



## THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA



**Report by – ALAN GENONI – 2006 Churchill Fellow**

To study strategies for the provision of appropriate, curriculum and services to the full cohort of students in senior schooling (Years 11 and 12) as a result of the raising of the school leaving age in Western Australia to 17 in 2008.



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Signed

Dated

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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This research project was undertaken between April 17 and May 19, 2007.

In Western Australia, the school leaving age was raised from 15 to 16 in 2006. In 2008, the leaving age will be further increased to 17. This legislation creates significantly increased demands upon schools as they meet the challenge of offering the breadth of curriculum required to meet the diverse needs of the full cohort of students in the senior years of schooling (years 11 and 12). Providing appropriately for students at risk of not being engaged in education and training (NEET) will be a significant and crucial part of this challenge.

The aim of my research was to explore the strategies being used, and those currently being developed, in England and Scotland to provide appropriate educational provision to the 14 to 19 age group and to explore the relevance of these to education in Western Australia. In the United Kingdom, the school leaving age has been 16 since 1972 and a recently tabled government white paper proposes increasing the leaving age to 18.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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I take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of the Churchill Trust. Receiving a Churchill Fellowship enabled me to undertake the study and in so doing to establish a network of contacts with leading educators and policy makers in the United Kingdom. I am confident that the study will be of benefit to the education system in Western Australia. I also acknowledge the expertise of the Churchill Trust in Canberra and Perth in preparing recipients of fellowships for the extraordinary journey they have the privilege of undertaking.

I also acknowledge and thank:

My Referees

- Mr David Smith, Audit Partner, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Perth.
- Ms Pam Moss, Fremantle District Director of Education, Department of Education and Training of Western Australia.
- Mr David Ansell, Director Participation, Department of Education and Training of Western Australia.

My family Shelley, Kate and Michael. Patience is a great virtue.

My work colleagues at Canning College, and North Lake Senior Campus, Perth.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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### **Highlights**

- Working with, and learning from, Principals and their colleagues in schools and colleges in England, Scotland and France.
- Meeting with, and learning from, the leading educational policy makers in England and Scotland. I particularly acknowledge Ms Catherine Paulson Ellis in England and Ms Norma Wright in Scotland.
- Learning from academics whose research expertise is focused on the needs of 14 to 19 year old students.
- Meeting with many students in English schools who are benefiting from the development of alternative curriculum and from their own decisions to remain in education past the leaving age of 16.
- Becoming familiar with the important role played by the Department for Education and Science Innovations Unit in encouraging educational innovation and improvement.
- Being welcomed into the UK by the Director General of the English Churchill Trust, Mr Nigel Sudborough.
- Learning more about Winston Churchill (and therefore more about the aspirations of the Churchill Trust and the Fellowships) by visiting the Churchill Museum, London and Chartwell, Kent.
- Attending the Anzac Day ceremony, Westminster Abbey and visiting the Australian War Memorial, Villers Bretonneux, France.

### **Conclusions**

My study illustrated very clearly that educators and education systems are capable of learning a great deal from each-other. While I saw the great strengths of current educational policy development in the United Kingdom, the research also clarified for me the high quality of innovation in the Western Australian school system, particularly in relation to vocational education and the growing capacity to provide alternative curriculum and methods of accreditation in the senior years of schooling.

Major conclusions from the research are:

1. Schools will be required to move from the competitive culture of the last 10 years to high levels of collaboration to meet the needs of all students in the senior years of schooling.
2. Government agencies will be required to be far more collaborative in their attempts to provide effective services to young people who are most at risk at missing out on education and training opportunities.

These conclusions are expanded in the RECOMMENDATIONS of the report that are presented on page 24.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND DISSEMINATION**

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The learning from the fellowship will be implemented and disseminated through the following means:

- In my role as Principal of Canning College, Perth, where I am responsible for leading educational provision to students of 16 years of age and above.
- In discussions with key Department of Education and Training of Western Australia personnel. To date these discussions have occurred with Mr Keith Newton (Deputy Director General of Education), Ms Norma Jeffery (Executive Director Policy Planning and Accountability), Ms Jayne Johnston (Director Professional Learning Institute) and Mr David Ansell (Director Participation).
- In professional learning programs implemented by the Participation Directorate of the Department of Education and Training. This work commenced on June 7.
- In discussions in Principals' forums. The first of these is scheduled for June 27.
- Through my work as Chair of the Senior Schooling Association of Western Australia and as member of the Principals' Reference Group, Curriculum Council of Western Australia.
- Through writings for educational journals and newsletters, including School Matters, the journal of the Department of Education and Training of Western Australia.
- Through distribution of the present paper to education colleagues and to the broader community.

## PROGRAM

April 18	Mr Nigel Sudborough, Director General	Churchill Trust, London.
April 19	Professor Mal Ainscow	The Centre for Equity in Education, Manchester England.
April 20		Chartwell, Kent.
April 23	Mr Robin Shreeve, Principal, and colleagues	City of Westminster College, London.
April 24	Dr Ann Hodgson and Dr Ken Spours.	Nuffield Foundation, University of London.
April 25	Ms Jane O'Neill, Deputy Principal and colleagues.	City and Islington College, London.
April 26	Mr Kevin Wakor, Principal and colleagues	Richmond Upon Thames College, London.
May 2	Ms Norma Wright, Program Director.	Learning and Teaching, Scotland. Glasgow.
	Ms Julie Anne Jamieson, Head of Inclusion and Employability.	Careers Scotland, Glasgow.
	Ms Melanie Weldon, NEET Division.	Scottish Executive, Glasgow.
May 3	Ms Zoe Ferguson, New Educational Developments.	Scottish Executive, Edinburgh.
May 4	Mr Frank Crawford (Chief Inspector), Mr Bill Goldes. Ms Karen Corbett.	Her Majesty's Inspectorate.
	Dr Lena Gray, Business Manager. A Curriculum for Excellence.	Scottish Qualifications Authority.
May 8	Ms Deryn Harvey, Director.	Innovations Unit, London.
May 9	Mr Mark Vincent, Principal and colleagues	Shooters Hill Post 16 Campus, London.
May 10	Mr David Stephen, 14 – 19 Diplomas. Mr John Allbutt, Apprenticeships.	Department for Education and Science, Sheffield.
May 11	Ms Cynthia Davies, Manager GCSE's and A levels. Ms Catherine Paulson-Ellis, Manager Specialised Diplomas. Ms Ellen Scott, Manager NEET Ms Sara Germain, Raising the Participation Age	Department for Education and Science, London.
May 14	Ms Yasmina Slimani,	Australie Mag, Paris.
May 15	Mr Frank Woodall, Principal	British School of Paris, Versailles.
May 16	Mr Gerard Willems, Principal.	Lycee Jacques Brel, La Courneuve.

