-time position.

Under his training plan, Gabriel's learning includes vineyard maintenance and harvesting, laboratory testing, winery hygiene and safety as well as core winemaking skills. Gabriel works with the winemaker in all aspects of processing the vintage which Gabriel says he enjoys most. He has the opportunity to expand his communication and marketing skills by working the cellar door and promoting the wines, the business and the local area to visitors to the region. In addition, Gabriel works with his employer to promote the winery at events such as Stanthorpe's Apple and Grape Harvest Festival and Toowoomba's Carnival of Flowers. He also volunteers as a steward at the Australian Small Winemakers Show and the Winemakers Association blind tastings.

Gabriel is a member of the school's Advisory Committee for the Wine Tourism Industry Links Program and continues to promote the industry at school events such as the Year 10's SET Planning day.

Gabriel says that he enjoys the wine tourism industry because there's always something new happening. It's an industry he can see himself being in for a long time. His goals include further training through the newly created Queensland College of Wine Tourism. Eventually he would like to gain international experience in the wine tourism industry.

Young people, such as Gabriel, and existing workers in wine tourism will be studying to gain qualifications ranging from Certificates to Diplomas to Bachelor degrees in fields such as viticulture, wine food processing, cellar door operations, tourism, hospitality, marketing and business management. Significantly, while the Queensland College of Wine Tourism is located on Stanthorpe State High School land it draws students from several geographical locations. The College is aligned with the Queensland Wine Industry Development Strategy. This wine industry training centre will operate as a commercial vineyard, winery, tourist centre, and provide seminar and function facilities. The College represents far broader partnerships between:

1. non-state schools (Nudgee College and Sheldon College),
2. state schools (Stanthorpe SHS, Centenary Heights SHS, Kingaroy SHS, Murgon SHS, Tamborine Mountain SHS)
3. university (University of Southern Queensland)
4. local government (Stanthorpe Shire Council)
5. industry (Queensland Wine Industry Association)
6. technical and further education (Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE and the Australian Agricultural Colleges Corporation)
7. federal government (Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training)
8. state government (Queensland Departments of Education and the Arts; Employment and Training; Tourism and Fair Trading)

(www.stanthorshs.eq.edu.au/winetourism.htm)
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

Working together, the Gateways Schools directly linked to the College provide students with industry-relevant skills development through integrated curriculum, structured industry placements, school-based traineeships, cadetships and involvement in industry events. TP Brennan, Chief Executive Officer, Stanthorpe Shire Council sees this College as meeting the education and training needs of the interrelated wine, tourism and hospitality industries. Funding for stage one of the College’s development has been received from state, federal and local governments, the Queensland Wine Industry Association, and the University of Southern Queensland. The $6.3m facility provides an end-to-end opportunity for students in the wine tourism industries, from entry to tertiary level across the spectrum of skills underpinning the industry. In April 2006, the College opened its doors to the first student intake.

Minerals and Energy

The Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy was initiated as a partnership between the Queensland Government and the Queensland Resources Council. The academy is preparing and encouraging students to enter mineral and energy-related learning and career opportunities associated with these industries. The students undertake work experience and other on-site activities with Queensland Resource Council member companies.

For example, Xstrata provides scholarships for students entering Year 11 at Spinifex State College at Mt Isa. These students are supported to complete their senior education while participating in industry placements during school vacations. In Year 12 successful students are signed up to undertake school-based apprenticeships in their chosen career.

Local-level industry school community partnerships

Over the past 30 years, Queensland’s society and workplaces have changed. Vocational education and training (VET) is playing an increasingly valuable role in helping young people move through education, training and employment. With the progressive introduction of the VET in Schools initiative over the last few years:
... there has been a significant increase in VET delivery to school students. A large percentage (approximately 60 per cent) of Queensland students study at least one VET subject and over 390 schools are registered as training providers. In 2003 the average annual student contact hours per student was 300 in Queensland, significantly higher than the national average of 211 (Department of Employment and Training, 2005, p. 29).

Queensland has led the way with the delivery of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships “with 51.1 per cent of the total in Australia” (Department of Employment and Training, 2005, p. 29). The range of industries in which young people are learning and earning includes:

1. building construction
2. tourism and hospitality
3. motor trades
4. marine
5. manufacturing
6. agriculture
7. retail.

While not designated an ‘industry’, tertiary study is also an important link in the vertically integrated learning and earning opportunities available to young people. In all of the industries noted above, there are pathways available to further study at university or other higher education options. This section includes a brief overview of the ways in which tertiary study can be integrated into the Senior Phase of Learning. It concludes with a vignette of an education and training centre that provides a unique learning environment with distinctive curriculum offerings, active interagency partnerships and dedicated community support for the young people who attend.

**Building and Construction Careers**

Dingo Mini Diggers has formed a partnership with 12 schools on the Darling Downs, including St Mary’s College, the Dalby Christian School and state high schools at Clifton, Pittsworth, Millmerran, Cecil Plains, Dalby, Jandowae, Bell, Quinalow, Oakey, and Crow’s Nest. John Skerman, the ETRF Coordinator for the Darling Downs District established the ‘Dingo in Schools education-industry link program’. He worked with Dingo Human Resources Manager, Mark Celledoni, to establish the program.

Dingo has supplied a mini-digger which is shared among these rural schools. Dingo also supplies other earth moving machinery such as a post-hole digger, trench digger, soil spreader and bucket attachment for training purposes. Fully qualified teachers are integrating the use of this equipment into the study of agricultural studies, science, industrial design and technology. Students are taught how to operate and maintain the equipment, complete log books, machine safety, and engine and hydraulic technology. Dingo Mini Diggers won the 2005 Manufacturing Industry Skills Council Award.

**Automotive**

In 2003 Queensland secondary schools have partnered with NRMA Insurance and its smash repairers, the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, and Queensland Apprenticeship Services to provide auto-body traineeships in panel beating and spray painting. Students are interviewed for the school-based traineeships, receive on-the-job training from qualified staff and are paid a training wage by their employer. Students learn to repair damaged metal, plastic and fibreglass, as well as how to make and form vehicle panels using machine or hand tools. The students complete their senior studies, including TAFE courses, and then articulate into apprenticeships.
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

Tourism and Hospitality
Sea World Nara Resort on the Gold Coast conducts three-day training programs that provide senior school students with an introduction to the tourism and hospitality industry. Year 11 students have a chance to experience hotel operations, including kitchen, sales and marketing, office, concierge, human resources, room service, restaurant, engineering, gardening, tourism, and business management work. Year 12 students focus on six areas of their choosing. Schools participate in these programs on a user-pays basis. The fees contribute to the cost of providing the students with two nights accommodation, food and training materials.

