



## **The Dandenong*First* Project**

**Improving education and employment outcomes for young  
people in Greater Dandenong**

**for**



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## Acronyms

ACE	Adult Community Education
AMEP	Adult Migrant Education Program
AMES	Adult Multicultural Education Service
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CBD	Central Business District
CGD	City of Greater Dandenong
CGEA	Certificate of General Education for Adults
CIIF	Collaborative Internet Innovation Fund
CMY	Centre for Multicultural Youth
DDB	Dandenong Development Board
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DHS	Department of Human Services
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIIRD	Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development
DPCD	Department of Planning and Community Development
EET	Employment, Education and Training
ESA	Employment Services Area
GPT	General Property Trust
GRIPP	Gain Respect Increase Personal Power
JPET	Job Placement, Employment and Training
JSCI	Job Seeker Clarification Instrument
LGA	Local Government Area
LLNP	Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program
MIC	Minaret Islamic College
MYAG	Multicultural Youth Action Group
NCLC	Narre Community Learning Centre
NIEIR	National Institution of Economic and Industry Research
PSP	Personal Support Program
RCD	Revitalising Central Dandenong
RIL	Regional Industry Link
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SBATs	School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships
SCAAB	Springvale Community Aid Advice Bureau
SE CASA	South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault
SEADS	South East Alcohol and Drug Service
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SE LLEN	South East Local Learning and Employment Network
SEMMA	South East Melbourne Manufacturing Alliance
SE MRC	South Eastern Migrant Resource Centre
TAFE	Tertiary and Further Education
UREEP	Urban Renewal Employment Enterprise Program
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools
YRIPP	Youth Referral and Independent Persons Program
YSAS	Youth Substance Abuse Service
YTSI	Youth Transitions Support Initiative

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# Executive Summary

## *Introduction*

Dandenong is a place of growth and opportunity. Over the last decade, economic growth in the area has been strong and industry employment growth has been amongst the highest in the state. Manufacturing, retail, construction and wholesale trade are all major employers in the area (NIEIR 2009<sup>1</sup>). Dandenong's population of 130,751 is expected to grow substantially over the coming years with planned housing developments. The EastLink tollway has also increased the attractiveness of the region to residents and business owners (RICA 2009:9<sup>2</sup>). The State Government has been investing in the area too, with a major financial investment in the Revitalising Dandenong Project redeveloping the City centre and transport infrastructure.

Despite these strengths, many young residents are excluded from growth local employment opportunities. Most unemployed residents have education below Year 12 and lack an initial qualification. Equally important, they often lack work experience and language skills at a point where more and more of the available jobs in Dandenong require specific skills and post school qualifications. As a result the last decade has seen Dandenong suffer the worst increase in its unemployment rate of any municipality in Melbourne (NIEIR 2009). This situation is set to continue given the impact of the global financial crisis and data indicating that the impact of resulting job losses has been borne almost entirely by young Australians and, in particular, young men (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009<sup>3</sup>).

Over recent years there has been an increasing focus on the social inclusion of young people: education, training and employment are central to that agenda. The Rudd government's vision of a socially inclusive society is one in which young people feel valued and have the opportunity to participate fully in economic, social and civic life. This vision responds to calls for social justice and community cohesion as well as the recognition of Australia's place within a wider, globalized context and, in the context of an ageing population, future labour force demands. At a community level, the social consequences of a breakdown in social inclusion have already been demonstrated, most publically in the 'riots' of 2007. Victoria's A Fairer Victoria policy framework is now explicitly aligned with this social inclusion agenda.

All sectors of the community have a role to play and commitments to make in ensuring young residents have real opportunities for social inclusion. The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008: 18<sup>4</sup>) reinforces this call:

With commitment and hard work – from children and young people and their parents, carers and families, from schools, teachers, communities, business and all Australian governments – all young Australians will be provided with the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Victorian government has already gone some way to creating the structures for 'joined-up' responses that bring together a range of players. The Local Learning and Employment Network

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (2009) *Dandenong Industry and Labour Market – 2006 Census Update and Indicators Project*, Dandenong Development Board, Dandenong.

<sup>2</sup> Regional Industry Career Advisors Network (2009), *Environmental Scan*, DEEWR, Canberra.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009) *Catalogue 6202.0 – Labour Force Australia Jul 2009*, ABS.

<sup>4</sup> MCEETYA (2008) *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne.

(LLEN), one of 31 that cover Victoria, has had a central role to play and, in the arena of 13 – 19 year olds, that role will expand under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions. However, LLEN do not have the mandate to address those aged over 19 with significant barriers — a common scenario for refugee and migrant youth — nor do they have a mandate for service delivery. Earlier research by NIEIR has suggested that if English proficiency, schooling and vocational qualifications amongst residents of Greater Dandenong were improved, we could expect to have 4000 more locals (aged 16 – 25) in work by 2021. The *DandenongFirst* Project was completed by Mission Australia for the Dandenong Development Board and aims to identify how this target might be achieved.

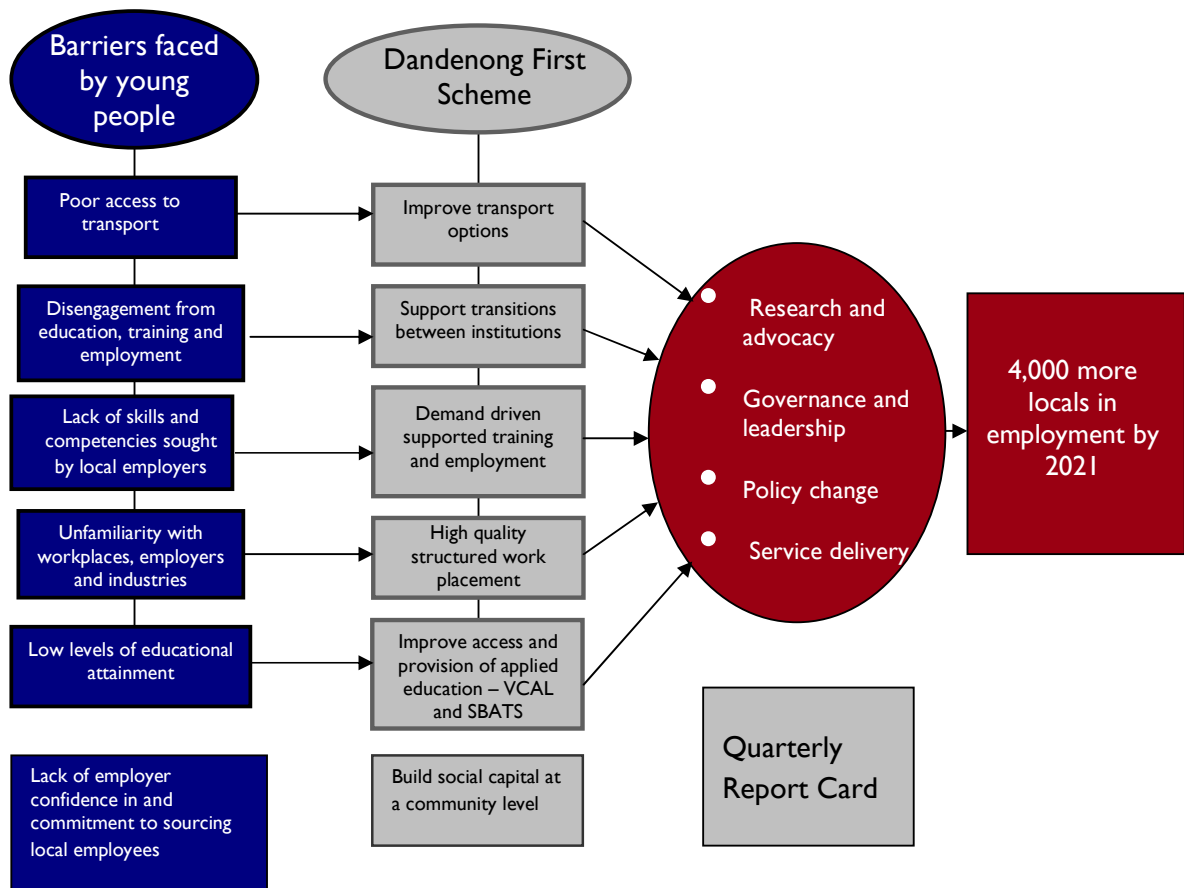
### ***Research Outcome***

The *DandenongFirst* project suggests that achieving the target of 4000 more locals in employment by 2021 will require a sustained combination of research and advocacy, policy change and leadership, and measuring and reporting across five areas: Transport, Transitions, Skills, Experience, and Participation & Attainment. It is unlikely any of this will occur without co-ordination and the necessary resources and mandate to motivate, sustain and monitor change. The primary recommendation of this report is for the creation of a *DandenongFirst* Scheme, whose goal is to ensure that 4000 more locals are in work in Greater Dandenong by 2021.

While there are existing agencies with a mandate and some degree of resource to act in a given field, *DandenongFirst* will be charged with responsibility to orchestrate a series of specific, integrated projects to ensure the removal of barriers, the creation of new opportunities and the refocusing of existing opportunities for local people aged 16 – 25. A core role for *DandenongFirst* will be to monitor progress and report to the community.

The specific projects of the proposed *DandenongFirst* Scheme are illustrated in the diagram below

## DandenongFirst Scheme



Whilst the DandenongFirst Scheme will be the primary vehicle for overcoming the barriers identified in this report, it will take some time to develop the details and secure the necessary consensus and resources for its creation. In the interim there are a range of measures which can be pursued under the mandates of partner agencies involved in the DandenongFirst Project, Mission Australia and the Dandenong Development Board. The recommendations for these measures can be found in the main report.

### ***Findings and Discussion***

Using the information gathered in the research for the DandenongFirst Project, findings and recommendations have been made across five areas; Transport, Transitions, Skills, Experience, and Participation & Attainment.

#### **Transport**

Without efficient travel options between home and a place of study or work, young people are excluded from participation. Nearly 80% of survey respondents identified transport as an

employment barrier for half their clients or more. Public transport in the northern half of the city is good, with six train stations and a suite of bus routes. The southern half of the city is the location of a number of new business parks and employment sites, but there are no train stations and only two bus routes. State Government has completed a review of public transport in the area, and new routes in the southern half of the city have been proposed. The review has not been made public, and the government has not undertaken to fund the proposed routes.

The primary mode of travelling to work in Melbourne is by car and many jobs require a driver's licence. No driver's licence was listed as a barrier to employment for all or most of their clients by over 80% of survey respondents. Driver education programs are a proven method of addressing this problem. For instance, seven driver education programs, each meeting the needs of specific cohorts, running from 2010 to 2021 would assist 2,310 participants to get their licence. A response of this order would be required to achieve the target of 4000 more locals in work by 2021.

Other ways of addressing transport issues in the city are also required. A study of feasible, innovative ways of overcoming transport barriers for Greater Dandenong's disadvantaged young people could identify appropriate options.

## **Transitions**

Many young people in Greater Dandenong are disengaged from education, training and employment. Once they have been disengaged for some time, it becomes more difficult for services to assist young people to progress towards employment.

Transitions support services provide detailed career advice, including identification of barriers to employment, education and training needs, and referral to appropriate local education, employment and training opportunities. These services are currently available to young people in Greater Dandenong but primarily to those who are already disengaged.

Transitions support services could have a greater impact with young people who are still involved with education and training, and would assist them to continue their progress towards skills, qualifications and employment. This has been recognised and new resources for such services are becoming available, particularly through employment services and DEECD. It is unclear whether the new services will fill the gaps, or whether transitions support services available across all the service sectors are sufficient.

## **Skills**

A key finding from the research concerns the mismatch between the needs of local employers and the development of a labour force with specific sets of skills. While the new Job Services Australia is designed to provide holistic support for job seekers at the same time as actively engaging with local industry to develop employer specific training packages and a supply of appropriately skills jobseekers. It is expected that the new regime will require a degree of capacity building to achieve its objectives. However, in a context of rising unemployment, employers will also have a range of 'work ready' applicants competing for available jobs. A large proportion of unemployed young people in Greater Dandenong have skill gaps as well as low levels of English proficiency and generic employability skills.

Achieving 4,000 local people in local jobs will require a dual focus. On the one hand there needs to be a sustained intervention to demonstrate how demand driven work-based training can be customised to meet the changing needs of local employers and to enhance their profitability while contributing to social inclusion. On the other hand, employment in social enterprise is a proven method of improving skills and employability: providing integrated social support and life-skills development, vocational skills, a social context, transitions support, and a live industry training context.

Successful social enterprises are usually hosted by a community sector agency in partnership with a group training company, an RTO and a secure customer base, often in the public sector. VicUrban's Revitalising Central Dandenong project provides an opportunity for the development of a social enterprise sector in Dandenong, but there are a range of other industry contexts where social enterprise may be viable.

## **Experience**

The lack of connection between Dandenong's unemployed young people and its employers comes at great cost to both. Each has much to gain from the other, but there are too few platforms or contexts between them to begin discussions and find expression for common interests.

Structured work placements are a low-risk way of introducing young people to the workplace and develop skills whilst employers can encounter the employees of the future and contribute to positive social outcomes. Work placements are currently arranged by secondary schools, RTOs and community sector pre employment programs, many of whom struggle to find a sufficient range of employers and industries to host their students. Employers report that the risks associated with work placements and the administrative burdens are a disincentive. At the same time, there is a need to ensure a goodness of fit for work placements ensuring that the 'level' of requirement – that is, work experience or structured workplace learning – is aligned with the capability of the employer.

A new structure is required, one that:

- Manages the risk exposure of employers and young people on placements
- Increases the profile of the structured work placements and attracts more employers to participate
- Reduces the administrative burden upon agencies sourcing and administering placements
- Provides access to a range of industries and workplaces suited to the diverse interests of young people
- Provides a pedagogical and support structure which maximises the educative and transformative potential of placements
- Enhances opportunities for embedded mentoring

A central agency, with a mandate to source and manage placements on behalf of agencies and institutions would be well placed to achieve these goals. Because of their small scale and limited resources, community agencies providing pre-employment type programs are in most immediate need of the services of such an agency, but it may be feasible for a proportion of the placements required by larger institutions such as Chisholm TAFE, secondary schools and employment services agencies to be sourced through the central agency. It is likely that this would function as a brokerage, fee for service arrangement in this context.

Parallel to this process of realising the potential of structured work placements there is a need to work with employers to build their commitment to the local community. The policy agenda clearly positions employers as a partner in ensuring the social inclusion of young people yet many employers do not see their role in that partnership or, if they do, do not have the information or skills to be able to create opportunities for young people. Accordingly there is a role, possibly within the proposed agency, for building the capacity of the business community.

## **Participation & Attainment**

For many students, the more traditional pathways and pedagogical paradigms of full time secondary schooling and VCE is not appropriate. A wider diversity of options catering to a range of educational needs and aspirations is necessary to keep these students engaged and participating. Two models for responding to this need within the mainstream education system are SBATs and VCAL. Given the demographics and barriers we have noted, opportunities to participate in these programs, their quality and appropriateness are particularly important to young people in Dandenong.

Research into SBATs and related programs show clear benefits. Coordinating SBATs and integrating them with the curriculum is a time consuming task and Victorian schools are not currently resourced for the costs incurred. This means that some students who may benefit from undertaking SBATs are not currently doing so. There are some precedents for coordinating and resourcing SBATs at a regional level through clusters<sup>5</sup>.

Despite the wide application of VCAL in the region, stakeholders have identified a number of factors preventing young people taking advantage of the VCAL. Limiting factors include:

- perceptions that it is a marginal option
- the perceived and actual lack of pathways to higher education
- a lack of information and promotion of the programs offered by schools
- the availability of appropriately qualified staff

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<sup>5</sup> The service provided to the Geelong region by the SGR LLEN is one example

## Background and Purpose

In 2008, the Dandenong Development Board received the final report for the Dandenong Industry & Labour Market Project, a research study it had commissioned from the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). The research found that in the ten years to 2006, industrial development and employment growth in the City of Greater Dandenong had exceeded the state average, but 1000 fewer Greater Dandenong residents were employed. Greater Dandenong was the only Melbourne LGA to experience a fall in resident employment levels during this time. NIEIR found that many of the new jobs had been secured by workers living elsewhere and residents of Greater Dandenong were not able to take advantage of the opportunities in the City. Many of the new jobs in the City required skills not possessed by resident jobseekers. Three drivers of this effect were identified:

- The low education attainment of the workforce and the low education participation rate of residents.
- Skilled and high income residents move away from Dandenong to areas with better liveability and lower travel times to work.
- The high level of humanitarian and refugee migrants settling in the area.

The report made a number of findings and recommendations relating to the first of these drivers. Finding 23 says that “as a policy objective, there is adequate scope for intervention initiatives, such as enhanced schooling, enhanced English proficiency and TAFE upgrade, to deliver 4,000 additional Dandenong residents into employment by 2021.”

In January 2009, the Dandenong Development Board and Mission Australia endorsed a partnership agreement for Mission Australia, with the support of the Dandenong Development Board, to undertake a research project considering education and employment issues in Greater Dandenong and developing a plan to achieve the goal set out in Finding 23 of the NIEIR report.

When considering a viable scope for the project and where collective efforts might have the most significant impact, it was agreed that the report would focus upon unemployed and underemployed residents of the City, aged 16-25. The definition used for the term ‘underemployed’ was ‘those who deem their current employment to be insufficient (e.g. number of hours worked, skill level required) and wish to make better use of their skills.’

Other elements of the project were to:

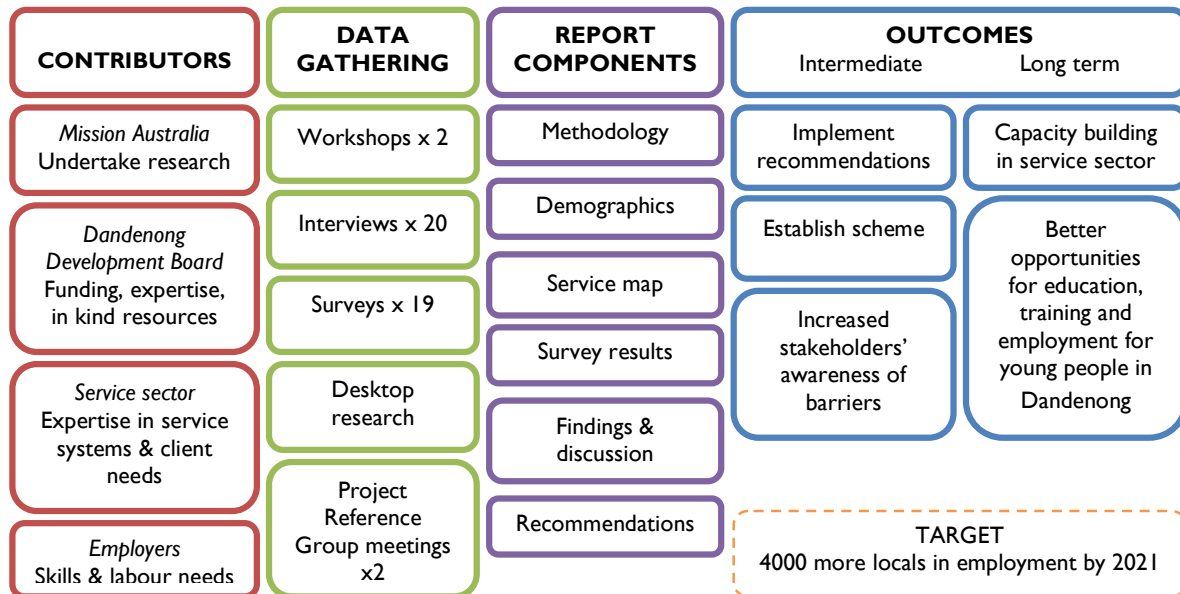
- Develop a service map of the programs in the Greater Dandenong area supporting disadvantaged 16-25 year olds.
- Develop a suite of recommendations for how the primary goal of 4000 more residents in employment by 2021 might be achieved.
- Involve stakeholders and build support for the project amongst those individuals and agencies likely to have a role in implementing the recommendations.

This document articulates the research project undertaken by Mission Australia and presents the methodology, service map, findings and recommendations.

## Methodology

Research was undertaken in the first half of 2009, and focussed on the education and training needs of 16-25 year old, unemployed and under-employed residents of Greater Dandenong. Researchers sought the input of service providers and considered a range of data to create a service map, identify trends and issues and formulate recommendations. The following diagram outlines the research process and structure.

### DandenongFirst Project – Process and structure



Primary research for this report was gathered by three separate means – workshops, interviews and surveys. Participants in each of these processes were provided with a Plain Language Statement outlining the structure and purpose of the research and its ethics framework. The following assurances were offered.

