

R E P O R T

ON THE

SOUTH EAST LOCAL LEARNING EMPLOYMENT NETWORK (SELLEN)
BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

SCHOOL BASED APPRENTICESHIPS & TRAINEESHIPS
(SBAT)

FOR

SELLEN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SBAT program under the operational framework adopted by SELLEN has been an outstanding success. As one student participant noted “I didn’t have any bad things to note down because there weren’t any.”

Dalwood Consulting in late 2009 was commissioned to investigate the effectiveness of the SBAT program and its framework. This was driven partly as a response to the federal government’s “Earn or Learn” policy.

The method we employed has been to develop a thematic framework that highlights and relates the factors that undergird successful SBAT programs. It has proved to be an effective and efficient methodology. Interviewees included key participants in the program – employers, teachers and students, RTO’s and SELLEN itself.

The thematic framework as presented in the body of the report is an accurate representation of the opinions expressed in interviews. It also reflects key learnings from the case studies included as appendices to the report.

The framework identifies a number of factors vital to program success. They include;

- Thorough preparation and attention to clarity of concept, process, roles and responsibilities.
- The pivotal nature of trusted and reliable mediation.
- The capacity of key players to establish and sustain trusting relationships.
- An operational model built on co-operative and collaborative working relationships.
- Adequate training for mentors in the workplace.
- Ongoing education of the community in all aspects of the program.

The authors found no disagreement that the SBAT program and its operational framework have been highly effective and efficient. There is no doubt that the program and like models should take their place amongst available pathways for senior secondary students. The program complements options such as VET and VCAL.

Key players involved in the programs established so far are outstanding practitioners maintaining superior levels of professional and personal competence. Their example will not be easy to replicate but the challenge to do so will be worth the energy and commitment.

For the foreseeable future capable mediation will be required as will some degree of government subsidy. Any early attempt to withdraw that support would place the program in jeopardy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the SELLEN should use the report to solicit specific purpose funding over a five year period in order to have the resources available to actively mediate in such programs.
2. That forums similar to the exploratory sessions conducted in late 2009 be held on a more regular basis (e.g. twice yearly) in order to provide a meaningful follow-up to local community agencies, schools and business. This will keep faith with all those who chose to participate in 2009.
3. That the next forum should be based around the thematic framework developed in this report for comment and feedback and ideas for concrete action (moving forward).
4. That the case studies provide the basis for information booklets for broad distribution through local industry, schools and the media.
5. That key players in current programs be brought together to consider the implications of the report.
6. That the practice of Apprenticeships Group Australia in involving parents in the SBAT process be noted and codified for distribution among potential players in the future. In particular the way in which parents were meticulously prepared prior to the signing process.
7. That the thematic framework be used to identify the skills and attributes required in key players in future programs and that the findings be factored into the preparatory phase of future programs including internal training models.
8. That an active advocacy program be developed based on active community education and collaboration. Advocacy should also include the need for ongoing government support in which employers are subsidized for creating traineeship positions.
9. That schools be asked to introduce the SBAT program as a career and learning pathway for senior students. That schools be asked to give consideration to introducing the SBAT program to students in year 10 where appropriate. As a first step that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Training be approached through the local region to develop a process whereby schools can be informed of the progress made so far in making SBAT a viable option.
10. That a copy of this report be sent to the leadership of each institution involved in current programs with thanks for their participation

INTRODUCTION/RATIONALE

In late 2009 Dalwood Consulting was commissioned by the South Eastern LLEN (SELLEN) to evaluate the effectiveness of its and others' work in progressing School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT).

Over many years SELLEN has been involved in facilitating partnership programs linking students with work place opportunities. Around 2007 this activity consolidated itself into developing a framework for a single employer with the entry of multiple students into part time traineeships and apprenticeships.

Now three years into the process it is time to take stock of the strengths of the framework and where it can do better.