Manufacturing
Stoddart Metal Fabricators has been manufacturing a diverse range of stainless steel products for over 40 years. As the business grew it experienced a dwindling number of quality apprentice applicants. Managing Director Bill Stoddart made a strategic decision to put skills attraction and development high on the company agenda and abandoned traditional recruitment in favour of a innovative new campaign. Stoddart reaches into local high schools to promote trade career opportunities to students and their parents. Stoddart works closely with Rochedale and Marsden State High Schools to get the message out to young people that manufacturing is a great career option. After struggling to fill 15 apprentice vacancies in 2002, Stoddart received a much larger pool of 90 determined applicants in 2004. The new intake will take the total number of apprentices currently working at Stoddart to 65.

Agriculture
Young people at Longreach, in the far west of Queensland, have participated in a rural skills training program that leads to a Certificate II in Agriculture and/or Certificate II in Rural Operations. This opportunity resulted from the local DYAP partnerships. The DYAP management committee combined funding from Access to Pathways grants, the Priority Country Area Program (PCAP), the Australian Agricultural College Corporation's Longreach Campus and the Australian Government's Department of Education, Science and Technology Outback Pathways and Careers (OPAC) program. The result was a Rural Vocational Pathways Program which included four one-week blocks of training at the Agricultural College campus. Parents contributed to the cost of meals while PCAP funds covered accommodation and transport so that young people could live on-site during the off-the-job training component of the program.

While in Longreach, students visited local businesses to investigate different career options. They were also able to attend the Career Expo in Brisbane thanks to the school-community-industry and cross-sectoral partnerships that financed their learning.

Retail: young people with special learning and earning needs
Through enterprise-industry partnerships, Years 8–12 students at the Darling Point Special School on Brisbane's Bayside have learnt how to manage money and other important work and life skills. The School runs a number of enterprises such as a coffee shop, tuckshop, laundry, cleaning service, horticulture, packaging process, photography, and shredding. Through the shredding enterprise, the students learn how to source waste paper locally, shred it and then on-sell it to pet shops. Local businesses, including vet hospitals, hardware stores, cafes, nurseries, clubs and retail stores, provide work experience and employment for the students including experience in budgeting, invoicing, banking procedures, communication and relationship strategies, workplace health and safety, and specific tasks.
Working Together: Bunnings Cannon Hill and Darling Point Special School

A partnership between Darling Point Special School and Bunnings Warehouse at Cannon Hill is giving young people with disabilities the chance for valuable work experience and for some, the opportunity to gain employment. According to Principal Charmaine Driver, the school approached Bunnings Warehouse at Cannon Hill, along with a number of other businesses in the community, to take on some of their students for work experience. School staff knew that Bunnings had a history of supporting people with disabilities and a strong company ethos of supporting the community. The work experience program has been running successfully for a number of years and many young people from the school have had the benefit of this valuable opportunity.

In 2006, a group of four students works at the Cannon Hill Bunnings Warehouse once a week, collecting trolleys. Each is accompanied by a teacher aide, except for one student who is now about to do the task unaided. There is another group of eight students working at Bunnings each Wednesday for the whole day (including one student with high physical support needs who uses a wheelchair). These young people generally work alongside a Bunnings employee. They take on a range of responsibilities such as helping on the cash register, working in the call centre or on the loaders or helping with cleaning and tidying.

According to Operations Manager Eric Mackintosh, it's a very rewarding experience for the students and a partnership that has proved equally rewarding for Bunnings. “We're very community oriented with a focus on people and I've always believed that it's the right thing for us to be out there dealing with the community and making opportunities such as this available to those who need them most,” he said. “I think it's important that the young people feel that they're contributing while they're here so the emphasis is always on ‘what are you going to do for us today?’ Most recently, a few of the young people who are a little bit older have started coming in with a carer during the day to collect trolleys for us. In fact there are four of them doing that at the moment and I'm hoping we can eventually offer them positions as fully fledged team members. Obviously we need to go through that process and see exactly what their abilities are and how well they can cope but it's progressing well and I believe that down the track we will be able to get them into the store,” he said.

Mr Mackintosh was involved in a similar program at the Bunnings Underwood store and developed a similar partnership with the Kuraby Special School. Through the program he identified one particular youngster who he thought would be able to hold a permanent job. Unfortunately Mr Mackintosh was transferred to Cannon Hill before that could happen but he received a call from that young person’s teacher a couple of months later asking if he could help. The young person is now a fully fledged casual team member with this store working on Tuesdays and Thursdays for four hours each day. He performs a range of tasks from looking after trolleys to cleaning. Initially he was supported by a carer, but he now finds his own way to the store using the train and bus. He gets to work, does his job and then he goes home again independently. “The program really doesn’t cost us anything other than a couple of phone calls and a bit of time and it’s all worth while if you can have a positive outcome for one child every year,” Mr Mackintosh said.

Fast-tracking to University

Senior students at Cavendish Road State High School's Brisbane Academy of Science are fast-tracking their way to university. High-achieving students have the opportunity to undertake tertiary-level science subjects, taught at school by academy teachers, during their final three or four semesters of high school. Students who successfully complete two subjects in the fields of biotechnology, biomechanics, physics, chemistry or biology, and satisfy all other admission requirements, can gain direct entry into a science degree at Griffith University or a human movement degree at the Queensland University of Technology, after they complete Year 12. They also gain valuable credit points exempting them from subjects already completed.
Conclusion

Concerns about local and global changes and multilingual knowledge economies have created an environment where possibilities for the 'l/earning society' could be imagined and subjected to experimentation. This Chapter has documented a series of strategic interventions used to reposition senior secondary schooling and engage young people in a balanced range of Senior Phase Learning and earning activities. Engagement in l/earning is “both an end in itself and a means to an end [...] it describes energy in action, the connection between person and activity” (Frydenberg, Ainley & Russell, 2005, p. 1). It has illustrated the collaborative work of schools, community organisations, universities, TAFE colleges, small/medium/large businesses, and government agencies. Through these networks and partnerships, interagency, cross-sectoral, multidisciplinary flexible learning options have been developed.

The vignettes contained in this Chapter have provided insights into the breadth of opportunities and types of support available for young people. The reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning have created new categories of students and learning providers, and new possibilities for students and learning providers. In the process, the reforms have challenged ‘rules’ governing what can and cannot be done across a range of policy-dependent government services, including transport, youth services, education, employment and training.

The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

Chapter 5

Lessons from the journey so far

We demand much of our educational systems. For the future we are demanding more. Education and training that prepare the overwhelming majority of our young people with the attributes to contribute actively to an internationalised, rapidly changing economy. Education and training to create the knowledge and outcomes on which our future will be based (Gardner, 2002, p. 6).

Introduction

The Queensland Government is playing a significant role in pioneering a new pattern of compulsory participation in learning and earning for young people. What is emerging is the possibility for a vertically integrated system of education, training and work that is aligned to changing social and economic conditions. The reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning in Queensland were initiated in a local/national/global policy environment which portends an increasingly “precarious, risk-ridden life” that makes “life projects all but impossible” (Bauman, 2004, p. 90).

In the face of uncertainties about the changing labour market, young people could be left to seek individual cures. Governments could ignore the concerns they have about young people’s personal well being that arise from these economic insecurities. They could call upon young people to simply brace themselves for even more insecurity, and urge them “to seek individually their own individual solutions to the socially produced troubles” (Bauman, 2004, p. 90).