- Participation is voluntary. There are no consequences should you decide to withdraw from the research at any time.
- The records of information you provide will only be accessed and used directly by Mission Australia's research staff.
- The information you provide will be used only for the purposes of the 'Dandenong Alternate Education and DandenongFirst projects'.
- None of the information you provide will be used in a way which directly identifies you or your organisation (unless your consent has been specifically sought and granted). However, whilst every reasonable effort will be made to protect your identity, it may still be possible for some people to guess your identity from the information you have provided.

- Participants will be provided with a summary of the research findings.

The information provided in this report is in accordance with the above. Where specific details are given, above and beyond the stipulations above, further approval has been sought and granted from the organisations and individuals concerned.

### ***Workshops***

Two separate workshops were held. The first focussed on education and skills issues and took place at the offices of the Dandenong Development Board on 2 April 2009. Seventeen people attended, including representatives from:

- Springvale Learning and Activities Centre
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- City of Greater Dandenong
- South East Migrant Resource Centre (SE MRC)
- VicUrban
- LINK Employment and Training
- Chisholm Institute of TAFE
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)
- Mission Australia
- Dandenong Development Board
- SE LLEN

The second workshop was held on 9 April 2009 and focussed on employment issues. It was attended by fourteen people, including representatives from:

- South East Melbourne Manufacturers' Alliance (SEMMA)
- Coles Supermarkets
- MEGT
- VicUrban
- LINK Employment & Training
- Mission Australia
- Dandenong Development Board
- SE LLEN

Both events were facilitated by Phil Young, from Right People Consulting, who provided their services on a pro-bono basis.

Participants were invited to discuss various approaches to meeting the target for 4000 more people employed in the City by 2021. Topics covered in the discussions were recorded by the group and by staff of Mission Australia and the Dandenong Development Board. The data is included in this report.

### ***Interviews***

Twenty semi-structured interviews were arranged with stakeholders in the City of Greater Dandenong. Interviewed agencies include:

- The B.E.S.T. Centre (Berry Street special school)
- Springvale Community Aid & Advice Bureau (SCAAB)
- Freeman Aitken Pty Ltd (local employer)
- SE LLEN (two interviews with different staff)
- WAYSS
- LINK Employment & Training
- Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)
- Youth Referral and Independent Person Program (YRIPP)
- Chisholm Institute of TAFE (two interviews with different staff)
- City of Greater Dandenong - Youth Services
- VicUrban
- Connectus
- SEMMA
- SE MRC
- Fletcher Insulation
- GPT Group
- Coles Supermarkets
- Australia Personnel

The interviews with service providers sought to determine the services offered and their structure, identify gaps and opportunities for improvement, and understand the barriers faced by young people when pursuing education and employment.

The interviews with employers sought to identify the labour and skills needs in the future, their current recruitment processes and to test support for proposed initiatives.

Interviews were transcribed and analysed for relevant data. Data from these interviews is used throughout this report, but most notably in the service map.

### ***Service Map***

The service map in this document describes the operations of a range of large and small organisations providing services to our cohort, unemployed or underemployed 16-25 year old residents of Greater Dandenong.

It accounts for the largest and most central agencies and sectors in the area, along with a range of providers of smaller niche programs. Information in these profiles was drawn from interviews, survey responses and existing documentation. The profiles do not cover every service and agency but rather the document gives a broad understanding of the services and opportunities available in the City, and some of their strengths and limitations.

A more comprehensive list of relevant organisations can be found in Appendix 2 to this document, *Organisations receiving requests to complete the survey*. This list was developed by compiling three existing lists provided by supportive organisations:

- School Focussed Youth Service, June 2008, *Greater Dandenong Youth & Family Services*
- Dandenong Development Board, February 2009, *Contacts - Master List*

- Susanne White, 2007, “Networks in Dandenong and SE Region – September 2007”. *Greater Dandenong and SE Region Youth Network Mapping Project*, Resolutions Group

## **Survey**

A survey of the organisations delivering services to unemployed young people in Greater Dandenong was distributed in both hard copy and online formats. A copy of the paper-based survey can be found in Appendix 1 to this document. An online version was also developed to enable dissemination of the survey via network email lists. In April, a link to the online survey was sent to eleven well-networked organisations, with the request that it be forwarded to any organisation delivering services to unemployed or underemployed people in the City of Greater Dandenong, aged 16 to 25. In the successive weeks, follow up calls and emails were made to recipients to increase the response rate. In addition to this, some hard copies of the survey were delivered in person, with a return envelope.

It is known that the survey was disseminated to 55 organisations but it is highly likely that it was forwarded onto more. A list of these agencies is included in Appendix 2 to this document. 19 of these organisations responded, giving a response rate of 35%.

Of the 19 organisations responding to the Dandenong*First* Service Survey, 89% were not-for-profit agencies. These 19 organisations have provided 70 services to 3161 unemployed or underemployed young people in the City of Greater Dandenong in the past year.

## **Stakeholder engagement**

Amongst the goals of the partnership between Mission Australia and the Dandenong Development Board were to build awareness of the Dandenong*First* research project, build stakeholder engagement with the education and employment issues facing young people in Dandenong and establish a consensus about the initiatives required to overcome the existing barriers. Opportunities for discussion of the research process and findings also served to strengthen the veracity of the data and feasibility of the recommendations.

To further these ends, Mission Australia and the Dandenong Development Board convened a Project Reference Group. The Group consisted of representatives from;

- SE LLEN
- SEMMA
- DEECD
- VicUrban
- LINK Employment and Training
- South Eastern Migrant Resource Centre
- DIIRD
- Chisholm TAFE
- Dandenong Development Board; and
- Mission Australia

The Project Reference Group met twice; once in May to consider a *Situations Report* where the data gathered and methodology was presented, and once in June to consider the draft recommendations. The feedback and advice received have been incorporated into this report.

### ***Limitations of data***

The most significant limitation of the data presented in this report is that it was gathered from employees of organisations providing services to young people rather than young people themselves. Employees were targeted for a number of reasons. Firstly, there are many ethical issues surrounding the research of young people, necessitating a complex ethical framework to survey or interview them directly. Secondly, employees in the community services sector have a broad range of knowledge; street level knowledge of issues facing their clients (our cohort), knowledge of other organisations and services in the region and knowledge of the government policy that funds and regulates their sector. All of this information was necessary to gain an insight into the factors affecting the delivery of services to unemployed young people in the City. Nonetheless, young people themselves can offer unique insights and perspectives on the barriers they face and the services they need. It is suggested that, if possible, further research addressing education and employment issues in the City engage with young people directly.

There are methodological limitations to the data from the survey, particularly insofar as the numbers of clients served by organisations varies widely. The organisation with the smallest client base had 12 clients while the largest had 600 clients. The data presented has not been weighted to take this into account, and responses from the organisation with the smallest number of clients are given the same consideration as those of the largest.

As noted previously, information in the Service Map is not universal and there are many organisations without a profile. We believe, nonetheless, the document is sufficiently detailed to give a broad understanding of the services and opportunities available in the City, and some of their strengths and limitations.

## Demographics

The population of Greater Dandenong, 130,751, has remained relatively constant for the past 15 years.<sup>6</sup> It is expected to grow substantially with planned housing developments and the recently completed construction of the EastLink tollway, increasing the attractiveness of the region to residents and business owners.<sup>7</sup>

Compared to some nearby areas, Dandenong does not have a particularly large demographic of young people. Nevertheless, the number of disadvantaged young people is constantly replenished through the migration system.

At the time of the 2006, census, Greater Dandenong had a total population of 17,848 residents aged 15-25.

The residents of Greater Dandenong come from approximately 150 different countries.<sup>8</sup> 42.6% of the population were born in Australia, but the majority of these are children of parents born outside of Australia.<sup>9</sup>

The largest migrant populations come from Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and India.<sup>10</sup> 55.2% of the residents of Greater Dandenong speak a language other than English at home. Many of the migrant settlers are refugees on humanitarian visas, numbering approximately 900 per year, comprising one quarter of all humanitarian settlements in Victoria. They come from countries such as Sudan, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia.<sup>11</sup>

Migrants feature heavily amongst the clients of service agencies, with 44% of organisations responding to the DandenongFirst service survey having at least 95% of clients from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background. 31% of respondents had less than half of their clients from a CALD group. Respondents were asked to list the top three CALD groups they provide services to. The following table represents the percentage of organisations that listed each CALD group as being among their top three groups within their client base.

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<sup>6</sup> City of Greater Dandenong, *Social Conditions in Greater Dandenong*, [http://www.greaterdandenong.com/Resources/SiteDocuments/sid1\\_doc28844.pdf](http://www.greaterdandenong.com/Resources/SiteDocuments/sid1_doc28844.pdf), 2006, p. 1. accessed June 2009

<sup>7</sup> Regional Industry Career Advisors Network (RICA), *Environmental Scan*, February 2009, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> City of Greater Dandenong, *Great people great place, a statistical snapshot of those who live and work in Greater Dandenong*, [http://www.greaterdandenong.com/SiteDocuments/Statistical\\_Snapshot.pdf](http://www.greaterdandenong.com/SiteDocuments/Statistical_Snapshot.pdf), 2003, cited in RICA, *Environmental Scan*, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> South East Local Learning and Employment Network, *City of Greater Dandenong - Environmental Scan*, [http://www.sellen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/greater\\_dandenong.pdf](http://www.sellen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/greater_dandenong.pdf), 2003, cited in RICA, *Environmental Scan*, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> City of Greater Dandenong, *Social Conditions in Greater Dandenong*, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

Table 1 - % of respondents selecting each CALD group as among the top three in its clientele

<b>CALD group</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Sudanese	65%
Afghani	37%
Pacific Islander	29%
Asian	24%
Burmese	24%
African	18%
Vietnamese	18%
Indian	18%
Polynesian	12%
Sri Lankan	6%
Samoan	6%
Chinese	6%
Eritrean	6%
Cambodian	6%

(Source: DandenongFirst Service Survey, 2009)

The most commonly listed were Sudanese and Afghani, suggesting that of their CALD clients, it is mostly young people on humanitarian visas requiring assistance from community service providers.

### **Education**

The residents of Greater Dandenong possess a significantly lower level of educational attainment than in other local government areas (LGAs). Young people are more likely to leave school prior to completing year 12 than the Melbourne average and are less likely to attend university.<sup>12</sup> 63.4% of these early school leavers leave during, or at the end of year 11, and 73% of them are male. In 2006, 15% of 20-24 year olds were not in education or in paid employment. This is the second highest level of youth disengagement in Melbourne.<sup>13</sup>

The ABS Census of 2006 reported that there are 8,338 15-19 year old residents in the City of Greater Dandenong. The following suggests that there are 12,592 full time secondary school students in the City.

Table 2 - Secondary school full-time enrolments, City of Greater Dandenong, 2008

<b>Sum of Year 7</b>	<b>Sum of Year 8</b>	<b>Sum of Year 9</b>	<b>Sum of Year 10</b>	<b>Sum of Year 11</b>	<b>Sum of Year 12</b>
2130	2217	2204	2135.3	2082.2	1823

(Source: City LLEN Data Report, March 2009)

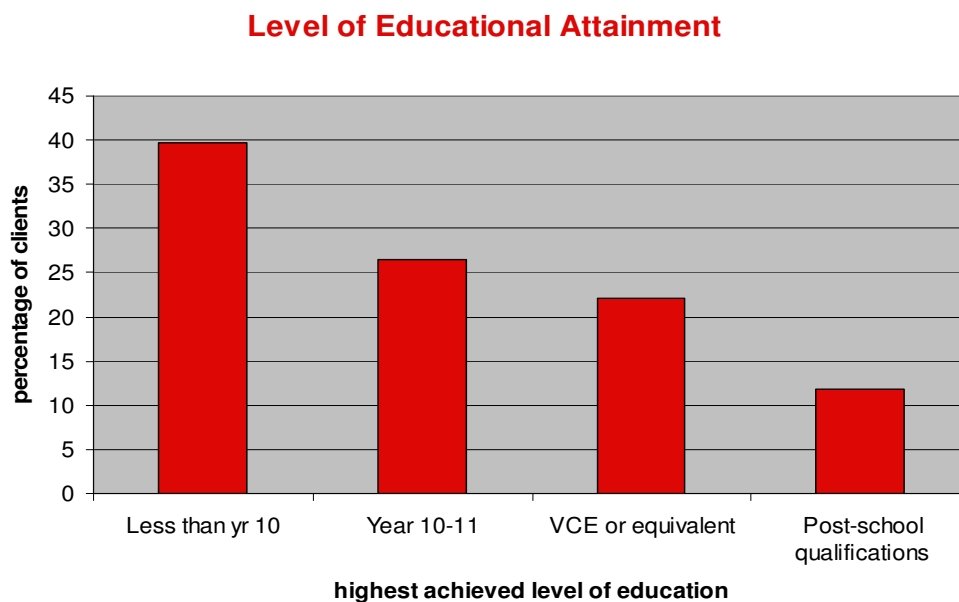
<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

This graph shows that in 2008, enrolments peaked in year 8 and year 9 and steadily declined until year 12. The figures suggest that 18% of students enrolled in Year 9 do not enrol in Year 12.

Because of the relationship between high needs and low educational attainment, we might expect young people access services in Greater Dandenong to have lower attainment than the population as a whole. DandenongFirst Service Survey respondents were asked to rate the level of educational attainment of their clients in the demographic of concern. They were given four levels of attainment – less than year 10, year 10-11, VCE or equivalent and post-school qualifications – and asked to nominate the percentage of their clients that had achieved each level. The following table represents the results.

Figure 1 - Level of educational attainment



(Source: DandenongFirst Service Survey, 2009)

88% of young people accessing services had attained less Year 12 and 40% had attained less than year 10.

There are a number of factors contributing to the low levels of educational attainment amongst young people in Greater Dandenong. One of these factors is the workforce status of the parents of secondary students. Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate the occupational categories of parents of students enrolled in year 10-12 in a government school in Greater Dandenong.

Table 3 - Key: Student family occupation categories (SFO) 2008, City of Greater Dandenong

Category	Definition
A	Senior management in large business organisation, government administration and defence, and qualified professionals
B	Other business managers, arts/media/sportspersons and associate professionals
C	Tradesmen/women, clerks and skilled office, sales and service staff
D	Machine operators, hospitality staff, assistants, labourers and related workers
N	Not employed
U	Unknown

(Source: City LLEN Data Report, March 2009)

Table 4 - Proportion of full-time enrolments in each SFO category (year 10-12 government schools only), City of Greater Dandenong, 2008

	Student Family Occupation Categories, 2008							
	A	B	C	D	N	D&N	U	Total
<b>Full time enrolments</b>	108	262	494.7	1134.7	1166.2	2300.9	8.2	3173.8
<b>Allocation (%)</b>	3.4	8.3	15.6	35.8	36.7	72.5	0.3	100

(Source: City LLEN Data Report, March 2009)

Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate that in 2008, more than three fifths of the parents of students enrolled in year 10-12 in a government school in Greater Dandenong were disadvantaged in the labour market; half were unemployed and half worked as machine operators, hospitality staff and labourers.

Those students Greater Dandenong who do complete Year 12 are less likely to go into University, and more likely to go into VET study than their counterparts across the state. The following table represents the destinations data from Year 12 leavers (all strands) in the South East LLEN area (including Greater Dandenong).

Table 5 – Year 12 completers destination data, 2007

Destinations of 2007 Year 12 completers											
LLEN	Total Year 12 completers		University	VET Cert IV+	VET entry-level	Apprentice	Trainee	Employed full-time	Employed part-time	Looking for work	All completers
South East	3550	n	860	500	124	126	82	291	203	113	2299
		%	37.4	21.7	5.4	5.5	3.6	12.7	8.8	4.9	100.0
Victoria	48780	n	14510	4729	1223	1910	1339	4893	3005	1261	32870
		%	44.1	14.4	3.7	5.8	4.1	14.9	9.1	3.8	100.0

(Source: 2007 On track Data)

## ***Employment and Industry***

Whilst the unemployment rate for Melbourne has declined in the last two censuses, the number of Greater Dandenong residents in paid employment has dropped, suggesting many local jobs are going to people who live outside of Greater Dandenong.<sup>14</sup>

Currently, the manufacturing industry is the largest employer of residents of Greater Dandenong, providing one third of all jobs. Retail is the next largest employer, providing 15% of jobs. One third of the jobs held by people in greater Dandenong are in labouring or trades, while 15% are professional jobs, this is half the Melbourne average.<sup>15</sup>

Growth is expected in the retail, hospitality, health and community service industries to meet the needs of the growing population. Manufacturing is set to remain the biggest employer of locals, despite the troubles faced by the automotive supply chain.<sup>16</sup> Of the future jobs expecting to be generated by growth in the local population, half will require a degree or above and 15% will require a diploma.<sup>17</sup> In addition to this, the number of positions not requiring the completion of year 12 will decrease by 2,500.<sup>18</sup> This suggests that employers are increasingly demanding higher skills, making employment difficult to attain for residents with minimal education. However, employment opportunities abound for those who do finish secondary school and pursue further education.

The following table shows that at the time of the 2006 Census, there were 17,798 15-25 year old residents of Greater Dandenong, 7.6% of whom were looking for work.

*Table 6 - Employment amongst 15-25 year old residents of Greater Dandenong*

Employed, worked:	15-19 years	20-25 years
Full-time(a)	577	3,349
Part-time	1,411	1,870
Employed, away from work(b)	85	189
Hours worked not stated	174	342
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,247</b>	<b>5,750</b>
Unemployed, looking for:		
Full-time work	219	531
Part-time work	326	278
<b>Total</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>809</b>
Total labour force	2,792	6,559
Not in the labour force	5,034	2,244
Labour force status not stated	512	657
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,338</b>	<b>9,460</b>

Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census Data, cat. 20680

<sup>14</sup> City of Greater Dandenong, *Social Conditions in Greater Dandenong*, cited in RICA, *Environmental Scan*, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> RICA, *Environmental Scan*, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, *Dandenong Industry and Labour Market – 2006 Census Update and Indicators Project*, February 2009, p. 202.

<sup>18</sup> RICA, *Environmental Scan*, p. 38.

# Service Map

## Needs

To situate the service map in context, the *Needs* section uses data from the DandenongFirst Service Survey and other sources.

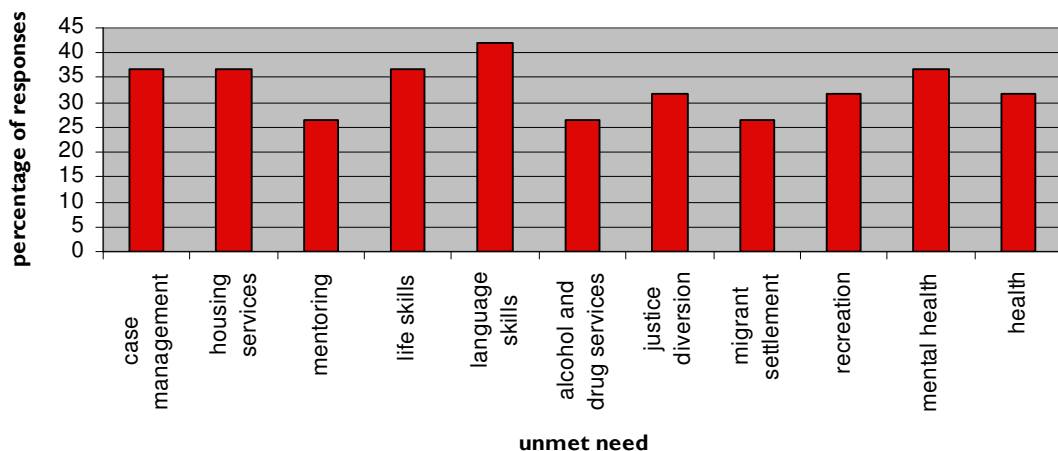
Needs are categorised broadly under three headings; *Basic needs*, *Generalist education*, and *Vocational education and pre-employment services*. We can understand these categories as a hierarchy, with each progressive level building upon the foundation provided by the others.

## Basic needs

In the first category, *Basic needs* are the services necessary for a basic quality of life and without which, meaningful participation in education, training or employment is not possible. Examples of these basic needs are; a safe home, income, food and clothing, basic English language skills, accessible transport options, loving and supportive relationships with family and/or friends, a cultural life and community connectedness. Examples of the services provided to people with these needs include; case management, housing services, mentoring, life skills, language skills alcohol and drug services, justice diversion, migration settlement, recreation, mental health, etc. Many of the young people who would benefit from these services are disengaged from the contexts where they might be provided, so providing information and an initial point of engagement is necessary. For disadvantaged and disengaged young people, accessing these services form the first stage of a journey towards meaningful employment, security and social inclusion.

