Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council (RREAC)

Regional Report:
Meetings in the Mid West Region
29-31 August 2016

21 December 2016

Contents

Executive Summary

The ongoing provision of quality education and training to rural and remote Western Australia is dependent on the Minister for Education (Minister) receiving sound strategic advice. The Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council (RREAC) fulfils an important role in providing advice to the Minister from a cross-sectoral perspective and encompasses the provision of education through both government and non-government sectors.

Each year RREAC seeks to hold at least one meeting in a regional area and engages in discussion with regional stakeholders. Regional discussions ensure that RREAC members are attuned to the many issues and challenges facing, and strategies being employed by, rural and remote communities. Regional discussions also provide an important opportunity for regionally-based stakeholders to engage with RREAC in context.

In August 2016, RREAC held discussions in the Mid West region and met with more than 100 people involved in education and training. RREAC acknowledges the generosity of people with whom it met, and thanks them for their time and the sharing of their knowledge and experiences.

Each regional visit by RREAC has highlighted the commitment of people to achieving successful outcomes within their region. As noted in RREAC's previous regional reports, there are both common challenges, and region-specific challenges, that arise in relation to rural and remote education and training. The importance of local solutions to local challenges is a common theme in regional discussions. RREAC's visit to the Mid West region reinforced RREAC's previous experiences.

The intent of the report is to advise the Minister of the information collected in the context of those three days. This report summarises the major themes, issues and concerns. The report is not an analysis nor does it attempt to be comprehensive; rather it provides a regional snapshot of some matters raised during RREAC's visit.

RREAC is considering some issues further and will report separately to the Minister in line with its terms of reference.

1. Introduction

As part of RREAC's core business, the opportunity to experience first-hand education in a regional context is paramount. Each year RREAC seeks to hold at least one meeting in a regional area and also engages in discussions with regional stakeholders. Regional discussions ensure that members are attuned to the many issues and challenges facing rural and remote students, staff, service providers, families and communities, and are also attuned to the strategies employed to overcome disadvantage and maximise outcomes. Regional discussions also provide an important opportunity for regionally-based stakeholders to engage with RREAC in context.

From 29-31 August 2016, RREAC held discussions in the Mid West region, based out of Geraldton. RREAC developed an extensive and engaged program; over three days meeting with more than 100 people involved in education and training including principals; teaching and non-teaching staff; representatives of school boards, school councils, P&C and P&F associations; and students. The commitment of people with whom RREAC met to achieving successful outcomes within the region was clearly evident.

2. Regional Context

2.1 The Mid West Region

Education landscape

The Midwest education region extends from Dandaragan in the south to Exmouth in the north, Meekatharra in the north east, and to Sandstone in the east.[1] It covers an area between 500,000 and 600,000 sq. km (larger than Victoria), and serves communities as diverse as the City of Geraldton, wheat belt areas, fishing centres, mining communities and remote towns and settlements.

More than 50,000 people live in the Midwest education region, of whom around 10,000 are students attending schools. Nearly 25% of the school population are Aboriginal.[2]

Education facilities are situated throughout the region with predominance in the more populous Batavia Coast. Year 11 and 12 are centred in Geraldton with some district high schools running upper school but with less choice of subjects.

There are 48 government schools (of which 18 are Independent Public Schools (IPS)). The region has a number of Catholic education facilities; including three primary schools and one secondary school in Geraldton and primary schools in Mullewa and Northampton. There are also two independent Colleges in Geraldton supporting students from kindergarten to year 12 as well as a number of alternative and specialist education facilities. The diversity of education delivery in the region is illustrated, for example, by the composition of the state government schools which includes four remote community schools,[3] one senior high

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[1] Note that the Mid West Regional Development Commission boundaries are different to the Midwest Education Region boundaries; the latter matches the boundary of the Yamaji country.

[2] For the purpose of this paper, the term 'Aboriginal' encompasses Western Australia's diverse cultural and language groups and also recognises those of Torres Strait Islander descent.