However, the demand for a strong and capable state that is able to provide some protection against the insecurities of the day, led the Queensland Government to initiate reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning. This was in response to concerns about young people’s “social precariousness and social protection” (Bauman, 2004, p. 91).

This Chapter is structured around four key issues. The first section provides an account of the critical success factors in making these large-scale, multilevel reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning. This is followed by an expression of the signature strengths of these particular reforms. Then, there is a summary of some key challenges for further education and training reforms that have emerged from initiatives to date. The final section provides a basis for robust hope for a future-oriented Senior Phase of Learning.

Large-scale, multilevel education and training reforms: Critical success factors

Critical to effecting large-scale, multilevel reforms is the balancing of various levels of education and training services and the role of the representative state and participatory institutions of civil society. Reforms at one level can prove ineffectual if undermined by other levels. It is dangerous to minimise the role of the state. Similarly, there are dangers in over-stating the importance of regional, district and local forms of governance.

The systemic or state level was responsible for building the horizontal and vertical relationships required for progressing the senior phase ETRF reform agenda. State, regional/district and local level partnerships had differing capacities to create the structural and cultural changes put in motion by the reform initiatives. These different but interdependent levels had different capacities to resolve complex socio-economic and socio academic problems.
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

There are methods for implementing and sustaining the integration of participatory governance arrangements and representative democracy. The methods relevant to successful participatory governance in this particular reform agenda included partnerships which negotiated and transformed innovatory policies into innovative practices. The ETRF’s senior phase reform was re-invented through system-wide processes of knowledge generation and information exchange. These processes of policy monitoring, evaluation and learning relied on trust and reciprocity, both vertically and horizontally.

Factors that were critical to the success (or otherwise) of these reforms may be accounted for as:

1. engaging community knowledge networks
2. brokering education and training services
3. enhancing industry-school engagements
4. trialling funding flexibility.

Engaging community knowledge networks
Trials of the ETRF senior phase reforms used existing well-established community knowledge networks. In the first instance, these networks provided knowledge of student referrals, work experience placements and support services. Second, to get things done for young people, they extended and elaborated the social connections among diverse groups within local communities. This was seen as part of the trial’s cost-effective service delivery, enabling leveraging of in-kind support from non-government community organisations, schools (of all denominations and systems) and other government departments. The DYAP management committees played a pivotal role in facilitating this engagement of community knowledge networks.

The evaluation report of the CP Trial found the heavy reliance on “the management of key stakeholders and young people … required significant time and resources, which contributed to higher staff workloads” (Queensland Government, 2006b, p. 14, also p. 25). Through the DYAP management committees, many schools benefitted from strong networks with State and Commonwealth Government youth support agencies. DYAPs were able to leverage government-funded programs to support and assist disengaged and marginalised youth. They were also able to leverage support from a range of tertiary education providers and extended networks of employers.

Brokering education and training services
Old ideas about school-only learning for young people are less capable of responding to emerging possibilities and problems. The senior phase reforms supported new relationships between schools and non-school learning providers, while at the same time, preserving what had proven valuable in school-based learning including new models of learning provision for young people, especially the disengaged and alienated. This meant “new policy, management, communications and consultancy skills for [engaging] non-school staff” (QSE 2010, 2000, p. 9).

Initiatives were developed with program coordinators developing new knowledge and skills in the brokerage of education and training services. These education and training brokers worked across districts to establish links between schools, TAFE, other education and training providers and community agencies to coordinate resources and opportunities for young people to further their learning or earning. This also provided the basis for establishing necessary frameworks for involving non-school-based providers in the provision of public services in education, training and work.
Enhancing industry-school engagement

Five attributes were identified with the success of the industry-school engagement initiatives so far:

1. industry-school engagements provide on-site learning experiences for students; young people learn to learn and work in a new environment
2. businesses and schools work together and share their relevant expertise. Industry teaches students knowledge and skills relating to products and what matters to succeed. Schools know how students learn and ensure that their experiences are turned into worthwhile education
3. students gain a head start in their careers, a broad education and knowledge of work/life which leads to job opportunities and advanced standing in further education and training
4. teachers, students and employers bring enthusiasm, excitement and imagination to these initiatives, inspiring and demanding passion of each other.
5. students enter the labour market with solid experience and qualifications that are endorsed and valued by industry.

A key feature of industry-school engagements is that they avoid the problems of streaming. Rather than focusing on a narrow horizontal set of jobs, students are made aware of the range of jobs within an industry. This vertical insight into different levels of employment within an industry provides a more holistic perspective. The focus is on vertical organisation of employment opportunities rather than a horizontal focus. In this way industry-school engagement initiatives can cater for 100 per cent of young people, enabling all of them to understand the industry’s overall employment structure, rather than just a particular segment of it. This encourages young people to imagine a range of integrated work, education and training pathways for their future.

Trialling funding flexibility

Resourcing these far-reaching changes to the Senior Phase of Learning was an issue of considerable debate in interviews, the research literature, publicly available submissions to the various government initiated reviews, and the Green and White Papers. CP Trial demonstrated the possibilities that eventuate when Government is flexible in its resourcing arrangements for purchasing programs and services to re-engage disengaged 15- to 17-years-olds in learning (Queensland Government, 2006b, p. 15). The CP Trials indicated arrangements that re-engage young people with the schooling system. Moreover, the trials provided flexibility for resourcing the diverse range of learning options required to re-engage this cohort.

The Senior Phase of Learning reforms: Signature strengths

The signature strengths of the reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning in Queensland will always be identified differently by the various people involved. In this section, we have identified four major strengths that have emerged from the data. They are summarised as:

1. changing the operational conditions of possibilities in senior phase learning
2. providing for, and learning from, ongoing evaluations
3. facilitating local-level representative and participatory governance
4. developing holistic re-engagement strategies.

Changing the operational conditions of possibilities in senior phase learning

The habitual, taken-for-granted strategies of education and training reform are no longer satisfactory. To deal with new groups of disengaged young people “the habitual tools and stratagems of intervention do not suffice; nor are they particularly adequate” (Bauman, 2004, p. 71). The ETRF’s senior phase reforms did not sanction transforming
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schools, whether they be public, Catholic or independent, into institutions for confining disengaged young people. To do so would have altered the main purpose of senior secondary schools merely to custodianship of young people. Considered undeserving and disobedient, disengaged young people would be held under prison-like control so that they would not take to crime. High schools could have been turned into storehouses for deactivating these disengaged young people (Bauman, 2004, p. 82).

The Queensland Government took the senior phase reforms in another direction. It incited and invited exploration of possibilities for worthwhile accredited learning within and beyond school (Pitman, 2002). It created opportunities to explore young people’s melioristic treatment and community reintegration. The provisional character of the senior phase reform initiatives made these explorations possible during the trial phase from 2002 to 2005.