In the DandenongFirst Service Survey, service providers were asked to indicate which of the Basic needs of their clients they perceived were unmet. The results as represented in Figure 1.

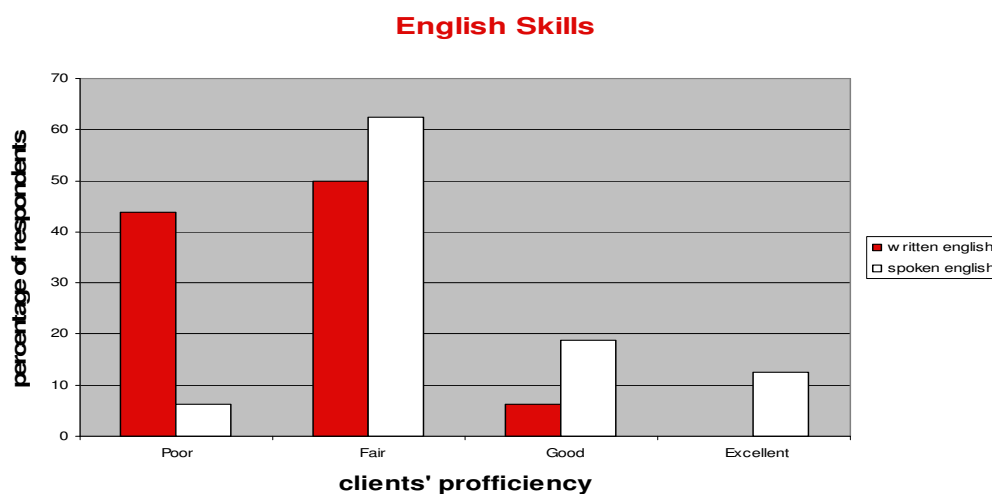
Figure 2 - Unmet basic needs



The most commonly identified unmet need was for language education, nominated by forty percent of respondents. Case management, housing services and mental health were all nominated by over 35% of respondents. Provision of services for mental health, mentoring and migrant settlement appear to be better matched to need, with each being nominated by around 27%.

The need for language skills was confirmed elsewhere in the survey, where respondents rated their clients' written and spoken English skills as poor, fair, good or excellent. The following graph represents the percentage of respondents that chose each of these options.

Figure 3 - English skills



(Source: DandenongFirst Service Survey, 2009)

The majority of clients had a less than 'good' level of written and spoken English. Spoken English is somewhat stronger than written English.

### Generalist education

Services in the second category, *Generalist education*, provide the opportunities for generic education and employability skills. Without attaining these, it is very unlikely that young people will find employment. Many young people in Greater Dandenong are below this threshold, with shortcomings in language skills, employability skills and educational attainment.

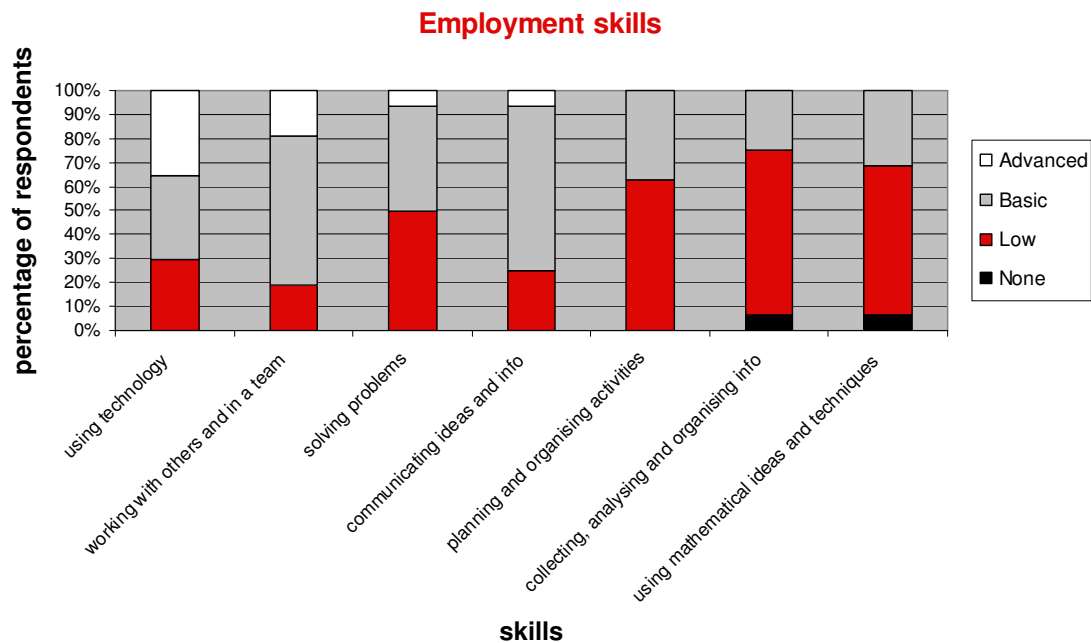
During the interviews with employers, a lack of generic employability skills was often mentioned. The level of generic employability was measured in the survey, where respondents were asked to rate the proficiency of their clients at a selection of generic employment competencies:

- Using technology;
- Working with others and in a team;
- Solving problems;
- Communicating ideas and information;
- Planning and organising activities;

- Collecting, analysing and organising information; and
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques.

These competencies were developed by an intergovernmental body known as the Mayer Committee in 1992<sup>19</sup>. Respondents were given four options; none, low, basic and advanced, to rate their clients' proficiency in each competency. The following graph shows the percentage of respondents that selected each level of proficiency for each competency. Employment skills that clients were considered to be most proficient in are towards the left of the graph.

Figure 4 - Employment skills



(Source: DandenongFirst Service Survey, 2009)

With respect to four of the employment skills – ‘collecting, analysing and organising information’, ‘using mathematical ideas and techniques’ and ‘planning and organising activities’ - 100% of clients were deemed to have no, low or basic proficiency. ‘Using technology’ was determined to be the skill clients are most proficient in.

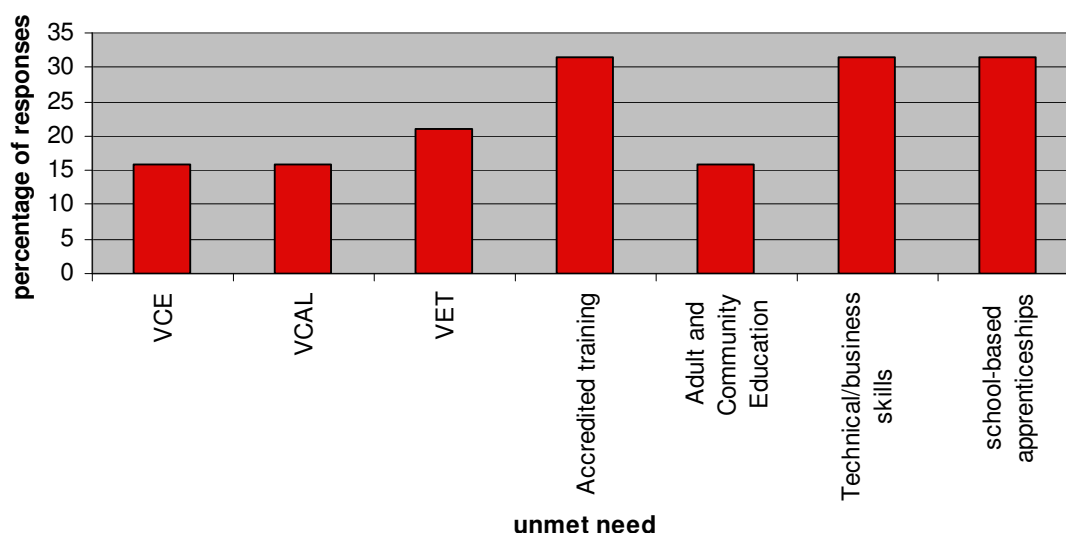
Generic education is one necessary element of improving employability skills. Because young people have a diverse range of abilities and learning styles, and all young people deserve the opportunity to find and develop their aptitudes, a wide range of educational formats and contexts is necessary. Applied education is particularly valuable in this context, and is available in Greater Dandenong in a number of formats, including VCAL, VET in Schools (VETiS) and School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATS).

<sup>19</sup> Australian Education Council and Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training (1992) *Key Competencies*, Sand and McDougal Printing, Australia.

For some young people, attainment of a basic generalist certificate such as VCE or VCAL will be sufficient to gain an entry to the workforce, but compared to entry with a higher qualification, the position is likely to be lower value, less secure and with fewer opportunities for ongoing learning and skill development. The NIEIR report found that in the decade from 1996 to 2006, there has been no growth in the number of these positions, and a contraction in their share of the local labour market from 62% to 46%. By 2021, the demand for persons with year 12 or less will decline by 3,700 compared to current levels. The pathways for the unemployed to access employment via low education attainment positions will become more difficult, but not impossible. The demand for educational attainment positions of year 12 or less will still contribute 35 per cent of total Dandenong employment in 2021. With a turnover in these employment positions of 20 to 30 per cent per annum, there will still be opportunities for pathways for Dandenong residents to access employment opportunities if they are employable (:v1).

In the DandenongFirst Service Survey, service providers were asked to indicate where within the *Generalist education* they perceived their clients have unmet needs. The results are represented in the following graph.

Figure 5 - Unmet needs in Generalist education



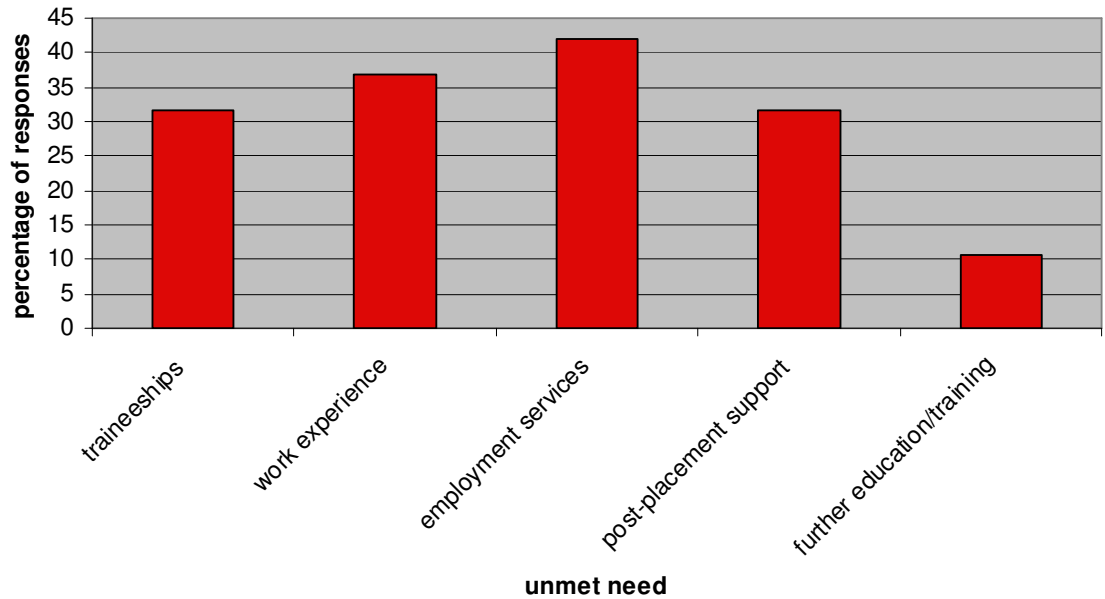
VCAL and VCE were nominated by 16% of respondents, or half the as much as accredited training, technical/business skills and school based apprenticeships, which were all nominated as unmet needs by over 30% of respondents.

### Vocational education and pre-employment services

The categories attracting the highest responses were all in the third category *Vocational education and pre-employment services*, which assist young people to develop industry specific skills, post-school qualifications and enter their industry of choice. Employers have indicated that it is predominantly the young people with these levels of education and above that they seek to employ. The NIEIR report found that in 2006 there was an excess demand for diploma level TAFE qualification of 3,200 and 10,000 certificate 3 and 4.(:v). Demand for workers with a TAFE qualification is forecast to grow by around 9000 positions by 2021 (v1).

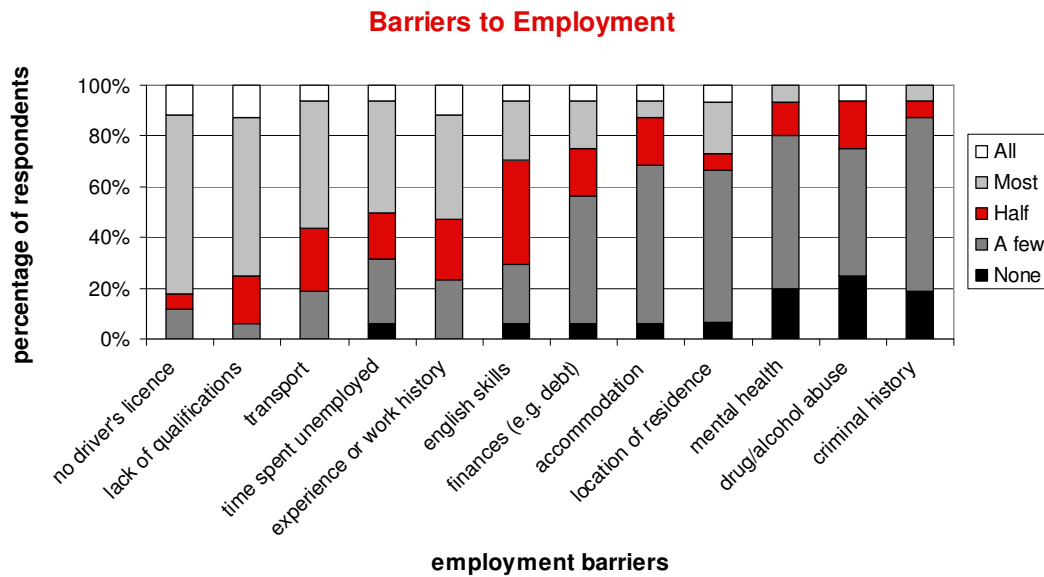
In the Dandenong *First Service Survey*, service providers were asked to indicate where within the *Vocational education and pre-employment services* they perceived their clients have unmet needs. The results as represented in the following graph.

Figure 6 - Unmet needs in Vocational education and pre-employment services



The survey respondents were asked to determine the proportion of their clients who faced a number of specific barriers to employment. They were given 5 options to articulate the proportion of clients who encountered these barriers; all, most, half, a few and none. The following graph summarises the responses, with those barriers perceived as being experienced by the largest amount of clients to the left of the graph.

Figure 7 - Barriers to employment



Source: DandenongFirst Service Survey, 2009

The barriers that were faced by the majority of clients reveal several gaps in the community service sector where clients have unmet needs. Firstly, a lack of transport and driver licences was overwhelmingly deemed a barrier to employment. 90% of respondents believed that at least half of their clients lacked a licence and this limited their ability to find work. About 80% of respondents thought the same of transport. Secondly, a lack of qualifications was listed by 95% of respondents as presenting a barrier to at least a half of their clients. The central tendency (mode) for all responses was “a few”. This reflects the data collected pertaining to the level of educational attainment. Thirdly, 70% of respondents thought a lack of experience or limited work history was presenting a barrier to at least half of their clients. The central tendency (mode) for all responses was “a few”.

## Services

The purpose of the service map is to give an account of the various services provided to our cohort in Greater Dandenong and the broader trends, issues and policy considerations affecting the sector. It offers a discursive profile of a number of the most significant and influential agencies delivering services to our cohort, along with an account of a few smaller, innovative programs run in the community sector. Data for the service map was gathered primarily through interviews with individuals from the agencies concerned.

For the purposes of the DandenongFirst Service Survey, services were categorised according a typology of 18 different types of services. The following table illustrates this typology and how many respondents' clients have received each type of service within the past year.

Table 7 - Number of clients receiving services in the past year

<b>Service</b>	<b># of clients</b>
Case management	1200
Migrant settlement	840
Housing services	780
Accredited training	612
Recreation	482
Language skills	442
Life skills	407
Adult and Community Education	318
Post-placement support	262
Employment services	250
Other	230
Work experience	122
VCAL	97
Further education/training	82
Mentoring	62
VCE	39
Justice diversion	20
VET	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>6263</b>

(Source: DandenongFirst Service Survey, 2009)

The organisations delivering these services varied greatly, according to the number of staff employed. Those employed by each organisation, and specifically located within Greater Dandenong, ranged from 1 to 646; the mean number of staff employed is 53 and the median number is 14. The organisations were mostly small to medium, with 65% employing less than 20 staff in the City of Greater Dandenong, 23% employing between 20 and 100 and only 12% employing more than 100. Of the organisations surveyed, two thirds employ youth specific staff. The range of the number of youth specific staff within these organisations is between 1 and 35.<sup>20</sup>

As with the needs section, we have divided the service map into three categories. Whilst these categories are useful conceptual tools and guiding principles for our purpose, we do not wish to overstate their significance. The journey of young people is rarely linear and they may have needs across multiple categories simultaneously. Many services in Greater Dandenong operate on a number of levels at once, work in partnerships spanning across categories, or at least have established lines of referral to organisations meeting other needs. 85% of organisations surveyed referred clients to other organisations.

Most of the services interviewed for the DandenongFirst Project indicated that they participated in local network activities. The most often mentioned were the groups convened by the LLEN, Council and the South Eastern Migrant Resource Centre's Migrant Youth Action Group. These networks were seen as important sources of local information about services and opportunities for young people. These networks and others are extensively documented in DDB sponsored

<sup>20</sup> The organisation that employs 646 staff was unable to determine how many youth specific staff it employs, citing that 'it frequently varies'.

2007 research by Susanne White of the Resolutions Group entitled *Greater Dandenong and SE Region Youth Network Mapping Project*.

The complex structures of partnerships, networks and referrals means that placing services within a single category within the hierarchy is often problematic. As a rule of thumb, organisations and their services have been categorised according to their primary goals or associations.

The service map aims to illustrate who the pivotal agencies are and their broad area of operations concerning our cohort. The service map is not intended to be all inclusive, and many services do not appear. There are some descriptions of agencies who are not service providers in the direct sense, but whose operations impact on the sector. Also included in the service map is discussion of broader policy issues currently affecting the sector.

## **Basic needs**

### **City of Greater Dandenong Council**

Council's youth services are primarily based at a collocated facility known for the last decade or so as the Visy Cares Centre.

Council provides a number of programs through their youth services:

- A sport program including basketball, which has been particularly successful in attracting disadvantaged young people.
- Three committees dedicated to running music events, the Muso Network, Freeza and Phase (dance).
- A young leaders program.
- Café Salvo in Noble Park, which serves as an after school drop in centre. This service is available 3 afternoons per week, with computers and entertainment.

In addition to these well established services, Council is participating in a new partnership with Victoria Police, Youth Substance Abuse Service (YSAS), Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and the MRC to deliver the Connections for At Risk Young People program. This program funds outreach workers to identify young people who are disengaged and link them to education, employment and training opportunities. Because of their expertise with outreach, YSAS are the host agency. Council's contribution is funded by the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD). The program was funded for 12 months to March 2010.

Apart from housing Council's services, the Visy Cares Centre tenants include:

- The South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (SE CASA)
- The Smith Family
- CMY
- South Eastern Alcohol and Drug Service (SEADS) co-located with YSAS
- Gain Respect, Increase Personal Power (GRIPP) (youth justice program for young men with violent offences)

Council provides a front door intake, reception and referral service at the Centre. This position has recently been reformed to include a counselling service and more emphasis on the referral

role. The Centre has had a relatively high turnover of residents in the past and there has been a general decline in the number of tenants.

Recently, sponsorship from Visy for the Visy Cares Centre has ended and been replaced with sponsorship from Leader newspapers, who will provide a half page ad every week for three years, dedicated to youth issues. In addition, they will provide a half page advertorial each quarter. Selection of a new name for the centre is currently underway.

Council is currently reviewing its Youth Strategy, although details of the review process are not available.

### **Homeless service system**

Homelessness and unemployment are related problems, each compounding the other. Finding work is made particularly difficult without adequate housing, whilst housing problems are exacerbated by unemployment. The provision of services to help overcome one of these problems in isolation runs the risk of falling foul of the other.