In brief form the SBAT framework involves:

- ▶ Identifying employers prepared to offer school based traineeships and apprenticeships;
- ▶ Identifying young people interested in taking up the opportunities presented;
- ▶ Finding appropriate Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) willing to take on the training role;
- ▶ Working with schools that are prepared to be supportive and flexible in their administration and that understand the importance of an individual learning program;
- ▶ The application by SELLEN of mediation and facilitation skills and processes.

Just prior to this investigation during 2009, SELLEN conducted three community forums in the cities of Casey, Cardinia and Greater Dandenong. The forums provided opportunities for local businesses, schools and other agencies to hear from participants in the framework and provide feedback in terms of future needs and directions. The data from these sessions have contributed to this report.

A pleasing consequence of the forums has been the establishment of a new traineeship program involving the three cities of Casey, Cardinia and Greater Dandenong. This was inaugurated in late 2009.

Latterly, changes to government policy in relation to the school leaving age and the demand that all young people be either in education or training to be eligible for financial support, have added even greater urgency to creating an effective framework.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors in arriving at a suitable methodology, namely using a thematic framework approach for this investigation, acknowledge the helpful advice received from Dr John Henry of Victoria University.

We would also acknowledge with gratitude the willingness of all participants in this investigation to give of their time and experience in developing the report.

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To assess the effectiveness of the SBAT framework;
- ▶ To identify those factors that assist towards its effectiveness;
- ▶ To identify those matters requiring additional attention in order to improve the program.

METHOD

- ▶ Available documentation was supplied and read.
- ▶ A thorough briefing was obtained from the SELLEN personnel in the program. At the same time, the same personnel provided insight into identifying the factors that had made the program successful.
- ▶ This resulted in a draft thematic framework, namely a framework that codifies those elements of the program that had produced successful outcomes. The use of the thematic framework was an agreed methodology to use in the context.
- ▶ A draft framework was subsequently used to elicit further comment and feedback from SELLEN.
- ▶ The purpose of establishing a thematic framework for the program evaluation was to:
 - provide a comprehensive focal point for interviews without overwhelming the interviewees.
 - help contain the content so as to place realistic boundaries around investigations without detracting from or disregarding the complex nature of the task.
 - provide an efficient methodology in the construction of the evaluation as well as saving time for all parties involved who are time poor.
 - provide an efficient focus for the report and therefore, for the reader also.
- ▶ The thematic framework was used extensively in a schedule of interviews representing all key players in the program – employers, school-based personnel (students and teachers) and representatives of RTO's. Interviewees were first asked to identify significant factors that had led to the success of the program or indicated shortcomings. Finally they were introduced to the thinking behind the draft thematic framework and asked to comment.
- ▶ Data collected was then used to identify key issues arising and to modify the draft thematic framework towards a more final version.
- ▶ Three case studies were compiled and checked for accuracy with key players involved.
- ▶ A draft report was compiled including our conclusions and recommendations and circulated for comment.
- ▶ The final report was submitted to SELLEN.

KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM INTERVIEWS

An outstanding feature of the interviews was the high level of consensus in identifying the factors that lead to a successful SBAT program. We were overwhelmed with the number of commonalities that resulted. Very few contrary opinions arose. The thematic framework (see below) is a fair representation of the opinions expressed. As we have noted above the thematic framework itself was refined and adapted in the light of the data arising from interviews. As such the most important issues arising from interviews will be found in the thematic framework which has become the most significant aspect of the report. Moreover the learning's from the case studies are similarly reflected in the elements of the framework.

The following notes reflect those issues that arose in addition to matters mentioned in the thematic framework.