Providing for, and learning from ongoing evaluation
An iterative evaluation process was used throughout the senior phase trial period. It was a five-phase formative evaluation that gathered qualitative data via interviews, questionnaires and analysis of reports and other documentation. Each evaluation report identified strengths and challenges and made recommendations in relation to implementation of reforms.

Aspects of the reforms’ systems for steering change that were evaluated included: the Senior Education and Training (SET) Planning processes within schools; the community engagement processes of District Youth Achievement Plan (DYAP) management committees; the implementation of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative (YSCI); the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Framework; communication strategies; governance, cooperation and coordination; and the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations.

The Phase 5 Evaluation report (2006, p. 7) noted that, “the nature of the reforms makes evaluation of outcomes, such as increased school retention rates, a long-term process”. This means that the future of the ETRF’s senior phase reforms lies in four key areas worthy of ongoing evaluation:

1. enacting innovation leadership through the constantly changing landscapes of education and training and transitions from initial education to the worlds of learning and earning
2. strengthening partnerships and relational goodwill among young people as learners, their teachers, employers, parents/guardians, educational institutions and community organisations
3. staying alert to new ways of building learning and earning pathways and supporting the complex combinations of technical, social and conceptual knowledge and skills needed in the future
4. providing a comprehensive, evidence-based account of outcomes for young people that lets everyone know what works for them, what doesn’t and why.

Measures such as the Key Performance Indicator Framework and the Next Steps Destination Survey may go some way towards providing a reading of future progress.

Facilitating local level representative and participatory governance
The governance of the ETRF’s senior phase reform agenda was the responsibility of bodies at different levels of education and training in Queensland. The explicit facilitation of local-level representative and participatory governance through the DYAP management committees enabled the day-to-day, grassroots work of the senior phase reform agenda to progress. Here a whole new culture of working together was being established. For communities without a history of such close intersectoral and intersystemic collaboration, conceptualising and enacting such a complex cultural change was indeed challenging. Not only did people have to learn to work together in
a very short period of time, they also had to produce outcomes in the form of detailed plans, establish and monitor programs and communicate with their own constituencies.

From the beginning of their involvement with DYAP Management Committees, people were under pressure to ‘perform’ in an environment for which there was no road map or guide book – only a shared commitment to young people.

As this was happening, a new statutory studies authority was being established – the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA). Here, three previously disparate authorities (BSSSS, TEPA and the Queensland Curriculum Council), each with its own work culture, were merging into one body. Concurrently, the QSA was coping with the complex changes required to bring the new Queensland Certificate of Education to fruition while also maintaining old systems for students who were already in the learning pipeline of senior secondary schooling.

From conceptualisation to operationalisation, the redesign of what counts as ‘senior secondary studies’ was a major cultural change for education and training in Queensland.

It is here that Governments can demonstrate their capability for underwriting the socio economic security of their citizens, and people more generally. The Queensland Government rested its expectations for large-scale, multilevel, multi-agency education and training reforms on the promise to protect its citizens:

... against redundancy, exclusion and rejection as well as against random blows of fate – against being consigned to ‘human waste’ because of individual inadequacies or misfortunes; in short, on the promise to insert certainty and security into lives in which chaos and contingency would otherwise rule (Bauman, 2004, pp. 89–90).

Young people are not being left to deal with the uncertainties driving changes in the labour market. It is right that these are not regarded as matters of individual concern to be dealt with by individuals using their limited private resources. The prime purpose and duty of democratic governments is the well being of its citizens and other human persons. Assent to the ETRF senior phase reform initiatives is legitimised by the Government’s “endorsement of an insurance policy against individual mischance and calamity” (Bauman, 2004, p. 51). Is it still possible to say that “the prime purpose and duty of all political power [is] the well-being of its subjects”? (Bauman, 2004, p. 52).

Developing holistic re-engagement strategies

A holistic approach to re-engagement enhanced the success of youth services wrapped around education and training programs and focussed on the social and emotional needs of young people. This increased the likelihood of them continuing to participate in learning. Integrated service delivery made it possible for young people to access a range of services from one organisation or site. Funding for youth services came from NGOs and Government Departments.

The trial indicated possibilities for integrated delivery through interdepartmental planning and management of service provision. Schools purchased the delivery of education for marginalised young people from a community service provider. In addition to education, the providers delivered wrap-around youth support services to program participants. This holistic focus on students’ well-being reduced further risk of their disengagement (Queensland Government, 2006b, p. 24).
Challenges for the journey into the future

Future challenges for the ongoing implementation of the ETRF senior phase reform agenda are to be found in the complex and sometimes contradictory relationships between people and sectors, at all levels, of education and training in Queensland. An overview of four key challenges is provided in this section. The challenges are identified as:

1. providing ongoing leadership
2. managing partnerships and networks
3. building human and physical resource capacities
4. maintaining individualised learning journeys.

Innovation Leadership

Education and training leaders in the Independent, Catholic and state school systems know that transitions between education, training and work/life continue to change for all young people. These leaders want to create mechanisms to enable greater experimentation in the integration and alignment of education, training and work/life trajectories. They want to create conditions and reforms that enable regional and district operational leaders to take strategic risks, to push the envelope, to make holistic, integrated innovations that articulate education, training and work/life.

State-level education and training leaders know they have to meet legislative and fiduciary accountabilities. Reforms must be defended in every Department from Premier’s, through Treasury to Child Safety. This is necessary for getting the funding and support required. Education and training leaders from the OECD, ILO and UNESCO are interested in encouraging large-scale reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning. They are interested in information about public policy making in this area. They want to know how the education and training reforms in one country might influence the policy agenda further afield. They want to know the potential spin-off benefits for other countries.

State-level leaders wanted to disseminate information about the ETRF senior phase reform agenda to students, teachers, parents, other education providers and the community. Conferences, forums and workshops were held to do so. Capturing the knowledge generated at different levels of the education and training system about the management and leadership of large-scale reforms remains open to future documentation. For the time being, the following might be considered the signature strengths of the reform management in senior phase learning.

Partnership Management

Building capacity for thoughtful, tactful and proactive engagement of partners is important. The DYAP management committees confronted the daunting task of sewing together a diverse, heterogenous constituency. They engaged in the everyday jobs of negotiation, making compromises and producing the concessions required for the success of the ETRF. This required the investment of resources and time to add to their demonstrable strengths as safety nets. DYAP committee members established close working relationships in the face of tendencies that may have driven them apart.

It is not always the help that is provided through the DYAPs that is important, but the confidence that such help is available should it be needed. Without such trust, the “binding agent of human togetherness ... the web of human commitments falls apart, making the world a yet more dangerous and fearsome place” (Bauman, 2004, p. 2). The achievement of successful outcomes for young people requires time, resources and relationship management capabilities.
Coordinated and focused time and resources are needed to grow capacity, plan holistically and provide educational services involving industries, community and other agencies. Relationship management with key stakeholders, such as employers and young people themselves has required more time and resources than original cost estimates anticipated. The DYAPs represent a site where long-term results can be secured. Of course, they do not have the “capacity of local partnerships to create structural change and resolve complex economic and social problems” (Reddel and Woolcock, 2004).