Data on the number of homeless young people in the 'The Frankston-Dandenong Corridor', which includes Greater Dandenong, Frankston City and the Mornington Peninsula, was collected in the 2006 Census and released on 9 July 2009<sup>21</sup>. There were 1530 homeless people in the area, representing a rate of 40 per 10 000, consistent with a rate of 41 for 10 000 population for Melbourne as a whole.

In the City of Greater Dandenong and surrounding LGAs, WAYSS is the primary provider of accommodation and support to young people and the broader population who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

WAYSS employs around 100 staff and provides housing and case management to about 600 16-25 year olds in Greater Dandenong. WAYSS provides accommodation to young people for 6 months or less, and often their clients return for further assistance after they have exited. The biggest obstacle encountered by WAYSS in their work to help young people is a lack of available housing in which to place its clients.

WAYSS tenants are assisted to access education, employment and training (EET) opportunities, and it is a condition of their tenancy that they pursue these opportunities. Very few of WAYSS' clients have finished school, and most face significant barriers to employment. Barriers include low generic employability skills, access to transport, insecure accommodation, lack of qualifications, little work experience and work history and long term unemployment. Homeless young people often have little motivation to find employment, with other issues in their lives seeming more pressing. This is particularly the case for those who have acclimatised to the 'subculture' of homelessness and are without other peer groups. For those actively seeking employment, casual work with low entry barriers tend to be the most desirable and accessible, whilst supported work settings with a specific mandate to build generic skills and where the complex needs of the young person may be accommodated are seen as the most desirable destinations for young people by their case workers.

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<sup>21</sup> Chamberlain C, MacKenzie D 2009. *Counting the homeless 2006: Victoria*. Cat. no. HOU 203. Canberra: AIHW.

Whilst there are options for education and training for this cohort, particularly in the fields of hospitality and trades, homeless young people have a broad range of aspirations for which there are too few opportunities.

To assist WAYSS' clients meet the education, employment and training requirement, referrals are made to the Youth Links EET program run by Springvale Community Aid & Advice Bureau (SCAAB).

SCAAB is a central point of information and referral for the Greater Dandenong community. With 45 staff across sites in Dandenong, Noble Park, Narre Warren, Cranbourne and Oakleigh, it provided services to around 500 16-25 year old clients in the past year. Services include counselling, crisis intervention, pathways to education, training and employment, community development, life skills training, migrant settlement and outreach.

WAYSS and SCAAB are both part of the State Government's Creating Connections youth homelessness 'hub', which extends from Dandenong to Mornington Peninsula, and also includes Open Families and Salvation Army Peninsula Youth.

The Youth Links EET program is specifically funded to provide intensive support to ten 22-25 year olds per annum. In practice, however, the program provides a drop-in and referral service to a broader range of clients from agencies in the 'hub'. This extra service is funded internally by SCAAB.

Until July 1 2009, young homeless people in receipt of welfare benefits were referred to the JPET (15 – 21 years) and PSP (22+ years) programs, a part of the Job Network system also delivered by SCAAB.

JPET aimed to:

- Establish a stable lifestyle for the participant;
- Assist the participant to attain life skills;
- Re-establish, or strengthen family links where appropriate;
- Improve the participant's participation in education and pre-vocational and vocational training; and,
- Prepare participants for, and maintain them in, entry-level training or work opportunities, which are appropriate to their needs.

As of July 1 2009, the JPET and PSP services will be discontinued and replaced by the suite of services available under Stream 4 of the new national employment services system. SCAAB will partner with employment services agencies to deliver a similar service with increased resources.

In the new policy environment, Employment Services providers are encouraged to forge close links and establish collaborative arrangements with organisations delivering homelessness services. More information about Employment Services is available under the *Job Network/Employment Services* section of this document.

### **South Eastern Migrant Resource Centre Inc**

The South Eastern Migrant Resource Centre is a not-for-profit community agency providing a wide range of services to newly arrived refugees in the South Eastern region. It has two offices, one in Dandenong and one in Narre Warren. The MRC is well-connected in the region, participating in various networks such as the Multicultural Youth Action Group (MYAG) and the LLEN.

The MRC has a Youth division that works closely with their Community Projects team and Family team in the delivery of services to young people. To qualify for youth services, clients must be aged 12 to 25, have lived in Australia for at least 6 months and no more than 5 years, and have a humanitarian visa. The MRC has about 150 young people on their database at present who are regular participants in their programs.

The MRC offers a case management service involving one-on-one consultations with a case worker. Issues dealt with include family conflict, education and employment needs, finding and sponsoring overseas relatives, legal issues, learning about Australian culture and information about starting community organisations. In addition to this service there is a wide range of social and recreational programs available to young people. These include various sporting programs, creative programs and concerts. These programs are beneficial for engaging young people, who are then able to access other services delivered by the MRC.

The MRC runs various other programs: a crime prevention program where at-risk young people are paired with an Australian-born mentor; a homework support program based at AMES and Dandenong High School; an outreach program locating and engaging youth who have lost contact with the education system; a driver education program for Sudanese youth; and a program where young people can work on an old car and practise driving once it is fixed.

The majority of services provided by the MRC are funded by DIAC in a contract valid for the next two years. Its justice diversion program is funded by the Attorney General's office and its car maintenance program is funded by VicHealth. It internally funds its homework support program and a housing support worker who assists newly arrived refugees navigate the private rental market.

The MRC has identified various unmet needs of its young clients. They require CALD-specific employment services, employment services to assist in the search for part-time work and homework support programs for post-secondary school students.

### **Youth Referral and Independent Person Program (YRIPP)**

YRIPP coordinate a team of volunteers to support minors who have been picked up by the police and cannot be supported by a parent or an adult. These independent persons guide the young person through the police interview process. Volunteers also provide young people with referrals to relevant local services. The volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds, but tend to be tertiary students, retirees, social workers or teachers. They must live within 20 minutes of a police station to participate in the program. YRIPP attracts its volunteers through advertisements in the local paper relationships with Universities and other contacts. It provides training and support to its volunteers.

## Generalist education

### Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)

AMES is a major service provider in the area in language provision for newly arrived young people 18 – 25 years old. It has offices in Dandenong, Noble Park and Springvale. It is the primary provider of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) funded Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). The program provides up to 400 hours for eligible young people with interrupted schooling, followed by 510 hours of AMEP provision. Classes run for approximately 20 hours per week and state funding allows AMES the opportunity to extend AMEP hours to allow the young people to study for up to 1 year at AMES sites.

Youth specific classes are run at Noble Park and Dandenong AMES. Young people who study at Springvale are included in general AMEP delivery. There are three classes for youths at each of the Noble Park and Dandenong AMES sites, totalling approximately 120 students each semester.

Apart from language skills, AMES' programs also provide life and employability skills, address settlement issues, provide recreation and social inclusion opportunities as well as offering counselling services for the young people. AMES is in partnership with Dandenong High school in delivering the VCAL Foundation certificate to newly arrived young people with interrupted schooling. It is a model that offers bilingual support, learning strategies and independent study skills.

Historically, the language education provided to new migrants has focussed on settlement outcomes. Recently, dissatisfaction with this paradigm has emerged and a new understanding has formed, that migrants have not gainfully settled in Australia until they have found work.

AMES is piloting a DIAC funded program integrating language programs with vocational training. In one example, AMES has worked with SEMMA to develop a syllabus relating to language required for work in the manufacturing industry. During the course, migrants are taken to worksites and trained by host employers. The course also integrates VET components with language education.

AMES is a specialist Job Network provider for the CALD and migrant community, and will continue in this capacity under the new Employment Services system. Its work with jobseekers is often integrated with its language services delivered through the AMEP programs. Many of AMES' cohort have not previously worked in Australia, so work experience and work placement opportunities are particularly valuable.

Other programs provided by AMES include:

- The Language Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP), usually mandated through a Centrelink referral. This program is for 10-20 hours per week and caters primarily for long term unemployed people, who have different issues to newly settled migrants. Nonetheless, young migrants who do not acquire sufficient English skills through the AMEP can return to AMES through the LLNP.
- The *Ucan2* program, designed to provide part-time employment opportunities, post-placement support, contextualised workplace language learning, and mentoring. The program is delivered in partnership with Foundation House who provides the psych-

social support, the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) who provides young Australian mentors for peer support, and AMES who delivers work related curriculum. The program continues after the AMEP concludes and provides support in the transition to further employment or education pathways. This program has been delivered since 2007 at Noble Park AMES and more recently at Dandenong AMES campus.

### **Adult, Community Education sector (ACE)**

There are ten organisations in the City of Greater Dandenong funded to deliver ACE programs. Seven of them are Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres. These seven centres in the City are:

- Dandenong Neighbourhood House
- Jan Wilson Community Centre
- Keysborough Learning Centre
- Noble Park Community Centre
- Springvale Learning & Activities Centre
- Springvale Neighbourhood House
- Wellsprings for Women

The other three ACE providers are:

- SER MRC
- Springvale Indo-Chinese Mutual Assistance Association Inc.
- Avocare

The seven Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres work as a Cluster, formed to collaborate and support one another in providing community development and adult education opportunities. Each is run by a community based committee of management, and together have around 40 EFT staff. The staff are a mix of full-time, part-time and short term project positions, and they are assisted by a host of volunteers.

Collectively, the Cluster have around 370 clients aged 16-25, representing around 15% of their client base. Around 80% of these clients are from a CALD background, with strong representation of the Sudanese, Vietnamese, and Burmese communities. The Cluster members located in Dandenong have stronger representation of Afghani community as compared to their counterparts in Springvale and Noble Park.

Services provided to young clients include;

- Recreation & health promotion
- Accredited training (including business, IT, community services and other courses)
- Language and literacy programs
- Computer training
- Information and referrals

A range of other services such as drug and alcohol programs, mentoring and life skills are delivered from time to time on a project basis. One ACE provider, the Keysborough Learning Centre, is a VCAL provider, with around 20 students.

As providers of information, recreation, social connection and language education, Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres often play an important role in helping new migrants to settle and connect to their new community. The Cluster integrate their work with SCAAB, MRC and AMES, and should be considered part of the settlement system in Greater Dandenong.

Another of the roles of the Cluster is as an education provider for the most disadvantaged and least connected learners. ACE caters for those whose eligibility for language education through AMEP has expired, but have not yet gained adequate skills for work or further education, or those who have finished Year 12 and require further skills, but would find the TAFE experience too demanding or daunting, and require a 'softer' re-entry point to the education system. ACE providers consider that this mode of education is effective in developing critical thinking and helping people to become aware of the many opportunities available to them.

Whilst many young ACE clients have completed Year 12, they face a number of barriers to employment. These can include a lack of transport options, English skills, generic work skills, qualifications and little work history. Many have poor written English.

For some disadvantaged young people, ACE may be their only contact with the education and training sector, particularly those who participate in the recreation programs. ACE providers offer, therefore, an important engagement mechanism for many other providers seeking to engage young people who are otherwise "off the radar".

Like Chisholm, ACE will be deeply affected by the changes to the VET sector. These changes present challenges and opportunities, but how they will play out is not yet clear.

### **South East Local Learning and Employment Network**

Young people's school to work transitions and education and training providers in the City of Greater Dandenong are supported by the South East Local Learning and Employment Network (SE LLEN), which also covers the LGAs of Casey and Cardinia. The LLEN is governed by a board whose membership represents the majority of the education and training institutions in the catchment, along with representatives from business and community agencies.

The mandate of the LLEN is to build the capacity of the whole local community to meet the education, training and employment needs of young people. The primary expressions of this role are as a facilitator of information sharing and a convenor of meetings and discussions across different elements of the education system. This aims to create a regional understanding and coherence across the sector. For example, the LLEN convenes meetings to address school retention and engagement (Southern Youth Commitment) and to coordinate the delivery of VETiS, School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATS), and VCAL.

In addition to these roles, a number of specific programs and initiatives are delivered by the LLEN. For example, LLEN officers collect the annual On-Track survey following both year 12 and early school leavers. When these young people are contacted, those who are not in education, training or full-time employment, are offered advice and/or referral to a range of programs and services in the south eastern region. This service is known as On Track Connect. The LLEN is well placed to provide the service because of its active participation in a range of networks and forums, and close knowledge of available programs in the ever changing sector.

As a result, 2008 saw 71 Year 12 leavers from the area referred into the program. Because of the focus of many services in the area on early school leavers and the more disadvantaged end of the spectrum, there is a shortage of options for this cohort.

Apart from outbound calls from the On-Track survey, the LLEN team also provides a referral service to inbound callers, for example those who are referred from the YRIPP program (profiled later in this document). Because of its limited capacity and mandate, this service is only promoted to a limited audience.

The LLEN has recently been funded by the Collaborative Internet Innovation Fund (CIIF) to develop a virtual platform for careers information, delivered through the use of innovative 'Web 2.0' technologies.

The LLEN also delivers the Commonwealth Local Community Partnerships (LCP) program. They work with local industries to match their skill and labour needs and provide career exposure opportunities to local schools and in some community agencies (e.g. AMES). The Commonwealth stipulates that the LCP primary role is to 'facilitate' relationships between business and educators, including provision of more direct services such as organising work placements. The SE LLEN LCP also works closely with schools in coordinating a VET in Schools Network and plays an integral strategic and 'back office' role in maintaining and broadening VET in Schools programs. THE SE LLEN LCP has recently been nominated and is a finalist for the Victorian Training Awards in this area and is also working closely with the Bendigo and Adelaide Banks in 'rolling out' a School Based Traineeship program which was developed in the South East across the country. The SE LLEN LCP is also currently finalising planning to deliver Structured Workplace Learning support and placement services to schools utilising its innovative VETiS web portal.

A current project of the LLEN is to build a council of regional industries interested in working with education and training initiatives, such as forming partnerships with schools. Recently, there has been considerable activity in building relationships between schools and local businesses and the council of regional industries would seek to capitalise on this momentum.

The LLEN and its staff enjoy a high profile in the area and clearly exert some influence by dint of their expertise and connections. However there are inherent tensions within their mandate. For example, the LLEN has a role in identifying gaps and opportunities in the sector, and keeping abreast of cutting edge pedagogical models, but it has no real power to implement plans or deploy resources. The LLEN is well placed to provide transitions advice to young people but is not able to be a fully fledged service provider due to its limited mandate. Connections between local industries and schools are important for creating employment pathways, but the LLEN cannot fully realise this potential whilst it is limited to a merely facilitator role.

The creation of LLENs in Victoria recognised the importance of network governance, place-based policy making and regional planning and coordination, but decisions about policy and resource allocation are still largely made within the hierarchical, centralised bureaucracies. It appears the LLEN would be well placed to take a more significant role in regional decision making, but policy change would be required to allow evolution from network information sharing to genuine network governance and service delivery. The National Partnership of Youth Attainment and Transitions and the resulting progressive shift of transitions programs from the Commonwealth to State governments will allow for progress, albeit for a limited age, and younger, age range.

## VCAL

For many secondary students, the generalist academic orientation of the VCE and its focus on achieving an ENTER score for University entrance is at odds with their learning style, their aspirations and/or their aptitudes. This can lead to disengagement, early school leaving and a wasted opportunity to develop appropriate skills for a vocation. The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) was introduced to Victoria in 2002 to provide another option for these students. Typically, VCAL programs can be distinguished from VCE by their;

- Applied learning framework,
- Strong pathway orientation and specialist skills development,
- Integration of VET subjects,
- Focus on post school transition to work, apprenticeships or TAFE; and
- Whole or partial provision in a non-school setting.

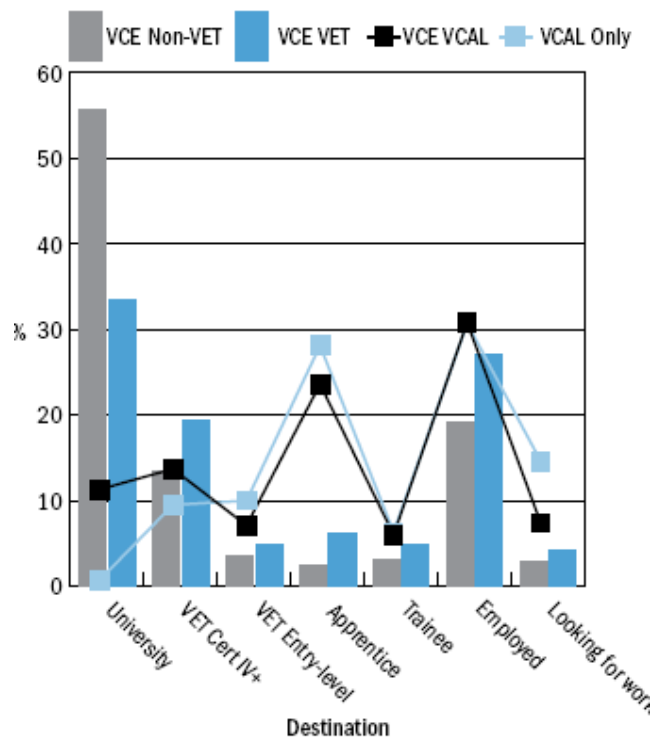
VCAL has a flexible pedagogy spanning three levels – foundation, intermediate and senior. Students can take up to 4 years to complete the certificate, and take the time needed to complete each module. Students can participate up until age 20.

Data on destinations demonstrates the program’s level of success in moving completers into work and/or vocational study. The following tables represent destination for data for VCAL and other certificates.

Table 8 – State wide VCAL destination data, 2007

Destination	VCAL Only	
	No.	%
University	8	0.7
VET Cert IV+	113	9.5
VET Entry-level	119	10.0
Apprentice	334	28.1
Trainee	75	6.3
Employed	365	30.8
Looking for work	174	14.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,188</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Figure 8 - State wide VCAL, VCE & VET destination data, 2007



(Source: On track data 2007)

The outcome with the highest proportion of VCAL completers was employment, with 31%. The next most numerous was apprenticeships, with 28% of outcomes. A further 20% went on to further study, with half starting at Certificate IV or above and the others at entry level. Traineeships accounted for 6% and the remainder and 14% were looking for work. This compares with 3% of completers from the pure VCE strand looking for work.

It should be noted that nearly twice as many males complete VCAL as females, with females more likely to move into employment, traineeships and further education, and much less likely to begin an apprenticeship (8% of females compared with 39% of males).

Since its introduction, VCAL has steadily grown in its numbers of providers and students. This table depicts an increase in enrolment in VCE from 2007 to 2008.

*Table 9 - VCAL enrolments, City of Greater Dandenong, 2007-2008*

	<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Senior</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>2007</b>	58	180	67	305
<b>2008</b>	48	254	105	407

There was a 33% increase in VCAL enrolments in Greater Dandenong from 2007 to 2008. In 2007 there was 1 VCAL student for every 7 VCE students in the City of Greater Dandenong. This compares with a ratio of 1 to 13 state-wide.

Most secondary schools, and a number of community providers in the area are registered VCAL providers.

#### *Providers*

- Dandenong
  - Chisholm TAFE (adult)
  - Dandenong High School (government)
  - St John's Regional College (Catholic)
- Dandenong North
  - Lyndale Secondary College (government)
- Keysborough
  - Keysborough Learning Centre (adult)
  - Keysborough Secondary College – Chandler Campus (government)
- Noble Park
  - Noble Park secondary college (government)
- Noble Park North
  - Carwatha College (government)
  - Nazareth College (Catholic)
- Springvale
  - Killester College (Catholic)
- Springvale South
  - Keysborough Secondary College – Coomoora (government)

Source: VCAA Schools and Study Search, <http://schlprv.vcaa.vic.edu.au/schoolsstudiesearch/>

A number of the school VCAL programs are hosted by community sector partners. For example, LINK provides VCAL through a partnership with Lyndale Secondary College, with

streams in hospitality, automotive, building and construction. The focus is on building intake for LINK's apprenticeship programs. The Coomoora campus of Keysborough Secondary College in Springvale South provides VCAL in partnership with The Keysborough Learning Centre. AMES has a VCAL partnership with the Dandenong High School, which includes 2 weeks work experience.

VCAL can also be delivered outside of the school system. Narre Community Learning Centre (NCLC) is registered to provide VCAL directly (i.e. without the students being enrolled with a school). They are not located in the CGD but there are a few students from CGD enrolled there.

Chisholm TAFE also provides VCAL at their Dandenong campus, streams in automotive, business & hospitality. In 2009 there are 21 Chisholm VCAL students living in CGD. Although Chisholm's VCAL students are aged between 15-54 years, 90% are aged 16-18 years.

### **School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships**

The Commonwealth government established School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs) in 1997 in response to the skills shortage and the increasing number of students in paid employment. SBATs give students the option to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship while at school, usually in year 11 or 12. The student is employed part-time, during or outside of school hours, and receives training from a VET provider (their school, a TAFE or an RTO). This is done concurrently with their normal school curriculum and the SBAT may be accredited as a subject towards their VCE or VCAL program. Students aren't expected to complete their apprenticeship or traineeship by the end of their schooling, rather it is hoped that they will move into full-time employment with their SBAT employer to complete their training after year 12.