## CONTEXT

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In 1972 Margaret Thatcher, the British Education Secretary, raised the school leaving age to 16. In 2007, Alan Johnson, the present education secretary, has proposed the raising of the leaving age to 18. The proposed legislation gives support to the current target of 90% of seventeen year olds participating in education and or training by 2015, up from the current 76%.

Within the context of national legislation the English and Scottish education departments operate separate systems of educational governance and policy. Each system is currently introducing unprecedented, major change to improve retention and participation in education and training for the 14 to 19 year old age group.

### England

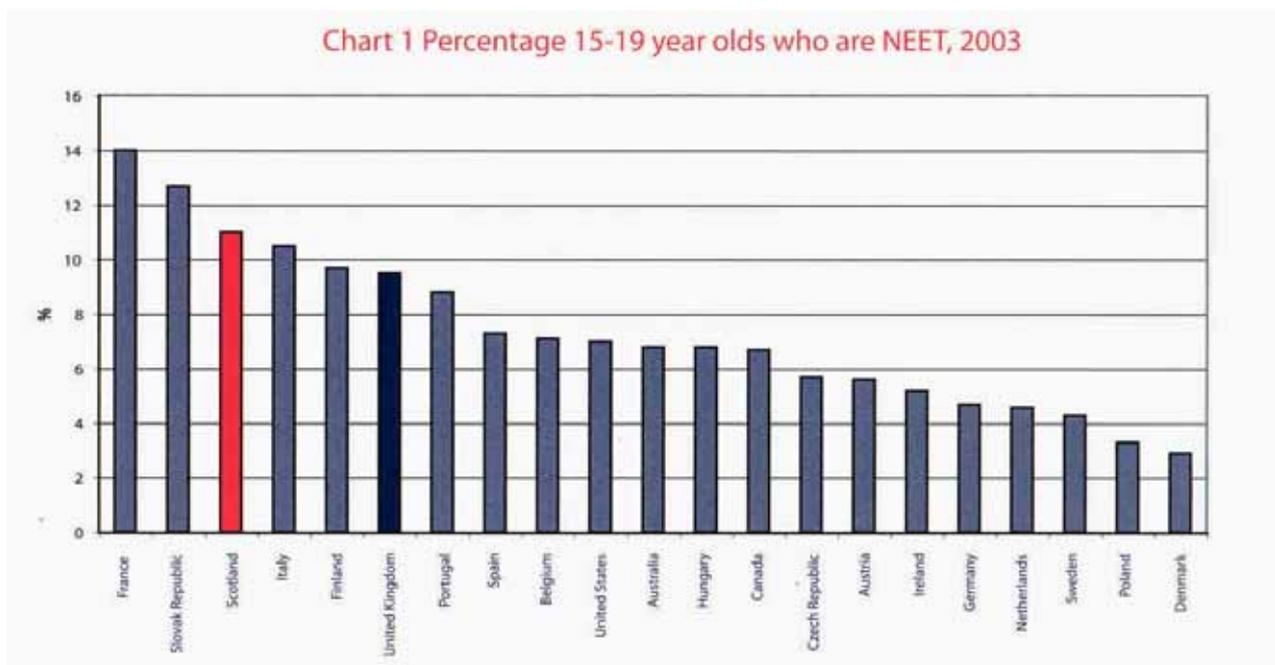
In England the major initiatives of the 14 to 19 year old reforms are outlined in the document 14 – 19 Year Old Education and Skills (2005). Reforms include:

1. Curriculum and Qualification Reform – Curriculum initiatives include the introduction of a new range of fourteen Diploma Courses for the 14 – 19 year old age group.
2. Creation of a 14 to 19 year old Curriculum Entitlement. This is a statement of the minimum offer that is to be available to all students.
3. The establishment of partnerships or federations of schools as the basis for the delivery of the Curriculum Entitlement including the fourteen “lines” of the diploma.
4. Development of curriculum for older students who are working below level 2.
5. An increased focus on functional English and Mathematics skills.
6. Early identification of and intervention with students likely to become NEET (Not Engaged in Education Or Training).
7. Greater opportunity for practical, applied learning and for workplace learning.
8. Development of Entry to Employment, an individualised work based learning program for 16 to 18 year olds who have barriers to engaging with education or employment.
9. Development of CONNEXIONS which provides a one to one counselling service to help students make transitions through the school system and into the workplace.
10. Initiatives related to better behaviour management and drug education and support programs.

## Scotland

Education authorities in Scotland are particularly focused on policy development that will improve outcomes for students who are NEET, or who are at risk of becoming NEET. These policies are encapsulated in the Scottish Executive document *More Choices More Chances* (2006).

The graph below illustrates the percentage of 15 to 19 year olds not engaged in education and training in European Union countries. The data reveals that Scotland has a high percentage in comparison to like countries:



While the strategies of *More Choices More Chances* apply across the Scottish education system, there is a specific focus on seven Local Authorities which possess high numbers of young people not engaged in education or training as measured by indicators such as attendance rates, exclusion rates, low educational achievement and poor post school destinations.

The major initiatives of *More Choices More Chances* focus on the key stakeholders taking unequivocal responsibility for the NEET group, on stemming the flow into NEET (prevention rather than cure) and on prioritising education and training outcomes for the NEET group as a step towards lifting employability. NEET reduction is being positioned as a key indicator for measuring system success. Five key areas of policy activity are identified:

1. Pre 16, those of compulsory school age.
2. Post 16 (post compulsory education and training).
3. Direct support for individuals by removing barriers to accessing opportunities.
4. Joint commitment and action through national and local partnership in planning and delivery.
5. Financial incentives that ensure education and training are viable options.

## **England, Scotland and Western Australia**

There is a great similarity of purpose and action to meet the needs of all students in the education systems of England, Scotland and Western Australia. While emphasis on the common directions varies, the similarities could be summarised as:

1. A move to greater retention and participation for all students
2. Recognition of the cost to individuals and to society of the NEET group.
3. A commitment to the provision of relevant educational opportunity for all.
4. A recognition that increased participation demands curriculum development and innovation and more diverse systems of accreditation.
5. A recognition of the importance of individualised career counselling for all students, particularly for students at risk of becoming NEET.
6. An understanding of the importance of Local Community Partnerships as being essential to the planning and delivery of strategies to improve participation and retention.
7. An awareness of the importance of financial support for students in the 14 to 19 year old age group to make education and training viable for all.
8. A strong recognition of the fact that schools will have to collaborate much more to meet the needs of all students and to ensure appropriate curriculum access.
9. The development of guarantees/entitlements to ensure minimum level of provision to students.
10. An understanding of and commitment to effective data collection systems to track movement of, and outcomes for, young people.
11. A commitment to training outcomes as being as important as academic outcomes.
12. A definition of participation as being engagement in education or training, or employment with a training component.