[3] Remote Community Schools are located at Burringurrah, Gascoyne Junction, Pia Wadjarri and Yulga Jinna.

school,[4] 10 district high schools, a College of Agriculture in Morawa, and two Schools of the Air.[5] Students may also access curriculum through the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE).[6]

The Geraldton Residential College provides accommodation for students attending Geraldton-based high schools, both government and non-government.[7]

The Central Regional TAFE is the major vocational training provider in the Midwest education region. It comprises campuses in the Midwest education region (Geraldton, Carnarvon, Exmouth, Wiluna) and other education regions (Kalgoorlie, Northam, Merredin and Moora).[8]

Tertiary studies can be undertaken through the Geraldton Universities Centre (GUC). The GUC works in partnership with universities across Australia to support tertiary education delivery that meets Mid West student and industry needs. GUC's community-based model, the first of its kind in Australia, has drawn attention from regional communities throughout Australia with some now replicating the model. Its model of supported distance education sees programs offered online by GUC university partners with face-to-face tutorial support provided by GUC for students across all disciplines.[9]

Challenges

Education and training challenges noted by the Mid West Development Commission include:

> "The region has a range of quality education and training institutions that offer diverse secondary and post high schooling options. Nevertheless, the Mid West faces a number of education and training challenges and continued investment is critical for regional growth and development. … Low education outcomes negatively impact on the future life options of the region's young people and correlates with poor

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[4] Geraldton Senior College, Geraldton. John Willcock College, also based in Geraldton and currently Years 7-10, will transition towards offering Years 7-12 from 2019.

[5] Carnarvon School of the Air and Meekatharra School of the Air. Meekatharra SOTA, established in 1959, is the largest of five Schools of the Air in terms of population and has a 540,000 sq. km boundary. It caters for pre-school – Year 7. In 2009 its physical presence was relocated from Meekatharra to Geraldton. As at semester 1, 2016 Carnarvon SOTA had 39 K-Year 6 students enrolled and one Year 7 student. Meekatharra SOTA had 29 K-Year 6 students enrolled and four Year 7 students (As advised by Mr Greg Thorne, Executive Director, Midwest Education Regional Office April 2016).

[6] SIDE links to State Training Providers through workplace learning and vocational education and training programs.

[7] That is, students from Geraldton Senior College (Years 10-12), John Willcock College (Years 7-9), Geraldton Grammar School (Years 7-12), and Nagle Catholic College (Years 7-12).

[8] Comprises campuses formerly a part of the Durack Institute of Technology, Goldfields Institute of Technology and CY O'Connor Institute.

[9] Formed in 2001 the Geraldton Universities Centre (GUC) became an independent, not-for-profit, incorporated body in 2010. It now supports university courses in Geraldton on behalf of a range of universities including CQUniversity, Charles Sturt University and the University of Southern Queensland, and continues to build on the range of programs available to provide more choice to the local community. The higher education awards for these courses are offered and conferred by the university partners. GUC also supports students in Carnarvon at the Carnarvon Library and Art Gallery. The student body has grown from 20 student places in 2001 to more than 180 students studying at the Centre in 2014.

childhood development and health and wellbeing outcomes. They are also unlikely to result in a highly skilled workforce of the future."[10]

More information is contained in Appendix 1.

2.2   State and Regional initiatives

During its visit RREAC noted a strong regional focus highlighted by recent State Government regional initiatives that encompass education and training including:

- *State Government Regional Services Reform* (May 2015)
- *Aboriginal Youth Services Investment Reforms* and *Aboriginal Youth Services Investment Priorities and Principles (IPP) 2015* (May 2015)
- *Mid West Regional Investment Blueprint* (August 2015)
- *Roadmap for Regional Services Reform* (July 2016)[11], and
- regional development education projects involving upgrades to the Geraldton Residential College and Geraldton Universities Centre.

Most recently, in April 2016, the Director General, Department of Education (DoE), issued a statement, *Directions for Aboriginal Education 2016.* The statement introduces the *Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework* as a structure for maximising the learning outcomes for Aboriginal students. Principals are asked to consider the statement to inform the work of their schools to improve education outcomes for Aboriginal students.[12] The DoE has stated

> "From 2017, a more targeted approach to teaching and supporting Aboriginal students will include the establishment of a new Aboriginal Education Teaching and Learning Directorate, strengthened services to support Aboriginal students, research partnerships with universities and expert groups, and an Elders in Residence initiative"[13]

Other recent State initiatives include the *Aboriginal Services and Practice Framework 2016-2018* (June 2016), launched by Child Protection Minister Andrea Mitchell. While focused on the child protection system it is a useful map of foundational elements and relevant to the cross-sector observations RREAC made in its Pilbara Regional Report.[14]

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[10] Government of Western Australia, Mid West Development Commission, (August 2015), *Mid West Regional Blueprint, Executive Summary,* page 5. Available from: http://www.mwdc.wa.gov.au/ [12/09/2016].