No information specific to Greater Dandenong regarding SBATs was sourced during the research. However various findings general to Victoria came out of the research process and are articulated in the *Findings and Discussions* section of the paper.

### **Alternative Education**

The alternative education sector is comprised of various programs outside of, or integrated with, mainstream education. Many programs in Victoria are funded by the DEECD or DEEWR, run by community service organisations and internally within schools. Alternative programs often access resources through DEECD's Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) but it requires time and skill to successfully qualify for the funds. These resources can then be used by schools internally or as brokerage for external providers. There is a wide variety in the nature of the programs and the pedagogies employed.

In the absence of state or national policy frameworks, the sector has grown in an ad-hoc manner, with eligibility and pedagogy developed by individual institutions, responding to local needs and securing resources from a range of sources. Alternative education programs are often short-term with a goal of mainstream reintegration, but long-term options are also available.

In 2008 DEECD commissioned a review of alternate settings in the Southern Metropolitan region<sup>22</sup>. The report made a range of recommendations encompassing:

- Management, governance and reporting structures
- professional development of staff
- reintegration into mainstream settings where possible
- development of alternative settings within schools
- adequacy of funding, particularly for early identification and prevention

This report has since been superseded by the KPMG's state-wide policy review, commissioned in early 2009 and due for completion in June 2009. A workshop gathering stakeholder input for this project was attended by researchers for the DandenongFirst project. No publications from this project are currently available.

Young people enrolled in alternative education programs have a range of issues and needs requiring additional support and tailored care. These include behavioural issues, learning difficulties, trauma, family problems and mental health issues. It is believed that young people are experiencing difficulties at an increasingly young age, particularly with the transition from primary to secondary school, requiring earlier enrolment in alternative education programs. This is problematic because the majority of alternative education programs are for older young people. There is a widely acknowledged need for a broad spectrum of services to address a broad spectrum of needs.

There are a range of problems faced by the alternative education sector that are not specific to the Greater Dandenong region. These are being addressed by the KPMG policy review and include:

- a lack of quality assurance mechanisms and outcome measures;
- lack of resources for early identification and provision for special needs, resulting in young people reaching a 'critical' stage before action is taken
- insufficient funding and resources for the increasing number of students requiring alternative education;
- a sense that schools are not doing enough to 'stick it out' with their more problematic students, identifying their problems and catering for them within mainstream education;
- a difficulty in reintegrating young people back into mainstream education; and,
- a lack of structure and clear state-wide governance arrangements.

An established and well-regarded alternative education program in Greater Dandenong is the B.E.S.T. Centre, an independent special school in Noble Park run by Berry Street. The Centre was established in 2003 to meet the needs of young people in residential care, 96% of whom were found to be not enrolled in, or permanently suspended from school. The B.E.S.T. Centre is a good example of the potential of the alternative education sector, the issues commonly faced and the nature of the students enrolled.

There are 19 young people currently enrolled in the B.E.S.T. Centre, between 12 and 16 years of age. They are mostly Australian-born, along with 4 Sudanese. Significant personal barriers and very low levels of academic and behavioural functioning place these young people at the hardest

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<sup>22</sup> Giddings, D. (2008) *Alternative Settings Review, Southern Metropolitan Region*, Rod Allen Consulting, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Melbourne.

end of the spectrum. The Centre was developed with initial philanthropic support, and receives ongoing funding from DEEWR. This funding is seen as insufficient to maintain the teacher to student ratio required by the Centre's high needs students.

The philosophy of the B.E.S.T. Centre has its roots in the Sanctuary Model, a therapeutic education model developed in New York. It takes into account the trauma endured by each young person and develops an appropriate response, with achievable goals and pathways. Young people have an individual learning plan addressing behavioural and academic development. Usually the behavioural aspect of the program – including safety, structure and regulation – is addressed before the academic aspect. The Centre offers applied learning facilities in automotive, IT, woodwork, home economics and music. The academic program is based on state curriculum at an appropriate level for each student and ideally builds the young person up to a level commensurate with year 10 completion. When that is achieved, young people typically transition into a community VCAL program, seen as the most appropriate foundation program to address the special needs of the students. Due to their complex needs, many students do not reach this stage.

The B.E.S.T. Centre has developed partnerships with businesses to provide opportunities for work placements. The capricious temperaments of the students mean that these have had mixed results. Another problem faced by the Centre is that often opportunities for work placements arise when there are no students ready to take them up, or conversely, there is a student wanting to gain some work experience with no available opportunities.

## Vocational education and pre employment services

### Chisholm Institute of TAFE

Chisholm TAFE is the largest VET provider and RTO in Greater Dandenong. It has over 420 students from Greater Dandenong aged 16-25 and a total enrolment of nearly 2300 students. Whilst the bulk of Chisholm's students undertake accredited training, language, Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA), VCAL and VCE courses are also provided.

Students of these 'Foundation courses' overwhelmingly come from CALD backgrounds and their English skills are typically 'fair'. Most students struggle financially and have limited work opportunities arising from their lack of transport, English skills and lack of work experience and work history. Although half of the students have completed Year 12, generic employability skills are typically low.

To better meet the special needs of students from a refugee background, Chisholm was a partner in the *Changing Cultures Project*, working to integrate and improve the services of a range of organisations from the education, health and settlement sectors.

Apart from CALD backgrounds, a number of other disadvantaged minorities are represented amongst Chisholm's students, including those from disadvantaged English Speaking Backgrounds (ESB), Indigenous and those with a disability.

Indigenous students at Chisholm have the support of a dedicated Koori Unit and can access Koori specific programs such as the *Mumgu-dhal tyama tiyt* foundation program and cultural arts subjects. Indigenous students are also supported by academic and cultural support services as they progress through mainstream foundation studies like CGEA and VCE.

Disadvantaged ESB students are particularly represented in Chisholm's Foundation courses such as the VCAL and CGEA programs at the Dandenong Campus. Their disadvantage might stem from early school leaving and disengagement, poorly literacy skills, homelessness, backgrounds of non employment in the family, drug abuse, physical abuse, family disharmony, low educational expectations and completions, single parenting and so on.

Students with disabilities are also catered for, particularly through the Transitions and Work Education programs for students who have physical, learning and mental difficulties.

Most students require practical placements in industry settings as a component of their course. The task of identifying suitable businesses and negotiating placement arrangements takes a lot of time. Whilst there are Industry Entry Facilitators for all students, CALD and Koori students have a dedicated Industry Entry Facilitator, focussing on securing practical placements and providing transitions support. In 2008, the CALD Industry Entry Facilitator assisted 144 students to find practical placements in retail, medical, administration, aged care, education, trades, engineering and hospitality.

Chisholm also works to engage with industry through their Work Based Training Analyst. This helps them increase enrolments, provide pathways to relevant employment for their students, secure work placements and keep them up-to-date with industry training needs. The 'selling' of

training packages and work placements occurs in the context of Chisholm's Work Based Training Analyst providing independent advice about available government subsidies and funds to help business meet their skills and labour needs. The independent expert advice is readily accepted by business and provides a useful initial topic for engaging employers.

Providing courses relevant to industry demands will become increasingly important in the new policy environment for the VET sector, announced in 2008 by the Victorian Government. The new policy, entitled *Securing Jobs for the Future*, is applicable from July 2009 and will see the tuition fees (above the government subsidy) determined by the individual provider. The government funding rate for various levels of training will be set centrally, whilst public and private providers will compete for students eligible for a government subsidised place. This is a significant change in structure, which will no doubt effect the way Chisholm go about their business. Exactly how these changes will manifest is yet to be determined.

### **Job Network / Employment Services**

The Commonwealth Government has implemented a significant change in the way employment services are structured and delivered. The new Employment Services system was implemented on 1 July 2009, replacing seven contracted programmes into a single Stream Services programme known as Job Services Australia.

Unlike its predecessor, the new system provides holistic support for jobseekers to overcome barriers preventing them from accessing work. Incentive structures no longer push jobseekers into inappropriate or unsustainable positions, or into fragmented one-dimensional support programs. Instead the new system promotes integrated, tailored service delivery through a cluster of agencies working in partnership. It provides more flexibility and resources for disadvantaged jobseekers and rewards agencies for achieving progress towards employment, rather than just for employment outcomes.

Using the Job Seeker Classification Index (JSCI), Employment Services will place jobseekers into one of four streams. Stream 1 represents 'job ready' jobseekers, whilst Stream 4 is designated for the most disadvantaged jobseekers with significant vocational and non-vocational barriers. The intensity of assistance and resources available will be determined by the jobseeker's designated stream.

Under the Job Network system, employers often became disaffected with the agencies and their clients. In too many cases the candidates were unready, or inappropriate for the position, so employers turned to other methods of recruitment, further disadvantaging jobseekers with employment barriers. This situation has been widely reported in Greater Dandenong. The new policy environment strongly encourages Employment Services to actively engage with local industry, develop employer specific training packages and a 'pipeline' of appropriately skilled jobseekers. A fresh approach in Employment Services may generate greater engagement from employers in the future however this will require a significant amount of capacity building.

Work experience forms an important part of the new Employment Services structure. Each stream will include a 'work experience phase' tailored to the needs of individual jobseekers. The 'work experience phase' implies activity requirements similar to those under the mutual obligation component of the previous system. Work experience activities will have a broad interpretation and will include, for example, accessing drug and alcohol counselling for some job seekers. For most jobseekers, eligible work experience activities will include work for the

dole/green corps, defence force reserves, voluntary work, part-time work, part-time study and unpaid work experience placements.

The Employment Services system will introduce a new focus on transitions support. Transitions support includes careers advice, identifying education and training needs and barriers to employment, and referring to appropriate local education, employment and training opportunities.

The City of Greater Dandenong is within the Bayside Employment Services Area (ESA). A number of Job Network providers in this ESA will not participate in the new system, whilst others will be new entrants.

*Table 10 - Employment services in the City of Greater Dandenong, 2009*

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Specialty</b>	<b>Locations in CGD</b>	<b>Operational in area prior to July 2009</b>
Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)	Culturally and linguistically diverse, migrants and refugees, Youth At Risk	Dandenong, Noble Park, Springvale	Yes
Australian Integrated Employment & Training Services	People with a disability	Noble Park	No
Direct Recruitment Pty Ltd	Generalist	Springvale	No
Holmesglen Institute of TAFE	Homeless or at risk of homelessness	Dandenong	No
IPA Personnel Pty Ltd	Generalist	Dandenong, Springvale	Yes
Reed In Partnership	Generalist	Dandenong	No
Sarina Russo Job Access	Generalist	Dandenong	Yes
The Salvation Army Employment Plus	Generalist	Dandenong, Springvale	No
WISE Employment	Generalist	Dandenong	Yes

As these agencies begin to operate in the new system, a significant opportunity exists to forge new relationships and partnerships with the broader service system. The stream structure and increased brokerage, flexibility and support available to disadvantaged job seekers will enable greater connectivity than previously possible.

#### **VicUrban - Revitalising Central Dandenong**

In partnership with the City of Greater Dandenong, the Victorian Government's \$290 million Revitalising Central Dandenong (RCD) project is being delivered through VicUrban.

The RCD initiative includes four major projects:

- A \$20 million transformation of Lonsdale Street
- Creation of a new City Street to link Dandenong Station with the heart of the city
- Building of the George Street Bridge to better cater for travel to Dandenong's centre
- Improvement of the Dandenong Station Precinct

In its management of the project, VicUrban has a mandate to support opportunities for employment and training for local people, the long term unemployed and the socially disadvantaged when it awards contracts for works relating to the revitalisation of central Dandenong.

Specifically, the community outcomes sought by VicUrban through the RCD initiative include:

- The use of local labour in contracts;
- Increase in the level of spending with local suppliers;
- Decrease the level of long-term unemployment;
- Increase the number of training opportunities within the local area;
- Embed the community benefit requirements in the procurement process in order to demonstrate that they are not part of a separate initiative.

VicUrban will write community outcomes and other commitments to local economic and social benefits, such as local employment outcomes, into requests for tenders/expressions of interest. Tenders will be considered and awarded with regard to their response to these matters, along with other considerations.

To assist developers in being able to deliver community outcomes, VicUrban has identified a number of support agencies and encourages developers, where appropriate, to familiarise themselves with these agencies.

VicUrban has identified Industry Capability Network Victoria (ICN) as a service provider capable of assisting with the support of local supplier requirements. While VicUrban does not guarantee that any local suppliers sourced through ICN will be suitable or of the required standard, VicUrban encourages developers, where appropriate, to familiarise themselves with ICN and describe the support that could be provided.

ICN is funded by the Victorian Government to replace imports, explore export opportunities and promote regional industry in order to assist in the economic growth of Victoria. ICN is also the manager of Regional Industry Link (RIL), which is a Victorian Government initiative to match the capability of regional industries with prospective buyers through the RIL website - bringing buyers and suppliers together to do business.

To assist developers in being able to deliver employment and training outcomes, VicUrban has appointed a preferred group training organisation, MEGT, for the RCD initiative. MEGT will provide VicUrban, developers, contractors, sub-contractors and employers with a central point of contact for apprenticeships and traineeships with necessary networked services to the wider employment and training community. MEGT will identify employment and training opportunities, coordinate access and potentially deliver pre-vocational and vocational training programs.

VicUrban also recognises that social enterprises have a distinct and valuable role to play in helping to create a strong, sustainable and socially inclusive community. Developers are again encouraged to demonstrate appropriate action to support the creation, development and good management of social enterprises within the local area.

VicUrban intends to work with community agencies and developers to ensure that outcomes identified in the tender documents can be achieved.

VicUrban is using the Revitalising Central Dandenong project as a pilot for directly considering social outcomes in their tendering process. VicUrban will consider the experiences of the Dandenong pilot when evaluating the potential for broader application of these programs.

To further support social procurement outcomes the Victorian State Government has an Industry Participation Policy applying to state funded contracts over \$10 million. This scheme encourages bidders to consider Australian and New Zealand suppliers and create local employment opportunities.

### **LINK Employment and Training (LINK)**

LINK is a not for profit Group Training organisation operating in Dandenong for 25 years employing apprentices & trainees. LINK is an RTO, and provides labour hire and recruitment services. It plays an active role in local networks and initiatives and was a generous contributor to this research project. Its General Manager serves as Chairperson of the Board for the SELLEN, and it has myriad other partnerships with local service providers and businesses.

Some of the programs run in Greater Dandenong by LINK are:

- An Access program with Mission Australia, for Sudanese young people, focussing on work readiness.
- VET in partnership with local secondary schools.
- Pre-apprenticeship training in construction and automotive trades.
- A 'Skills Store' working with people to achieve formal recognition (RPL) for skills that they, by and large, already have through work and life experience, but have not been accredited for.
- A themed Community VCAL program aimed at transitioning disengaged students from school into an apprenticeship or traineeship employed by LINK Group Training.
- A partnership with a local hairdressing business to provide training. LINK provides the formal RTO and the business provides the training.

In addition to these programs, LINK has run two groups of the Connectus program. Connectus is a pre-employment training program born out of police Commissioner Neil Comrie's office. It was ostensibly a drug prevention program but focussed on removing the risk factors and directing young people at risk towards opportunity and rewarding work. Its target age group is 16-20 years, with some exceptions. The pilot phase was conducted over four years, during which time the model was refined, including a full evaluation by Victoria University in October 2006. In 2007, at the conclusion of the pilot stage, the model was moved from VicHealth to within the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Workforce Participation, and is now delivered by a range of community sector agencies around Victoria with state funding.

The initial model started with a week of life skills training and then put these lessons into practice with a week in the bush. Throughout its various stages of evolution, enduring elements of the program have been:

- The combination of one on one personal support and life skills training.
- A focus on sourcing and placing young people into appropriate education, employment and training positions. These can include short term work experience.
- A 12 month timeframe extending beyond placement into education, employment and training.
- A single case worker to develop a strong rapport and trust with the young person over the course of the program.

Although the LINK based programs in Greater Dandenong struggled to source adequate work experience and employment placements, it had some good results, with a number of clients returning to school or finding work.

### **Mission Australia - Getting to Work**

During the three months to November 2008, Mission Australia ran the Getting to Work program for a group of 7 participants in Dandenong. Another course is currently underway. The desired outcomes of the program are;

- Young people's employability and life skills increased,
- Young people complete a certificate II TAFE course,
- Young people participated in work experience and mentoring,
- Young people have overcome barriers to employment,
- Young people are employed.

Based on the a mini-evaluation of the 2008 group, all of the participant outcomes were achieved, the course contents were relevant to the needs and aspirations of the participants, and delivered in a supportive and inclusive manner. The participants were very positive about the opportunity to participate and would not hesitate to recommend the course to their peers.

It is not clear, however, that much progress was made on the final objective listed above, that of increasing links with local employers. Further work needs to be undertaken in this area, particularly in identifying the reasons behind the seeming reluctance of local businesses to support local job seekers.

## **Factors Limiting the Delivery of Services**

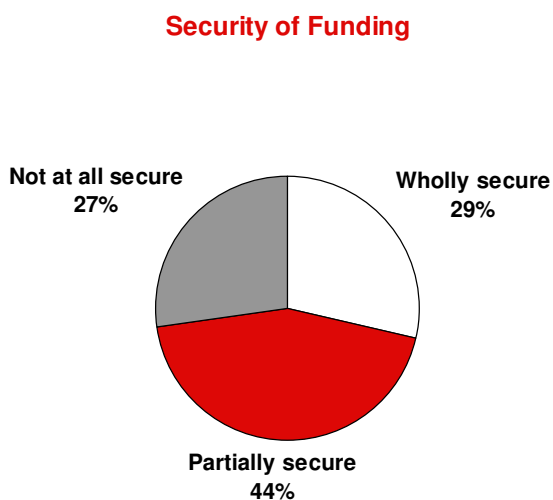
Appropriate governance, accountability and funding structures are essential to a client centred, efficient and effective service system.

To gauge these issues in the Greater Dandenong context, survey respondents were asked to write a few lines about the internal and external factors that limit the delivery of their services to young people in Greater Dandenong. From these responses arose many criticisms of the funding and governance systems currently in place.

When asked about the factors limiting the ability of their organisation to deliver services to unemployed young people, three quarters of respondents listed concerns related to funding. There were a variety of problems with funding, including a lack thereof, inflexible contract conditions, increased competition and an inability to afford experienced staff.

Primarily of concern to community organisations in the City of Greater Dandenong is a lack of funding, or a feeling of insecurity in funding for their existing programs. The majority of respondents listed a lack of funding as a limiting factor to the delivery of services to young people. For each service they had delivered in the past year, each respondent was asked the extent to which they felt the funding for that service was secure. The following pie chart shows the result of this question, indicating that 71% of services are 'not at all' or 'partially' secure in their funding arrangements.

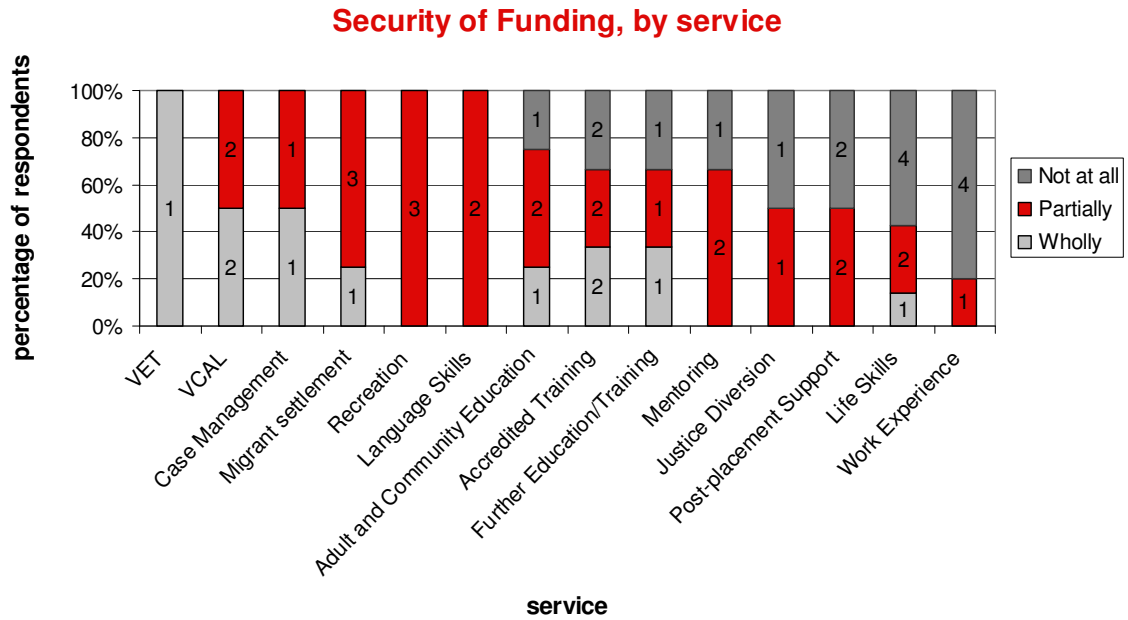
*Figure 9 - Security of funding*



*(Source: DandenongFirst Service Survey, 2009)*

The following graph depicts the security of funding by service. The numbers in each column represent the number of services that are either wholly, partially or not at all securely funded.