The balance of this paper will, using the learning arising from Churchill Fellowship, assess the above agenda and its implications for the Western Australian education system. Part One will focus on the English education system with a particular focus on student curriculum entitlement and collaboration between schools to implement the entitlement. Part Two will explore strategies being implemented in Scotland to retain students in the education system and to support those young people most at risk of not being engaged in education and training. The issue of collaboration between schools and across government agencies in Scotland will be a particular focus. The key recommendations of my report (p.24) are drawn from the discussion.

## PART ONE

### CURRICULUM ENTITLEMENT AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND.

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In both England and Western Australia, the dominant model of school improvement initiatives over the last decade has been competition between schools. Competition for students, competition for resources, competition through the publication of league tables, competition for positive public perception and competition to deliver the “best” curriculum through specialist programs which have been used to entice the “best” students. Competition has been a driving force for change and has existed between government schools and between government schools and private providers. In this process, those in the elite socio-economic environments and those with greatest resources have inevitably been the winners and the divide between the “haves” and “have nots” has increased, even if the general standard of schooling has improved. The Manchester based Centre for Equity in Education in its 2007 report *Equity in Education: New Directions (1)* argues:

*Equity cannot be achieved in a centrally controlled, target driven system, in which choice and competition are key. Greater equity will only be achieved by moving towards the development of national policy frameworks which allow the freedom for local decision making, guided by principles of shared accountability, local networking and equity informed target setting.*

Perhaps the most telling point made by the Centre for Equity is that:

*Choice and competition at best reproduce existing social divisions and at worst exacerbate these. Competition between schools and colleges has led to the narrowing of educational opportunities as they seek to attract the most academically able learners and to maintain their local status according to government targets and league tables. At the same time it encourages the growth of dubious practices to exclude the most vulnerable.*

In Western Australia collaborative efforts between schools have been evident in circumstances where limited resources have been provided to groups of schools to use in program development. In Western Australia this has occurred in the establishment of school clusters to deliver vocational education and training programs and through the preparation of District Education and Training Plans for the development of programs to meet the needs of students returning to schooling because of the raising of the school leaving age in 2006.

In England, legislation has resulted in a model whereby school improvement and curriculum development will increasingly be driven by collaboration between schools and within communities. This model of educational delivery has significant implications for future practice in Western Australia.

As a greater percentage of students in England have opted to continue in schooling beyond the compulsory age of 16, and as the system moves to compulsory schooling to 18, a broader curriculum offer has been developed to ensure appropriate provision for all. As the curriculum has expanded it has become more difficult for any one school to offer the full curriculum choice. This fact has been exacerbated with the introduction of the 14 “lines” of the vocationally linked Diploma courses for 14 to 19 year old students. The first five Diploma courses will be offered in 2008.



All 14 Diploma courses have to be made available to all students as part of a curriculum entitlement for all students. The entitlement includes access to:

- All 14 Diploma courses.
- National Curriculum core subjects – English, Maths and Science
- Foundation subjects – ICT, Physical Education and Citizenship
- Foreign Languages
- Careers Education

The entitlement is designed to ensure minimum and equitable access to curriculum. However, while most schools will be able to provide access to core and foundation programs, few schools by themselves will be able to provide the full entitlement, yet legislation places a duty on all schools and colleges to ensure that they provide access to the full entitlement to all students on the school roll. This access will be provided by the establishment of school federations. Legislation places the responsibility on Local Authorities and Learning Skills Councils to secure minimum provision through the development of local partnerships and the publication of a curriculum prospectus for the partnership. This is historically significant legislation which puts the rights of the learner at the centre of policy rather than the learner being captive to the circumstances and curriculum capacity of the school in which he/she is enrolled.

The key driver to force collaboration is that while the diploma programs have to be made available to every student, applications for delivery of the diplomas are not made by individual schools, but can only come from a federation of schools. This “Gateway” process also provides schools with significant funding when approval is given. Legislation and policy, carrot and stick provide a powerful mix for reform.

### **School Federations – The Perspective of Policy Makers**

In interviews I conducted with her, Catherine Paulson Ellis, Head of Policy in the 14 – 19 Diploma Division of the English Department Education and Skills (DfES), noted that the effective implementation of the new curriculum demands collaboration, both in a formal sense because “the entitlement is legislated for” but more so from the perspective of quality because “no one school will have the physical resources nor the personnel to deliver the full entitlement”.

Ms Paulson-Ellis also noted the importance of the British Government’s school renewal program, Building Schools For The Future. She argued that this major investment in new schools had to consider curriculum needs of the future and the “complementary offerings of schools in a local area”. This view was echoed by two of the school principals I met, each of whom is having his school completely rebuilt over the next two years.

Ms Cynthia Davies, DfES Head of Policy for GCSE and A Levels pointed out that collaboration between schools is crucial from the perspective of A level curriculum because “under current arrangements there are many students who do not have access to particular A level courses because they are in schools whose offer is simply not broad enough”. She added that “the Ministers have been very keen to retain GCSEs and A levels but the political view is to strongly encourage the diplomas, vocational programs and also programs such as the International Baccalaureate”. Political imperatives have therefore become central to the need for school federations to provide the breadth of curriculum offer that is demanded.

To assist in the development of school federations and local area planning, the DfES has established a Federations Unit. It has also created a separate Innovations Unit which has as one of its primary goals the “nurturing of school federations through providing the means for educators who are working in school federations to support and learn from each other”.

Deryn Harvey, Director of the Innovation Unit described a number of different models of federation, details of which can be found on the unit's website (2). Examples provided include:

- Ribblesdale Schools in Lancashire hired an industrial centre and established a unit funded by all schools in the federation.
- Stevenage in Hertfordshire constructed a common timetable for 8 schools with a Federation Coordinator who is employed by the 8 head teachers.
- In Plymouth there is a federation between a comprehensive school and a grammar school. Each offers curriculum to students of the other school.
- The establishment of 3 – 18 schools by the creation of “hard federations” in which there is a common management and budget structure.
- Federations between 11 – 16 schools and Colleges of Further Education.

Ms Harvey noted that “government has started to encourage collaboration at the expense of competition and schools are accepting that on their own they are nothing. Together they are everything”. She also reflected that this was in stark contrast to “the hard experience of competition under Margaret Thatcher”.

Prior to the formal requirement for local area collaboration, Ms Harvey indicated that most school federations were based on partnerships between schools that were “trying to deliver A level courses but which did not have a sufficient number of students to provide choice and where curriculum provision was not cost effective”. This comment was borne out in my discussions with principals and will be explored in a subsequent part of this paper.

Ms Harvey's colleague at the Innovations Unit, Valerie Hannon has argued in an essay entitled *New Leadership For the Collaborative State* that “the publication of *Every Child Matters*, identifying 5 key outcomes for every learner, is predicated on the understanding that only multi-agency and inter-school working of a quality never realised before will be capable of delivering these outcomes....similarly, the expectation that all 14 to 19 year olds will be entitled access to a much broader curriculum than any single school can offer carries a similar implication. Sustainable, effective and efficient collaboration therefore has been well and truly incorporated into the policy pantheon”.

