Evaluation of the Victorian Youth Enterprise Pilot South West

Final Report

Prepared for the
Department of Education, Employment and Training

by

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Foreword and Acknowledgements

The Youth Enterprise Strategy, while drawing on contemporary thinking in several areas, was designed to chart unknown territory. It brings together new ideas about education, training and employment networks, youth enterprise and enterprising communities and regional economic development in one strategy. The Strategy has drawn on the less integrated, smaller-scale programs that are framed within these different areas, and attempted to map out what it would look like in practice to extend the boundaries of cooperation and vision.

The Strategy drew on current and emergent thinking about the need for different strategic approaches on the part of Governments and local communities, to meet new social and economic challenges. It was initiated by the Victorian Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD) in 1998, through a series of local consultations in the region. A taskforce, lead by Martin van Tijn (DSRD), consulted with Regional Forums, Shire and City Council representatives, and with young people, to develop an overview of the region’s social and economic context. In 1999, the Department of Employment, Education and Training developed the recommendations of the Taskforce into a strategic approach to regional social and economic development. The strategy (Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy) was implemented in 2000 – 2001. It has spanned the new millenium, a change of Government and key changes in personnel at the local level.

The pilot has overlapped with the release of key State and Federal reports: the Ministerial Review on Post Compulsory Education and Training, (DEET: 2000) and the Prime Minister’s Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce 2001 Report: (2001). The pilot Strategy features in the Youth Pathways Action Plan as an example of the kind of innovative partnership between local partners, supported by regional and national frameworks, that would form the basis for a proposed ‘national commitment to all young people’ (p.159).

The Strategy was informed by similar concerns to those that shaped the Review on Post Compulsory Education and Training. The focus on youth, on shifting cultural prejudices and on facilitating pathways is compatible with the recommendations of this Review. In practice, although the development of pathways through education, training and employment are similar to those that are evolving in the Local Learning and Employment Networks, the goals of the Youth Enterprise were both more focussed (around enterprise generation) and more broad (regional development).

The formative evaluation has revealed the reality of the tensions, disappointments and frustrations as well as significant achievements that the pilot generated. However, in the final analysis, the Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy pilot can be seen as a significant intervention in the development of more effective policy to meet real local needs in new ways. It provides a powerful tool for the generation of models of Youth Enterprise for wider implementation.
Part 2

Methodology

The evaluation focussed on two, related elements of the Strategy. One was the work of six project coordinators who worked closely with young people in the region, to develop youth enterprise and to link young people with education, training or employment pathways. The other was to explore the impact of the strategy on local and regional planning, policy and development strategies. Johanna Wyn and Helen Stokes from the Australian Youth Research Centre focussed on the work of the coordinators in the Action Areas. Gordon Forth and Ken Howell, took responsibility for evaluating the impact of the strategy on regional development. Documentary evidence, in the form of coordinators' reports was utilised where relevant.

The evaluation design included both a process and outcomes dimension, in order to provide formative information which would contribute to the development of the Youth Enterprise Strategy Pilot in the South West. The evaluation also aimed to provide outcome data and an informed perspective on the potential for the Strategy to be implemented more widely. An interim report, submitted to the evaluation steering committee in September 2000, served as a focal point for the final phase of the projects under the Pilot phase, and encouraged the development of several projects for further funding.

Team members conducted three rounds of formal interviews and several rounds of less formal discussions with representatives of participating organisations (see Appendix one). As part of the evaluation process discussions were held with key regional development organisations including the Greater Green Triangle Area Consultative Committee and the Greater Green Triangle Regional Association Post Secondary Educational Consortium.

The first round of interviews conducted in May, June and July 2000 provided participants (which included project managers and coordinators) with an opportunity to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the project to date. In August 2000, telephone interviews were conducted with coordinators, to validate the data gathered in the first round of interviews. These interviews, and less formal discussions, provided a basis for the Interim Report, presented to the evaluation steering committee on 19 September 2000. This report was discussed at a meeting of participants at Warrnambool City Council on 14 November 2000. Our evaluation also took account of the findings of recent research, key recommendations of reports, strategies and policies relating to key youth issues and regional economic development.

A second round of interviews and consultations occurred in October 2000, with all key players, including young people who were participating in the projects. Following this meeting the project team conducted a third round of structured interviews with project coordinators in February and with four key project managers in March 2001. Written summaries of the discussions with project managers (which were undertaken by Ken Howell and Gordon Forth) were sent to interviewees for comment and suggested changes.
Within the region, Warrnambool is growing partly at the expense of smaller centres such as Mortlake and Terang. Hence the implementation of the Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy Pilot was seen by local government and community organisations as one means of addressing the related issues of permanent out-migration of younger people and the related issue of youth unemployment, which is relatively high in the region. As well as providing a basis to develop more appropriate youth policies and initiatives for the South West, the pilot Strategy provides a model for rural and regional development.
South West Victoria

In terms of youth related issues, the South West region of Victoria is typical of much of rural Australia. With an economy and employment still based largely on agricultural production, forestry and fishing (24% of workforce) the region has experienced only modest economic and employment growth during the 1990s. The next most important areas of employment are: retail (14%) and Health and Community Services (9%). Low average commodity prices in wool, sheep meat, the deregulation of the dairy industry and farm amalgamation, together with increased mechanisation of agricultural production and processing have had a negative impact on employment in the region. Similarly the introduction of more advanced technology and the recent closure of major enterprises, such as Warrnambool Woollen Mills, has significantly reduced employment opportunities for young people in the region. In the 15-24 age group 38% of females are employed in retail and males are split between agriculture (22%) and retail (27%). The major area of employment growth, including youth employment, has and will be in the service industries, which account for two thirds of all new jobs in the wider region. These jobs tend to be concentrated in the major population centres such as Warrnambool, Hamilton and Portland. Furthermore, although areas of employment growth can be identified, the total number of jobs available in the region is in decline. Within the total Greater Green Triangle the total number of jobs has declined from 77,818 in 1986 to 76,092 in 1999 (ABS census data).

Like many of Victoria’s rural regions, patterns of low achievement for both boys and girls contribute to early school leaving and undermine more effective pathways to further education and employment. In the Barwon-Western District labour force region, which encompasses the South West, between 16 – 20 per cent of the boys have fail grades in English and between 6 and 10 per cent of girls. These figures show poor results for young people in the region, in comparison with their counterparts in the inner eastern and southern regions of the Melbourne metropolitan area, in which the figure for boys and girls with fail grades is 0 – 5 per cent (DEET, 2000: 62-63). While these broad figures mask local variations, the patterns that are identified have lead the government to identify ‘geographical patterns of low achievement’ in the region (DEET, 2000: 62).

School retention rates are also a major area of concern, and in many rural and regional areas of Victoria (DEET, 2000). A high proportion of young people in the region leave school without any recognised qualification. Recent research shows that 21-30 per cent of boys and 11 - 20 per cent of girls in the Barwon-Western District region (which encompasses the South West) left school early. This figure is in contrast with the 0-10 per cent of girls and boys who are early school leavers in the inner southern and inner eastern regions of Victoria (DEET, 2000: 51).

In demographic terms, the region has experienced a gradual decline in the total population with significant population growth limited to the Warrnambool-Port Fairy-Koroit sub regions. The total population of Warrnambool, Moyne and Corangamite is 59,606 with 8,121 (13%) of the population aged between 15 and 24 (ABS Census figures) In common with most of regional Australia the region has and will continue to experience an aging of the population with a current median age of 34. This is partly due to an ongoing out-migration of younger people who leave the South West in search of better employment and educational opportunities in larger centres.
perspectives and thinking about the potential for local youth to contribute to regional economic development. It was seen as a realistic way to create the necessary investment in cultural capital that would have the potential to bring the benefits of new economies to rural areas.

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the extent to which the pilot program had met its objectives, including:

- the impact of the pilot program on young people’s education, training and employment pathways in the region;
- the nature of the partnerships between youth, community, business and government that have been developed during the pilot; and
- the extent to which young people have contributed to regional development through the creation of small business.