[11] Major reforms to the delivery of housing, education, employment and human services for Aboriginal people living in regional and remote Western Australia - the *'Resilient Families: Strong Communities'* roadmap, which sets out 10 actions the State Government will undertake in partnership with Aboriginal people to strengthen families, improve living conditions, increase job prospects and accelerate education outcomes.

[12] The four key areas highlighted in the statement for 2016 are: 1) Children are ready for school, 2) Students attend school regularly 3) Students improve literacy and numeracy skills AND 4) Students have pathways to real options after school. For more information refer to: http://www.det.wa.edu.au/aboriginaleducation/detcms/navigation/policies-and-research/all-documents/. [20/12/2016].

[13] Western Australian Government, Department of Education, *Focus 2017*, https://www.education.wa.edu.au/. The Elders in Residence initiative was launched on 17 November 2016 - https://www.education.wa.edu.au/web/newsroom/-/new-approach-to-strengthen-aboriginal-education. [20/12/2016].

[14] Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council, (March 2016), *Regional Report: Meetings in the Pilbara Region.* Report to the Minister for Education. Available from: http://rreac.des.wa.gov.au/reports/ReportsMinister

3. Regional Program

3.1   Participants

A comprehensive program was developed by RREAC and discussions involved a range of relevant stakeholders. Over three days RREAC[15] met with more than 100 people involved in education and training, including representatives from:

- the Midwest Education Regional Office
- the Department of Aboriginal Affairs – Midwest Regional Office
- Mid West Development Commission
- Geraldton Universities Centre
- Geraldton-based government and non-government secondary schools[16]
- regional district high schools in Northampton, Mullewa, Morawa, Dongara and Carnamah
- the WA College of Agriculture – Morawa
- Yuna Primary School
- Morawa Education and Industry Training Alliance (MEITA)
- Meekatharra School of the Air
- Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre[17]
- Geraldton Residential College
- Central Regional TAFE.

Further details can be found in Appendix 3.

In order to obtain a cross section of viewpoints and facilitate contributions from participants, when meeting with Geraldton-based high schools RREAC hosted three separate focus groups; one group for principals, one group for school councils/P&C/P&F Association representatives, and one group for students. The groups then gathered together in plenary sessions to share observations. Last year RREAC held similar forums in the Pilbara region; the forums were engaging and informative, and participants enjoyed sharing their experiences with RREAC and other schools.

Additionally when travelling to the regional district high schools and the WA College of Agriculture – Morawa, RREAC subcommittees met with principals, teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of school boards and school councils; representatives of P&C and P&F associations, and students.

The regional program built on discussions conducted by RREAC including meetings with:

- Ms Deb Hardie, Manager Residential Colleges, Country High School Hostels Authority (February 2016)
- Mr Greg Thorne, Executive Director, Midwest Education Regional Office (April 2016)
- Mr Chris Reddy, Head of Numeracy, House Coordinator and Data Systems Coordinator,

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[15] Refer to Appendix 2 for RREAC members attending the Mid West regional discussions.

[16] Government - Geraldton Senior College, John Willcock College. Non-government - Nagle Catholic College, Geraldton Grammar School and Strathalbyn Christian College.

[17] Established in 2010. Part of Edmund Rice Education Australia's national initiative - Youth+, responding to the needs of young people in the Midwest community of Western Australia. Provides options for those who are marginalised and disenfranchised with the education system. Provides an educational framework where teachers and youth workers supports social and wellbeing needs along with their academic requirements. August 2015 Census: Years 7-12 - 79 full-time students (35 indigenous), approx. 13 staff (2.8 FTE teachers, 4 FTE youth workers).

and Ms Jill Hill, Aboriginal Liaison Officer, both from Clontarf Aboriginal College (April 2016)

- Ms Jacquie Sandhu, Acting Principal, Mr Jonathon Bromage, Deputy Principal and other staff of the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) including a site visit (June 2016)
- Mr Stephen Baxter, Executive Director, Statewide Planning and Delivery, Department of Education (and RREAC Member) (June 2016).

RREAC reflected on its regional discussion with further liaison with some stakeholders, and in October 2016 a further briefing from Mr Stephen Baxter on behalf of the Department of Education.