- ▶ It is important not to underestimate the student's lack of experience in workplace protocols and expectations e.g. getting to work on time.
- ▶ Students can experience anxiety when confronted with life patterns outside their normal routines and comfort zones e.g. using public transport.
- ▶ Students appreciated that they were given substantial roles in the workplace. They felt valued e.g. they were not there just to make coffee and to run errands.
- ▶ Business and community agencies tend to view government programs with a certain skepticism that militates against the uptake of traineeship programs and the like. On the other hand the availability of a government subsidy assisted employers in deciding to take on trainees.
- ▶ Greater certainty in matters of ongoing government support would be helpful.
- ▶ Information overload can act as a disincentive towards taking on additional responsibilities.
- ▶ Do not underestimate the need for the comprehensive preparation and training of mentors – question assumptions about what people can and can't do.
- ▶ The program appears to have had the unintended result of improving workplace morale as mentors have enjoyed the experience of working with their young colleagues.
- ▶ Parent involvement is a little canvassed area – where parent support has been involved it has made a large difference to students and their decisions.
- ▶ Small business believes it has difficulty in finding adequate resources, but as one case study shows it is doable given the right circumstances.
- ▶ As with most programs success is no overnight event. Realistic timeframes are required.
- ▶ The question always with us is how to sustain the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the program and the people facilitating it.

A THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

What have been the predominant themes emerging from the project?

Please note the considerable overlap between the themes whereby we recognise the interdependence that exists between them.

Thorough preparation of the ground

- ▶ Establish clarity surrounding the concept and have the capacity to sustain that level of clarity throughout the process;
- ▶ Engage local interests through an education campaign involving potential employers, schools, parents, media and community support agencies;
- ▶ Understand the needs and expectations of all parties;
- ▶ Identify actual areas of skill shortage and potential employer participants;
- ▶ Identify areas of skill not covered by VET;
- ▶ Establish in all parties a perception of mutual benefit;
- ▶ Identify the decision makers, the gatekeepers;
- ▶ Harness ones capacity to be strategic in ones approach to key players;
- ▶ Establish a willingness to devote real resources to the project.

Availability of mediation and reliable support through the process

- ▶ Third party mediation services have been pivotal in achieving a successful program. Mediation has provided the necessary persistence to see the program through to implementation.
- ▶ Accept that all players whether school or industry based are time poor – they require assistance;
- ▶ Program success will build on sustained thoroughness and will not tolerate short cuts and laxity – third party monitoring and brokering are vital;
- ▶ Third party support will provide assurance, undergird fledgling relationships and provide clarity throughout a rather complex process.

Relationships

- ▶ Engender trusting relationships based on reliability of performance and integrity;
- ▶ Empathise with the needs of the key players as well as their organisations;
- ▶ Understand the vital nature of establishing relationships at the local level and engaging the cooperation of local media outlets;
- ▶ Respect timelines namely be consistently reliable;
- ▶ Extend the trusting relationship between individuals to one between the enterprises involved. This is a question of sustaining respectful and trustworthy enterprise cultures.

Prior experience

- ▶ Knowledge of similar programs and their outcomes;
- ▶ Life experiences that help one appreciate the needs of potential participants and how the program might help;

- ▶ Prior links between school and business that had satisfying outcomes – programmatic or personal.

The operational model enabling tight cooperative working relationships

- ▶ Process clarity is vital at each stage of the program;
- ▶ Establish clear unambiguous communication between all parties;
- ▶ Codify clear statements of roles and responsibilities for the school, the student and the employer;
- ▶ Identify suitable persons as mentors and trainers and their training needs in fulfilling those roles;
- ▶ Have clear statements on program stages and expectations for each stage;
- ▶ Establish clarity about how each party is accountable for what and to whom;
- ▶ Reach agreement concerning resource requirements and training requirements.

Celebrating and communicating success

- ▶ All parties deserve the rewards of success that inspire a willingness to engage in further action;
- ▶ Spread the news of success and strengthen the chance of developing further programs among new players;
- ▶ Conduct forums to define and discuss where the program is successful as well as to identify areas for positive improvement.