While the concept of youth enterprise is not new, it is not well understood within government agencies and regional organisations in Australia. In 1989 the OECD published Towards an “Enterprising” Culture: A challenge for education and training, which outlined the case for youth enterprise, drawing on more than a decade of research in this area. The report documents key elements of social and economic change over the last 25 years, including youth unemployment, changes to the labour market, organisational change and challenges for education and training. It concludes that youth enterprise should be promoted, in order to strengthen young people’s capacity to assume responsibility and initiative in a situation of institutional and economic uncertainty. The report describes a number of specific examples of relevant youth enterprise case studies which have been implemented in Australia, the US, the UK and other countries, many of which were in rural contexts (OECD, 1989 107).

The Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy builds on this work. More recently, the Government has taken a lead in recognising that not all young Victorians have benefited from the positive aspects of social and economic change in the new century. A Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training (2000) acknowledges that ‘the pathways for young people are uncertain, unequal and poorly signposted’ (p. 7). It recommended a ‘whole-of-government and whole-of community’ approach to the consolidation, of the post compulsory phase of young people’s lives, creating more coherent, collaborative and accountable relationships between education, training, industry and other government organisations.

Through the Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy Pilot, it was intended that the two elements (youth enterprise and education, training and employment pathways) would be brought together, and linked to a third component, regional development. The evaluation was designed to provide information on the transferability, of the Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy to other regions. It sought to evaluate the potential of a strategic intervention to young people’s engagement in education, training and employment, through the support of and development of an enterprising culture. The longer term goal of the Strategy was to have a positive impact on a region’s long-term economic, social and cultural development.
Part 1

Background

Overview of the Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy Pilot

Early in 2000, the Victorian Government implemented a pilot Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy in the South West\(^1\) of Victoria, encompassing Warrnambool City, and Moyne and Corangamite Shires. The strategy was designed against the backdrop of social and economic change affecting young Victorians, in which the pathways through education, training and into employment have become increasingly challenging to negotiate\(^2\). Many studies report on the impact these changes are having on young people, including increased rates of mental illness amongst youth (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001). Young people in many rural areas have been especially affected, by these changes and by the impact of economic restructuring on their communities. At the same time, there is widespread concern about the future of many of Victoria’s rural towns. For more than a decade there has been concern about ‘Australia’s rural crisis’ and the threat to the viability of rural economies, and the negative consequences of this for the social fabric and the need to invest in ‘human capital’ to respond to new opportunities and generate new rural economies. Various rural development strategies have been implemented, in recognition of the positive value placed on having viable country towns and regions (Rogers & Collins, 2001). It is recognised that young people will leave rural areas. The challenge for the longer term survival and re-invention of many smaller towns and rural areas is for young people to leave with the understanding that there would be something worthwhile to return to. These broader developments have informed the concept and design of the Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy, and the pilot which was implemented in the Warrnambool, Moyne and Corangamite Shires, known as the South West region of Victoria.

The initiative aimed to promote a process of regional development in which young people were a catalyst for change. The pilot strategy aimed to contribute knowledge about the ways in which cultural change can enhance economic development in local, rural contexts. While the strategy had a longer-term regional development aim, the short-term goal was to invest in the development of social capital.

The pilot strategy aimed to develop partnerships between young people, education, industry, community and all levels of government. Its objective was to engage young people in the development of the region, and to foster young people’s contribution to its future prosperity. The emphasis on youth enterprise was a deliberate strategy to change

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\(^1\) South West Victoria is normally taken to include the following local government areas: the shires of Corangamite and Moyne and City of Warrnambool, which were the designated areas for this project, and the shires of Glenelg and Southern Grampians which were not.

\(^2\) A ten-year longitudinal study of Victorian school leavers, 1991 – 2001, found that the “post-1970 generation” have faced a fragmented education and training pathways and a tenuous education-work nexus, in the context of rapidly changing labour market conditions, including high rates of part-time, contract employment (Dwyer et al. 2001).
• Project leaders, especially those that are early in their careers, also require professional development and training in the establishment of new, integrated youth-focussed initiatives and in measuring outcomes effectively.
• The pilot confirms the importance of effective local ownership of initiatives and the establishment of clear lines of responsibility.
• The idea that youth are a key to community development needs to be more explicit.
• Local traditions and needs should shape the implementation.
• The concept of network and partnership that informs current approaches to ‘whole-of-government’ approaches may be more readily implemented in urban areas, where density of population and service provision and accessibility of transport facilitate the work of networking.

The evaluation concludes that the Youth Enterprise Strategy Pilot has a number of implications for Victorian policy. The pilot has:
• demonstrated the potential for local areas to implement cross-sectoral programs in the interests of young people’s well-being and participation, across DEET, Health, Family and Youth Services and State Development;
• reinforced the importance of shaping regional initiatives, that build on but do not attempt to replicate urban models;
• highlighted the need for Government departments to facilitate areas of ‘overlap’ in the interests of youth and community development, improved education, training and employment outcomes and youth well-being; and
• revealed the viability of activating community energy and resources through the establishment of a strategic approach to youth enterprise.

A further investment in developing and refining the concept of a Youth Enterprise Strategy for Victoria based on the successes and strengths of the pilot would provide a framework for:
• effective, locally relevant, all-of-government and whole-of-community approaches, including industry and non-government organisations;
• development of social capital in rural and regional areas;
• identification of new economies in regional and rural areas, especially those that draw on communication and information technology skills;
• participation of young people in the new local partnerships;
• recognition of rural-urban links and pathways that strengthen rural communities; and
• the implementation of a new teacher education program that prepares teachers to take a youth-focussed, inter-sectoral and enterprising approach to education.
Executive Summary

The Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy Pilot was implemented in the South West of Victoria early in 2000, in Corangamite and Moyne Shires and the city of Warrnambool. The duration of the pilot was approximately 15 months.

The Youth Enterprise Strategy has tested current thinking and practice about the establishment of networks and collaborations across sectors to map out what it would look like to extend the boundaries of cooperation and vision. In one strategy, it brings together education, training and employment networks, youth enterprise and enterprising communities and regional economic development. The Strategy was designed to develop partnerships between young people, education, industry, community and all levels of government.

The Strategy aimed to promote regional development in which young people are a catalyst for change. It was designed to generate knowledge about the ways in which cultural change can enhance economic development in local, rural and regional contexts. Its objective was to engage young people in the development of the region and to foster young people’s contribution to its future prosperity.

The evaluation aimed to establish the extent to which the pilot program had met the following objectives:

• the impact of the pilot program on young people’s education, training and employment pathways in the region;
• the nature of the partnerships between youth, community, business and government that have been developed during the pilot; and
• the extent to which young people have contributed to regional development through the creation of small business.

This report documents the development of the seven ‘projects’ that were funded under the Strategy. It describes the breadth and extent of initiatives undertaken, and identifies gaps, barriers and particular difficulties.

Measuring outcomes of the pilot Strategy against the objectives, the evaluation concludes that the pilot has demonstrated the viability of this strategic approach to building social and economic capacity in rural and regional Victoria.

The evaluation has identified key areas that would need to be addressed in the application of the Strategy to other areas:

• Managers require systematic and on-going professional development so that they are informed about new concepts of youth enterprise and obtain skills in working across traditional sectors.
This report provides a detailed description of the implementation of the Youth Enterprise Strategy pilot in the South West region, an analysis of the contributions of the pilot project to young people, the region and to ongoing to policy and program development.