3.2   Format

RREAC received information by way of formal briefing from some stakeholders and held less formal meetings with others. The program used various forms of consultation including one-on-one discussions, presentations, a discussion forum with plenary and focus group elements, and site visits. In order to obtain a wider regional perspective the program also involved travel by RREAC subcommittees to some regional district high schools and the Morawa Agricultural College for site visits and discussions.

Informal feedback from participants was very positive. For example, with regard to plenary and roundtable focus sessions held with government and non-government schools based in Geraldton, some participants expressed the view that that the occasion provided a collegial and collaborative environment on which Mid West participants might build in the future.

3.3   Scope

Discussions were held in the context of RREAC's 2015-2016 focus areas[18] and, more generally, education and training issues and developments in rural and remote areas of the State. Areas canvassed included:

- an overview of the education landscape of the Midwest education region
- the Midwest Regional Education Office (MERO) - role and projects[19]
- access to comprehensive secondary schooling both government and non-government
- vocational education and training in schools provision in the Mid West region
- residential boarding facilities
- literacy and numeracy
- attendance, transiency, engagement and transition

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[18] 2015-2016 focus areas:
  1. Access of students in the rural and remote areas of the state to comprehensive education at the senior secondary level (Years 11 and 12) - in its various modes of delivery.
  2. Access to secondary school for Aboriginal students.
  3. Access to boarding facilities for Aboriginal students.

[19] Discussion canvassed Aboriginal Youth Services Investment Reforms, collaborative networks and partnerships, attendance and engagement, engagement and transition support, Midwest School Psychology Services and network, Aboriginal Education Team, transiency, Aboriginal Youth Services Investment Priorities and Principles (IPP) 2015, in particular the Geraldton Demonstration Site - the City of Greater Geraldton is one of the regions that have been selected for early and tangible application of the IPP at a local level.

- programs linked to education outcomes for Aboriginal students[20]
- the experience of some students in the Mid West region (WA Certificate of Education – ATAR and vocational education and training)
- strategic synergies between agricultural college and district high school programs
- community/school/industry collaboration and support
- professional development and training for school boards and councils

A useful schematic of the role played by MERO is attached as Appendix 4

4. Key Issues

Participants were open to sharing their challenges and successes with RREAC. A number of recurring themes arose in discussions:

4.1 professional development and training for government school boards and councils

4.2 enhancing student aspirations – non-ATAR pathways to further education

4.3 leadership training for principals

4.4 access to boarding facilities for Aboriginal students[21]

4.5 transiency and continuity of learning

4.6 improving attainment, attraction and retention for Aboriginal students

4.7 building strong partnerships at a local operational level

4.8 attraction and retention of staff

4.9 access to secondary education and bypassing

Some are explored further below.

4.1 Professional development and training for government school boards and councils

Government schools in Western Australia may have either a school council or a school board. Government schools that have become Independent Public Schools (IPS) have a school board; non-independent public schools have a school council. Boards and councils are regulated by the *School Education Act 1999*, *School Education Regulations 2000* and the individual body's Terms of Reference. If the board or council is incorporated it must also comply with other legislative requirements.

RREAC heard of concerns regarding -

- the need for accessible and flexible training and professional development in governance for both school boards and school councils
- difficulties with the recruitment of highly skilled members, particularly in some remote, regional and lower socioeconomic areas, and
- the loss of capacity and expertise of board members upon the expiration of the board member's three-year term, or with staff turnover.

RREAC notes that in June 2016 the new School Boards Development Program, was launched by the Minister for roll out by the Department of Education to IPS during the

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[20] For example WA Centre for Rural Health (WACRH) program at Mount Magnet DHS, SHiNE, Clontarf Football Academy, KindiLink, Follow the Dream: Partnerships for Success, Remote Schools Attendance Strategy – a Commonwealth Government initiative (RSAS).

[21] In view of RREAC's current focus areas this report has focused on access to residential facilities by aboriginal students. Issues were raised with regard to access for all students and RREAC has noted this for further inquiry.

second half of 2016. The program, *On Board for Education,* has been designed to strengthen the role of boards and build a sustainable on-line resource accessible, on a needs basis, to all school communities for their ongoing development into the future.[22]

The program, developed by Department of Education, was informed by an independent study commissioned by DoE and undertaken by Curtin University. The study aimed to better understand where improvements could be made to the functioning, influence and effectiveness of boards in meeting the demands of their role within the scope of existing statutory and policy settings.[23]

The program does not provide training for government school councils. RREAC is preparing a separate report to the Minister on this area.