As a summary of the view of policy makers towards the value of federations, the DfES argues that Federations can increase the capacity within groups of schools to achieve higher standards by providing:

- improved teaching and learning
- a structured way for schools to collaborate, learn from each other and share best practice
- improved senior and middle management, joint appointment of staff and coherent training
- joint staffing opportunities including specialist teachers and wider career opportunities across the federation
- governance support and development
- a cost effective and coherent curriculum increasing the opportunity to fulfil individual student needs, extending curriculum entitlement
- cost effectiveness – economies of scale
- a basis for further partnerships including cross phase and with other providers
- saving on planning and administrative time

- strategic planning for example through the sharing of complementary specialisms
- building capacity and coherence across the federation and the Local Education Authority.

### **School Federations – The Perspective of Academics**

The most influential group of academics in relation to the British 14 to 19 year old education policy agenda is the Nuffield Group based in Oxford, but with members in various universities across England. Their specific remit through the Nuffield Foundation is to provide an annual report on educational provision for 14 – 19 year olds. A key aspect of this is to comment on the agenda for school federations.

In their 2006 Annual Report (3) the Nuffield academics argue for:

*“a more collaborative strongly planned system that overtly attempts to redress social differences, produce economies of scale and which maximises choice of provision over choice of provider and to make the kind of tough decisions that are needed to ensure effective and efficient 14 – 19 year old provision in a locality”.*

Discussions with Dr Ann Hodgson and Dr Ken Spours from the Nuffield Foundation highlighted a dichotomy of policy imperatives when it was noted that “while collaboration will be essential, the drivers for collaboration may not be as strong as the drivers for competition”. This view also has particular resonance in the Western Australian context where current drivers for collaboration are extremely weak in comparison to those operating in England.

Dr. Hodgson also commented on the extensive collaboration that already occurs for the delivery of A levels. She noted the irony “that in many ways it is collaboration for competition and survival”. She also voiced concerns about the place of the new Diplomas in the curriculum offerings of schools, particularly in so far as they operate in competition with the entrenched academic streams, but added that “schools can’t offer a broad curriculum without collaboration between schools and with community organisations”.

Dr Hodgson cited the 2006 Nuffield Review (3) which highlights three primary reasons why strongly collaborative systems are important for addressing “deep seated practical and cultural problems at the local level within the school system”:

1. Addressing disaffection – motivating disaffected learners requires more than the introduction of specialist vocational provision. It demands reforming secondary education as a whole to tackle the roots of alienation, demanding collaboration between all practitioners, not just those running vocational programs.
2. In a period of financial constraint institutions need to move towards the concept of a local area system that shows genuine regard for the efficient use of area resources for the benefit of all learners. Pooling vocational equipment, rationalising 6<sup>th</sup> form places and introducing more planned approaches to employer resources and placements will be necessary.
3. There is strong evidence that institutional division of labour in a local area resulting from competition exacerbates social division. A more strongly planned system is needed that attempts to reduce social differences, provides economies of scale and privileges choice of provision over choice of provider.

In Manchester, the Centre For Equity In Education argues in *Equity In Education: New Directions (1)* that competition has “resulted in unequal outcomes and that “collaboration is the key to access and equity”. Professor Mal Ainscow from the University of Manchester noted that policies which have encouraged competition between schools have often resulted in “all schools wanting academically able students” and ensured that “provision for less able students is seen as a

necessary evil". The competitive model is also linked to quality assurance processes whereby "data is what we value, rather than what we value being the wellspring of data collection".

Discussions with Professor Mal Ainscow revealed the Centre For Equity view that the concept of school federations is "potentially very promising and the basis for a paradigm shift in the delivery of education". He stressed that the 14 – 19 year phase "is the most promising area for collaboration for aiding vulnerable children, improving weak departments and extending curriculum pathways". In elaborating on this argument, Professor Ainscow referred to four "failing" schools in an economically deprived area of Halifax. Principals in each of the schools were replaced, but results for students remained the same. As a result, the four schools have formed a federation and established an "action research network to see if working together they can bring about change". Early evidence is that this "evidence lead, school lead initiative is bringing with it positive change."

Professor Ainscow, in agreement with DfES bureaucrats commented on the importance of the Building Schools For The Future program in bringing principals together to discuss future educational delivery in a borough. He regarded this as one example of the power of federations to "break down the isolation of principals".

The Centre for Equity in Education contends that the early reforms of the Blair government, particularly the centrally driven initiatives, failed to deliver equity. New Directions sets out a "viable alternative approach". Collaboration is at the heart of the alternative and an "equitable education system would have to be characterised by unified networks of educational provision, which rather than competing on narrow criteria would provide a more genuinely comprehensive and universal range of educational opportunities".

Professor Ainscow commented that there are also some very pragmatic reasons for the creation of school federations. "The number of people wanting to be principals has declined significantly requiring a different view of school leadership".

### **School Federations – The Perspective of Schools. Four Case Studies**

In common with school systems in Australia, bureaucratic policy business in response to perceived failings is placing great pressure on schools in England to prepare for and deliver change across a range of policies while at the same time responding to the immediate needs of students and teachers.

A Daily Mail report of May 7, 2007 sums up the climate that I encountered in the six English schools that I visited. At a head teachers' conference the Daily Mail reported that the attendees forecast "chaos in 2008 when five of Labour's flagship initiatives are all implemented at the same time. Under the plans, GCSE's will be changed, job related diplomas and extra tests in basic Maths and English will be introduced and a new secondary curriculum will be implemented". The same page in the newspaper carried an article commenting on the "100,000 lost children who are currently not attending schools".

The schools I visited represented inner city boroughs, and boroughs located in the outer precincts of London. They included academically high performing schools and schools in economically deprived areas where academic achievement is more limited. The schools were not chosen on the basis of the collaborative work they were doing nor on the basis of participation in federations. Yet, in each of the schools, significant collaborative efforts are underway, ranging from that which has been mandated for the delivery of the Diplomas, to long established practices of common timetabling to provide better curriculum access for A level students, and the provision of borough wide programs to cater for the needs of students who have been excluded from the school system.

## **1. City Of Westminster College**

Principal Robin Shreeve of the City of Westminster College commented with frustration on the fact that “curriculum innovation is happening every year, therefore there is constant change and no stability”. However, he and his colleagues reflected with enthusiasm on two programs they are involved in which illustrate very significant collaboration across the Westminster Borough.

The first of these is a program for 14 to 16 year old students from across Westminster who have been excluded from the school system. This program is offered by Westminster College as a full time program with a maximum of 10 students per class. The aim is to move these students to a training program at 16 years of age.