The evaluation team express their appreciation for the willing cooperation of all the key 'players' in the South West who contributed to the evaluation. Thanks to the project coordinators, the managers who represented Warrnambool City Council, Moyne Shire Council, Terang Resources and Brophy Youth and Family Services. The support of Deakin University and South West TAFE for the development of a teacher education component is also appreciated. The evaluation was facilitated by Colin Dunn, the Strategy Coordinator and Peter Turner provided valuable professional advice to the project. The Director of Economic Development at Warrnambool City Council (David Keenan) has also played a key role in the implementation of the evaluation.
Following the distribution of the final report to managers and key stakeholders, final interviews with managers were conducted and suggestions, corrections and amendments were incorporated into the report.
Part 3
Description of the Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy Pilot

The Strategy was built around five related "Action Areas":

Youth Leadership
Regional Education, Employment and Training Partnerships (REET-P)
Enterprise and Small Business
Information and Communications Technology
Enterprise Teacher Education

These Action Areas formed the central components that sought to generate a change in thinking, towards more enterprising communities, and that would build the necessary infrastructure to develop and sustain these changes. The primary focus on youth was seen to be a practical way of highlighting the potential that exists in communities to become innovative. Education, training and employment networks, enterprise and entrepreneurship skills and IT skills are all essential to the future development of regional Australia. In the longer term, developments in this area will be supported and sustained by new teacher education programs, that are prepare teachers to see schools as a part of cross-sectoral networks, promoting innovation and entrepreneurship amongst young people. Hence, through the "Enterprise Teacher Education" component, the Strategy built in a professional development element to support innovation.

In practice, these Action Areas were implemented across several projects, under the management of five auspicing organisations in Warrnambool and the South West region of Victoria:

Warrnambool City Council
Moyne Shire Council
Terang Resources
Brophy Family and Youth Services
Deakin University and South West TAFE

In practice, with the exception of the Teacher Education component, the Youth Enterprise South West Pilot Strategy was implemented through six, related, youth enterprise "projects", each of which was assigned a coordinator, responsible to one of the four auspicing organisations and supported by a Strategy Coordinator (Colin Dunn). For example, Youth Leadership was a component in projects auspiced by Warrnambool City Council, Brophy Family and Youth Services, Terang Resources and Moyne Shire Council (see Table 1). The pilot was specifically designed to ensure that the focus was on the Shires of Moyne and Corangamite, as well as the City of Warrnambool, in recognition of concern about inequalities emerging between regional centres and smaller towns.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auspicing Body</th>
<th>Warrnambool City Council</th>
<th>Brophy Kulcha Shift</th>
<th>Terang Resources Artspace</th>
<th>Moyne Shire Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinators Leadership Activities</td>
<td>Andrew Creed</td>
<td>Emily Reeves</td>
<td>Emma Vagg</td>
<td>Belinda Claveria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Young Achievement Australia teams from a secondary and a tertiary setting have been identified and are receiving mentoring assistance</td>
<td>Yth enterprise week in planning</td>
<td>Youth leadership group</td>
<td>Koroit Theatre proposal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Youth leadership calendar</td>
<td>Youth leadership summit</td>
<td>Youth Summit in Mortlake (50 YP involved)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 YP attend</td>
<td>Youth leadership</td>
<td>Training workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>project management/youth leadership training on fortnightly basis</td>
<td>summit launch</td>
<td>Surveys by Koroit YP on vision of Koroit in 2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monthly music and entertainment events linking with Breakout 2000</td>
<td>Mentoring of YP to help them provide music, public speaking and catering for Launch of Artspace</td>
<td>Mortlake YP developing Music events and working on Mortlake to brighten it up for the Buskers festival</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinators REET-P Activities</th>
<th>Jill Warne</th>
<th>Emily Reeves</th>
<th>Emma Vagg</th>
<th>Belinda Claveria</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracking School pathways</td>
<td>Marketing campaign to showcase YEW SW</td>
<td>Assisting with industry partnerships in IT and Art areas</td>
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<td>Identifying training needs</td>
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<td>Industry profiles for 2000 Business plan</td>
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<tr>
<th>Coordinators Youth Enterprise and Small Business Activities</th>
<th>Andrew Creed</th>
<th>Emily Reeves</th>
<th>Emma Vagg</th>
<th>Belinda Claveria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young innovators sessions</td>
<td>Enterprise Coop (Vic Health)</td>
<td>Artspace (Youth initiative Centre)</td>
<td>Proposal for Koroit theatre cafe and rock festival in school holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enterprise training workshops</td>
<td>Art gallery at Youth Enterprise and Leadership Centre; 30 YP art work promoted (bi-monthly events)</td>
<td>Launch of Artspace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth enterprise mentors, data-base available for all of YESW projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exhibitions at Artspace eg Landscapes by local School students</td>
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<td>Network of young innovators</td>
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<tr>
<th>Coordinators Information and Communications Technology Activities</th>
<th>Dion Barker and Jill Warne</th>
<th>Emily Reeves</th>
<th>Emma Vagg</th>
<th>Belinda Claveria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relaunching the YESW Web Site</td>
<td>Regional Youth leadership calendar on YESW web site. IT group receives training from designers at Warrnambool Business Centre</td>
<td>Establishing IT skills register</td>
<td>Establishing IT skills register</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotspot Internet cafe at Multimedia centre</td>
<td></td>
<td>Graffiti workshops at Artspace</td>
<td>Web based design course</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Silverball Film Makers festival project involving film makers workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Bool Music and 'boolbands.com online promotion of youth music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth &amp; IT Registry (3 vacancies have been filled)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth enterprise website</td>
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Substantial progress was made on the design of a possible Youth Enterprise Teacher Education program, which would be based in Warrnambool, offered by Deakin University with support from South West TAFE.

**Teacher Education**

The fifth Action Area, the development of a teacher education program focussing on enterprise education, was facilitated through the signing of a contract by Deakin University and the Department of Education, Employment and Training to undertake a feasibility study as the first step in the possible establishment of a new teacher education program to be provided through Deakin University at its Warrnambool campus.

**Management Structure**

The management structure (described in Table 2) was designed to maximise local interpretation of the strategy, through by vesting management responsibilities for the projects in local organisations. The structure provided strong links with regional economic development and youth policy. The links with the Department of Education, Employment and Training were maintained through the appointment of a Strategy Coordinator (Colin Dunn). Individual project coordinators reported to their local managers. The Strategy Coordinator provided a support role, coordinating monthly meetings of the Project Coordinators to review progress and provide guidance.

*Table 2: Management Structure of the Youth Enterprise Strategy Pilot*
Part 4
Implementation

The following section focuses on the description of the main activities that were implemented in each of the project areas. It shows how the five Action Areas that informed the establishment of the pilot Strategy were implemented across six of the seven project areas. The descriptions reveal the breadth and extent of initiatives, activities and programs that were implemented in the region during the relatively short period of the pilot. We also identify gaps, barriers and particular difficulties that were experienced in each of the projects.

All of the project areas were successful in developing a distinctive approach to youth enterprise and regional development. Development was uneven – some projects were able to get under way more rapidly that others, and a key element in the progress of all the projects was the development of an understanding by the project leaders of the meaning of youth enterprise for their specific area. Once they were established, the project leaders moved fairly quickly to ensure that there were links between the projects to support their common goals of fostering youth enterprise and enhancing regional development. Many of the activities were undertaken collaboratively.

The descriptions include brief case studies, which describe how young people participated in the projects. These have been included in order to provide a richer descriptive account than the listing of activities allows.

REET – P
(Regional Education, Employment and Training – Pathways)

Coordinator: Jill Warne

This component of the Strategy was intended to provide a framework for the integration of education, employment and training pathways in the region. The role of the Coordinator was to facilitate the development of more effective pathways through education and training and into employment. In order to do this, she undertook some basic research into local employment needs in the region and mapped some potential pathways. The scope of the work meant that she was in a strong position to provide advice to other projects involved in the Strategy.

Activities and Achievements:

The implementation of this component of the Strategy was strongly influenced by the location of the coordinator in the Warrnambool Business Centre. For example, Jill developed an Industry profile and registry for the information technology (IT) industry. By February 2001, three job vacancies in IT in the region had been filled from this registry. It was planned that the industry profiles would then lead into developing pathways for young people in different industries. It is important to emphasise that industries operate
differently and that therefore there will be a variety of pathways to employment. One example is the tourism and hospitality industry, where it is necessary to develop a multi-skilled approach to training, with young people rotating through a range of tourism businesses. The young people could come from a range of areas, including VET programs in schools, TAFE and JPET.