4.2   Enhancing student aspirations – non-ATAR pathways to further education

Attaining the required ATAR[24] ensures direct access to a chosen university course (direct pathway). However completion of a Certificate III or IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma TAFE course can create a pathway into further education (indirect pathway). Both direct and indirect pathways can be aspirational.

RREAC heard views recording a strong focus on the attainment of ATAR; a perceived preference by schools towards guiding students to enrol in a Certificate II or III vocational training course, when a Certificate III or IV may be achievable and may offer a future pathway option. Views were expressed that there was little information about the possibility of vocational education and training pathways to further education for students considering their WACE.

RREAC is preparing a separate report to the Minister on this area.

4.3   Leadership training for principals

Developing and improving school leaders is a vital mechanism for improving student outcomes. During RREAC's regional discussions views were expressed that most northern regions of the State are training grounds for staff and there may be a need to upskill principals, regardless of whether or not the school has IPS status. Difficulties with accessing training by staff who are located in rural and remote areas was also noted.

Additionally, participants expressed views that sustained capacity-building arose from strong and experienced leadership that was not person-dependent. Initiatives often commenced but before they become embedded, impetus was lost as leadership changes occurred within a school.

RREAC notes that a recent Western Australian parliamentary report tabled in August 2016 canvasses matters associated with the professional development and training of principals

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[22] Information under this heading, unless otherwise indicated, was obtained from Western Australian Government, Department of Education, *Independent Public Schools - School Board Development Program*, September 2016, https://www.education.wa.edu.au/. Accessed 27/11/2016

[23] Information under this heading, unless otherwise indicated, was obtained from Western Australian Government, Department of Education, *Independent Public Schools - School Board Development Program*, September 2016, https://www.education.wa.edu.au/. Accessed 27/11/2016

[24] The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (**ATAR**) is the primary criterion for entry into most undergraduate-entry university programs in Australia.

and staff. That report made a number of recommendations, to which Department of Education provided a response in November 2016.[25] RREAC will consider the matters raised in its regional discussions further.

4.4   Access to boarding facilities for Aboriginal students

The importance of access to regional residential facilities was canvassed in RREAC's February 2016 report to the Minister on its Pilbara regional discussions.[26] When RREAC visited the Pilbara region in October 2015, there was no residential boarding facility. A consistent thread of thought was expressed that some challenges associated with rural and regional education and training may be addressed by the provision of a regional residential facility; that development should be a priority and would add value.

When in the Midwest region RREAC was reminded of the trend of families leaving once children reach high school age; a reflection of the perceived limited opportunities in high school and post-compulsory education. As explained by the Midwest Regional Blueprint[27] -

> "The region has a number of district high schools in locations with lower populations, often in more remote inland areas. Many families in these areas send their children away to boarding schools, reducing student numbers in local schools. This naturally reduces the diversity and range of subjects taught and can result in reduced teacher quality, disadvantaging the reduced cohort of students in their senior years. This creates a challenging environment for education service providers seeking to provide equitable education. The NAPLAN statistics of schools in more remote areas is indicative of this challenge."

Further[28] -

> "The majority of the region's year 11 and 12 students are based in Geraldton at the Geraldton Secondary College, Nagle Catholic College and in smaller numbers Geraldton Grammar School and Strathalbyn Christian College. The standard of upper secondary education in Geraldton is therefore very important regionally, as is the availability of boarding facilities."

When in Geraldton RREAC met with representatives from the Geraldton Residential College. It was an opportunity to meet with representatives from a residential college that had been in operation for over 80 years. One area of interest to RREAC was access by Aboriginal students to residential facilities; "access" being used in the broader sense of opportunity, attraction and retention**.**

As foreshadowed in RREAC's Pilbara Report there are complex issues surrounding the development, operation and sustainability of residential facilities and there are particular

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[25] Parliament of Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, Education and Health Standing Committee, *Report No 8: IPS Report Card: The Report of the Inquiry into the Independent Public Schools initiative,* (August 2016). Available from www.parliament.wa.gov.au.

Western Australian Government, *Response to the Legislative Assembly, Education and Health Standing Committee, Report No 8: IPS Report Card: The Report of the Inquiry into the Independent Public Schools initiative*, (November 2016). Available from www.parliament.wa.gov.au.