Figure 10 - Security of funding, by service

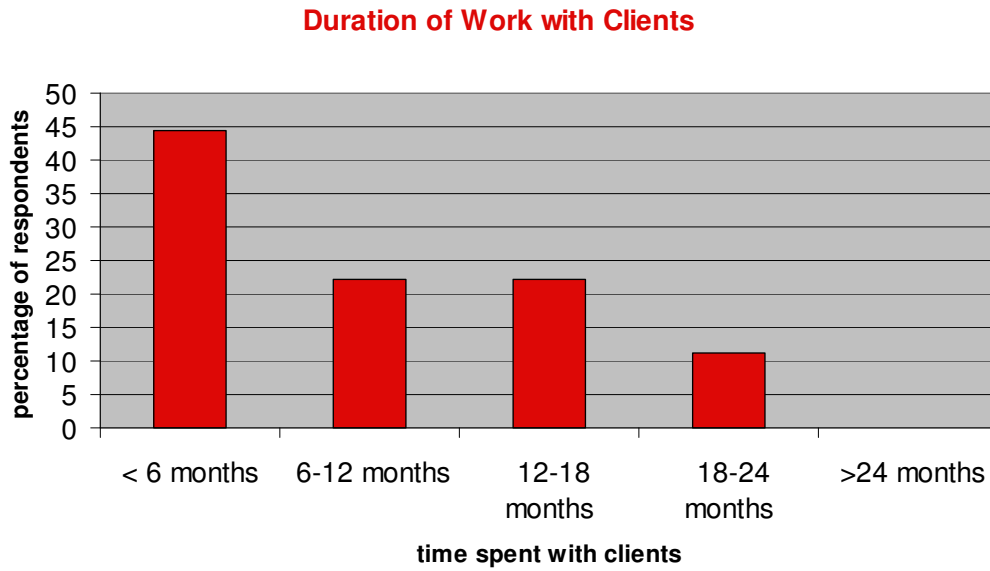


Source: DandenongFirst Service Survey, 2009

Least securely funded are work experience, life skills, post-placement support and justice diversion services.

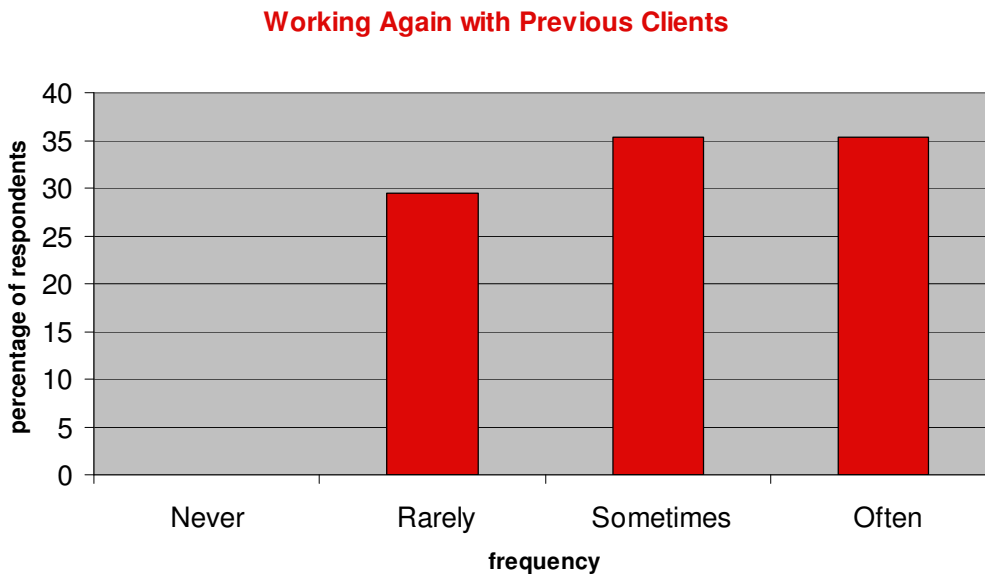
The following two graphs, looked at together, reiterate the lack of funding and its potential negative repercussions for the young, unemployed clients of community organisations. The first graph represents the typical duration of their work with clients. The second graph depicts the frequency with which organisations work again with clients they have worked with previously.

Figure 11 - Duration of work with clients



Source: DandenongFirst Service Survey, 2009

Figure 12 - Working again with previous clients



Source: DandenongFirst Service Survey, 2009

These graphs depict the ‘churn’ of clients which is widespread practice in Greater Dandenong, given the majority of clients are worked with for less than 1 year, but ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’ need to access those services again.

Funding bodies were also seen to be inflexible in their funding arrangements. Strict eligibility criteria preclude many clients in need from accessing services, due to inflexible restrictions written into contracts. In addition to this, a large amount of administrative duties were seen as unproductive as they tended to distract staff's attention from the delivery of services in order to adhere to the bureaucratic requirements of its funding body.

Competition was listed as a factor impinging on the organisation's ability to deliver services to their clients. Competition tends to displace the co-operation between agencies required to overcome multiple and complex barriers faced by clients.

Insufficient staff and physical building infrastructure are other, funding-related issues faced by organisations delivering services. One issue raised was a difficulty in attracting experienced, professional staff to the City of Greater Dandenong and retaining them. A lack of quality was noted in the applications for case worker and social worker positions in the area.

Frequently mentioned was the confusing nature of the service sector. It was said that the service sector is fragmented, with insufficient information made available to young people. Consequently, young people rarely have a good idea of the services available to them or how to access them. One respondent mentioned that clients often remained with one known service provider, rather than branching out to other organisations that may have a more appropriate service available.

These issues relate primarily to the policies and practices of the State and Commonwealth government departments more than to specifically local factors. The size, scope and complexity of the service system in Dandenong, and the high needs of its clients mean that these factors are felt more acutely in Dandenong than elsewhere.

# Service Map – Unemployed Young People in Greater Dandenong

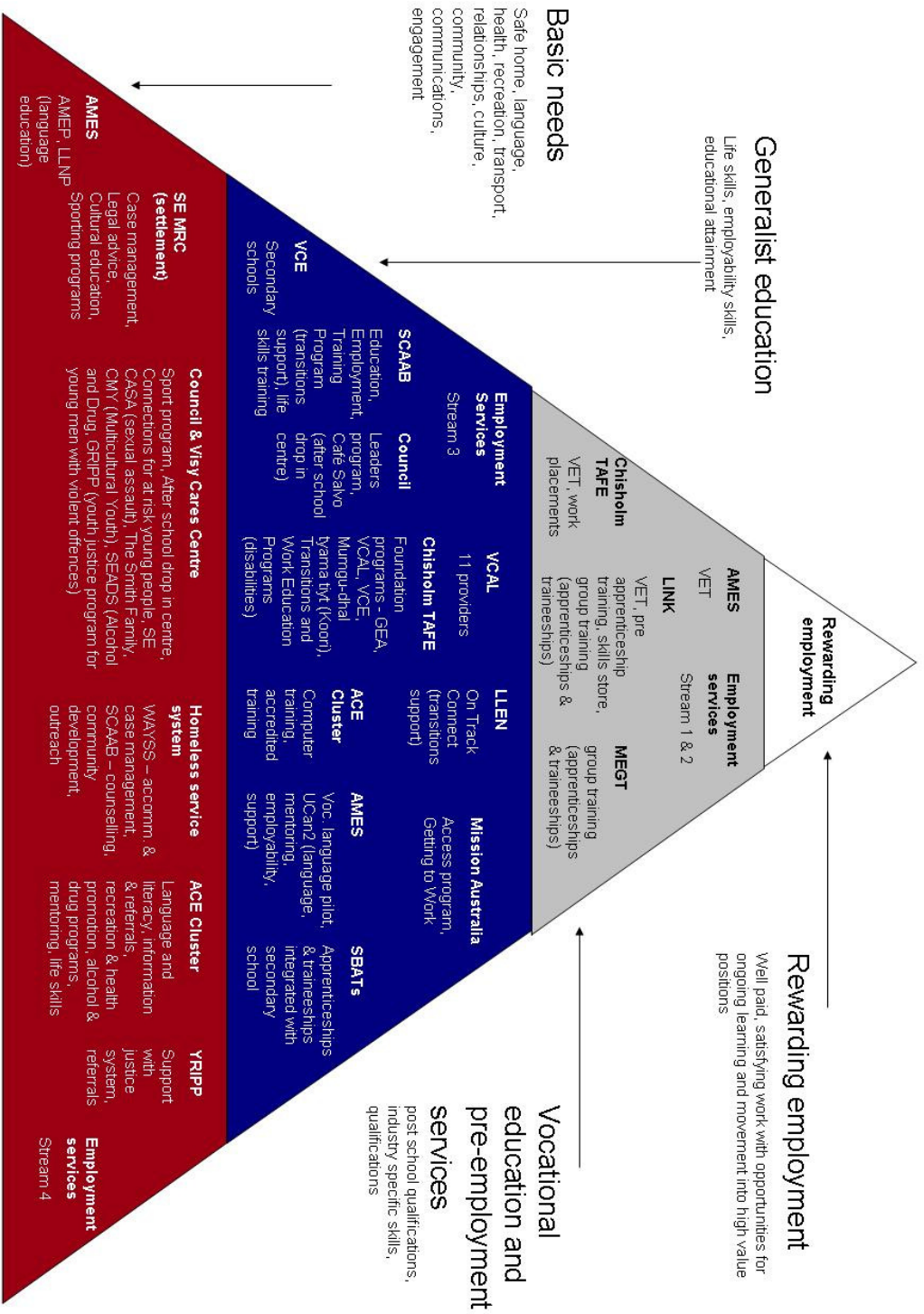


Figure 13 - Service Map Summary Diagram

## Findings and Discussion

This section is compiled from a combination of reflections on a range of issues from workshop and interview participants, and from the service map information above. Barriers and opportunities have been identified across five areas; Transport, Transitions, Skills, Experience, and Participation & Attainment.

### *Transport*

Without efficient travel options between home and a place of study or work, young people are excluded from participation. The evidence suggests that inadequate transport options remain a real barrier in Greater Dandenong.

Nearly 80% of survey respondents identified transport as an employment barrier for half their clients or more. In Melbourne, cars are the primary mode of travel to work, and many jobs require workers to possess a licence. Public transport accounts for an increasing proportion of trips to and from work, whilst walking and bicycle travel remain an option for those with access to appropriate infrastructure and within reasonable range of their destination.

Many families in Greater Dandenong, particularly those without a wage income, find owning and running a car inaccessibly expensive. Without this resource, young people typically won't have the opportunity to learn to drive with a supervising, fully licensed adult. Some young people may also lack the skills required to pass their learner permit test. 85% of survey respondents identified the lack of a driver licence as an employment barrier for all or most of their clients.

Many of those who do have the resources to get their licence will face a further dilemma. If they don't have a job or family resources, it is unlikely they will be able to afford a car but without one, their employment options remain limited.

Driver education schemes for disadvantaged young people such as that run by the Migrant Resource Centre in Dandenong or Mission Australia's Aboriginal Driver Education Program (ADEP) in Gippsland are a proven method of addressing this barrier.

The MRC's Driver Education program is for people from African backgrounds, although there is a high unmet need for such programs in other communities. The program has 6 evening sessions with interpreting services available. If they complete the 6 sessions, each participant can take part in 5 free driving lessons. The MRC believe that such programs need to be targeted in such a way that CALD communities can access them. At the time of publication of this report the MRC were in discussions with VicRoads to expand the program.

Such schemes can combine public, community sector and philanthropic resources with volunteer labour. In addition to helping young people get their licence, they have the added benefits of building young people's confidence and self esteem whilst building social capital and engagement with young people.

It is the primary aim of this report to develop strategies to enable the employment of 4000 more locals by 2021. If the clients represented in the survey data gathered for this report are typical, then at least half of the jobseekers will have transport barriers. If 200 young people per year participated in a driver education program, then in excess of half the target number of 4000 would be better equipped to travel to work. Mission Australia's ADEP program is able to assist around 30 participants per year. If seven driver education programs of this scope ran concurrently from 2010 until 2021, each responding to the needs of a specific client group, they

would collectively assist 2310 participants. It is suggested that a response of this order is required to overcome the transport barriers facing young people in Greater Dandenong.

Public transport is another important option for young people traveling to work or study, and the broader community. Resource constraints, environmental sustainability and urban liveability also weigh heavily in favour of public transport. In Greater Dandenong, six well patronised train stations, most in the north west of the city, are serviced by a train line connected to the metropolitan network. The northern half of the city also has a suite of bus routes, many of which connect with the Dandenong train station.

The southern half of the city however has no train stations and only two bus routes. The state government has completed a review of bus services of the City of Greater Dandenong and identified gaps in the growing industrial and residential areas of Dandenong South, South East and South West. New routes have been proposed in the review, but the review has not yet been publicly announced. The state government has completed bus reviews of metropolitan Melbourne and the Minister will release the reviews of outer areas soon, followed by the middle suburbs (including Greater Dandenong), then inner suburbs. Dates for the release of the middle & inner suburb reviews have not yet been announced.

Apart from new bus routes, a number of other options exist for expanding transport options in Greater Dandenong. Accessible car hire schemes are increasingly prevalent in the inner city, and street designs are increasingly accommodating pedestrians and cyclists. Bicycle hire schemes such as the one soon to be piloted in the CBD provide another option. A study of feasible, innovative ways of overcoming transport barriers for Greater Dandenong's disadvantaged young people could identify appropriate options.

## ***Transitions***

Whilst young people remain engaged with school, language education, vocational or pre-employment training, they remain 'within the fold' of an organisation with a mandate to monitor their progress and welfare. Once they leave school, finish a course or disengage for any other reason, young people are between commitments and are largely without support, placing them at greater risk of moving away from their pathway towards rewarding employment.

A number of participants in the workshops and interviews reflected that disadvantage and disengagement could often be traced back to these transition points. One participant was concerned that many students who are disengaged from school, particularly those who are expelled, "have nowhere to go".

The Victorian DEECD's *Student code of conduct*<sup>23</sup> guidelines stipulates that where students are expelled prior to the age of 15, the Principal must arrange for a transfer to another suitable school. A source within the department says "this process is widely observed but in practice some students get lost, e.g. some students are enrolled in distance education, some with community providers (VCAL) and when the placement falls over the school is not notified, or student becomes uncontactable and so on."

Many students who are expelled or disengage from school after the compulsory age do not move on to other institutions.

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<sup>23</sup> Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *Student Code of Conduct Guidelines*, <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/codeofconduct.htm>.

A number of service practitioners have observed that once disengaged, young people's barriers to employment became more complex and it could be difficult to identify and reengage them. A number of services specialise in reengaging this cohort, including outreach by WAYSS, YRIPP, the Youth Links drop in centre by SCAAB, the ACE sector, recreational services run by Council and the Connections for At Risk Young People partnership. These are valuable services, but preventing the initial disengagement is preferable.

To reduce the risk of disengagement, young people nearing the end of their current enrolment need to be offered comprehensive and detailed career advice, including identification of barriers to employment, education and training needs, and referral to appropriate local EET opportunities. This type of support can be described as transitions support and it is best provided before they have spent too long between engagements.

Transitions support is often provided to young people in Greater Dandenong *after* they have disengaged. Examples of such programs include<sup>24</sup>:

- The Youth Transitions Support Initiative (YTSI), available to 15-19 year olds, primarily as part of the 'out-bound' calls associated with gathering the On-Track data. The in-bound service is promoted to only a limited audience (eg. YRIPP referrals). The service is typically for a single session and does not provide ongoing support
- Youth Links program provided by SCAAB, within the Creating Connections youth homelessness hub. This service is directed towards 14-25 year olds in crisis.
- JPET & PSP programs (old Job Network)
- Getting to Work, Mission Australia

Providing such services to disengaged young people is certainly worthy, but we might ask: would the support not have been better placed *before* disengagement?

It would be untrue to say that all Greater Dandenong's young people in education and training go entirely without transitions support. Available services include:

- a range of programs provided by LINK
- several mainstream programs and for those specific disadvantaged groups at Chisholm TAFE
- VCAL courses, which typically focus on individual pathways to further learning and employment.

These programs provide transitions support to many, but there are wide gaps. For example, one interviewee identified a need for a more thorough program for Year 12 completers without work, and AMES have no funding to support their young migrants after they've finished working with them in the AMEP, so they make the transition to further education or employment on their own.

Early transitions support, with broad eligibility criteria is an effective strategy for assisting young people in Dandenong, so we need to broaden and raise the safety net. To do this, we need transitions support to be built into the fabric of mainstream service responses.

There was a wide consensus on this point from contributors to the research of this project and the matter seems to have also been recognised within the relevant bureaucracies. From Term 3, 2009, DEECD will pilot a Careers Counselling and Guidance Service for early school leavers

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<sup>24</sup> This list reflects the period prior to the middle of 2009, a when number of changes in the service sector took place

in three regions, including Southern Metropolitan region. Young people aged 18 and under, who have not completed Year 12 or its equivalent, who are not enrolled in an education or training institution and are not working full-time, will qualify for a maximum of six hours of career counselling and guidance provided by qualified careers counsellors in their local area.

Transitions support from Employment Services agencies will also become more available. According to the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEEWR)'s *Request for Tender* document for new Employment Services, the system will provide transitions support as part of their Employment Pathways Plan, a generic element of service delivery for all streams. This means that when young people apply with Centrelink to receive unemployment benefits, and concurrently access employment services, as is typical, transitions support will be provided as a matter of priority.

These two new elements of the service system are a welcome addition, and their presence would seem to obviate any further introduction of new transitions support services into the region at this time. However, the quality, intensity, scale and scope of support offered by the new services remains to be seen. There is a very real possibility that they will not suffice for the existing and future needs.

## **Skills**

Low education and skills attainment has been cited by employers, service providers and the NIEIR report as a primary cause of poor employment outcomes for Dandenong's young people. 83% of survey respondents' clients had mostly fair or poor language skills and English was a barrier to employment for half or more of the clients for 55% of respondents. Poor levels of generic employability skills are also evident in the survey data, with most of the skills listed having a majority of clients ranked 'low'.

While it is true that any action to increase education quality, participation, attainment and employment outcomes will directly or indirectly improve these figures, initiatives which directly and holistically tackle this problem should be considered. Opportunities that enable for a combination of enterprise based skills development in a supportive setting have gained considerable purchase in recent years<sup>25</sup>. Such approaches can be used to design a package that responds to the specific skill sets required of an employer while combining the support needs required of a potential employee.

Social enterprise is becoming broadly recognised as an ideal demonstration of such efforts. Whilst definitions remain contested, social enterprise generally refers to any business selling goods or services in the marketplace with the primary purpose of achieving social outcomes. Whilst there are a range of models, typically social enterprises offer paid work in growth industries to disadvantaged jobseekers, integrating personal support, brokerage and referral to relevant services and vocational and non-vocational education.

The state and Commonwealth governments have both funded social enterprise in Melbourne and elsewhere through a range of initiatives. Mission Australia, who run a number of social enterprises in Victoria and elsewhere, have recently received substantial Commonwealth funding for its construction and landscaping social enterprise, known as Urban Renewal<sup>26</sup>,

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<sup>25</sup> Perkins, D (2006) *Improving employment participation for welfare recipients facing personal barriers*. Paper presented at the Social Policy Association conference, University of Birmingham, Jul 18 – 20.

<sup>26</sup> Urban Renewal was previously known as Urban Renewal Employment Enterprise Program (UREEP)

through the Employment Innovations Fund. Urban Renewal is currently making arrangements for new sites in Dandenong and elsewhere.