Secondary schools are important partners in the development of improved pathways for young people. Jill Warne made a number of links with schools, such as instituting a ‘roadshow’ to local schools, involving many of the Project Coordinators in presentations to secondary school students about possible post-school options. She also began the process of developing a ‘map’ of local students’ post-school outcomes. Jill reported that the main pathway in the region for young people to gain employment in the area is through the Year 10 work placement program. If young people are interested in an apprenticeship or traineeship, the employer will offer them casual work after the work placement if they are happy with them, and that may lead into an apprenticeship or traineeship.

The contact with secondary schools revealed that there was a lack of information around possible pathways for the young people to take. Of the 60 young people in the groups, only 7 wanted to stay in the region.

What has been learned?

• **The importance of management ownership of the project**

  The REET – P coordinator was answerable to her managers within the Warrnambool City Council and the full implementation of a more systematic and integrated approach to education, training and employment in the region requires their support. The implementation of this element of the strategy would have been facilitated by the involvement of the managers in a developmental process to assist them to understand the aims of the Strategy and to contribute to its development.

• **The importance of support from school leadership**

  There were difficulties in accessing, organising and running the ‘roadshows’ (information sessions) in schools. The lack of involvement of the Department of Education, Employment and Training at the regional level meant that the program was not introduced through the leadership of the schools (school Principals) and therefore the schools were more difficult to access.

• **The limitations of short-term funding**

  The goals of the project are essentially the long-term goals of contributing to regional economic and social development. However, because the funding was short-term, there was an understandable hesitation by management to invest time and energy.

• **The local employment situation**

  With a changing and possibly shrinking labour market, the task of identifying job opportunities for young people in South West region is complex. Many will continue to leave the region for work and education. The tendency for jobs to be concentrated in larger centres means that the smaller towns have a disproportionate loss of youth, compared with the regional centre. Creating jobs for young people (to come back to) is a long-term project.
**Artspace**

Coordinator - Emma Vagg

"Artspace" is a youth-focused art gallery and arts workshop, which is located in a shop on the main street of Camperdown. It was established by the Youth Enterprise Strategy. The gallery is in a highly visible location, and although it has a focus on the production and display of young people's art work, it is a resource for the whole community.

Artspace provided a strong focus for connecting with local schools. For example, the launch of the gallery was conducted with strong support from schools in the area. VET hospitality students at Cobden Technical School provided the catering and VET business administration students at Terang Secondary College provided the promotions. They produced a powerpoint display that ran throughout the launch, about how to be involved in the project and the history of the project. Young people involved with Artspace provided music for the launch. Artspace was used as a venue for school holiday programs based around art and music promotion for young people.

Artspace subsequently provided a mechanism for promoting young people’s skills to the Shire. Through Artspace, young people were given a higher profile in the community, planning exhibitions, finding local sponsorship for the gallery and conducting interviews with the local media.

Young people who exhibited at the gallery were encouraged to develop a portfolio of their work, and the preparation for events and exhibitions involved young people directly in an enterprising environment in which they were key contributors. Emma organised a mentoring group for young artists, based at Artspace, through the formation of a 'friends of Artspace' group consisting of older artists and young business people.

While Artspace was based in Camperdown, links were maintained with Warrnambool and the wider region, through promotions in the Kulcha Shift events calendar.

**What has been learned?**

- **Setting up takes time**
  The physical challenge of getting the building that housed Artspace ready took a considerable time and energy from both the coordinator and community members. Although it took far longer to get the shopfront into shape than the coordinator had planned, the refurbishment of the gallery was itself a positive link with the community. The work being undertaken by the coordinator and the young people was very visible, and mobilised support from local shop owners in the form of paint and electrical goods.

- **Attitudes to formal training**
  The young people who become involved in Artspace were interested in having experiences that were different from 'school'. Many were not interested, in the early stages, in taking on formal accredited training, but did want to have access to informal learning and appreciated the support of mentors. Artspace has been especially successful in providing a point of connection for young people who do want to participate in the community, but who do not want, at this stage, to be constrained by the requirements and relationships of formal educational settings. In the longer term, Artspace has the capacity to provide a significant link between school education
and further education. Its success in involving young people points to a need for more informal education opportunities for young people while they decide which direction their life will take. In the longer term, Artspace would be likely to involve more marginalised youth.

- Transport and accessibility

There were some difficulties with having a program based in one town without a rural and remote strategy attached to it. 60% of the young people live outside the town and so transport for the young people was a challenge. Much time was involved in transporting young people to and from meetings. As some of the young people lived in Timboon it meant that a lot of travel was required by the Project Coordinators to make sure the young people could attend.

Participants

Sarah (16 years old) was at TAFE doing a course in hospitality and was on the Corangamite Youth Committee. She lived in Camperdown. She saw an advertisement for involvement in Artspace in the paper and was interested because there is not a lot to do in Camperdown. Sarah had her art work displayed in the window of Artspace and as a result of this publicity was asked to do a logo for the local health centre. Sarah was out of school and was thinking of leaving town to go to Western Australia (where she subsequently went). During the pilot though, because she was involved in Artspace and had been getting some graphic design work she stayed in town for a while. Sarah surveyed the young people to see what they want in Camperdown and was the “youth voice” at regional meeting for YESW in June.

Phil (16 years old) was in year 11 at Mercy Regional College in Camperdown and was on the Corangamite Youth Committee. Phil lived in Timboon, 40 minutes drive from Camperdown, and was interested in the music potential for Artspace. He was involved with a band that played at youth forums and had performed a gig at the Geelong High School social. He was interested in developing a space for the band at Artspace as well as participating in the event management workshops and was positive about the cultural and commercial opportunities that Artspace provided.

Kulcha Shift

Coordinator: Emily Reeves

Kulcha Shift is a youth-oriented workshop located in a converted shop on the main street of Warrnambool which was created by the Youth enterprise Strategy. It offered young people a meeting space, to plan and coordinate activities and enterprises, an exhibition space to display work and a resource space, where young people could access computers.

Activities and Achievements:

Kulcha Shift provided a facilitation role for music, film and entertainment in the local area, encouraging young people to be involved in the organisation and performance of events, linking with FREEZA and the Warrnambool City Council. A key element in this strategy was the development of a Web-based calendar of events, developed and updated by young people. It facilitated young people’s access to film training, through the Warrnambool multi-media centre and instituted a ‘graffiti group’ to develop responsible
attitudes to graffiti and to find acceptable local spaces for the development of graffiti art. Through Kulcha Shift, the ‘graffiti group’ were placed in contact with the Warrnambool Business Centre, to develop a business plan for their enterprise.

What has been learned?

- **Measurement of “outcomes”**

  Like each of the projects, the measurement of tangible outcomes was difficult. In fact, Kulcha Shift was able to demonstrate that it had engaged more young people than many of the other projects. Like most of the other projects too, Kulcha Shift placed a strong emphasis on creating possibilities and opportunities for young people, which they would not necessarily take up during the pilot phase.

- **Previous local involvement**

  Kulcha Shift was able to take up a high profile with young people fairly rapidly, because of its close relationship with Brophy Youth and Family Services who auspiced Kulcha Shift. Brophy Youth and Family Services have a long-term presence in Warrnambool and the district, and are familiar to many young people and their families, as well as having close networks with other youth services in the region.

**Participants**

Chantel and Melissa were involved in the music and entertainment group and Stephen was involved in the IT (Website) group. They all attended Breuer College in Warrnambool. They spend a lot of time at Kulcha Shift, coming in regularly after school. It has given them somewhere to go in town, somewhere to meet people and a way of participating in Warrnambool life. They enjoyed being on the committees and saw it as useful for developing resumes and job applications for future use. They found the teamwork beneficial and say that they have gained confidence and skills from the event management training and the public speaking training.