[26] Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council, *Regional Report: Meetings in the Pilbara Region,* (March 2016). Available from: <http://rreac.des.wa.gov.au/reports/ReportsMinister.
[27] Western Australian Government, Mid West Development Commission, *Mid West Regional Blueprint*, August 2015, p110-111. Available from < http://www.mwdc.wa.gov.au/> [21/11/2016]
[28] ibid.

challenges for Aboriginal students with differing cultural expectations and needs around a strong sense of community.[29]

RREAC is finalising a separate report to the Minister on this area.

4.5 Transiency and continuity of learning

The transiency of Aboriginal families has long been a major factor impacting on the quality of education received by indigenous young people. The mobility of families can mean that schools are unable to provide continuous learning programs, as regular school attendance is compromised. On average, Aboriginal students have lower levels of school attendance and lower academic achievement rates than non-Aboriginal students. In 2015 the state-wide school attendance rate for Aboriginal students was 76.3% compared with 90.9% for non-Aboriginal students.[30]

During regional discussions RREAC heard about:
- The Trans-border Attendance Strategy[31]
- Alternative attendance arrangements (Section 24)[32]
- Connect Community[33]
- The increased use of school networks with using informal arrangements
- The importance of Independent Education Plans being kept and made accessible
- *Better attendance: Brighter futures* strategy of the Department of Education
- The Royalties for Regions Pilbara Mobile Classroom Project

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[29] Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (March 2000), *National Inquiry into Rural and Remote Education* initiated in 1999. *Emerging Themes*, page 17. Available from: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/human_rights/rural_remote/emerging_themes.pdf> [21/1/16]. Also Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (May 2000), *Recommendations*, pages 52-53. Available from: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/human_rights/rural_remote/Rec_book.pdf>. [21/1/16].

[30] Western Australian Government, Department of Education, *Annual Report 2015-2016*, page 30. Available from https://www.education.wa.edu.au/

[31] The Trans-border Attendance Strategy (initially Tri-Border Attendance Strategy) is an action item under the Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014. The Strategy commenced as a pilot in 2009 and included 45 Northern Territory, South Australian and Western Australian remote schools to address the issue of absenteeism and significant mobility amongst Aboriginal students. The Strategy has gradually progressed to include 399 public, Catholic and independent schools in 2013. Source: http://det.wa.edu.au/studentsupport/behaviourandwellbeing/detcms/navigation/student-attendance.

[32] Section 24 of the *School Education Act 1999.* Under section 24 principals may enable students to attend without enrolling them if the period of attendance is likely to be less than four weeks and the student retains enrolment at the original school. DoE has produced Guidelines for Section 24. Arrangements are delegated to the local school Principal. A formal temporary, end-dated agreement between the principal and the parent documents the arrangements for the student to temporarily attend another school or off-site educational program, whilst maintaining their enrolment. The arrangement is overseen by the student's enrolled school. Suitable situations for use of such an arrangement include Registered Training Organisations course delivery; community-based courses and hospital school support.

[33] The Student Attendance Connect Community provides school leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff from Western Australian public schools, networks and regions a way to collaborate and share their knowledge, strategies and resources for improving and maintaining student attendance. The Student Attendance Connect Community is restricted to Department of Education staff. Source: http://det.wa.edu.au/studentsupport/behaviourandwellbeing/detcms/navigation/student-attendance

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- What assistance SIDE and SOTA may afford for a transient population, noting the need for strong parental engagement for successful outcomes.

Across the Mid West region all schools were focused towards increasing student engagement and attendance. For some schools engagement and attendance matters required a major investment of school resources on a daily basis.

Common questions raised with RREAC included:
- Is there some way we can have a program for a child and they can receive continuity of learning wherever they turn up?
- Can Individual Education Plans be made more accessible?
- What system will provide information on tracking the movement of mobile students and also enable the sharing of currency of learning for a student?
- How do we ensure any system is, and remains robust, with the type, frequency and currency of data input?

RREAC is preparing a separate report to the Minister on this area.

4.6   Improving attraction, retention and attainment for Aboriginal students

Regional discussions reinforced RREAC's appreciation for the scope of issues to be addressed as well as the outstanding work that is being done.