Parent support

- ▶ Encourage the participation of parents at all stages of the process.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ The SBAT program has been an outstanding success. The program deserves serious consideration across the school sector for purposes of a broader application in Victoria and elsewhere.
- ▶ Underlying the success of the program has been a very strong and effective operational framework. Interviewees attested to this without exception. As the reader will have noted from the thematic framework the operation has been based on sound and detailed preparation. Part of that preparation is the training of people who are key in the process, for example, the mentors. It cannot be over-emphasised the degree to which such training and preparation is vital to program success.
- ▶ As is pointed out in the thematic framework the availability of expert mediators was pivotal in achieving the success. It is clear that the key players in the process, namely industry/business and schools, are not capable at this stage of achieving the sort of successful outcomes that have been achieved through mediation. The mediators have been successful in breaching barriers between schools and business and have been able to translate the process and the program into readily understandable language avoiding jargon and unnecessary technicalities. It should be noted that a major element of the support has been the way in which time consuming paperwork has been managed on behalf of the key players.
- ▶ It is interesting to note that the SBAT program complements other programs already in existence. For example it provides compulsory structured work placement that is currently not the case with VET programs. It is clear that the SBAT program will be a valuable addition to the pathways available to senior secondary students in Victoria.
- ▶ The program would never have gained traction without the capacity of significant players to establish and sustain strong collaborative working relationships. As can be seen from the thematic framework the issue of relationships is fundamental. This was recognized by all interviewees.
- ▶ The evidence shows that all the key players in the process so far have been exceptional people possessing exceptional professional skills and personal attributes. These have included a high capacity for managing people situations, wisdom in staff selection and a capacity for anticipating the needs of partners and their workplaces. In the longer term the challenge will be to find others whose skills and attributes are of like quality if present successes are to be replicated in future programs.
- ▶ Mediation between schools, employers and RTO's is an indispensable part of the process and will be for the foreseeable future for reasons outlined above. SELLEN has managed this role with great sensitivity and has earned trust and plaudits accordingly. A key issue for consideration is how the mediator will exit from each specific program in a staged manner. It is clear that the mediator cannot remain as an intrinsic part of the process forever, however it is also clear that a premature exit would be unwise. There may well be no formulaic approach to this question as each case will present different challenges.
- ▶ It is clear that government subsidy of the SBAT program will remain necessary into the future until the SBAT program is more firmly entrenched in the mindset of both schools and employers.
- ▶ Employers have found the program to be an invaluable source of future employees in a market where suitable candidates are difficult to find.
- ▶ All participants in the programs appear to have found a personal sense of reward through such things as a sense of enjoyment, observing a more stimulated staff, observing students profiting from the role modeling of mentors and others, finding suitable new employees,

seeing their child achieve meaningful and gainful work or being better prepared to enter the workforce.

- ▶ While it is not clear the degree of influence that parents play in the process there is evidence to suggest that their influence is positive. There is more work to be done in establishing the precise level of influence exerted by parents. It should not be forgotten that parents can also be employers.

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APPENDICES

Introduction to Appendix One

Following are three case studies, involving two large well known organizations and one case study involving a sole trader.

CASE STUDY ONE

Jayco Caravans

Jayco Caravans currently services around 50% of the caravan market in Australia. The premises inclusive of the manufacturing sections, is located at Southern Dandenong. Their need for suitable applicants for apprentices, on an ongoing basis, was and is, high. In 2008 Chris Riley, Jayco's Technical Training Co-ordinator, began to investigate what type of programs were available that would match the company's urgent need.

In the initial stages (2002-2008), an apprenticeship program was trialed. This particular generic program did not meet all the company's needs. Nevertheless, the exercise proved a valuable opportunity to fine-tune exactly what Jayco required. Further exploration into suitable programs continued.

About Chris Riley

As Chris is the key player in this case study it is relevant to mention just some of his characteristics and experience. Chris had had prior experience working with Jayco Caravans as well as experience as a trainer in the tertiary TAFE system. His familiarity with the respective workplace cultures and inside knowledge of both areas of expertise combined with his exceptional life experience as a young man, proved to be a dynamic force in bringing about the successful implementation of the SBAT program at Jayco Caravans. It is important to note that Chris had the full support of the Owner/CEO of Jayco Caravans. The owner's support is demonstrable and therefore meaningful for both Chris and the apprentices.