The second program is 6f (4), a combined 6<sup>th</sup> form offer across the borough for A level provision. In this program Westminster college accepts students from other schools into some of its academic programs and sends students to other schools in 6f to study specialty subjects offered by those schools. Suzanne Overton, Vice Principal commented that “trust has built up here between principals and there is an exchange of teachers to support colleagues in other schools. This partnership works well”.

Ms Overton added that the move to the requirement for a borough 14 to 19 combined offer is an “interesting model” which she thought could fail “because of the fear of poaching students and the attitude of staff”. Mr Shreeve added that there is concern that “some schools will benefit from the model while others will not”. In a telling addition he reflected “but if the offer for the students improves, that cannot be a bad thing”.

The following day, Mr Shreeve was meeting with borough colleagues to consider common timetabling involving 8 schools. This strategy is reflected in a joint Westminster Schools document Westminster 14 – 19 Strategy (5). The federation of the 8 schools and related policy development is managed by Mr John Tynan under the direction of the principals. Mr Tynan’s task is to encourage the collaboration and to ensure that the mandated borough 14 – 19 offer is implemented. He indicated that “all schools and colleges have to be involved in collaboration for delivery of the diplomas, particularly as GCSE results are poor with 50% of students leaving without having met the GCSE benchmarks”.

Mr. Tynan commented on the resistance to the diploma model that is evident in some boroughs such as Kensington and Chelsea, but commented on others such as Wolverhampton “where 8 people are employed by a federation of schools to ensure the quality of the collaboration and policy implementation”. These schools all operate a common timetable and are moving towards a hard federation with common management and budget. He also reflected on the fact that “60% of students in London do not attend their nearest school, so they are already making choice on the basis of quality”. These observations about choice and the movement of students across London were supported by all of the principals I interviewed.

## **2. City and Islington 6<sup>th</sup> Form College**

Jane O’Neill, Principal of City and Islington College indicated that the College’s main historical form of collaborative working was with the 6 comprehensive schools in the Borough of Islington that do not offer 6<sup>th</sup> form education. However, she added that the College was participating in the gateway process in a federation of schools to gain authority for delivery of 3 diplomas in 2008. Ms O’Neill added that “the implementation of the diplomas was a major spur to the development of federations”. For example, while City and Islington is not in a position to offer the engineering diploma, they scanned the borough to see which school could take the lead in its implementation and Hackney College has elected to do so.

At City and Islington, staff stressed a theme that was to recur at each of the schools I visited. “Many students, particularly post 16 don’t attend schools in their own borough, particularly as 16

to 18 year olds have access to free public transport as part of the Education Maintenance Allowance which offers flexibility across boundaries”.

In common with the Westminster Borough, the schools in Islington are currently engaged “in the development of timetable models to make the diplomas work”. This would involve “serious planning across all of the schools and build upon the current arrangement whereby students from across the schools do work placement on the same day of the week”.

Ms O’Neill commented on the models of Wolverhampton and Bristol where clear practices and procedures in relation to duty of care for the students have been developed to apply across organisations which share responsibility for students. Information about these models is available on the DfES website (6)

An interesting aspect of the discussion with Islington staff was the clear identification of conflict that can arise between schools when a collaborative model is introduced. Ms O’Neill noted that “in this borough we have nearly all A levels available, but 3 schools have a very small offer, but want their 6<sup>th</sup> form so hang on to them at any cost. However, the learner needs to come first. But at least we are sitting around the table”. It is clear that by working through this conflict and establishing effective collaborative practices, opportunities for students will improve.

Tying the threads of our conversation together very neatly, Ms O’Neill added “if you don’t get the student numbers, you don’t survive therefore there is a tension between collaboration and independence. But to implement the policies of increasing choice and engaging NEET, you must be able to offer the right curriculum through partnership. We may be forced into it, but no one school can meet NEET needs alone”.

### 3. Richmond Upon Thames 6<sup>th</sup> Form College

Richmond Upon Thames is in a unique environment in that it is the only 6<sup>th</sup> form provider in the Richmond Borough. It has a strong academic profile and attracts students from across London. At the same time, some students leave the borough to complete 6<sup>th</sup> form. The college has 4,000 full time students, a significant part time enrolment and 700 staff members.

In this particular scenario, there is a significant lack of trust between schools in the borough. Principal Kevin Watson notes that “some schools in the district are seeing the specialised diplomas as the way to 6<sup>th</sup> form provision”. He added that the borough “is in the early stages of collaborative discussion. The issue of common timetable and the realities of students moving from one school to another are not yet decided”. He presented the view that



“students may be more likely to move to the different, adult ethos of a college, but less likely to move to another school” and that there were “lots of divisions around institutional self interest”. Mr Watson’s view was that “schools could pick up level 1, level 2 and vocational post 16 provision, while the college attended to the academic post 16 provision”. He provided another vision “where colleges are vocationally oriented they could become the VET centre, while the schools shared the A levels”.

Mr Watson’s vision was based on adapting the future to currently existing arrangements. While there is a strong attraction in this from a pragmatic perspective, such an arrangement may well limit the most appropriate outcome for learners as it is based on the existing circumstances of the providers, not the needs of the learners.

Echoing comments made by other principals, Mr Watson suggested that “institutional self interest limits the choice of kids”. He added “at Richmond there is 93% retention to 18, therefore there is a less pressing need to make change to curriculum offerings. Why would we need diplomas? The kids are doing alright”. Mr Watson commented on the complexity of the meetings with principals of other schools in the borough. “I would like to think that collaboration is right and say yes, but we underestimate the issue of institutional loyalty versus subject choice at our own peril”. He added “it is a myth that a student who is not academic will enjoy vocational studies”. Vice Principal of curriculum Michael Rennie noted that “tensions about collaboration are enormous in this borough while in other areas of London it has really taken off”.

In the face of these tensions, Richmond Upon Thames partnered with local schools in applying for implementation of three of the new diploma courses. They also see potential in collaboration to meet the needs of NEET students “where there is a lack of appropriate curriculum and a need for small groups, limited numbers of teachers and off site projects”.

The circumstances of Richmond Borough were particularly interesting in that the resistance to collaboration, driven by institutional self protection, was significant and yet the levers for collaboration provided by the new curriculum imperatives were “working” in the sense that the resistance was not preventing the necessary discussion and planning.

#### **4. Shooters Hill Post 16 Community School.**

Shooters Hill is in the Borough of Greenwich and has a strongly established reputation for the delivery of A levels and for vocational education in seven different industry sectors. The school operates in a borough in which a number of schools have very small 6<sup>th</sup> forms. As a response to this the G+ Consortium was formed in 2002. The consortium publishes a combined prospectus (7) and stands as a forerunner of the federations that are currently being convened across England in response to DfES policy.