Additional programs

To assist with attraction, retention and attainment for Aboriginal students, many schools participate in or access additional programs, some run by Profit for Purpose/Not for Profits organisations. During the Mid West discussion RREAC further learnt about programs including:[34]
- Clontarf Football Academy
- SHiNE
- Follow The Dream
- Aspire Program
- WA Centre for Rural Health Program
- KindiLink
- Remote Schools Attendance Strategy

During RREAC's discussions at Morawa District High School we learnt about another program - Teach Learn Grow (TLG). RREAC received a presentation from TLG at its October meeting.[35]   A case study of TLG is at Appendix 5.

RREAC also met with representatives from the Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre (GFLC). A case study of GFLC is at Appendix 6.

Both GFLC and TLG illustrate different approaches to providing focused support to assist disengaged students in an educational context. RREAC notes the positive contributions that

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[34] Programs noted by Mr Greg Thorne, Executive Director, Midwest Education Regional Office in his presentations to RREAC in April 2016 in Perth and August 2016 in Geraldton.

[35] Travis Ricciardo, Chief Executive Officer, Shane Devitt, Board Member, and James Panarettos, Board Member, former General Manager, Teach Learn Grow.

such programs have to the enrichment of education and training opportunities for disengaged students.

4.7   Building strong partnerships at a local operational level

Government school networks and IPS clusters

Within each education region, education networks are formed, A network is a group of up to 20 schools in a local area that work together to support each other in areas such as increased curriculum choice, staff development, access to specialist teachers, primary-secondary transition and shared support services and resources.[36] Regional networks are open to all schools.

Independent Public Schools may work in "clusters", which aims to enable them to effectively combine ideas and resources to create even greater flexibility and opportunities for each school. During its regional discussion RREAC was interested to see how the Morawa IPS cluster was operating. A case study is at Appendix 7.

Across-sector collaboration

In RREAC's February 2016 report to the Minister on its Pilbara regional discussions[37] RREAC noted a tendency for the government and non-government school sectors to remain autonomous with little evidence of liaison or collaboration at a local level. While there were some examples of across sector collaboration and support,[38] it was also apparent to RREAC members that this separation, or 'divide', was prevalent in the Mid West region.

The plenary and roundtable discussions hosted by RREAC in the Pilbara and Mid West involved participants from across the education sectors – both government and non-government. Participants consistently observed that better and sustained mechanisms for sharing information and good practice between the government and non-government sectors are needed. It was variously noted

> *"There are opportunities for schools to come together across the government/non-government sectors – why does this not happen? Forums like this are valuable."*

> *"Student groups noted that there was not much interaction between schools. This could happen a lot more in year 11 and 12 to provide more choice."*

Some participants mooted the possibility of working together, rather than in competition, to provide greater choice of subjects for their respective student cohorts.

Schools can be at different developmental phases. Government school networks and IPS clusters can provide structure and impetus for collegiality, collaboration and support between government schools. However RREAC notes that such support may be of immense assistance and benefit where a school may not have a geographically close colleague within the government or non-government sector to which they belong, but there is a school from the 'other sector" with which they might collaborate.

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[36] Western Australian Government, Department of Education, *Annual Report 2010-2011,* page 42 https://www.education.wa.edu.au/.

[37] Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council, (March 2016), *Regional Report: Meetings in the Pilbara Region.* Available from: http://rreac.des.wa.gov.au/reports/ReportsMinister.

[38] We heard of the close collegiate relationship between the Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre and Geraldton Senior College with regard to disengaged youth referrals, re-engagement and reintegration.

It was also observed that transient students do move across sectors so there is a need for across-sector connection to ensure continuity of learning for the student.

RREAC emphasises that there needs to be a continued focus on the development of strong networks across a region to deliver education diversity given the contextual differences among schools. While government school networks or clusters are promoted and used by regional education offices for government schools, RREAC emphasises that across sector networks should be pursued and reinforced, *regardless of* the government/non-government sector to which a school belongs. The intent is for discussion that results in operational action tailored to the local level.

RREAC's Pilbara report observed one school of thought - being the formation of a school cluster of both government and non-government education sector providers to share local knowledge and approaches for the benefit of the whole community.

RREAC notes that while enthusiasm for greater collaboration between sectors was mooted during discussions, there is an important role for both the government and non-government sectors to facilitate the transformation of those expressions of interest into action that leads to operational outcomes tailored at the local level for the benefit of the student, school and community.

With regard to one area, RREAC notes the Minister's announcement on 14 December 2016 of a new approach to teaching in the Kimberley; a partnership between public, independent and Catholic schools to tackle the widening gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.[39] RREAC will watch this across sector initiative in this particular area with interest.