In addition Chris has a considerable local formal and informal network and he is an excellent communicator with people from all walks of life and with people at all organizational levels.

Armed with clarity of purpose, knowing exactly what the company required, access to a broad network, the ability to manage relationships well and the full support of the organization, Chris actually came across the solution for the company by chance!

How it began

In 2008 Chris acquired the information about the SBAT program from MEGT. It was not long after picking up the information that he came across SELLEN by chance. There happened to be a connection with one of his colleagues at Jayco Caravans and SELLEN. This led to Alex Palazzolo, SELLEN's Community Partnership Co-ordinator briefing Chris about the program. Given Chris' previous experience with government funded programs, he did not want to make a rushed decision. He then came across Alex at a sporting event. They shared an interest in

competition basketball. At this event, they had an opportunity to just chat and “size” each other up. Alex did not use the chance meeting to do the “hard sell”. Chris was impressed by his respectful stance and felt comfortable about making further enquires. After further discussions the concept and details came together. Chris was then introduced to Simon Rickard, SELLEN’s LCP Executive Officer. Chris’ confidence in the professionalism of SELLEN’s staff and the fact that they were a very well organized unit, sealed the deal.

The First Step

Preparation was thorough. This included absolute clarity about the role of SELLEN. In the past Chris’ experience revealed that the number of people from different industries and workplace cultures who were necessary to get a program off the ground, was extremely difficult to manage. SELLEN played the pivotal role as the broker between the business, school career department, Registered Training Organisation (RTO), students and parents. All staff at SELLEN reflected very similar values as Chris. For example they were dedicated, passionate, reliable, exercised common sense and happy to go the extra mile to achieve the short and long term objectives. The SELLEN network links also proved to embody very similar beliefs and qualities.

Before any party was contacted however, Chris and Alex met on numerous occasions to thoroughly identify what the program would look like and how to roll it out. Every detail was examined. For example, the selection of suitable student candidates was treated seriously. Interview questions were designed with the workplace culture in mind e.g. would they relate well with their new workmates?, measuring the students’ interest or their level of curiosity in a particular trade or the company product as well as their enthusiasm for life and learning.

As Chris was very clear about what Jayco needed he had identified certain things that were not negotiable. His inside knowledge of how an RTO operated was a huge advantage in shaping the program, understanding what could be delivered and how it could be delivered. This included rules and regulations, support, and discipline in class. The program was tailored to fit Jayco’s requirements exactly.

Throughout the consultations SELLEN was consistent in bringing the necessary people from the different organizations together in a timely manner. The program was ready to roll out for the first time. The synergy between the SELLEN and Jayco personnel was such that interviews for apprenticeships took place at the SELLEN premises.

The Next Step

With the preparation done and dusted, it was time to sign up the apprentices for 2009. Nine students were initially chosen and introduced to the workplace environment, three students were added one month after the program began. For some students this was a big shock. Some minor hic-ups were experienced, but the expectations of the student apprentices were clarified immediately. Students were spoken to respectfully and in very unambiguous terms. They responded positively having been made aware of exactly where the boundaries were. Any possible issues were nipped in the bud. This fair and firm approach was consistent with the Jayco workplace culture.

Support to help facilitate students from the school to the work culture was multi-pronged:-

- Parents played a valuable part. For example one parent was dedicated to ensuring her child arrived at work on time every day. With a 7:00am start at Jayco she had to rise well before 6am on those days. Prior to the program commencing, some parents had been well informed by the Field Officer at Apprenticeships Group Australia.
- The CEO of Jayco made a deliberate point of personally welcoming each apprentice to the company. He met them on the shop floor to shake their hand and to wish them good luck.
- The apprentice was also introduced to their team leader whom they had to report to regularly.
- As well each apprentice was assigned a different mentor monthly (depending on which department they were located in) for the duration of their program. The mentors had been well briefed and were clear about their role.
- In addition, Chris met with the apprentice group on a monthly basis with the purpose of getting the apprentice to do a self-evaluation, identifying where they themselves thought they needed improvement as well as to have the opportunity to talk over any other issues. This method of support and training provides the opportunity to learn the benefits of self-responsibility, a highly valuable attribute to develop.
- Each apprentice was rotated in various areas of production. At the end of two years, both the apprentice and the company were well placed to identify where there was a good match e.g. an aptitude for welding.
- Everyone surrounding the apprentices including their immediate work-mates, are excellent role models.