Conditions are required to develop a shared sense of destiny and a feeling of solidarity. If DYAP bonds are torn apart, then members will feel “silly to invest [their] time and resources in adding to their strength and to put an extra effort onto protecting them against wear and tear” (Bauman, 2004, p. 129). A test of the ETRF’s sustainability will be whether the successes of the DYAPs prove to be frail and superficial, or are institutionalised as the basis of long-term, participatory relationships.

Resource capacity building
Collective capacity building involves pursuing complex, accountable tasks via networked and nested learning communities (exchanges). Initiatives targeting all young people require conditions that attract and retain highly qualified staff.

Through purpose-driven networking and peer-based learning, workers are able to access ideas and identify self- and system improvements – and through this, generate new pools of educational leaders.

Staff turnover and a lack of suitably qualified staff are often associated with high workloads and uncertainty about continuing employment due to non-recurrent funding. These conditions have been found to impact negatively on some program initiatives, delaying some or undermining the achievement of outcomes.

The engagement of appropriately experienced and qualified educators, youth workers, project coordinators, education and training brokers and learning providers is a signature strength of the ETRF’s senior phase trial. Given the challenges confronting disengaged young people, and the challenges they pose, the employment of highly skilled and dedicated staff is essential. Low student/staff ratios enable the delivery of flexible learning programs that meet the varying needs of participants.

The evaluation report on the CP Trial found, “Some trials were impacted on due to turnover of these staff members. The reasons for staff turnover included high workloads, uncertainty around ongoing funding, burnout and access to support” (Queensland Government, 2006b, p. 14). It was also found that “uncertainty around continued funding made it difficult in some districts to attract staff to some trials, as well as [not] allowing appropriate time to plan for and advertise trials to attract disengaged young people” (Queensland Government, 2006b, p. 14).

Individualised learning journeys
The Registration of Young People System (RYPS) provides a mechanism and a space for individualised learning journeys that include syllabus, competency-based and non-syllabus based learning. The continued development and maintenance of the information technology system underpinning RYPS and the new career information service will be crucial for the realisation of individualised learning journeys over time.

Given that the first cohort of young people to benefit fully from this facility are those starting Year 10 in 2006, it is too soon to know how this aspect of the ETRF will impact on their choices and destinations post-Year 12.

The QSA (2004, p. 17) allows some young people to complete their senior studies over a longer period than two years through rules and processes termed the “Variable Progression Rate”. Not all young people completing Year 10 or turning 16 are expected
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to want a Senior Statement or QCE. Instead, some young people will obtain a training certificate or full-time employment. However, the QSA (2004, p.15) holds that it “is important that a decision made at the end of Year 10 should not deny young people the opportunity to change their minds and seek to achieve the new Queensland Certificate of Education at a later date”.

It was found that “young people need a range of re-entry points into the education [and training] system” if their risk of disengagement is to be mediated or otherwise mitigated (Queensland Government, 2004, p. 7). There are difficulties for re-entry for students who have disrupted the senior phase of their learning due to ill health, family circumstances or other reasons. Among the options available are apprenticeships and traineeships; a range of Certificate I, II and III qualifications, and study at agricultural colleges (Gardner, 2002, p.24).

Young people who have some external senior subjects, have studied vocational education and training, or have completed an approved bridging course may be considered for a tertiary entrance. English proficiency is a basic requirement for entry to all tertiary institutions (Gardner, 2002, p.24).

A complicating factor to the maintenance of the system’s capacity to provide for individualised learning journeys is the already identified need to extend particular intervention strategies to a lower age group. The evaluation report of the CP Trial “identified the need for early intervention for students at risk of disengaging from learning prior to turning 15 years of age” (Queensland Government, 2006, p. 15). The trial evaluation report found that the age for intervention should be lowered to assist young people to transition into the Senior Phase of Learning. This is confirmed in the Phase 5 Evaluation summary (2006, p. 21) which calls for further investigation of this recommendation from the trial findings.

Cultivating an education culture of robust hope

The reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning sought to marry change and continuity. The past was seen as a source of considerable resources and traditions which were brought forward, renewed and revitalised. This meant mobilising past achievements of innovators working in education, training and youth affairs to give shape and form to a better future for young people (Furedi, 2005, p. 159).

Such a perspective on the future enables educators, trainers and youth workers to create novel ideas about what needs to be done to improve the education, training and work of young people. Queensland’s senior phase reforms have helped generate ideas that are necessary for imagining alternative ways of moving ahead.

A sensible question raised by these reforms is, where do we stand on the potential and limits of human beings to shape their future? The ETRF’s reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning were considered necessary for making real choices between leaving disengaged young people alienated and disaffected from school-based learning, and finding viable alternatives for improving on the present situation. Practically speaking it might be reasonable to argue, that to a degree the reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning are fostering a climate that is hospitable to directly challenging the vulnerability of young people (Furedi, 2002, p. 166). Their affirmation of choice within appropriate support structures fuels robust hope for the future.

As an approach to policy action and analysis, robust hope seeks to establish good sense in education and training reforms through searching for the underlying importance in what occurs. Giving the reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning meaning and making them count are part of the processes for imbuing with significance what has been done and searching for a deeper meaning in what has happened (Bauman, 2004, p. 96).
Robust hope kneads the meaningfulness of these reforms out of all their complexity and complications. The potency of their meaning has been indicated through studying the significance of the reforms in the lives of young people. In this regard, the senior phase reforms represent some instances of good sense that restore confidence in human potential for pursuing positive ideals and, as such may be worthy of wider promotion (Furedi, 2005, p. 22).

**Counteracting the waste of human lives**
Disengaged young people are the collateral damage in the changes wrought by the local transitions in contemporary globalisation. Disengagement is a distasteful, disturbing and debilitating condition. The loss of life purposes among some young people is expressed in feelings of incomprehension, indecision and incredulity. This means that disaffected young people have little reason to treat society as somewhere to which they owe their loyalty. From their perspectives, schools are not experienced as places where they belong. They have been stripped of any feelings of being useful and having a social space of their own. They have lost their life orientation and confidence in being able to shape their own lives. There are poor job prospects for young people who disengage from education and/or training and attempt to enter a labour market now driven by different concerns.

The senior phase reforms have sought to support these young people by increasing their levels of education and training, and their future employment prospects. It addressed the needs of young people battling with disengagement, unemployment and their exclusion from rising levels of education, training and well being. The Queensland Government’s reforms in this area were interventions aimed to ensure that such young people will not be marooned in some asocial or antisocial emptiness.

**Re-ordering learning and earning**
Both the goals and means of education and training continue to prove challenging. The approach to learning inherited from the past, namely school-based learning, seems less and less able to engage some young people. The ETRF’s senior phase reform agenda recognises that the current challenges faced by young people are unlike the challenges faced by previous generations. For young people who are disengaged from education, training or work, or feeling excluded, the senior phase reform agenda supports pathways by which they might return to earning and/or learning.