In the late 1990’s the borough was characterised by high levels of young people not engaged in education or training. Those who left the area to access educational opportunities elsewhere were generally young people with ability, ambition and resources.

When the consortium was created, major capital expenditure was provided for Shooters Hill to expand the 6<sup>th</sup> form offer available in the borough. Principal, Mark Vincent said “this created great cynicism from other schools which were frightened that they would lose students and staff. Retention of jobs and staff was the reason why unviable schools had been maintained”. He added that “as part of the consortium we were able to create a vibrant and viable site. We originally targeted 600 students we now enrol 1,100 full time and 450 part time”.

The expanded curriculum offered by the college including the extensive and very well resourced vocational offer “has attracted students from neighbouring boroughs and levels of participation post 16 have increased significantly both at Shooters Hill and across the borough”. Mr Vincent contrasted the operations of Shooters Hill with those of colleges of further education. “Our view is that until the age of 19 or 20 students need added support. This is the ethos of the college and it works well within the consortium framework”.

With the establishment of the consortium a number of teachers have been “shared” across the schools within the consortium. This was also a feature of the A level federation arrangement in Westminster. The relationship between the schools “supports the retention and development of staff”. Mr Vincent also noted that the consortium schools collaborate on staff professional development activities. He added that Shooters Hill is receiving a 20 million pound Building Schools For The Future grant and that while the grant will greatly enhance the facilities and profile of the school, it will also be of great benefit to the consortium”.

The development of the consortium and the establishment of Shooters Hill as a 6<sup>th</sup> form college did require significant change. Three schools in the borough lost their 6<sup>th</sup> form while six other schools retained theirs. Those which lost their 6<sup>th</sup> form “were very small with all the curriculum provision problems of limited subjects on offer”. Students from these schools now travel to one of the 6<sup>th</sup> form comprehensives in Greenwich or to Shooters Hill. Mr Vincent suggested that the “40% increase in post 16 participation in the borough justifies the new arrangements”. However, he added that there is still “far too much competition over prestige, heads salaries and enrolment numbers. The real issue is the best arrangement for students”.

A strength of the established federations such as the Greenwich consortium is that they make the delivery of the new diploma programs relatively easy in comparison to boroughs such as Richmond where a very high level of competition characterises the relationship between schools. In this regard Mr Vincent noted “we are well placed to deliver the diplomas. Students in consortium schools can come here or go from here to access one part of their program just as they do now for the other aspects of their curriculum”.

As the Greenwich consortium has become stronger, a number of Catholic schools have become involved as have schools from outside of the borough. While this has been welcomed, it does increase the complexity of issues related to management, budgeting and future planning.

Mr Vincent noted the significant role that the Learning Skills Councils will play in the development of federations, citing an example in a neighbouring borough where “three schools within three miles of each other were offering French A level with each school having three students. The Skills Council has indicated that it will not fund such an arrangement.” This is another tool, beyond the implementation of the diplomas, for ensuring economically and educationally viable practices through collaboration.

Of the Boroughs I visited, Greenwich was the most advanced in its development of collaboration between schools. Therefore it was interesting and important that the educators in Greenwich believe that collaboration has become very significant in enhancing outcomes for all students but particularly for students at risk of becoming disengaged.

## **CONCLUSION TO PART ONE**

It is evident from the four case studies provided, and from other school visits that I undertook, that there is significant variation in the readiness of schools and boroughs to respond to the collaboration agenda. Some have a strong history of collaboration, some do not. Some schools already belong to federations that they regard as essential to meeting the aspirations of students. In other boroughs there are significant barriers to federation and active suspicion of the agenda. However, the necessity of introducing the new curriculum agenda is driving these schools to collaborative planning.

In all of the schools I visited there is an acknowledgement that the needs of students should override the self interest of the educational provider. However, self interest remains a barrier that does challenge the capacity of schools to improve educational delivery through collaboration. Teachers, bureaucrats and academics are all aware that institutional self interest is a powerful inhibiting force that can stand between students and broader curriculum provision.

An understanding that was common to all who I interviewed in England was that small secondary schools create a need for collaboration due to their necessarily restricted curriculum offer. The legislated curriculum guarantee highlights this very significant problem and ensures that these schools will have to look to partnerships if their students are to receive the full entitlement. They may well need to rely on federations for their own survival.

Academics, bureaucrats and teachers involved in the study shared common understandings about the benefits of school federations, although the emphasis varied across these groups. Academics emphasise equality of opportunity and reflect on current inequalities. Bureaucrats see collaboration as the only way to implement the curriculum guarantee, particularly access to the new diploma entitlement. Teachers possess the greatest diversity of opinion about federations, but can offer the clearest examples of the benefits of collaboration for students.

The degree to which teachers and schools value collaboration appears to be directly related to their position on the implementation continuum. Those already engaged in active federations are generally very supportive of them and are able to point to clear examples of improved outcomes for students, schools and communities. Those who are in the initial stages of planning are wary and concerned about losing their own organisation's identity.

The case studies revealed substantially increased opportunities for students as schools moved to more collaborative structures and as trust developed between the principals and staff of cooperating schools. While historically the focus of collaboration has been on the delivery of academic programs, provision for at risk students is currently being enhanced by school federations. This is particularly crucial in an era of increased retention and with the move to compulsory schooling to 18 in England and 17 in Western Australia.

Collaboration between schools in Western Australia has been a key factor in expanding the vocational offerings available to students in most education districts. District Education and Training Plans created for the delivery of programs for the "new" cohort in the senior years of schooling due to the raising of the leaving age have also been based on cooperative structures involving schools and the broader community. Where collaboration has occurred, it has been to the benefit of students.

There is a very powerful argument to suggest that the best aspects of the English move towards federations of schools would be extremely beneficial to some school communities in Western Australia. Federations are capable of providing broader, more relevant curriculum access and therefore a better educational experience for many students. They are also a key to improved educational practice and enhanced financial management and economy in the delivery of educational programs.

In Western Australia we can no longer justify circumstances such as students in suburban Perth and Fremantle having limited curriculum access or having curriculum delivered in a less than ideal way in the form of combined year 11 and 12 classes or very small classes. Besides improving circumstances such as these, federations have the capacity to breathe new life into struggling schools which have been increasingly asked to do too much as curriculum provision in the senior years of schooling has moved from one pathway in 1980 (TEE) to many (TEE, WSA, Vocational, "Special" Programs, Fast Track etc) in 2007. This diversity and complexity is set to be made more problematic for schools with the delivery of the new WACE and the truncated courses associated with each subject.

While the diverse geography of Western Australia means that federations are not the answer to all curriculum delivery and school renewal issues, in some locations they are clearly capable of improving the school experience of individual students and teachers. They also have the capacity to enhance the relevance of the school system to entire communities and enable government schools to leverage their greatest asset, the fact that they are part of a large system, to ensure the future strength of public education. Federations are a necessary part of future educational delivery in the senior years of schooling.