In 2008, Mission Australia commissioned Dr Jo Barraket at the Centre for Public Policy, University of Melbourne to undertake an independent evaluation of the program. The final report was completed in September 2008 and launched in the document *Working for Renewal: an evaluation of Mission Australia's UREEP, a social enterprise and transitional labour market program*.<sup>27</sup>

The evaluation found that Urban Renewal is a high value program that is responsive to the specific needs and aspirations of program participants. The main strengths of the program are:

- Consistent and personalized social support, including life-skills development and a coordinated approach to individual client needs;
- Patient support for personal and vocational skills development;
- A social context for training and development;
- A partnership approach to training and development;
- Holistic support for transitions from exclusion to participation; and
- Dynamic training in a live industry context.

At the time of the evaluation, 71% of participants (N=21) have made the transition into sustained employment or education. Of past participants interviewed, 59% were employed at the time of the evaluation; this figure is consistent with local and international benchmarks for TLM performance. In addition, 86% of the first intake of participants experienced some form of positive personal development as a result of participating in the program.

Successfully tackling multiple and complex barriers to employment requires a partnership of agencies with different competencies. Hunt and Hart (2008)<sup>28</sup> detail a number of dimensions to the partnership delivering Urban Renewal.

Firstly, there is a partnership in the sense that there are three organisations who combine their respective services and capacities to deliver the program. In [Urban Renewal's] first sites in East Reservoir and West Heidelberg, these include the Kangan Batman TAFE, with whom the participants spend one day per week; Apprenticeships Plus, a group training company who are the legal employers of the trainees and a conduit for government employment subsidies and related supports; and Mission Australia, who provide the personal support and training in a live industry setting

Secondly, [Urban Renewal] combines the funding and support of a range of government programs and initiatives from local, state and federal tiers. Although [Urban Renewal] operates as a commercial enterprise, the cost of achieving its social outcomes puts it at a disadvantage in a competitive market. Dr. Barraket's evaluation found that commercial income defrayed 66% of Mission Australia costs in delivering the program. Financial viability is therefore only possible with the combined resources of a number government programs aimed at achieving specific goals for designated clients. In this sense it joins up

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<sup>27</sup> see [http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/document-downloads/doc\\_details/78-working-for-renewal](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/document-downloads/doc_details/78-working-for-renewal)

<sup>28</sup> Hunt, J. & Hart A. (2008) 'Transitional labour market programs: procurement for social inclusion?', *Partnerships for Social Inclusion* conference, Centre for Public Policy, Melbourne, October 2008, accessed July 2009 at <http://www.public-policy.unimelb.edu.au/conference08/Hart.pdf>

government programs and increases the potential impact of disparate funding initiatives.

Thirdly, [Urban Renewal] is place based. Recruiting from, and providing building and landscaping services to East Reservoir and West Heidelberg, areas designated by the state government for Neighbourhood Renewal, the opportunities for participants and the work they undertake are geographically focussed upon disadvantaged areas. The program has also sought to work in concert with the local Neighbourhood Renewal offices to align priorities and strategies.

And finally, [Urban Renewal] offers government agencies and private business the opportunity to play a role in generating positive social outcomes through their role as purchasers. Traditionally the welfare sector has received support from government through program funding and the private sector through gifts, donations or in-kind and pro bono contributions of work and expertise. A social enterprise provides scope for a different relationship with the public and private sectors. Instead of a funding grant, gift or donation, a social enterprise may be supported when the goods or services it produces are purchased by the public or private sector. In this sense, [Urban Renewal] opens an opportunity for purchasers to be partners in achieving social outcomes. :6-7

Development of the social enterprise sector requires a policy and resource environment conducive to the formation of partnership in each of these dimensions. Examples of the first three dimensions of partnership detailed above are evident in Greater Dandenong, and mandates for their further development can be found in the contemporary policy environment.

The fourth dimension of partnership necessary for social enterprise, social procurement, has found an important exemplar in VicUrban's Revitalising Central Dandenong projects. There is significant scope for engaging social enterprise in these projects either directly, or indirectly as subcontractors. These works provide a good foundation for the establishment of a social enterprise sector, but there are risks associated with aligning a business to a single or small number of customers. Other sources of work must be found for the sector to be sustainable in the longer term and make a significant contribution to the target of 4000 more locals employed by 2021.

Neither State nor Local Government operations in Greater Dandenong currently consider social outcomes in their mainstream purchasing arrangements. If procurement policies mandated the consideration of social outcomes in tendering processes, social enterprises would enjoy an advantage against their for-profit competitors. Given the various subsidies and supports currently enjoyed by the sector, the social benefits offered would be cost-neutral for purchasers. Cost neutrality is particularly important for private purchasers, for whom opportunities will also exist to procure goods and services from social enterprise. This would contribute to their triple bottom line, potentially provide a new resource of appropriately trained and skilled employees and add to their profile as responsible corporate citizens.

Whilst the building and construction sector offers a significant opportunity to the social enterprise sector, there may be other industries appropriate for social enterprise in the Dandenong area. Social enterprise works best when engaged in growth industries, with relatively low barriers to entry-level employment and supplying goods or services to a secure

customer base, particularly to the public sector. As noted, growth is expected in the retail, hospitality, health and community service industries to meet the needs of the growing population. We can also reasonably expect increasing opportunities for initiatives improving environmental sustainability; retrofitting homes and domestic appliances for energy and water efficiency, public education and behaviour change campaigns, landscaping and ecosystem rehabilitation and other such initiatives are all promising examples. Manufacturing is set to remain the biggest employer of locals, so there may be opportunities for integrating social enterprise with the manufacturing sector. Feasibility studies, business plans and partnership development will be required to explore all these possibilities.

As we have noted, developing social enterprises requires a range of agencies with different competencies to form a partnership. The formation of such partnerships, with their complex governance, finance and accountability arrangements is a significant task requiring strong leadership. If the social enterprise sector is to make a real contribution to the goal of 4000 more locals in employment by 2021, it would require numerous initiatives to be run concurrently. Typically, each social enterprise will employ 10-20 participants at a time, with each placement aiming to engage the participant for one year. At the time of the 2006 Census, there were 1354 15-25 year olds looking for work. If ten percent of these young people sought employment in a social enterprise at any given time, 135 places would be required. If the sector were to work with this many young people each year, 1300 participants would be assisted over a ten year period. This would require between seven and thirteen social enterprise businesses to operate simultaneously from 2011 until 2021. It is therefore suggested that 10 social enterprises be the target number.

In the Dandenong context, we suggest that the necessary partners for each social enterprise would include:

- A group training company
- A community sector agency with demonstrable capacity in the sector
- An RTO
- Local and/or State government agencies (e.g. VicUrban) to fund and/or purchase the services directly, or indirectly through subcontracting

With these partners in place, the further participation of local business, schools and community sector agencies would build further capacity in the sector.

If a broad base of support can be established across the community, all tiers of government, the community sector and industry, social enterprise promises exciting possibilities for the residents of Greater Dandenong. As a first step, a central agency with a mandate to champion the cause, lead negotiations between partners and advocate on behalf of the necessary policy instruments will be required.

## ***Experience***

Unemployed young people in Greater Dandenong live amidst the buzz of economic activity. A construction site, the shopping mall, road works, a factory, passing trucks, take away food outlets; all places of work, skills, status, income and opportunity from which they are excluded. This exclusion has an obvious economic effect, but just as significant are the psychological and social consequences. We know that when individuals feel they are outsiders and have no stake in social and economic systems, they are less inclined to respect the norms and boundaries of those systems. This perspective and the associated behaviour are a source of further stigma and exclusion. The results can be tragic for the individuals concerned and come at great cost to the social and economic system as a whole.

Whilst the above scenario is all too common in Greater Dandenong, many young people are confident, hopeful and ambitious and could not be described as outsiders. Many young migrants are keenly motivated and see bright futures for themselves, but may not have an understanding of the opportunities that lay on their doorstep. High profile, white collar professions such as medicine, law, IT or engineering have strong associations with success and status but in truth there are few direct opportunities to access these positions for the young people of Greater Dandenong. Manufacturing, an industry replete with local opportunities for skilled workers, holds little allure in the popular imagination. It has been observed, for example, that manufacturing work is often perceived by young people in Greater Dandenong as 'dirty dangerous and dumb', despite forecasts of higher wages resulting from increasing levels of specialisation, automation and productivity. Many employers know they need to invest in training their workforce and opportunities exist for talented young people to develop specialist skills and ascend to high value positions within the sector. Employment in manufacturing offers great prospects, but young people often have scant opportunities to become aware of them.

On the other side of this barrier between young people and local workplaces are the employers. The economy has grown strongly in Greater Dandenong over the last decade. Whilst processes have become more efficient and productivity has increased, more workers have been required, particularly those with the skills and aptitudes to take on a variety of tasks, more responsibility, and learn and adapt in a constantly changing environment. Many of the most trusted, skilled and experienced workers are ageing, and there are too few talented young staff to replace them. Employers generally choose to locate their business in Greater Dandenong because of its strategic strengths and established supply chains, and may not be aware of the social and economic plight of so many of its residents. They may have had contact with locals looking for work and found the applicants culturally alien, marginally literate in the language of the workplace, underqualified and without adequate experience.

The lack of connection between Dandenong's unemployed young people and its employers comes at great cost to both. Each has much to gain from the other, but there are too few platforms or contexts between them to begin discussions and find expression for common interests. We might express the disconnection between young people and employers as a lack of social capital. Social capital has been described as 'the networks, shared values and understandings between people that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and work together.'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Priest, S (2009) 'What is 'social capital' and how can vocational education and training help develop it,' *National Centre for Vocational Education Research*, p. 3.

A primary task, therefore, in building opportunities for our cohort is in building social capital between employers and local young people. Trust is a necessary ingredient for this development. Research in the field of game theory has shown that trust is developed where two actors undertake a joint project involving mutual gain, and in so doing expose themselves to their partner, who may act against their interests.<sup>30</sup> Where the mutual gain is achieved, and neither partner acts against the interest of the other, trust is developed. Naturally, initial joint projects must be modest and the risks to both parties minimal, but over a series of iterations, the joint projects and the risk exposure may be increasingly substantial. Trust thus develops over time and can eventually lead to significant advantages for both actors.

Greater Dandenong, then, requires contexts in which young people and employers might work together, seeking a modest mutually beneficial outcome, but without much initial exposure to risk. Young people need to learn workplace skills and employers need labour, so this is an obvious place to start. A short term, structured work placement seems to sit well within these considerations.

In this report, the terms 'structured work placement' and 'structured workplace learning' are used to describe any unpaid period of work, undertaken by a young person who may or may not be in school. The placement could be on a part-time or full-time basis and for a period of one week to several months. It may be coordinated by a school, a community organisation, an employment service provider or by the young person themselves.

Research undertaken by the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research found a positive relationship between undertaking VETiS modules and building social capital. VETiS courses provide young people not only with vocational education and training but with the ability to interact with industry and employers. In addition to planned course outcomes, students have been found to have increased self-esteem, a feeling of respect from authority figures, and a greater capacity to approach employers and find employment in the future.<sup>31</sup> There is no reason why the same results would not be experienced by young people in structured workplace learning programs through their interactions with people in the workforce and employers.

Structured workplace learning also provide young people with important insight into an industry or job, reinforcing or challenging their desire to pursue that career path, enabling better informed decisions in the future. They can assist in the development of important life skills such as social interaction, punctuality and appropriate behaviour in a professional context. Participating in structured workplace learning can make a young person realise they lack necessary skills and qualifications, encouraging them to reconnect with education.

Apart from assisting to meet their labour needs, considerable benefits for employers from workplace learning programs have been identified by stakeholders in this research process. Some business people have a desire to lead, share their skills and teach, and being a structured workplace learning host is an opportunity for them to do so. This may be especially the case for young people who have made their way through the business world with some success, despite a disadvantaged background. For older skilled practitioners, this role may be an opportunity to

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<sup>30</sup> Scharpf, F. W. 'Games Real Actors Could Play: Positive and Negative Coordination in Embedded Negotiations', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, January 1, 1994; 6(1): 27 - 53.

<sup>31</sup> Priest 2009, Op. cit., p. 6.

continue to use their skills and stay in the industry without the physical demands of direct practice. For those businesses who have adopted a triple bottom line or corporate social responsibility framework, hosting structured workplace learning programs is an opportunity to demonstrate their contribution to community outcomes. As more government agencies, such as VicUrban require contractors to contribute to social outcomes, there is an economic imperative for their participation as well. Opportunities to celebrate and exemplify businesses who host structured workplace learning placements may further increase the incentives for employers. A 'structured workplace learning week' or 'host employer of the year award' have been suggested by stakeholders.

In addition, the development of programs necessitates the creation of partnerships between industry, the community sector, schools and other education institutions. Whilst these partnerships take effort, there is evidence to suggest that the benefits outweigh the costs for all stakeholders.<sup>32</sup> Partnerships can generate social capital, which has been shown to retain people within the community. Currently in Greater Dandenong, residents are likely to leave once they move into a higher income bracket, resulting in a narrow distribution of income at the lower end of the spectrum, creating skills gaps and increasing labour costs. Social capital has also been shown to increase volunteering and participation in community organisations, bringing further positive social and economic outcomes to the region.

The importance of work placements is recognised by many of the education initiatives in Greater Dandenong. Chisholm TAFE, for example, place hundreds of students each year, with the assistance of their Work Based Training Analyst and Industry Entry Facilitators. They approach the employers by enquiring about their skills needs and offering advice on how to meet their needs in the future, including advice about available government grants and subsidies. This provides a good 'door opener' to begin a discussion about structured work placements.

In addition to those operated by Chisholm TAFE, The following programs operating in CGD have an interest in providing structured work experience opportunities:

- Youth Links (for clients of State Government's Creating Connections youth homeless 'hub': WAYSS, SCAAB, Open Families and Salvation Army Peninsula Youth)
- Employment Services Providers
- Getting to Work, Mission Australia
- B.E.S.T. Centre (Berry Street special school)
- Connectus (run previously through LINK)
- LLEN based Youth Transitions Support Initiative
- Connections for At Risk Young People Program (Council outreach, engagement and diversion program in partnership with Victoria Police, YSAS, CMY and SEMRC)
- Schools (through LLEN based LCP)
- VicUrban and contractors
- AMEP pilot partnership with AMES and SEMMA

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<sup>32</sup> Zevenbergen, R & Zevenbergen, K (2006) *School-to-Work Transitions: Final Report*, Griffith Institute of Educational Research, p. 6.

Data collected by the DandenongFirst Service Survey found that of the 19 surveyed, 6 community organisations provided a work placement service to its clients. Between these 6 organisations, 122 clients had accessed a work placement program within the past year.<sup>3334</sup>

Between all of these organisations, there is a large demand for placements and relatively few employers willing to accept them. Some employers who express interest in participating find themselves inundated with requests. Securing placements is particularly labour-intensive, and many community organisations lack the staff and resources to dedicate the necessary time to build industry links and establish programs with employers. The funding of these programs is also an issue. 4 organisations said this service was 'not at all' securely funded and 1 organisation reported it was 'partially' secure.<sup>3536</sup>

In addition to the above placements, there is a compulsory year 10 work experience program delivered through schools. A range of problems with these placements have been identified by stakeholders. Frequently, there is little pre-placement training and post-placement debriefing, leaving young people poorly prepared and unable to capitalise on lessons learned. Students may have little support and few resources to find a suitable placement, resulting in placement without much interest or relevance to the young person. Due to the compulsory nature of the placements, young people may not be voluntarily participating, and this has been reflected in their attitude towards the host employer during the placement, creating a negative experience for all involved. These types of placements can erode goodwill towards work experience that might exist amongst employers, students and the community

For a variety of reasons, many employers are reluctant to take on young people in structured workplace learning programs. As we have seen, young people in Dandenong tend to have high needs and low skills, so staff are required to mentor and train the young person, rendering them less immediately productive. Some employers may have had bad experiences offering structured workplace learning, particularly if the young people who were placed with them were not there of their own volition. Structured workplace learning programs are also seen to be inconvenient, time consuming and complicated, involving tasks such as risk management, liaising with the community organisation or school and planning a program for the young person. There is a clear lack of understanding amongst employers (many of whom are not residents of Greater Dandenong) about the local social problems, the programs that exist to help young people, and the important role they can play.

Various employers were interviewed to ascertain the circumstances that would be necessary for them to participate in structured workplace learning programs. All employers interviewed expressed interest in accessing, or information about how to access, financial incentives from the government to offset the potential cost to productivity. Employers felt that some kind of external support when it comes to risk management, liaising with the organisation attempting

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<sup>34</sup> In the survey, the term 'work experience' was used. However, there was no option to rate the funding of structured workplace learning placements, and it is assumed that the respondents who selected 'work experience' as a service their organisation provided, were providing a structured workplace learning service similar in nature to those being discussed in this section of the report.

<sup>35</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> organisation did not record the security of funding for its work experience service.

<sup>36</sup> In the survey, the term 'work experience' was used. However, there was no option to rate the funding of structured workplace learning placements, and it is assumed that the respondents who selected 'work experience' as a service their organisation provided, were providing a structured workplace learning service similar in nature to those being discussed in this section of the report.

to place the student, and coordinating the programs would be beneficial. Employers also expressed a desire to be assured young people placed with them had an interest in their industry and genuinely wanted to be there. There was a large degree of interest expressed by interviewed employers in placing young people in structured workplace learning programs, particularly if measures were put in place to facilitate the process and make it cost effective.

Another potential source of placements are sites of Commonwealth, state and local government operations in the area. The public sector is a significant employer and it is not unusual for these agencies to be without policies guiding the use of work placements. In the absence of such guidance, public servants are less likely to be able to support placements within their workplaces. A wide range of vocations exist in the public sector, and opportunities for local young people to experience these work places would be particularly valuable.

Structured work placement is clearly an effective strategy for overcoming unemployment and underemployment amongst young people in Greater Dandenong, and could make a significant contribution to the target of 4000 more locals in employment by 2021. Currently, however, there are real structural limitations preventing the true potential from being realised. A new structure is required, one that:

- Manages the risk exposure of employers and young people on placements
- Increases the profile of the structured work placements and attracts more employers to participate
- Reduces the administrative burden upon agencies sourcing and administering placements
- Provides access to a range of industries and workplaces suited to the diverse interests of young people
- Provides a pedagogical and support structure which maximises the educative and transformative potential of placements
- Enhances opportunities for embedded mentoring.

Central to this work will be a focus on broadening the pool of local employers who engage with work placements, and future employment of local young people, through building social capital. This will occur on a range of levels focused on forging networks, norms and trust to maximise the number of local employers who understand the contribution they can make and to build their capacity and commitment to make that contribution.

A central agency, with a mandate to source and manage placements on behalf of agencies and institutions would be well placed to achieve these goals. Because of their small scale and limited resources, community agencies providing pre-employment type programs are in most immediate need of the services of such an agency, but it may be feasible for a proportion of the placements required by larger institutions such as Chisholm TAFE, secondary schools and employment services agencies to be sourced through the central agency. It is likely that this would function as a brokerage, fee for service arrangement in this context.

There are existing examples of such central structured work placement brokerage agencies in other areas,<sup>37</sup> and the SE LLEN already provides a facilitation service between industry and secondary schools throughout their catchment. The broader the range of agencies sourcing placements through the broker, and corresponding industry participants, the greater the benefits of centralisation are likely to become. It may be however, that given the scale of

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<sup>37</sup> Eastern Industry Education Partnership is an agency co-ordinating placements for schools across the Manningham, Whitehorse, Monash, Knox, Maroondah and the Yarra Ranges LGAs.

required placements and diversity of needs of students, industry and educators, that a number of smaller placement brokering agencies may be more suitable.

### ***Participation & attainment***

Amongst the NIEIR report's findings were that the low education attainment of the workforce and the low education participation rate of residents was a driver of poor employment outcomes in the Greater Dandenong. If young residents participate in education for longer, and pass through to higher levels of qualification, we can assume that their employment outcomes will improve.

For many students, however, the more traditional pathways and pedagogical paradigms of full time secondary schooling and VCE is not appropriate. A wider diversity of options catering to a range of educational needs and aspirations is necessary to keep these students engaged and participating.

Two models for responding to this need within the mainstream education system are SBATs and VCAL. Given the demographics and barriers we have noted, opportunities to participate in these programs, their quality and appropriateness are particularly important to young people in Dandenong.