**Warrnambool Business Centre**

**Coordinator: Andrew Creed**

This initiative, which was intended to provide a form of ‘youth business incubation’, was located in the Warrnambool Business Centre, a short distance from the centre of town, in the Fletcher Jones building complex. The initiative had the advantage of being located in close proximity to other business incubation projects. It provided general business advice and support to each of the projects. Andrew worked with the ‘graffiti group’ based at Kulcha Shift, to develop business ideas and plans that could evolve into money-making enterprises. Andrew also provided a mentoring role with the Light Years Media website design enterprise (which was developed by several young people). Focussing on developing ‘enterprising’ approaches, this project developing a buddy system, linking young business people with a ‘buddy’ in the same business, using email to connect with buddies in other countries as well as in Australia. In partnership with Belinda Claveria, who was the coordinator of the Moyne Shire project, Andrew developed the young entrepreneurs’ club, who met regularly to foster local youth enterprise.
What has been learned?

- The importance of networks.

  Much of the work involved in this project involved setting up networks. With more time, other networks could have been included, such as 'Enterprising Australia' or existing young service providers.

Participants

Chris and Dean founded Light Years Multi Media, a website design enterprise at the WBC. At the WBC they received 12 months free rent and mentoring/business assistance from Andrew Creed. They were the NEIS scheme that provided them with an income so those earnings could go to the business.

Prior to setting up the business they had completed Certificate 4 in Multimedia at TAFE in Warrnambool. Chris has always lived in Warrnambool but Dean moved from Albury to Warrnambool in order to attend the TAFE course.

Both would like to stay in Warrnambool and feel that they have a chance with the support offered to establish and make a name for themselves in the community. They felt it was better to stay in Warrnambool than move to Geelong because there are many more web design businesses in Geelong – and by implication, the opportunities to start a business are better in Warrnambool.

They support the other elements of the Strategy by offering training in web design to the young people in the other projects. They provided training for the website group at Kulcha Shift and at Mortlake.

Moyne Shire

Coordinator: Belinda Claveria

This project was located on two sites: one in a shop-front in Mortlake and the other at Koroit Theatre. However many of the activities undertaken in this project involved bringing young people together at different sites, for specific occasions. This project was possibly the most difficult one for the coordinator to see tangible results. Working with the mainly school-age participants, Belinda concentrated on providing young people with skill development workshops to assist them to further their goals. She also organised an 8-week course in web site design for local youth, run by Light Years Media (who were mentored by Andrew Creed at the Warrnambool Business Centre). Belinda also held a mini youth summit in Mortlake, raising the profile of young people with the Shire Council.

The Koroit Theatre Group held regular weekly meetings involving around 15 young people who were interested in screening movies and having band nights. This initiative served to mobilise young people from the local area who were keen to see some new, youth-based activities develop in Koroit. In the longer term, their participation may have had some results, but the short time-frame for the pilot meant that the outcomes were limited.

The Mortlake group met weekly after school. The group consisted of 13 young people, mainly boys, who were interested in developing band nights, and improving the Mortlake
streetscape for the Buskers festival. The young people painted park benches and replanted the street.

For both groups, their participation in the project involved learning how to negotiate with people in positions of power, ask for donations and follow up letters when there was no response to requests. The young people had to define goals and develop marketing strategies for their activities.

What has been learnt?

- **Raising the profile of young people**
  
  Despite the difficulties which Belinda encountered in implementing her part of the Strategy, the outcomes from this element have been very tangible. As a direct result of this intervention, Moyne shire has put youth on its agenda. It is one of the few Shires to be developing a youth policy, and is employing a youth development officer to continue the work begun by Belinda.

- **Attitudes to education and training**
  
  Echoing attitudes of the young people associated with Artspace, many of the young people in this initiative also wanted to have something different from formal education and training. While they were keen to be involved with the project after school, they were not interested in undertaking accredited skills training or programs.

- **Transport**
  
  Transport and the time taken for young people who are scattered across a wide geographic area to attend meeting and events was a difficulty.

- **Few local youth**
  
  It was reported that there are few young people in the 18–25 age group in the Mortlake and Koroit areas. Many choose to leave the town to take up post-compulsory education opportunities elsewhere, or for work.

- **Geographical spread**
  
  The Moyne Shire stretches from Port Fairy in the west to Mortlake in the east to Peterborough in the South, with little public transport. This makes a coordinated strategy very difficult. Belinda Clavier had to catch the school bus to find the young people who were living in Koroit.

**Participants**

Adele and Candice lived in Koroit and attended school in Warrnambool. They would like to see Koroit developed to take advantage of tourism opportunities and to be involved in initiatives that would bring tourism to Koroit. Candice says “the little plants on the streets are the only things that have changed in thirteen years in Koroit.”

Candice and Adele started their project with a survey to find out what other people have as a vision for Koroit, through surveys which they distributed in the supermarket and through a local letter box drop. They still plan to publish the results in the local paper. They saw it as important to organise activities for young people in Koroit, as well as wanting to bring life back to Koroit. They point out that it is difficult to access Warrnambool by
public transport on the weekends. The buses in Warrnambool do not pick up under 18s at night so they can’t get back to Koroit.

Multimedia Centre, Warrnambool

Coordinator: Dion Barker

The Multimedia Centre is located near the Centre of Warrnambool, opposite the South West TAFE, and is accessed by people of all ages. The Centre, which was already well established, provided a base for the provision of dedicated multimedia support to the Strategy, through Dion Barker. The Centre has up to date multimedia resources for young people to use, and professional support. The Multimedia Centre also provided an important mechanism for linking young people into study and work in the IT sector.

Through this Centre, Dion was able to provide specialist support for young people who wanted to learn more about using various forms of media. For example, he coordinated the Silver Ball Project. Every week, 20 young people attended workshops on different aspects of film making, and editing films on the computer, for the Silver ball Film Festival in 2001. This project involved young people from 12 – 40 years and, while they were mainly from Warrnambool, some traveled from areas outside Warrnambool such as Childers Cove and Koroit.

Andrew also provided encouragement for the development of ‘Bool music, a web page promoting local youth music. This needed older established musicians to act as mentors to the young musicians to really get this started.

What has been learned?

• The importance of clear management processes

This project was particularly affected by the ambiguity in the management structure between the manager’s role (answerable to the Warrnambool Shire Council) and that of the Strategy Coordinator, Colin Dunn (answerable to DEET). This was partially resolved through facilitation from staff at Warrnambool Council, resulting in the appointment of Jill Warne to provide a mentoring role for Dion.

Youth Enterprise-Teacher Education

The youth enterprise-teacher education project operated outside local government with DEET dealing directly with senior staff at Deakin University including the former dean of the Faculty of Education (Professor Richard Bates) and Pro vice-chancellor of Development (Professor Lindsay MacKay). The other key participant in this component was the Director of South West Institute of TAFE (Barrie Baker) The evaluation team were observers at meetings between Deakin, South West TAFE, the regional coordinator, DEET and experts, but were able to interview key participants.

The Schedule Two for the Enterprise Education project listed the following outcomes that are expected at the completion of the project. These were: a research report identifying likely demand for a Teacher Education Course, development and submission of a joint qualification course eligible for secondary teaching registration, development of curriculum and support materials and development of a marketing campaign aimed at school leavers and mature age students.
Adrian Volders, Market Research Consultant for the Faculty of Education at Deakin University undertook research into the demand for an Enterprise Education Teaching course in the region. His research revealed low levels of interest by school leavers for a secondary education course based at Deakin Warrnambool with greater interest being shown for a primary or P-12 course. There was a strong positive response from South West TAFE students in regard to the potential course with up to 40% of those interviewed showing interest in enrolling in the course if it offered locally. Another potential source of students were mature age students who had completed a diploma at TAFE but were not able to leave the region to undertake a pre-service teaching course.