NOTE – While the issue of management structures for school federations was central to many discussions I had in England, I have not extended the purpose of this paper to look in depth at the way in which federations can be managed. Management structures are generally presented as a continuum from loose (schools working together without a common management structure or budgeting arrangement) to hard (groups of schools with common administration and budget). Evidence suggests that the nature of the management is crucial to the strength and longevity of federations. I refer readers to the website of the English DfES Innovations unit (2) for information about this issue.

## **PART TWO**

### **STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE NOT ENGAGED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SCOTLAND**

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#### **The Bureaucracy**

The policy paper of the Scottish Executive, *More Choices More Chances* aims to “eradicate the problem of 15 to 19 year old students not engaged in education and training (NEET)”. This broad, perhaps optimistic, position statement is supported by four other key policy documents; *A Curriculum For Excellence*, *Ambitious Excellent Schools*, *Missing Out (A Report On Children At Risk)* and *Overcoming Barriers: Enabling Learning*. The primary policy making bodies in Scotland with responsibility for the implementation of strategies for at risk students are The Scottish Executive, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education, Careers Scotland and Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Each of 32 local authorities also has their own education department. The complexity of the Scottish educational bureaucracy creates duplication of roles across the organisations and ensures that issues of funding and accountability are complex. These difficulties are freely acknowledged by those bureaucrats with responsibility for delivering quality services to NEET students. However, as Norma Wright, Program Director Learning and Teaching Scotland emphasised, the need for action is great as “Scotland has a specific NEET problem with 13.5% of 15 to 19 year olds not engaged in education or training compared to an OECD average of 8%”

#### **The Curriculum**

In describing the reason for the high level of NEET, Ms Wright emphasised that “the Scottish Curriculum is academic. Vocational and other alternative programs have been devalued”. This view emerged in many of my discussions with stakeholders. Julie Ann Jamieson, Head of Inclusion and Employability at Careers Scotland noted that Scottish schools have “little in the way of vocational education and curriculum, reform is urgently needed”.

To understand the lack of curriculum provision for at risk students it is important to appreciate the historic perspective that Scotland has “the best education system”. As Frank Crawford, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector described it “Scotland has a reputation for quality education. But this is for the elite”. Mr Crawford added that “all curriculum policy positions are now pushing towards equity defined as success irrespective of socio economic origin and context”.

Dr Lena Gray, Manager of the Scottish Qualifications Authority expanded on this by noting that “we now have more young people staying in schools but the curriculum does not suit them. Vocational qualifications are offered in further education, but not in schools”.

Currently the Scottish system is providing some access to Vocational Education and Training through collaboration between schools and colleges of further education. While this clearly has merit it will not provide the breadth of access that will be required to VET and other alternative programs as retention rates increase.

#### **Improving Outcomes For Young People Not Engaged In Education And Training**

Scottish strategies to reduce the percentage of young people who are not engaged in education are diverse and numerous. They include major curriculum reform, the ongoing development of extremely comprehensive career and transition advice programs, enhanced data collection about and tracking of young people, significantly altered accreditation arrangements and the encouragement of more student centred pedagogy. Crucial to all of these initiatives is enhanced

collaboration between schools and across community organisations to improve curriculum access and delivery of services.

In common with the English system, Scotland is also moving to clear statements of entitlement for young people which will hasten the need for collaborative planning and delivery. Scottish authorities are placing great emphasis on the provision of quality “joined up” government services and they demand the involvement of all providers of services to young people in mandated collaboration.

### **Multi Agency Collaboration**

The introductory statement to More Choices More Chances states that “clear leadership and better partnership are essential features of future action to reduce NEET. At a national level we will build upon the Scottish Executive’s unique national partnership approach with business and education leaders. Additionally, all local partnerships across Scotland will be expected to drive forward collaborative action on NEET”.

While I was in Scotland, the Scottish elections were held and the issue of young people not engaged in education was a very significant dynamic in the political and educational debate. The discussion was always in the context of improved collaboration being the key to improving outcomes. Seven “hot spots” of high NEET levels have been identified but “we (the Scottish Executive) make clear that we need action from all partners in every local authority in the country”. The key structure for the delivery of the NEET agenda is coordinated by a national NEET team “to work across departments and agencies and to support local partners” in the “development of effective partnership working between agencies”.

Each Local Authority is required to establish a Local Partnership which will be responsible for “driving forward collaboration, action and delivery on NEET”. Such partnerships are made up of schools, colleges, social work services, youth justice services, voluntary organisations, housing providers, Jobcentre Plus and health services. From this must arise an Integrated Children’s Services Plan. To facilitate the work of these partnerships each authority has a Director of Children’s Services who presides over educational delivery and all other services provided to young people.

Norma Wright, Program Director, Teaching and Learning Scotland commented that “multi-agency collaboration is very effective in some communities, less so in others”. She added that a significant problem is that “health services boundaries do not correlate with local authority boundaries”.

In conjunction with multi agency collaboration strategies the Scottish school system is firmly engaged in a cross sectoral dialogue for the benefit of students who are at risk of low educational outcomes and less successful transition to post school destinations. The Scottish Inspectorate document Missing Out emphasises the need to “improve communication and partnership working to ensure prompt targeted and effective support for young people and their families” (9).

The same need is well recognised in Western Australia. Unfortunately, to date, efforts to improve multi agency collaboration have not been clearly articulated in policy and have been too reliant upon initiatives from individuals. While Scotland is in a developmental phase with collaboration, they have the policies, the structures and the political commitment to drive the agenda forward in a manner that has been encouraged in Western Australia but has only been delivered on a very ad hoc basis with insufficient ongoing commitment from key agencies.

## **Guarantees To Young People In Scotland**

As is the case in England, the Scottish system works within a context of providing minimum guarantees to its youth. While this is in a developmental stage, the scope of the guarantees is broader than that offered in England. The Scottish Executive is in the process of reviewing the Youth Training Guarantee to develop an improved vocational education model and to provide a new guarantee to school leavers.

A key organisation in the delivery of the guarantee to school leavers is Careers Scotland which has the “responsibility of working in partnership with the Scottish Executive, Local Partnerships and other agencies including schools” (p.30 More Choices More Chances). Julie Ann Jamieson, Head of Inclusion and Employability at Careers Scotland indicated that “Careers Scotland has to offer a guarantee of consultation to all young people” and that this was viewed as a crucial part of the NEET strategy in which “all young people have one to one support so that no student leaves school without a destination”. To achieve this, Careers Scotland “has a partnership agreement with every secondary school”. Ms Jamieson indicated that the success rate is improving with a current figure of 88% of students leaving school to a relevant destination, but with significant variation between the regions of Scotland.