Outcomes/benefits

The outcomes from the first year of running the program at Jayco have been a surprise to everyone. The program objectives were certainly achieved with concrete evidence that the success of the program was solid. This was reflected in several ways:

- The extremely high increase in the number of applications from students for the 2010 SBAT program at Jayco. Word had spread quickly amongst the community.
- Jayco obtained highly suitable candidates for future employment in the company.
- Students have had meaningful long term workplace experience (as against one or two weeks work experience currently practiced).
- The parent was satisfied that their child is better equipped to find employment.
- Company staff were stimulated by new blood.
- The local community was enriched.
- The schools were proud that they have played a vital part in setting the process in place.
- The facilitators at every stage and from all parties enjoyed the satisfaction of success.

What has happened since?

At the end of the first 12mth program an evaluation of how it worked for Jayco has been undertaken. Once a month Chris now talks to schools about the program. Schools have also heard about the success at Jayco. Three weeks into 2010, Chris had bookings to speak with schools to tour Jayco three months ahead.

The 2010 SBAT program has commenced.

In line with the company's philosophy and commitment to the community, Jayco will follow through with the apprentices once they have been employed on a permanent basis, by putting them through a leadership program.

CASE STUDY TWO

Bendigo Bank

As in case study one, this story is about a large and community focused organisation with strong, solid support for the SBAT program from the top level. In this instance the Regional Manager, Michael Petering was involved ably assisted by Rachel Ellis, Customer and Community Manager, Mornington Peninsula Region.

In recent years, the number of young people entering the banking industry has declined steadily. Although this may have been because of the perception of more glorified career options being chosen by students, a big factor in the drop in interest was a gap in the tertiary training area for the particular skills required to set up young people to enter the industry. Therefore Bendigo Bank found themselves in a similar situation to Jayco Caravans, having a huge need for suitable, well prepared candidates for future employment. Michael Petering was quick to see the major benefits of the SBAT program, namely; upcoming skilled talented young people, actioning their succession plan, a pool of quality applicants and ongoing employees who had been inducted into the banking workplace culture. There were also unexpected benefits to eventuate (see below)!

The SBAT program filled the tertiary training gap and with the quality facilitation provided by SELLEN and the full backing of management, preparation to implement the program commenced. It should be noted that although provision of government funding was made available, the bank literally put its money where its mouth was and gave the green light to those involved, for whatever was necessary to make it a success even to the tune of being out of pocket over \$1000 per trainee by the end of the program. Management not only recognised the investment in the young people, but they also saw a valuable opportunity to show their real commitment to enriching the local community, clearly a philosophy they believe in.

Moving it along

Bendigo Bank personnel enjoyed a tight and effective relationship with SELLEN personnel namely; Simon Rickard, Local Community Partnerships (LCP) Executive Officer, Alex Palazzolo, Community Partnership Co-ordinator and Dani West, LCP Co-ordinator who all had the capacity to establish and sustain good working relationships, particularly at the corporate level. They took care of the paperwork, ran several information sessions, advertisements and developed the key partnerships with schools, and in particular, TAFE institutes who were quick to become a partner. The first 12 month program piloted eight positions.

In the beginning

Bendigo Bank staff and management embraced the idea and were committed to working with the trainees on the ground. However, as is always the case when introducing change, unanticipated issues arose, but as preparation for the program had been thorough, assistance was always swift and any concerns were nipped in the bud.

It was inevitable that some issues arose out of an understandable lack of awareness about each organisation's culture or way of doing things. For example how a school operates and how a trainee works within it or, on the other hand, the protocols and expectations an employer has of an employee. Also, for the banking industry, introducing trainees into their workplace meant

that they had to do it in a way that protected the privacy of client information without diluting the trainee's work experience.