The report identified a growing secondary teacher shortage due to an aging workforce and difficulties in attracting recent teaching graduates to rural areas. Principals interviewed for the report believe that unless Deakin re-establishes a teacher education program at Warrnambool there will be teacher shortages over the next decade. The greatest shortfall was predicted to occur in the areas of Mathematics, English, Drama, Science, Physics, Society and Environment and Indonesian.

It would be unlikely that the South West Region alone would provide employment for all the teachers trained at the proposed new teacher education program at Warrnambool. The proposed program would attract students from the state who wanted to specialise in enterprise education, and also provide teachers for schools across Victoria.

National Curriculum Services (Christine Reid) researched the requirements of teacher registration and evaluated several course models. The report recommended that a combined/joint course be offered based on the completion of diploma level studies at South West TAFE in the areas of:

- Information Technology
- Art(Fine Art)
- Multimedia
- Food Technology
- Business/Office Administration

These recommendations were followed up by Deakin University and South West Institute of TAFE and a draft course developed. The course proposal addresses registration requirements although some further advice is required. The academic board of Deakin University rejected this proposal on the grounds that it did not fully satisfy the University's academic requirements for course approval.

National Curriculum Services reported on the availability of existing course material developed by both South West Institute of TAFE and Deakin University. Some materials could be readily adapted while others would need to be revised to include Enterprise Education. Following the rejection of the draft proposal by the Deakin University's Academic Board, further work was undertaken by the panel of experts in developing a Graduate Certificate in Enterprise Education. Currently a proposal for a Graduate Certificate of Professional Education and Training (Enterprise Education) is awaiting approval from the Deakin University Academic Board.
Part 5
Outcomes

The pilot Strategy resulted in a number of positive outcomes as measured against the evaluation criteria. It has demonstrated the viability of this strategic approach to building social and economic capacity in Victoria’s regional areas.

1: The impact of the pilot program on young people’s education, training and employment pathways in the region.

The pilot program has raised awareness of the need to establish more integrated, systematic pathways for young people, through the REET-P project. This has been achieved through the documentation of existing education, training and pathways links in the region the identification of gaps in provision, and the identification of areas in which young people seek to gain skills themselves. The different youth enterprise projects have assisted individual young people to take a proactive approach to creating their own “pathways”. The projects revealed a strong bias towards economic and entrepreneurial activities in which young people tend to have expertise and interest – arts, media and performance. The Youth Enterprise Strategy pilot gave young people in the South West region opportunities to learn skills in the organisation and implementation of music and drama productions, in creating businesses in design and information technology and in art. The pilot has revealed the importance of providing structured opportunities for young people to have access to informal education and training while they work out their ‘next step’.

2. The nature of partnerships between youth, community, business and government that have been developed during the pilot.

In Mortlake and in Camperdown, the Strategy had a tangible impact on the opportunities for local youth to engage with professionals and other members of their communities and to participate in the life of their community. Being perceived as a valued member of a community was an important step in the creation of longer-term pathways through education, training and employment.

The impact of the strategy is evident in the development of new, more constructive youth policies for the local government organisations involved. These included the establishment of a new youth development position within Moyne Shire Council and several follow up youth projects. Terang Resources and Brophy Youth Services have obtained substantial funding from the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation to continue their youth enterprise projects. The project also facilitated more effective linkages and partnerships between local government and community organisations within the region. In interviews and informal discussions the participants have consistently commented on their heightened awareness of youth issues. Whereas previously youth issues, hence policy, tended to be limited to problem areas such as drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, crime and vandalism, this project promoted a positive, proactive view of youth within the region.
Terang Resources

The Project will engage young people and the town communities in the Shire of Corangamite in the development of economic participation by young people through a collective and community owned approach to economic growth and social productivity.

The project will adapt the aspects of the Youth Enterprise Strategy with elements of community development and community capacity building. The successful aspect of the youth Enterprise Strategy include:

- young people being responsible for managing a project or event; and
- young people acquiring useful transferable skills such as planning, delegation, cooperation, decision making, negotiation, reporting and accountability.

Artspace will continue to be the public face of the Project and will provide a focus for interaction between mainstream business, the community and young people. It will also be a place to provide information for young people on employment, education and training pathways. Artspace will be funded by VicHealth, as part of a local strategy to increase young people’s participation in economic activities.

Brophy Youth and Family Services

The Youth Communication Project draws on and expands the IT and Communication component of the Youth Enterprise Strategy and includes media and marketing. Both of these areas have been noted as areas of interest for young people from the Youth Forums that have been held over the last eighteen months. Young people are interested to undertake activities that provide them with opportunities to advance their IT skills. The Project will produce and distribute a quarterly Kulcha Shift Youth magazine with CD version and will run small scale IT exhibitions based on activities at the Youth Cooperative (funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation). The Project will encompass the Shire of Moyne as well as the City of Warrnambool. In the Shire of Moyne the activities could be linked with the role of the newly appointed Youth Development Officer.

3. The extent to which young people have contributed to regional development through the creation of small business.

The pilot Strategy is unlikely to provide clear information about the longer-term economic outcomes of a rural development strategy because of its short-term nature. The evidence indicates that the Strategy did generate recognition at the local level of the need to invest in the generation of new forms of social capital. For example, the a report from the committee of management of the Corangamite Youth Enterprise Project says:

While it has been difficult for the Corangamite community to fully understand the purpose of Youth Enterprise in such a short time, signs are emerging that the community has begun to understand, appreciate and support Artspace and Youth Enterprise.

The evaluation team found that while there was evidence of cultural change, the next step of linking youth enterprise initiatives with regional economic development policies was yet to be taken up by all participants. Perhaps understandably, given the short time frame of around one year, the orientation of local council officers and project managers was on enhancing access for young people, rather than on regional economic development outcomes.
Several managers pointed out that raising awareness of local business groups to the potential and needs of young people in business was a longer-term goal. For example, the Corangamite Youth Enterprise Project management reports that it was difficult integrating CYEP into the business life of the community in a meaningful way:

The coordinator (project leader) was not invited to a business breakfast organised by the Shire, nor were young people or the coordinator (project leader) invited to the small town development strategy consultation. Youth Enterprise was often overlooked because we were not taken seriously, partly because we were new and partly because we were not seen as permanent.

More work needs to be done to profile the opportunities for young people in rural and regional Victoria in the “new economy” – linked with information technology and knowledge. The significance of these new skills are highlighted in a recent report, Learning for the knowledge society: an education and training action plan for the information economy (DETYA, 2000). This report emphasises the fundamental importance of encouraging the use of information technology.

The Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy has served to highlight the untapped potential that exists amongst many youth in “new-economy-related” areas that are currently referred to as “the Arts”. Many young people are very receptive to education and training that fosters a high degree of skill in various forms of communication (drama, design, art and music/sound) and especially those that use technologies in new ways. The Youth Enterprise Strategy has created a heightened awareness of the potential of these skills and capacities in the South West. Elsewhere in the State, in Metropolitan Melbourne, the School/Community Regional Arts Youth Program (SCRAYP) is also pioneering this link between youth, enterprise, arts and communication technologies. The focus on arts and communication-based enterprising activities that emerged in the South West pilot point to the need to explore the role of arts-based projects in rural contexts.

3 SCRAYP is a partnership between the Footscray Community Arts Centre and Victoria University of Technology.
Part 6
Discussion

The evidence presented in the evaluation supports the view that the Youth Enterprise Strategy that was piloted in the South West of Victoria has the potential to be more widely applicable. The integration of youth enterprise, education, employment and training and regional development offers a viable, innovative and realistic model of youth, community and regional development. The pilot strategy has revealed that the further development of this model will benefit from consideration of the following elements:

Professional Development for Management

Managers require systematic and on-going professional development so that they are informed about new concepts of youth enterprise and obtain skills in working across traditional sectors.