The senior phase reform agenda has given legitimacy to schools engaging learning providers that operate outside their boundaries. Moreover, the ETRF’s senior phase reform initiatives invite consideration as to whether a focus on ‘school retention’, ‘anti-school behaviour’, ‘classroom strategies’ and ‘classroom management’ is any longer sufficient. After the experiences of the ETRF’s senior phase trial implementation, it might be a too limited view of the learning opportunities that really are available for young people. This is particularly so in terms of structuring their opportunities to access the larger funds of knowledge now available through immediate and extended communities and their local/global connections.

The senior phase reform agenda has made the central issue for policy making the question of whether, and in what ways it is possible to enable young people who disengage from schooling to engage with learning. The evidence reported here suggests that many combinations of school-based and non-school-based opportunities for learning allow this to happen.

**Inviting engagement in public affairs**
The reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning presented opportunities for trusting relationships that are essential to the co-joint operation of representative and participatory democracy. Many people’s hopes and ideals were invested in a belief in these reforms for making progressive change. People offered involvement and participation in an active community network.
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The DYAP management committees spoke to the potential of collaborative human actions. They debated the issues at stake in young people's disengagement, offered alternative ways forward, argued for particular courses of action, and attempted to alter the course of events.

Through such engagement, the reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning showed that people do care about matters of public importance. People are concerned and want to influence the public agenda for education, training and work as part of a broader societal project. “Through such human activities,” Furedi (2005, p. 163) observes, “people develop an understanding of how purposeful public activity may lead to positive results in the future.” This engagement was expressed through interactions with others as part of a public dialogue on the complex and changing relations between education, training and work. The DYAP management committees brought together diverse groups for engagement through dialogue and collaborative action. This interrupted fragmentation.

Iterative processes of policy reform

The idea that governments and communities can achieve positive results for all young people through education and training reforms might be dismissed as naive or presumptuous. However, this only reinforces acquiescence to the status quo and the acceptance of fate. Furedi (2005) argues that this is not an expression of civic empowerment, but resignation.

Queensland’s reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning meant that young people who did not fit the form of schooling that had been designed in another century were given a fresh start. They are now participating in a vertically integrated system of education, training and work that is more aligned to changing social and economic conditions.

In some respects, the senior phase reform agenda enabled continuity with innovative practices that had already been developed. Its policy initiatives reasserted and reaffirmed local initiatives as worthy of statewide uptake. In this sense, the reforms involved movements up and down multilevels and across multiple sectors and agencies. They were neither orderly nor chaotic. As is necessarily the case in all change, they produced disorder together with order. Not surprisingly, they brought unintended and unanticipated consequences, many of which were unpredictable. Furedi (2005, p. 161) notes that “human action often results in unexpected outcomes”, some of which may be uncomfortable to live with, while others may be beneficent. Playing down or ignoring these inevitable risks was a possibility.

However, the reform processes allowed for their consideration and management as part of the iterative process of policy action. These reforms had been designed to be capable of implementation in this way. Rarely can the design process compensate for the unavoidable fallibility of human expertise. As Bauman (2004, p. 24) observes, “A foolproof, risk-proof design is very nearly a contradiction in terms”. In these ways the reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning set in place possibility for building a new order for the proper placement of learning and its proper function.

Marshalling collective intelligence

Through the work of the DYAPs, the reforms to the senior phase pointed to possibilities for capitalising on what Surowiecki (2005), a business columnist, calls “collective intelligence”. The DYAP Committees, with their intersectoral, interagency constituency, provided a vehicle for collective decision making, problem identification and experimentation with alternative solutions. The Committees often comprised large and diverse groups able to make decisions about issues affecting young people in their locality. A key problem for the DYAPs was conceptual issues. For instance, how to define the target population has been a recurring concern.

The DYAPs also worked on the problems of coordinating different parties, knowing that all participants were working to achieve a common good, and the re-engagement of disaffected young people in learning and earning. Importantly, the DYAPs negotiated
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their way through the problems of securing ongoing cooperation. This involved parleying
the differing interests of various parties. Building trust was necessary so they could work
together. They did so, even when their particular interests suggested some alternative
might be equally appropriate.

Generally, DYAP committees were given enough relevant information and the chance
to talk over the issues with their peers to provide the opportunity to make intelligent
decisions. These practices were integral to the successful operations of the DYAPs and
making meaningful decisions about complex issues. The diverse and independent range
of voices brought to the DYAPs created the basis for exploring disagreements. Out of this
work, consensus and compromises were achieved.

Conclusion

The meaning and relevance of the ETRF’s senior phase reform agenda was much debated
more so when its policy ideas were tested through grounding in district and local
conditions. The State was an active participant in the ETRF. Organisations of civil society
were engaged and strengthened through the ETRF’s senior phase initiatives.

The active state is the collective tool citizens have for managing the socio-economic
effects of the forces, connections and imaginings unleashed by the contemporary
processes of globalisation. The active state is developing new frameworks for relating
the state, civil society and labour markets.

The reforms to Queensland’s Senior Phase of Learning were enacted on the belief that
the lives of young people could be improved. Where they were embraced, it was because
they offered the possibilities of real choices and alternative paths to a worthwhile future.
Collectively people throughout Queensland have worked through, with and around these
reforms to give some positive direction to the circumstances of young people’s lives.
They have taken a measure of control over affairs of public interests, namely education,
training and work. At its best, these reforms saw disengaged young people participating
as the agents of the changes proposed.
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References