Norma Wright indicated that the curriculum improvement strategy “A Curriculum For Excellence” (10) provides an “entitlement for all students to access academic curriculum, vocational curriculum and creative/artistic curriculum”. To achieve this, the Scottish system will need to introduce significantly enhanced vocational provision and tie it effectively into a coherent national framework. This does not currently occur in Scottish schools.

Melanie Weldon is the officer in the Scottish Executive who was responsible for the development of the More Choices More Chances policy initiatives. Ms Weldon noted that the “new guarantee is for all 16 to 19 year olds, but it will start with school leavers”. She indicated that “further education and vocational training will be at the heart of the guarantee, but that it will include reference to literacy, numeracy and the ‘soft’ skills”. The guarantee will be finalised by the end of 2007.

## **Collaboration To Deliver The Guarantee To The Young People Of Scotland**

The Guarantees provided by More Choices More Chances require significant change to the Scottish education system. All educators I spoke to held the strong view that these changes would have to be supported by a new era of collaborative arrangements between schools and between schools and the broader community. While the Scottish model for increased collaboration between schools is not as clearly defined as it is in England, the acknowledgement of the need for collaboration arises from an understanding of the shortcomings of the present system as well as from the policy directions of the Scottish Executive.

Ms Zoe Ferguson, Head of New Educational Developments in the Scottish Executive, commented on some aspects of the new collaborative requirements. She noted that “if broader skills than the academic are to be recognised and accredited then schools will require much stronger collaboration with community groups which provide alternative programs”. She added that there will need to be a stronger route through vocational education, requiring “greater cooperation between schools and further education colleges”. Presently, Skills For Work courses which are provided by colleges to some school students do not receive accreditation. Ms Ferguson made the interesting comment that “it has been shown that co-location is not necessary but providers are talking about how budgets and policies can link” and that “this raised the issue of accountability and management structures”.

While Ms Ferguson is adamant that “school – college partnerships are the key to collaboration”, she isolates the key problem that “it is not understood whether VET will be in the colleges or the schools”. The Australian experience suggests that it will need to be in both if the needs of students who are at risk of being NEET are to be met.

The Scottish system of school inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectors possesses a high degree of credibility among educators and the inspectorate is extremely influential in system policy development and in shaping school practice and culture. Chief Inspector Mr Frank Crawford noted that “the examination of school partnership arrangements is an important part of the inspection process”. He added that a key aim of the Scottish system is equity or “success regardless of socio economic origin and context”, but to achieve this, “schools cannot work in a vacuum, they cannot be islands”. His inspectorate partner Karen Corbett emphasised that “consortium arrangements are therefore the way of the future” but, reflecting comments made by educators in England, she added that “there would be resistance to this because of the potential effect on staffing levels in some schools”.

Norma Wright noted that “local authorities are encouraging secondary schools to work together to ensure better curriculum provision” and that this “will build on the arrangements whereby secondary schools work in clusters with their feeder primary schools”.

## **CONCLUSION TO PART TWO**

The Scottish education system has an extremely sharp focus on improving outcomes for young people at risk of not being engaged in education or training. The key strategy is to enhance the collaboration between government agencies in the delivery of services to these young people. For many years, such collaboration has been desired and desirable in Western Australia. It has been encouraged, but with notable exceptions it has not been sustained. The exceptions are the result of individual leaders in schools and other agencies pursuing collaboration in an often desperate measure to help young people who are at extreme risk. It is reactive rather than being a common practice delivering better outcomes for many young people.

For services to at risk young people to improve in Western Australia, collaboration will have to be a requirement of government agencies. Government legislation and policy to this effect will be necessary to break down barriers that have generally proved too hard to overcome in the past. These barriers include agency boundaries that do not overlap, a lack of joint policy commitment from government agencies, confidentiality issues which cloud the primary need to render timely support and assistance and, at times, a lack of will.

In Western Australia, we can also learn from the willingness of the Scottish parliament to demand minimum entitlements for young people in relation to curriculum access, financial support, careers advice and destinations at key transition points. While this work is in its infancy, the structures that have been devised have been designed with the full intent of overcoming barriers to participation, of ensuring more equitable access to services and therefore improving outcomes for all young people.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### SCHOOL FEDERATIONS

Factors such as geography and transport networks influence the capacity of individual schools in the Western Australian education system to collaborate within a federation of schools. However, in some government school clusters in the metropolitan area, outcomes for many students stand to be significantly enhanced by schools working in collaboration. This is increasingly necessary as a greater percentage of young people, with more diverse needs, remain in education as a result of the increase in the school leaving age.

My research, and emerging evidence from schools, suggests that in the senior years of schooling the recommendations which follow will result in:

- schools using resources more effectively
- broader and more relevant curriculum access
- improved educational outcomes for students including students at risk of not being engaged in education or training (NEET).
- a more equitable system
- a government school system that is more competitive in relation to the private sector.

Therefore, arising from my Churchill Fellowship research I recommend that:

- Current models of school federations (for example, Vocational Education and Training clusters) operating in Western Australia should continue to be supported.
- A minimum curriculum entitlement be developed for students in the senior years of schooling in Western Australia.
- Schools be required to develop and work within federations where the need is identified through local area planning processes or through District Director review visits. This recommendation should be progressed as a matter of urgency as part of the current DET review into secondary school provision in W.A.
- A sustainability strategy be put in place to support the development of each federation. This strategy should consider the model of leadership and governance most suited to the specific federation.
- A combined curriculum prospectus for all schools within a federation be published. This prospectus should form the basis of choice for students and parents and help shape the curriculum development of schools within the federation.
- Students be encouraged to access curriculum and school/s of their choice within a federation of schools and within the operational capacity of each school.
- Common timetabling between schools be required within a federation to support the curriculum access needs of students.
- School building programs be considered in relation to the needs of students across school federations not just for students within one school or within one school locality.

While the above recommendations are designed primarily for collaboration between schools in the senior years of schooling, future models of school delivery in Western Australia should also consider school federations with regard to

- the relationship between senior high and primary schools
- middle schools and senior campuses
- senior high schools and technical and further education colleges.

## **STUDENTS NOT ENGAGED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

While the above recommendations in relation to school federations are all highly relevant to improved outcomes for students at risk of disengaging from education, the following recommendations are specifically made in relation to this group:

- Government policy should have a premise of systematic, mandated collaboration between government agencies to improve outcomes for young people who are NEET or at risk of being NEET.
- The high quality vocational education and training programs developed in Western Australia government schools should be supported, developed and adequately resourced.
- Growing links between the education and training sectors in Western Australia be encouraged through policy development and financial support.
- Provision for the accreditation of curriculum council endorsed units in the new Western Australian Certificate of Education provides significantly increased opportunity for the development of more diverse learning opportunities for young people. This strategy should be resourced and supported. The engagement of the entire community with this strategy to be encouraged.

## NOTES

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