The participants in the project were initially not well equipped to undertake the role of “changing the culture” in terms of youth enterprise in the South West. This was largely due to lack of opportunity to learn about current thinking on youth enterprise and the need to build social capital in rural areas. Indeed, one of the underlying difficulties in the implementation of this project was different understanding of the concept of youth enterprise. Managers and project coordinators had little opportunity to contribute to the design of cross-sectoral partnerships that reflected local conditions.

In designing the Strategy, DEET intended that an appropriate, agreed definition of youth enterprise would be reached through individual’s participation in workshops conducted by the regional coordinator and experts. These workshops were also to provide a basis for participants to explore the potential for youth enterprise to contribute to regional economic development. However representatives of the key local government agencies – Warrnambool City Council Economic Development Unit (which included managers of the business and multimedia centres) and higher education providers from Deakin University and South West Institute of TAFE did not participate in these workshops. This oversight may have been a consequence of the ambiguity about responsibility for change management between the role of managers and that of the Strategy Coordinator. As a consequence, there was no agreed definition of youth enterprise, which was variously interpreted as youth with enterprising capabilities, assisting younger people to develop small businesses of their own, or a particular form of adult vocational training as well as the broader American socio-economic concept of youth enterprise. Even within this definition there was a degree of uncertainty as to whether youth enterprise was basically concerned with promoting local economic and social development through youth leadership schemes or addressing equity and access issues relating to disadvantaged youth.

Initially the different elements of the project were not structured to facilitate a team approach. Without a conscious effort to coordinate the five action areas, through a coordinated approach by their managers, it would have been possible for the different
projects to work in isolation. This changed towards the end of 2000 when the managers of Moyne Shire, Terang Resources, Warrnambool City Council and Brophy Family and Youth Services began to meet together, partly in response to the evaluation. The pilot Strategy has confirmed the need for professional development and support at a regional level for managers, coordinators and young people.

**Professional development for Project Leaders**

*Project Leaders, especially those that are early in their careers, require professional development and training in the establishment of new, integrated, youth-focussed initiatives, and in measuring outcomes.*

The decision to employ several young people as project coordinators also created a strong rationale for the provision of on-going, strategic and targeted professional development for the coordinators. While many of the coordinators had the benefits of being able to understand and to act as an advocate for local youth, the fact that many were early in their careers meant that they were lacking in experience.

**Effective Management Structures**

*The experience of the Youth Enterprise Strategy pilot reinforces the importance of effective local ownership of initiatives and the establishment of clear lines of responsibility and management between those responsible for implementation at the local level and the Steering Group.*

The management structure was designed to ensure local ownership of the project through the local-based managers. Warrnambool City Council’s Economic Development Unit was given the responsibility of organising occasional meetings of managers involved in this project. Working with the Strategy Coordinator, the then director of the unit (Thomas Lindsay) was to chair a steering group for the four projects. Two of the project managers, Rob Quaintrelle of the Multimedia Centre and Peter Costello of the Warrnambool Business Centre were council employees who reported to the director of the Economic Development Unit. Brophy Youth and Family Services, located in Warrnambool, is an independent organisation, while Terang Resources is a voluntary community organisation, not part of the Corangamite Shire structure. Moyne Shire had management responsibility for one of the projects. Steering Committee meetings, attended by all managers and project leaders were initiated by David Keenan (Director of the Warrnambool Economic Development Unit) and Frances Broekman.

Based on information provided in interviews it is clear there were significant problems in the overall management and coordination of the project. While some of these were partly due to unanticipated changes in personnel including the resignation of the director of Warrnambool City Council Economic Development Unit (Tom Lindsay) early in the pilot, others relate to the management structure.

Colin Dunn, the Strategy Coordinator commuted from Melbourne, residing part-time in the region for the first part of the project. His position provided an on-going contact point
with DEET, and continuity across each of the different elements of the Strategy. In reality however, this arrangement had a number of serious weaknesses. As Table 2 (above) demonstrates, the project leaders were, in a sense, answerable to two levels of management – their local managers and the Project Coordinator – and both of these levels of management were answerable to DEET. Consequently there was confusion over responsibilities and tension about goals and outcomes and no clear direction and leadership for the pilot Strategy. Some important dimensions of the strategy could not be implemented, as the work of the Strategy Coordinator became increasingly focussed on the projects. In particular, there was little time for the establishment of stronger links with regional government, policy, and programs.

The ambiguity, which was created by the management structure, was a source of concern by all managers. The Corangamite Youth Enterprise Committee comment that:

_The regional coordinator (Strategy Coordinator) played a key role in the success of CYE. However, it was not clear to us, CYE management and coordinator (project leader), whether it was the Warrnambool City Council, the lead agency or the regional coordinator (Strategy Coordinator) who was meant to be directing and overseeing the strategy._

_There was some confusion among the coordinators (project leaders) regarding who they should answer to and who was actually employing them._

A further area of difficulty was the role of Councils’ directors of economic development in the management of the project. Youth policy – where it exists in regional LGAs is normally located with the human resources/community services area. This is because regional councils have generally not seen youth policy as part of their rural economic development strategies but as a means of providing particular services to young people, especially disadvantaged youth. Directors of economic development employed by non-metropolitan LGAs would not normally be responsible for the implementation of council’s youth policy. Hence the project required a major shift in the thinking of Warrnambool City and Moyne Shire Council’s directors of economic development. During the course of the project Warrnambool City Council appointed a new director of Economic Development (David Keenan). There was a perception from some managers that the Youth Enterprise strategy was not “core business”. In the case of Moyne the manager of community support (Meg Baker), rather than the director of economic development, (James Purcell) was given responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Moyne youth enterprise project.

Whether economic development or human/community services units within council should be responsible for managing future youth enterprise initiatives depends on the central aims of such projects. Where the government’s priority is the development of young people as future entrepreneurs to contribute to the economic development of a region, the project should be located within economic development units or similar organisations such as RDOs. However, the key individuals concerned in managing the project would need to have a clear understanding of and demonstrates a commitment to youth enterprise. Where the government’s priority is to address equity and access issues, community services personnel within council or other agencies such as Brophy Youth Services would more appropriately administer the project.
Youth Enterprise as Community Development

The idea that youth are a key to community development needed to be more explicit.

In a number of cases, participants were under the impression that having a strategic focus on youth, as a new approach to community development meant an exclusive focus on youth.

One project in particular, Terang Resources (Artspace) took a community development perspective. Young people became involved in public life by putting on exhibitions, finding sponsorship and promoting their art in the community. The development of Artspace allowed young people to be seen outside the ‘welfare model’ and as change agents within the community. This role of young people as agents of social change is being developed in the next phase of the project being funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. Building on the experience of the Youth Enterprise Strategy, this project supports young people to work with all members of the community to develop social capital and enhance community capacity building. The development of social capital is central to the social and economic well being of communities and influences how well they can respond to and adapt to change (Bruce 1998).

The Corangamite Youth Enterprise Committee argues that:

Terang Resources managed the Corangamite Youth Enterprise Project in an alliance with three other community organisations, including local government. This provided the opportunity for us to pool our resources and expertise which in turn strengthened the project and established a strong network within the Shire. This continuing alliance is one of the positive outcomes of the project.

In Moyne Shire there was a substantial shift in thinking and action around youth issues. At the commencement of the project the Shire had a very limited youth specific focus. By the end of the project there was the development of a youth policy and the employment of a Youth Development Officer to continue programs in the area. Management at a Shire level brought about this change, because they could see benefits for the project at a local level and for the wider strategy. The involvement of Shire managers in management and project meetings gave a regional perspective as to what could be developed in regard to young people.

The approach to “Enterprise Education” that was initiated by the project did not fully recognise the potential that educators have in community development. While the more individualistic “enterprising individuals” and “enterprising skills” approach, which dominated the thinking of the working group is important, this in itself will not provide the level of support for cultural change that was envisaged. The assumption that the Teacher Education group worked with was that educators would teach “enterprise” to young people, rather than that educators themselves need to radically change the ways in which they relate to communities. Further development of the thinking about the role of education and educators in community development, through education, training and employment networks and through engagement with local economic development units is needed.
Recognising Local Cultures and Traditions

Local conditions and needs should shape the implementation of development strategies.