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# Appendix 1

## Historically significant events and key influences on the ETRF Agenda

The following timeline maps salient aspects of the social contexts and the significance of policies and events that were instrumental in shaping and influencing the ETRF agenda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year, Event/Publication</th>
<th>Significance of event or publication and [potential and actual] influences on education and training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>• Establishment of modern Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangan Report</td>
<td>• Expansion of Australia's university system; significant increase of places for young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams Report</td>
<td>• Expansion of post-compulsory education &amp; training opportunities with emphasis on transitions to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Guarantee in Norway, Sweden &amp; Denmark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>• Expansion of opportunities for young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (1982)</td>
<td>• Establishment of Australian Traineeship system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth, State &amp; Territory governments (early 1980s)</td>
<td>• Concerted national effort to raise retention to Year 12 rates in all Australian schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1984, Victoria) Youth Guarantee</td>
<td>• Establishment of Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirby Inquiry (1985)</td>
<td>• Expansion of places in higher education system</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• (In Victoria) Young people under 20 years who hadn’t completed Year 12 or equivalent vocational studies,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>guaranteed a place at TAFE or other public training providers; normal VET tuition fees apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>• Manufacturing industries identified as lacking competitiveness in global markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation of the National Training Board</td>
<td>• Australian terms of trade and current account in deficit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deveson Report) Training Costs of Award Restructuring</td>
<td>• Emphasis on ‘workplace training’ to deliver improved economic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>• An ‘open’ training market with private providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>• High levels of youth unemployment: criticisms of school curriculum not providing employment-related skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Finn Report), Young People’s Participation in Post-compulsory education</td>
<td>• State functions for education, training &amp; employment reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET): TAFE in the 1990s–Developing Australia’s Skills</td>
<td>• Support for (some) public bureaucracies to be corporatised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommended merging of general and vocational education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identified ‘need’ for competency-based training and assessment &amp; flexible delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommended multiple pathways for postcompulsory education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>• VET sector named &amp; identified as needing reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mayer Report) Employment related key competencies for postcompulsory education and training</td>
<td>• Declining apprenticeship numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Carmichael Report) The Australian Vocational Certificate Training Scheme</td>
<td>• Unemployment levels for young people &amp; disadvantaged groups remains high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Proposed establishment national VET system with industry focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mayer’s 8 Key Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alternative pathways identified for postcompulsory years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>• National response to reforms for the VET sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)</td>
<td>• Industry Training Advisory Bodies inform policy/events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wiltshire, McMeniman, Tolhurst) Shaping the future: Report of the Review of the Queensland School Curriculum</td>
<td>• A statutory body to develop syllabuses for all schools and a common reporting framework was recommended.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year, Event/Publication</th>
<th>Significance of event or publication and [potential and actual] influences on education and training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1996** | Post-compulsory task group in Queensland  
| (Cumming Report) Co-ordinating Diversity: Directions for post-compulsory education in Queensland. (Aust Bureau of Statistics) Education & training in Australia (Sweet) | • Post-compulsory task group in Queensland  
|  | • Current levels of career guidance (incorporating career information, career education, and career counselling) are inadequate  
|  | • Unemployment rates for Year 12 graduates substantially lower than for early school leavers  
|  | • Positive relationship between level of initial educational attainment & participation in on-the-job training. |
| **1997** | (OECD) From initial education to working life: making transitions work – Australia: Country Note.  
| Youth Support Coordinators established jointly by Qld DEA & Dept of Communities (NSW, Department of Education) Securing their Futures | • (In Aust) Youth labour market changed considerably over 20-year period from 1970s to 1990s  
|  | • Changing nature of transition period & its increasing complexity  
|  | • Three major strands to Aust’s reform strategy: (i) broaden senior secondary curriculum to encourage more Year 12 completions; (ii) strengthen partnerships; (iii) importance of individual initiative & responsibility for shaping one’s own transition pathways  
|  | • Complex, confusing & contradictory State, Territory & Commonwealth funding relationships & registration requirements for secondary school, vocational education, training & university education  
|  | • Address needs of ‘at-risk’ youth: full service of intellectual, social & emotional development opportunities & support via interagency initiatives  
| | • Review of NSW High School Certificate. |
| **1998** | (Australian Qualifications Advisory Board) Australian Qualifications Framework (Dusseldorp Skills Forum) Australia’s youth: reality and risk | • Nationally accepted descriptors for all formal qualifications from schools, VET & university sectors  
|  | • Qualifications standards for Senior certificate, Certificates I, II, III & IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Bachelor Degrees & above  
|  | • Disengagement from learning was frequent for a significant proportion of young people aged 15–24; successful transitions to work were fragmented; for many of these young people, poverty is a reality  
|  | • There are social and economic costs to the community of disengagement from learning (& earning). |
The Journey So Far in the Senior Phase of Learning