After the normal apprehension in new situations, the trainees and staff began to enjoy the changes. An added benefit was that customers also enjoyed the different interaction. An "L plate" was put on the counter in front of the trainee when acting in the trainee Customer Services Officer role. This created an icebreaker for the trainee and a point of engagement for the customer.

Progress

All trainees were assigned a staff member/mentor. The staff who took on the mentor role were trained and fully briefed on what part they played in the whole program. Each trainee was evaluated after a three month period. In the main, progress was better than expected. Some trainees were thriving so much that they were very keen to stay on, but it was impressed upon them that the program demanded that they finish their year 12 education.

As things got off the ground and the results became more evident, staff morale improved and it was also clear that the injection of new blood brought a new energy into the workplace.

Outcomes/Benefits

- Only one trainee opted out of the pilot, three were employed on a permanent part time basis. Other trainees benefited from the 12 months work experience both personally and professionally. Their extensive work experience is an impressive addition to their resumes together with referees. This gave them greater potential for future employment.
- All trainees were paid well, gained an insight into life in organisations and acquired more skills.
- Staff have been up skilled, experienced the rewards of positive change and enjoyed a more stimulating work environment.
- The bank has a pool of good applicants.
- Very good feedback from parents.
- An impressive increase in applications for the next SBAT program.

Conclusions/What happens now?

The Bendigo Bank story sounds like a dream, but let's not underestimate the efforts of the dedicated and quality people from the various organizational partnerships who contributed to the extensive planning. Proof of the success of the program is how quickly the word spread to the point that the bank would like to adopt the program on a national basis. This proposal is being considered, but given the extent of the localised model, there may well be very different issues in trying to replicate what worked exceptionally well in a local setting.

CASE STUDY THREE

Maranatha Christian School

Case study three is a very interesting story because unlike the other two case studies it involves a small business, a sole trader in fact. There are certainly commonalities between this case and the larger organizations. One of the main similarities is the significance of the informal network in bringing about the success for this particular student. Another major factor was the persistence, passion and dedication of the School Careers Counsellor and VCAL Co-ordinator, Eva Silverstein.

Background

Eva Silverstein was the key player in making this case a success. Although on a steep learning curve with regard to the SBAT program, Eva quickly saw the potential of the program and its suitability for two students in particular. One of those students, we shall call him Ben, was interested in learning more about carpentry.

For Eva it was a matter of identifying a possible match with need and opportunity, convincing the parties involved that there was value in pursuing the idea and helping the process move along before it even got off the ground! Eva's ability to build relationships and the informal network combined, brought the necessary people together to make it work.

It should also be noted that Maranatha Christian School already had a very positive relationship with SELLEN. Eva's confidence in the potential of SBAT was largely based on her effective networking with local schools and employers as well as SELLEN's strong support and promotion of programs such as the SBAT. The school had no hesitation in giving SELLEN and the SBAT program its full support.

As it happened

The school's maintenance officer, Chris was good friends with Steve Robinson, a builder and sole trader. Steve did need assistance and in fact had an apprentice for a period of time who unfortunately turned out to be more of a hindrance than a help. Hence, Steve was not looking to take a risk. However, Chris continued to offer his advice to Steve. With the constant demands of running his own business, an up and coming apprentice would have been an ideal way to remedy the situation and at the same time he would be in a position to offer a young person a chance. However, Steve's past experience with other similar programs was not favourable and he questioned whether it was worth getting involved. Nevertheless he did not dismiss the prospect completely. It would be about three months before Steve's interest would be reignited.

In the mean time Ben was informed of the possibility of an opening with a builder through the SBAT program. Ben wasn't sure about the prospect. His view was that he wouldn't get as much opportunity to do carpentry with a builder, as he might do with a person with the specific expertise. So in the early stages, Ben wasn't convinced it was the right opportunity for him.