It was intended that the implementation of the Victorian Youth Enterprise Strategy would be shaped by local conditions and needs. The traditions and culture of the South West presented a number of opportunities as well as barriers. With little by way of large scale industrial development (as in many regional areas) and a population which has remained predominately Anglo Celtic (with 91% of the population born in Australia and 4% being born in the UK) (ABS Census figures) South West Victoria is politically and culturally a conservative rural region.

However the culture of the region is changing. In Warrnambool and Port Fairy the median weekly household income is $500-$699, while the rest of Corangamite and Moyne have a weekly median income of $300-$499. In other words, there is a new diversity in the region, and at the same time, a continuation of socio-economic inequalities.

Where the South of Moyne Shire (based on Port Fairy and Koroit) has a median age of 32 the North East (rural area) of the shire has a median age of 38 (ABS Census figures). As a consequence the youth culture and general attitudes on youth issues in the region is less traditional in Warrnambool-Port Fairy than in the more rural areas of Corangamite and Moyne. Hence one of the cultural change objectives of this project was to challenge somewhat negative attitudes on youth and to provide a basis for more positive, innovative youth policies. In the case of Moyne and Corangamite the project has established the case for the development of a separate youth policy and the allocation of council resources to support it. However the priorities for youth are significantly different in major centres like Warrnambool compared to the rural shires of Moyne (except for Port Fairy) and Corangamite. Warrnambool youth already have access to a large range of social and recreational facilities and employment opportunities. Kulcha Shift was able to build on this infrastructure. In contrast 'Artspace' at Camperdown or a similar facility in Mortlake or Koroit needed to be a key facility for youth, establishing the infrastructure for youth-focussed policies and activities.

A common concern for all these three local government authorities is the extent of youth out-migration – the number of able young people who leave the region in search of better employment and educational opportunities and don’t return. This problem is more acute in the rural areas of the region compared to Warrnambool, which has a university and TAFE campus.
Re-thinking Urban-based 'Network Models'

The concept of network and partnership that informs current approaches to 'whole-of-government' approaches may be more readily implemented in urban areas, where density of population and service provision and accessibility of transport facilitate the work of networking. To effectively address key youth and other related regional issues it is generally accepted that a wider, integrated regional response is required.

The formation of such linkage and partnerships is still in the embryonic stage in the South West. Considerable progress has been made since the 1990s with the establishment of the Greater Green Triangle Regional Association, initially a commonwealth RDO, but now representing and funded by all local government authorities in south-west Victoria, the Wimmera and south-east South Australia. The shires of Glenelg, Corangamite, Southern Grampians, Moyne and the city of Warrnambool operate as a sub-regional grouping within the GGT. The other key wider regional organisation is the commonwealth funded Greater Green Triangle Area Consultative Committee which focuses on employment, education and training issues and facilitating regional assistance projects. Regional Assistance Program funding provided through the Area Consultative Committees represented a potential source of ongoing funding for future youth enterprise initiatives within the region.

At the same time there is evidence that traditional tensions between the City of Warrnambool and the Shires of Corangamite and Moyne, although less relevant, have been reinforced. For example, in a follow-up interview a member of the committee of management of the Corangamite youth enterprise project argued that DEET funding should have been allocated separately to each of the councils rather than using Warrnambool City Council as the facilitating agency. It was suggested that funding for the Warrnambool City Council's multimedia and business centres has not been used outside Warrnambool to assist young people in the region to develop critical skills.

In terms of recreational, social and employment opportunities for young people there are significant differences within the shires of Corangamite and Moyne. In both, the southern coastal townships of Port Fairy (Moyne) and Port Campbell (Corangamite) have developed into prosperous tourism centres with a distinctive surf-youth culture and opportunities for employment in tourism-hospitality. Employment opportunities for young people in the traditional rural supply towns within the shire, such as Koroit and Morialta (Moyne), Camperdown and Terang (Corangamite) are more limited. The growth and relative prosperity of Port Fairy/Port Campbell compared to other towns in the shire has exacerbated tensions within the Moyne and Corangamite Shire Councils. For example, councilors were divided on the issue of whether or not council funded tourism facilities and services should be concentrated in Port Fairy, as a major tourist centre or spread more evenly across the shire.

These complexities between the regional city and local towns are not unique to the South West of Victoria, and would need to be given consideration in any future implementation of the Strategy.
Part 7
Implications for Victorian Policy

The Youth Enterprise Strategy has generated findings that inform current policy directions towards a more integrated approach to policy and service provision, across the areas of Youth, Health, Employment, Education and Training and Rural and Regional Development.

In Victoria, the Department of Employment, Education and Training has given the strongest message about the necessity for whole-of-government approaches to policy and practice. The implementation of the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) in regions around Victoria in 2001 signals a new commitment to working across the sectors of education, industry and local government, to create an infrastructure to enable Victoria to meet the challenges of the new century.

The Youth Enterprise Strategy pilot takes this policy direction further, by focussing on youth enterprise and rural and regional development, as well as on the more traditional DEET focus on education and training. The findings of the pilot should further inform the next generation of cross-sectoral policies and programs even more broadly than has been achieved through the Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training (2000).

The contribution of the Strategy pilot is reinforced by the recent decision by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation to fund the continuation of three of the key elements in the Strategy pilot under its Mental Health Strategy. These elements (auspiced under the Youth Enterprise Strategy by Moyne Shire, Terang Resources and Brophy Family and Youth Services) were funded on the basis of their demonstrated capacity during the pilot phase to contribute to young people’s economic participation in society. This development supports the view, expressed in the Ministerial Review on Post Compulsory Education and Training and in the Prime Minister’s Pathways Action Taskforce, that both Government and the community have a responsibility to provide more ‘seamless’ avenues of action and participation for young people in work, education or training.

There is the potential for the Victorian Office for Youth to play a more strategic role to assist in the integration of education and training, health, and economic and community development policies and programs.

The pilot has:
- demonstrated the potential for local areas to implement cross-sectoral programs in the interests of young people’s well-being and participation, across DEET, Health, Family and Youth Services and State Development;
- reinforced the importance of shaping regional initiatives, that build on but do not attempt to replicate urban models;
- highlighted the need for Government departments to facilitate areas of ‘overlap’ in the interests of youth and community development, improved education, training and employment outcomes and youth well-being; and
• revealed the viability of activating community energy and resources through the establishment of a strategic approach to youth enterprise.

A further investment in developing and refining the concept of a Youth Enterprise Strategy for Victoria based on the successes and strengths of the pilot would provide a framework for:

• effective, locally relevant, all-of-government and whole-of-community approaches, including industry and non-government organisations;
• development of social capital in rural and regional areas;
• identification of new economies in regional and rural areas, especially those that draw on communication and information technology skills;
• participation of young people in the new local partnerships;
• recognition of rural-urban links and pathways that strengthen rural communities; and
• the implementation of a new teacher education program that prepares teachers to take a youth-focussed, inter-sectoral and enterprising approach to education.
### Appendices

#### Appendix 1
Outline of project objectives completed by project coordinators, October 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Project Objectives</strong></th>
<th><strong>What does this mean for your school?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strategies:</strong> What do we need to do to achieve our objectives?</th>
<th><strong>Monitoring:</strong> What indicators of achievement/success will we look for?</th>
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<td>• Young people’s education, training and employment pathways in the region.</td>
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<td>• The nature of the partnerships between youth, community, business and government that have been developed.</td>
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<td>• The extent to which young people have contributed to regional development through the creation of small business.</td>
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<td>• A change in location culture in terms of attitudes towards the employment of young people and attitudes of young people to the region.</td>
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Appendix 2

References