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<td>1999 (King, Dusseldorp Skills Forum) The cost to Australia of early school leaving</td>
<td>• The estimated lifetime cost (discounted to 1999 terms) to the country of each early school-leaver is $74,000; half this cost is a direct monetary cost, borne partly by the individual and partly by government. The remaining half is a social cost which falls across the individual, government and the whole community</td>
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<td>(Teese &amp; Charlton) Pathways through the Queensland senior certificate – who occupies them and where do they lead. (Cosier) The Potential inter-relationships of life long learning, labour market and social capital dynamics to define a sense of time and space within a socio-economic political context. Review of the Provision of Career Guidance Services in EQ Schools, March 1999 (Schmidt) The Economic and Social Context Facing Queensland’s Youth Population. Paper prepared for the Year 10-12 Project. Education Queensland. (Pitman) Runs on the board: Meeting the future challenges of postcompulsory school education in Queensland (Schofield &amp; Associates) The purposes of education; (Schofield) Independent investigation into the quality of training in Queensland’s traineeship system (MCYETYA) The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century</td>
<td>• The overall cost to Australia of one year’s early school-leavers is an estimated $2.6 billion • Reducing the number of early school-leavers nationally would yield an estimated 12.5 per cent rate of return • To achieve OECD benchmarks for completion of senior schooling, proportion of young people completing at least Year 12 of schooling in Queensland needs to grow from 67 per cent in 1998 to 88 per cent in 2010 • Recommendations 9, 10, 11, 12, and 16 of the IDWP Report on New Pathways through Senior Secondary Schooling have a direct bearing on the issue of providing careers advice to students, on the finding that current levels are inadequate • Even if in employment, young people still face issues e.g. lower levels of participation in the labour force; higher levels of unemployment; lower average incomes; higher levels of job mobility; different occupational profile (more concentrated in clerical sales and labourer occupations); high rates of casual &amp; part-time employment; reduction in full-time employment opportunities • All students to have access to socially just education to completion of Year 12 or its vocational equivalent • There should be clear and recognised broad pathways with multiple exit points to increase the range of opportunities to cross from one pathway to another of employment &amp; further education and training &amp; lifelong learning • State schools are losing market share to non-state schools • Initiatives should be long-term, not stop-start • Resourcing and school delivery systems are the most difficult challenges • Future challenges will involve: (1) curriculum that keeps pace with rapid global changes; (2) developing government schools as schools of excellence; (3) providing students with high-quality vocational preparation; (4) quality remedial literacy and numeracy teaching, learning and assessment; (5) achieving high quality in meeting the special needs of students; (6) giving students the attitudes and values needed to build sound social futures.</td>
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| **2000** *(Queensland Government)*  
Queensland State Education 2010                                                      | • There should be a strong state public education system  
• This is a complex diversity of changing family structures, information technologies, cultural, economic and workplace un/certainties that impact on students then (in 2000) and in the future  
• Year 12 completion more likely to lead to employment  
• Post-secondary qualifications increasingly need Year 12 or its equivalent  
• Already remarkable flexibility within the Queensland senior schooling system & the pathways flexibility that already exists for students in completing Yrs 11 and 12 is not taken up  
• Reconceptualise senior schooling as a journey into work & social networks  
• Reconceptualise functions of ranking & credentialing in senior schooling  
• *(Education Queensland)* 290 Secondary principals discussing Pathways for senior students, based on current pathways research and future trends for secondary schooling  
• Education & training has an enabling role in supporting Australia’s transition to the information economy  
• *(Victoria)* Local & global forces influencing employment outcomes for young people: flexibility that allows for articulation; better access to appropriate programs; statewide network across education & training providers, industry, local government & others; education system accountable for education & destination outcomes of every young person; mentoring necessary; strengthen linkages among education, training & industry; foster local diversity  
• *(Victoria)* 12 programs undertaken in geographic areas of high need & where existing or potential cooperative arrangements across education & training sectors  
• Five year Commonwealth funding framework to support training sector respond to demands for flexible and e-learning  
• Variables that encourage participation in post-compulsory education identified  
• *(SA)* Variables that cause young people to leave school early identified. |
| *(OECD)* From initial education to working life: making transitions work.              |                                                                                                   |
| **2001**  
• Variables affecting a student’s post-school destination e.g. gender, socioeconomic status, parent’s education, ethnicity, rural/urban location, school type (private/state), disability, and school attainment  
• In Queensland, the number of all Year 10 students who continue on to Year 12 has been steadily increasing for the past 30 years – notwithstanding a dip in percentages in the 1990’s  
• The curriculum needs to be more relevant and useful to potential early school leavers  
• Critical need for an interconnected and coordinated youth transitions system that has a focus on promoting positive pathways for young people  
• Many of the major issues in making pathways work for young people have been caused by weaknesses in how inter-governmental, cross-portfolio and cross-sectoral relationships and responsibilities are handled  
• *(Tasmania)* VET in Years 11 & 12 to be integrated as part of students’ senior secondary education with structured workplace learning opportunities included in all VET programs. |
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<td>• Queensland “Smart state” strategy: emphasises education, employment, training &amp; youth affairs</td>
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<td>• Extensive statewide consultations on ETRF Green Paper</td>
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<td>• Parents facing complex decisions about education</td>
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<td>• Proposed three years of trials for ETRF Senior Phase initiatives</td>
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<td>• States, Territories &amp; Commonwealth Governments commit to a common direction for improving educational and employment outcomes for all young people</td>
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<td>• Flexible learning options should be explored</td>
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<td>• Local involvement can bridge the sectors</td>
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<td>• Cross-sectoral funding issues create barriers and opportunities for improving pathways</td>
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<td>• Reconceptualisation of Senior Phase of Learning essential</td>
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<td>• Green &amp; White Papers: (i) recognition of changing nature of young people, the labour market &amp; international trends in education and training; (ii) proposals for change through creation of post-compulsory education &amp; training systems e.g. QCE, RYPS, industry-school links initiatives; (iii) change strategies e.g. legislation, consultation, trials, building on existing innovations, modest investment</td>
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<td>• Protocols for collaboration between government &amp; non-government sectors, Intersectoral Advisory Committee, ETRF Board &amp; ETRF Implementation Team established</td>
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<td>• (MCEETYA) Action plan for young people: (i) focus on local partnerships &amp; strategic alliances; (ii) promulgate effective ways to support young people; (iii) respond to their diverse needs; (iv) provide access to career &amp; transition support; and (v) establish education and training as the foundation for effective transition for all young people.</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>• (March) ETRF taskforce established for intersectoral advice on Senior Phase implementation</td>
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<td>• Trial of Senior Phase of Learning reforms begins in seven trial areas (15 State education districts)</td>
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<td>• District Youth Achievement Plans (DYAPs) finalised in trial areas across half the state</td>
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<td>• (April–October) 21 extra Youth Support Coordinators employed via 15 community organisations; total now 34</td>
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<td>• (In Aust) Much better economic conditions since the recession of the early 1990s have improved the work prospects of early school leavers</td>
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<td>• (In Aust) For the past decade, 15 per cent of teenagers have not been in full-time learning or work, and at least one in ten school leavers are not making a successful transition</td>
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<td>• (In Aust) 45 per cent of Indigenous teenagers and nearly 70 per cent of young adults were not in full-time learning or work in 2001.</td>
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<td>• “Queensland Government committed to increase the number of young people who complete Year 12 or its equivalent from 68 per cent to 88 per cent across all school sectors by the year 2010” (Queensland Studies Authority, 2004, p. 5).</td>
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<td>(Qld DEA, Jan–June) ETRF Trial Implementation Evaluation Report – Phase 2</td>
<td>• (May) Consultations begin on review of Senior Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Qld DEA, July–December) ETRF Trial Implementation Evaluation Report – Phase 3</td>
<td>• Trials of Senior Phase reforms extended statewide all State &amp; non-State schools ($4.7m for initiatives)</td>
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<td>Seven TAFE Qld Institutes offer Skills for the Future course</td>
<td>• GSWF program: $1.6m extra for 15–17-year-olds who have either left school early, or who are at risk of doing so</td>
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<td>(Lamb, Walstab, Teese, Vickers &amp; Rumberger) Staying on at school: Improving student retention in Australia (Spierings, Dusseldorp Skills Forum) Young people at risk in the transition from education to work (UK, Tomlinson Report)</td>
<td>• Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan guidelines finalised</td>
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<td>(Australian Government, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training) Learning to Work.</td>
<td>• Community engagement vital</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>• Youth Support Coordinator (YSC) Initiative evaluated</td>
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<td>(Polesel, Helme &amp; Teese) The next step report 2005: on the destinations of Year 12 school leavers in Queensland</td>
<td>• Senior Phase Key Performance Indicator (KPI) framework evaluated</td>
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<td>(Qld DEA, Jan–June) ETRF Trial Implementation Evaluation Report – Phase 4</td>
<td>• Economic incentives, meaning in the curriculum &amp; satisfactory teaching relationships enhance retention</td>
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<td>Changes to Youth Participation Act passed by Qld Parliament</td>
<td>• Retention to Year 12 is not an assured pathway in itself either to good jobs or to further education &amp; training</td>
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<td>(Figgis, Dusseldorp Skills Forum) Changing senior school certificates: a story of visions and revisions</td>
<td>• (Qld DET, July) Get Set For Work (GSFW) program extended to seven trial areas</td>
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<td>(Tasmania, Department of Education) Youth Participation in Education and Training (Guaranteeing Futures) Bill 2005</td>
<td>• Central Purchasing Trial started ($4m for 15–17-year-olds disengaged from i/earning)</td>
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<td>• (September) District Youth Achievement Plans (DYAPs) in place across all trial areas in Qld</td>
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<td>• 14% of young people aged 15–19 years (193 800 young people) were not engaged in full-time education or full-time employment, or in a combination of part-time education and part-time employment</td>
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<td>• Status of vocational education in schools a poor second choice to university pathways; career guidance for young people and parents needed.</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>• All Year 10 students have opportunity to complete Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan</td>
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<td>(QSA) Registration of Young People System</td>
<td>• (April) Queensland Certificate of Education – Expect Success, technical paper outlining new Senior qualification, released</td>
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<td>(Qld DET) Get Set For Work program expanded further</td>
<td>• (June) 79 more Youth Support Coordinators begin work across the state – 115 in total now</td>
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<td>(Connor, DSF) What's Mainstream? Conventional and unconventional learning in Logan</td>
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<td>• (November) Changes to Youth Participation in Education &amp; Training Act passed by State Parliament</td>
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<td>• Different people, different pathways: different patterns for i/earning for different groups according to: gender, geographic location, Indigenous, disability, language background, VET in schools, socioeconomic status, age</td>
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<td>• Immediate status after Year 12 gives only a partial view of young people’s experiences after leaving school</td>
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