Nevertheless, Eva, being a pro-active operator, arranged a meeting between Steve, Ben and Ben's parents. Ben didn't turn up. He was against the idea. Nonetheless his parents saw it differently and attended the meeting without him. As it turned out Steve's children went to the

school where Ben's dad ran the after school care program. This helped break the ice and a meeting of minds resulted. Ben's parents now played a very important part in encouraging him to explore the opportunity further. Subsequently Ben decided to meet Steve. It was on the very day he started with Steve! Ben did two weeks of work experience at first, then one day a week for a term and by the middle of the year both parties were ready to embark on a SBAT program. From this example it is clear that the opportunity may have been lost had it not been for the wisdom and persistence demonstrated by Eva.

Process

For Ben to be a participant in the SBAT program Eva had to organize a changeover from the VCAL career pathway to the SBAT program. This meant that Ben would be aiming to complete Certificate III which was a requirement of the SBAT program. Chisholm TAFE Institute were most accommodating enabling this to come about with the least amount of disruption to Ben's schooling. Ben's teachers at Maranatha Christian School also provided exceptional support during the transition. As the changeover required block release from school, his teachers were prepared to bring him up to date in his projects on a one to one basis so that he missed nothing.

Outcomes/benefits

- The partnership between Ben and Steve has been a very successful venture. Ben not only had the opportunity to expand his knowledge about carpentry and building in general, but had the bonus opportunity to work with a person with the skills to run a business.
- Ben was nominated and became a finalist in the 2009 O.S.C.A School Based Apprentice of the Year award run by SELLEN.
- Steve gained the assistance of a bright young man with an interest in the trade and who was keen to learn. His commitment to Ben and the program was very satisfying not only in achieving his objective of acquiring assistance, but under his direction and encouragement Ben was nominated for best trainee apprentice. Steve attended the Awards night.
- Ben is now keen to complete his year 12 in VCAL. He knows now that his full time employment is secured with his apprenticeship.
- Ben's transition from school to work has been facilitated and phased in a way that suited both Ben and his employer.
- Maranatha Christian School is very pleased to have played a key role in facilitating a successful outcome. The results represent success for the school, the students and their parents.

Appendix Two

Interviewees

SELLEN

- ▶ Simon Rickard, LCP Executive Officer
- ▶ Alex Palazzolo, Community Partnerships Co-ordinator
- ▶ Dani West, LCP Co-ordinator

JAYCO CARAVANS

- ▶ Chris Riley, Technical Training Co-ordinator

BENDIGO BANK

- ▶ Michael Petering, Regional Manager
- ▶ Rachel Ellis, Customer and Community Manager Mornington Peninsula Region

TRAINEESHIPS GROUP AUSTRALIA

- ▶ Rod Styles, AAC Manager
- ▶ Akrivi De Lorenzo, AAC Field Officer

CHISHOLM TAFE INSTITUTE

- ▶ Noel Sutcliff, Manager Manufacturing, Engineering & Logistics
- ▶ Ray Jopling, Department Manager Business & Management
- ▶ Nicole Polak, Workforce Training Consultant, Industry Liaison

CARDINIA SHIRE COUNCIL

- ▶ Fiona Hodges, General Manager of Community Wellbeing

MARANATHA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

- ▶ Eva Sliverstein, Careers Counsellor, VCAL & VET Co-ordinator
- ▶ Two year 12 student trainee/apprentices

KOOWEERUP SECONDARY COLLEGE

- ▶ Kim Ingram, VASS, MIPS Co-ordinator, Ass. Careers Co-ordinator
- ▶ One Year 12 student trainee/apprentice

Appendix Three

Acronyms

SELLEN – South Eastern Local Learning and Employment Network

SBAT – School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

RTO – Registered Training Organisation

TAFE - Technical and Further Education

VCAL – Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

VET - Vocational Education and Training

MIPs – Managed Individual Pathways

MEGT- MEGT (Australia) Ltd

OSCA – Outstanding Career Achievement Awards (South East)

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

DALWOOD CONSULTING