#### *School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships*

Stakeholders contributing to the research for the DandenongFirst project have identified that many young people and their families face difficulties in securing sufficient income and require young people to contribute to the family income pool. Low education retention rates are therefore partly due to young people's pressing desire to earn an income. Increasingly, young people in school are participating in paid employment, and many students leave school with the direct purpose of working full-time. There is evidence to suggest that participation in part-time work while at school can be a deterrent from their studies and encourage leaving school prior to the completion of year 12.<sup>38</sup>

SBATs enable students to maintain and even integrate paid work and schooling. Evidence suggests that they enhance a student's work-readiness, assisting their transition from school to work.<sup>39</sup> They allow less academic students the opportunity to remain engaged in school and excel in a vocational education setting. They may also allow students to be formally accredited for part-time work that they would be doing regardless of the SBAT system. SBATs have been shown to help with other school work. 74% of respondents to a survey conducted by NCVET reported that participating in a SBAT assisted with other school work to some degree. This is in contrast to 52% of students in part-time employment who reported that it didn't help at all with their schooling.<sup>40</sup>

A recent study into SBATs found that there is significantly less uptake than regular apprenticeships and traineeships, but that there is a rapid increase nationwide. The number of

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<sup>38</sup> Vickers, M., Lamb, S. & Hinkley, J. (2003) *Student Workers in High School and Beyond: The Effects of Part-time Employment on Participation in Education, Training and Work*, Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth Research Report Number 30.

<sup>39</sup> Zevenbergen, R & Zevenbergen, K (2006) *School-to-Work Transitions: Final Report*, Griffith Institute of Educational Research, p. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Smith, E. & Green, A. (2001) *School Students' Learning from their Paid and Unpaid Work*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide.

SBATs undertaken in each state varies, with the majority based in Queensland and Victoria. SBATs are largely in the hospitality and retail industries and usually at the level of a Certificate 1 or 2.<sup>41</sup>

In Queensland, schools receive substantial funding for each student engaged in a SBAT, and as a result actively encourage their students to partake in them. The Queensland Department of Education also has very clear policy regarding the role and responsibility of schools managing SBATs, encouraging flexibility of timetabling to allow students every opportunity to fit in their SBAT and to maximise integration of the SBAT with the student's curriculum. Previously in Victoria, minimal funding was allocated to schools for each student in a SBAT, but this has ceased. Only standard apprenticeship and traineeship funding is available to the employer that hosts the student.

Without dedicated resources, Victorian schools struggle to coordinate students with SBATs. There is a significant amount of administration and liaising involved in coordinating a placement; between the school, the employer, the training organisation, parents and the student. The more students who want to undertake a SBAT, the greater the workload for school staff given the task of coordinating the placements. In addition to this, schools are often inflexible in developing students' timetables to fit in the minimum 13 hours per week they need to dedicate to their SBAT. The lack of dedicated resources and flexibility can discourage students from doing SBATs, or result in schools failing to approve SBATs that students attempt to coordinate themselves. This could come at the cost of the student's engagement from education, as their desire to work (and earn an income) could outweigh their desire to stay in school.

Recent DEECD policy around SBATs has made increasingly pertinent the need for adequate resourcing. The option for a student to do a 'non-integrated' SBAT has been removed, ensuring that all SBATs are 'integrated' with their schooling and therefore receive some degree of involvement from the school. This policy is suitable if, and only if, schools are in a viable position to adequately coordinate SBATs and integrate them into their students' curriculum.

There are some precedents for coordinating and resourcing SBATs at a regional level through clusters<sup>42</sup>. This may provide economies of scale and remove the burden, and hence disincentive for schools to undertake the 'leg work' involved with SBAT provision. It is understood that the SE LLEN already provide a degree of assistance to schools in this regard, but a more direct provision of services may be warranted.

#### *VCAL provision*

Despite the wide application of VCAL in the region, stakeholders have identified a number of factors preventing young people taking advantage of the VCAL programs.

Some stakeholders have noted a lack of understanding of the value of the program by parents, young people, teachers and principals. The VCE remains the certificate of choice for most Year 11 and 12 students and until there is a critical mass of VCAL students, its perception as a marginal option is likely to endure. VCE is also seen as the standard pathway towards university entry and other higher learning. Stakeholders have reported that many students and their families, particularly those from migrant backgrounds, aspire to the white collar professional

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<sup>41</sup> Tom Karmel & Peter Mlotkowski, *School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, 2008.

<sup>42</sup> The service provided to the Geelong region by the SGR LLEN is one example

careers typically associated with these options. The capacity of VCAL to lead to higher levels of education needs to be more broadly developed and recognised. State wide, over 20% of VCAL completers go on to education in higher levels. The comparable figure for Greater Dandenong is not known, but if it is comparable there is certainly room to further strengthen the links between VCAL and further education.

Also contributing to popular misunderstandings of VCAL is a lack of information and promotion of the programs offered by schools. Secondary schools have demonstrated a reluctance to establish an identity as VCAL providers. These schools are known to compete for a reputation of academic excellence, and seek to attract more academically oriented students who will achieve better results and reflect well upon the performance of the school. Aligning themselves with VCAL programs could be seen to place schools' academic reputations at risk. As a result, publicly accessible information and promotions of the VCAL options offered tend to be de-emphasised.

Another challenge facing VCAL provision is the availability of appropriately qualified staff. Typically, teachers of applied learning require a combination of qualifications in teaching and technical practice. Given the skills shortage in the teaching profession, along with many technical vocations, appropriately skilled and qualified individuals can be hard to attract.

With a collaborative effort between schools, DEECD and community VCAL providers, none of these problems are insurmountable. There may be opportunities, for example, to recruit older skilled practitioners into part time teaching where their skills may still be used but without the physical demands of practice. Promotional campaigns and improved information may help overcome the stigma of the program, and well resourced, pilot courses offering supported pathways to higher education and employment may demonstrate the potential for further attainment.

## Recommendations

The recommendations in this section address an array of disparate policy areas and government and non-government agencies. Despite their breadth and specificity, there are consistent themes; including disadvantaged young people in a wider variety of social and economic realms, releasing existing capacity in the community, increasing integration and co-dependence between institutions, and reducing silos, barriers and transaction costs between sectors. Each of the proposals is motivated by a proposition that first and foremost, young people need *access*, a principle perhaps best articulated by Ivan Illich:

If a man (sic) is to grow up he needs, first of all, access to things, to places, and to processes, to events and to records. He needs to see, to touch, to tinker with, to grasp whatever there is in a meaningful setting

Ivan Illich (1973) *The Deschooled Society*

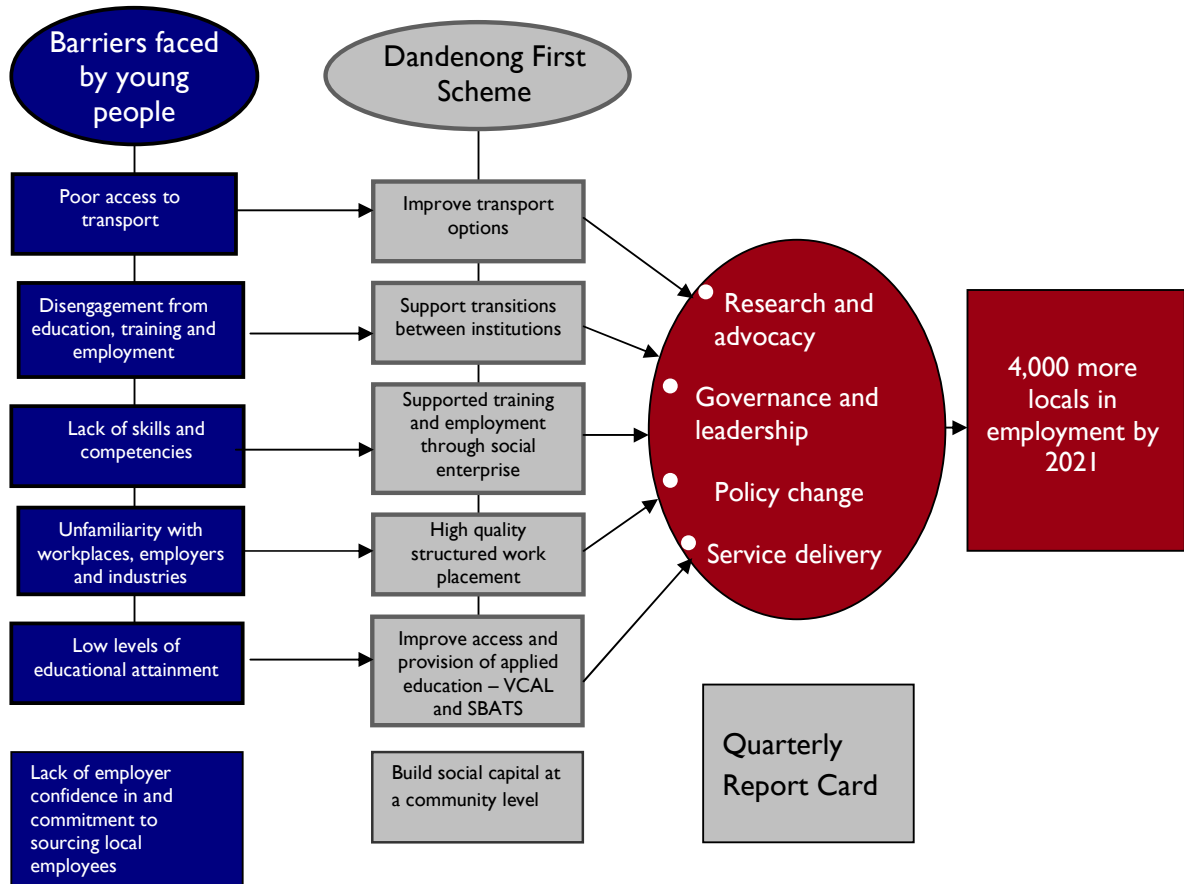
Achieving the target of 4000 more locals in employment by 2021 will require a sustained combination of research and advocacy, governance and leadership, policy change and service delivery. The themes above and their application in the various realms will take time, resources and conviction. The community of stakeholders will need to unite around the goal and build a collective resolve to address the five barriers. Once the resolve has been established, overseeing, measuring and reporting on progress will help determine if the efforts have been sufficient.

It is unlikely any of this will occur without an agency with the necessary resources and mandate to catalyse and motivate change. For this reason a *DandenongFirst* Scheme should be instituted to orchestrate and advocate across the disparate realms of policy and practice. The primary recommendation of this report is for the creation of a *DandenongFirst* Scheme, whose goal is to ensure that 4000 more locals are in work in Greater Dandenong by 2021.

Where there are existing agencies with the mandates and resources to act on some of these dimensions the support required will be to advocate for and assist in facilitating the necessary change. The transport, transitions and education and attainment fields would fit this description. In other instances, there may be no existing agency with the mandate or capacity to undertake the tasks required, for example, leading partnership and business development for the social enterprise sector, or working with employers and education and training providers to broker work placements.

The mandates of the proposed *DandenongFirst* Scheme are illustrated in the diagram below

Figure 14 - DandenongFirst Scheme



The DandenongFirst Scheme will be the primary vehicle for overcoming the barriers identified in this report. However, there are also a number of interim actions that are included in the detailed recommendations.

## 1. Transport

- 1.1. Reinforce the need for new bus lines in the south of Greater Dandenong
- 1.2. Provide driver education programs for young people in Greater Dandenong
  - 1.2.1. That the driver education programs be equivalent to 7 programs supporting 30 participants each, per annum from 2010 until 2021
  - 1.2.2. That these programs respond to the needs of specific cultural and demographic groups
- 1.3. A study of innovative ways of overcoming the transport barriers of young residents in the City of Greater Dandenong,

- 1.3.1. Thus study should consider walking and bicycle paths, bicycle rental and ownership schemes, car hire, car pooling and car ownership schemes, and other modes for viability and future funding.
2. Transitions Support
  - 2.1. Seek resources for an evaluation study of transitions support services offered to young people in Greater Dandenong from July 2010
    - 2.1.1. The evaluation study should consider transitions support services offered in secondary schools, vocational and language training, employment services, community sector programs and through the SE LLEN.
3. Skills
  - 3.1. Encourage local, State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies operating in Dandenong to develop social procurement policies (mandating the consideration of social outcomes in their tendering)
  - 3.2. Develop, implement and evaluate a demonstration project of demand driven, work-based training that meets the existing and strategic needs of the employer whilst providing sustained personal support for the young person and the employer.
4. Experience
  - 4.1. Encourage local, State and Commonwealth government departments and agencies operating locally to develop policies guiding the use of structured work placements in their work places.
  - 4.2. Pursue funding for a centralised work placement broker or brokers.
  - 4.3. That the broker place students with local businesses on behalf of community sector education and training programs, with the possibility of including employment services, RTOs and schools
  - 4.4. That the work placement broker/s:
    - 4.4.1. in partnership with employers and host agencies, develop and administer a range of evidence based, appropriate models providing quality assurance & risk management
    - 4.4.2. provide broader partnership development between industry and education/training providers
    - 4.4.3. increase public and employer awareness of the value of structured workplace learning by considering;
      - 4.4.3.1. promote a 'DandenongFirst Week' – an annual work placement campaign
      - 4.4.3.2. recognise supportive employers, such as a host employer of the year award
      - 4.4.3.3. provide advice to employers on meeting future workforce needs (e.g. available government funding and subsidies) as a 'door opener' for discussions with employers leading to work placements
      - 4.4.3.4. a broader campaign for workplaces to be opened as learning spaces
      - 4.4.3.5. build community social capital and a commitment to employing local young people
5. Participation and attainment
  - 5.1. Add capacity to South Eastern Local Learning and Employment Network and its members to;
    - 5.1.1. undertake a communications campaign promoting VCAL programs
    - 5.1.2. implement a high quality, 'showcase' VCAL pilot pathway program beginning with VCAL through to TAFE qualification and then onto employment

- 5.1.3. focus on professional development and recruitment of VCAL staff, including making provisions for older, former practitioners for part time employment as VCAL teachers
- 5.2. Add capacity to South Eastern Local Learning and Employment Network and its members to pursue;
  - 5.2.1. adequately resource the provision of SBATs
  - 5.2.2. consider the coordination and management of SBATs at a regional level, through the SE LLEN or another appropriate agency
  - 5.2.3. adapt school timetables to better cater for the needs of students undertaking SBATs.

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## Appendix 1 - Survey



### DandenongFirst Service Survey

This survey aims to gather information regarding the services delivered to unemployed or under-employed\* 16-25 year olds who live in the City of Greater Dandenong.

Please only consider this specific group, unless otherwise indicated, in the completion of this survey.

\* Those who deem their current employment to be insufficient (e.g. number of hours worked, skill level required) and wish to make better use of their skills.

#### Organisation Profile

1. What is the name of your organisation? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does your organisation provide services to unemployed or under-employed 16-25 year old clients living in the City of Greater Dandenong?  
 No                       Yes

If no, please discontinue this survey.

If yes, approximately how many clients in this demographic has your organisation provided services to in the past year?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Roughly what percentage of your total number of clients are in the demographic in question?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Tick the box that best describes your organisation.

Not for profit

Private

Government agency

Federal

State

Which department? \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. How would you best describe your position in the organisation? (Select the best option.)

Organisation Management

Service Management

Service Provider

6. How many staff are currently employed by your organisation and located in the City of Greater Dandenong?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Are there any staff whose roles are dedicated to the demographic in question?

No

Yes

If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_

## Service Profile

8. What services does your organisation provide?

Tick the relevant services, indicate how many clients (in the demographic in question) you have provided them to in the past year and how secure the funding is for that service.

Engagement					
			Funding		
	Service	Number of clients	Wholly secure	Partially secure	Not at all secure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Case management		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Life skills		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Language skills		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol and drug services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Justice diversion		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Migrant settlement		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Education					
			Funding		
	Service	Number of clients	Wholly secure	Partially secure	Not at all secure
<input type="checkbox"/>	VCE		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	VCAL		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	VET		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accredited training		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult and Community Education		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical/business skills		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	School-based apprenticeships		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Preparing for Work					
			Funding		
	Service	Number of clients	Wholly secure	Partially secure	Not at all secure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Traineeships		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work experience		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Employment services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Working					
			Funding		
	Service	Number of clients	Wholly secure	Partially secure	Not at all secure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Post-placement support		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Further education/training		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. In what ways do your services change your clients' prospects and outlook?

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10. Are there any internal factors that limit the delivery of your services to clients from the demographic in question?

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11. Are there any external factors that limit the delivery of your services to clients from the demographic in question?

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## Client Profile

As a reminder, all questions in the following section refer only to 16-25 year old unemployed or under-employed clients living in the City of Greater Dandenong.

12. Typically, how would you describe your clients' English skills? (Select the best option.)

Written :

- Poor  
 Fair  
 Good  
 Excellent

Spoken:

- Poor  
 Fair  
 Good  
 Excellent

13. Approximately, what percentage of your clients are from a CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) group?

\_\_\_\_\_

14. What are the top three CALD groups amongst your clients?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

15. What percentage of your clients have achieved the following levels of educational attainment?

	<u>0%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>75%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Less than year 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 10-11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VCE or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post-school qualifications (vocational, tertiary)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Typically, how proficient are your clients with respect to the following employment skills? (Circle one option for each employment skill.)

	<u>None</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Advanced</u>	<u>Full</u>
Collecting, analysing and organising information	1	2	3	4	5
Communicating ideas and information	1	2	3	4	5

	<u>None</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Advanced</u>	<u>Full</u>
Planning and organising activities	1	2	3	4	5
Working with others and in a team	1	2	3	4	5
Using mathematical ideas and techniques	1	2	3	4	5
Solving problems	1	2	3	4	5
Using technology	1	2	3	4	5

17. How many of your clients face the following barriers to employment? (Circle one point for each barrier to employment.)

	None	A few	Half	Most	All
Transport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No driver's licence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No valid identification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pregnancy and/or children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drug/alcohol abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of qualifications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finances (e.g. debt)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience or work history	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location of residence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Criminal history	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time spent unemployed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. How do clients access your service?

- Self-referral
- Referred from other organisations (please specify top three)

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- Other (please specify)

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19. Does your organisation refer clients from the demographic in question to other organisations?

- No
- Yes

If yes, please specify the top three.

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20. How long do you typically work with your clients? (Select the best option.)

- Less than 6 months
- 6 - 12 months
- 12 - 18 months
- 18 - 24 months
- Longer than 24 months

21. How frequently do you work again with previous clients? (Select the best option.)

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often

22. Typically, in which of the following services do you perceive your clients to have unmet needs? (Select as many as appropriate.)

<b>Engagement Services</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Case management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
<input type="checkbox"/>	Life skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Language skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol and drug services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Justice diversion
<input type="checkbox"/>	Migrant settlement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____

<b>Workplace Services</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Post-placement support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Further education/training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____

<b>Education Services</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	VCE
<input type="checkbox"/>	VCAL
<input type="checkbox"/>	VET
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accredited training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult and Community Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical/business skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	School-based apprenticeships
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____

<b>Preparing for Work Services</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Traineeships
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work experience
<input type="checkbox"/>	Employment services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____

23. Do you have one suggestion for improving opportunities for the demographic in question?

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*Thank you for your time.*

*If your organisation would like to receive a summary of our findings please include an email address.*

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2 – Organisations receiving requests to complete the survey

AMES Dandenong  
AMES Keysborough  
AMES Noble Park  
AMES Springvale  
Asylum Seeker Assistance Program  
Asylum Seekers Centre  
Avocare  
Berry Street  
Boys Brigade  
Casey North Community Information and Support Service  
Centacare Catholic Family Services  
Centre for Multicultural Youth  
Centrelink  
Chisholm Institute of TAFE  
City of Greater Dandenong  
Coomoora Community Centre  
Cornerstone Contact Centre  
Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-op  
Dandenong Neighbourhood House  
Dandenong Valley Job Support  
Dandenong Youth Support Services  
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
Department of Human Services  
Eritrean Australian Youth Association  
Future Leadership Foundation  
Gateway Centre  
Greater Dandenong Community Health Service  
Hand Break Turn Dandenong  
Hanover  
Jan Wilson Community Centre  
Joey's Van  
Link Employment and Training  
Mission Australia  
Narre Community Learning Centre  
Noble Park Community Centre  
Oz Child Youth Advocacy and Legal Services  
Smith Family  
South East Alcohol and Drug Services  
South East Local Learning and Employment Network  
South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault  
South Eastern Migrant Resource Centre  
Southern Adult Mental Health Service  
Southern Ethnic Advocacy and Advisory Council  
Southern Health  
Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau  
Springvale Learning and Activities Centre  
Springvale Monash Legal Service  
Springvale Neighbourhood House  
Sudan Liaison Office  
Sudanese Community Association of Australia  
WAYSS  
Wesley Youth Services Dandenong  
Women's Health in South East  
Youth Referral and Independent Person Program  
Youth Substance Abuse Service