5. Conclusions

General

1. Each regional visit by RREAC has highlighted the commitment of people to achieving successful outcomes within their region. As noted in RREAC's previous regional reports, there are both common challenges, and region-specific challenges, that arise in relation to rural and remote education and training. The importance of local solutions to local challenges is a common theme in regional discussions.

2. RREAC's discussions in the Mid West region reinforced RREAC's appreciation for the scope of issues to be addressed as well as the outstanding work that is being done.

3. Some of those issues will be further explored by RREAC with a view to providing advice to the Minister. These include:
   o professional development and training for government school boards and councils
   o enhancing student aspirations – non-ATAR pathways to further education
   o access to boarding facilities for Aboriginal students
   o transiency and continuity of learning

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[39] Government of Western Australia, Minister of Education, *New approach to teaching in the Kimberley,* https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/Barnett/2016/12/New-approach-to-teaching-in-the-Kimberley.aspx.

Building strong partnerships at a local operational level

4. RREAC emphasises that there needs to be a continued focus on the development of strong networks across a region to deliver education diversity given the contextual differences among schools.

5. While government school networks or clusters are promoted and used by regional education offices for government schools, RREAC emphasises that across sector networks should be pursued and reinforced, *regardless of* the government/non-government sector to which a school belongs. The intent is for discussion that results in operational action tailored to the local level.

6. RREAC's Pilbara report observed one school of thought being the formation of a school cluster board of both government and non-government education sector providers to share local knowledge and approaches for the benefit of the whole community.

7. RREAC notes that while enthusiasm for greater collaboration between sectors was mooted during discussions, there is an important role for both the government and non-government sectors to facilitate the transformation of those expressions of interest into action that leads to operational outcomes tailored to the local level for the benefit of the student, school and community.

8. RREAC is considering some issues further and will report separately to the Minister in line with its terms of reference.

6. Recommendations

1. That the Minister for Education note this report on RREAC's meetings in the Mid West region in August 2016.
2. That the Minister for Education consider sending a copy of this report to the Department of Education, the Association of Independent Schools of WA and Catholic Education Western Australia for their information.
3. That when conveying a copy of the report, the Minister for Education highlight RREAC's observations regarding across sector collaboration.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1
The Mid West region

Extract from Western Australian Government, Mid West Development Commission, *Mid West Regional Blueprint*, August 2015, p110. Available from < http://www.mwdc.wa.gov.au/> [21/11/2016].

"

Primary and secondary education

The Mid West has a range of public, private, independent, remote and specialist schools. In 2013 the Mid West had 50 schools with almost 11,000 enrolments from kindergarten to year 12. Maintaining choice in public and private education at all levels is important for many Mid West families.

As indicated in the Blueprint's Social Profile on page 25:

a. severe absenteeism in the Mid West (9%) is significantly higher than the WA average (3.6%);

b. NAPLAN results for Mid West public schools also confirm that Mid West students (years 3, 5, 7 and 9) are up to twice as likely not to meet National Minimum Standard (NMS) levels across all categories (numeracy, reading and writing);

c. Mid West NAPLAN results reflect two state-wide characteristics:

   1. NAPLAN results for Aboriginal students are markedly lower than those of non-Aboriginal students; and

   2. the further students live from a major / regional centre, the lower their results tend to be than results of students from that major / regional centre.

d. 37.8% of the region's adult population (15-64) has completed year 12, compared to 38.7% in regional Australia, 50.9% in WA and 52% nationally;

e. 17% of Mid West Aboriginal residents completed year 12; compared to 38% of non‑Aboriginal residents;

f. In 2013, 86.9% of year 12 students in Mid West public schools attained year 12 or equivalent qualifications, only slightly below the national target of 90%. Of the 328 year 12 public school students, only 64 applied for an ATAR in pursuit of tertiary entrance after year 12. Of those 64 students, 40 (62.5%) achieved an ATAR of 55+, with only six (9%) achieving an ATAR of 75+;

g. 86% of year 12 students are based in the Batavia Coast, with particularly low numbers in the Murchison; and

h. Retention of year 8 students through to year 12 has improved from 51% in 2004 to 69% in 2013, with retention of Aboriginal students improving from 18% to 54% during the same period.

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Appendix 2
RREAC Members attending regional discussions

- Hon Robyn McSweeney MLC (Chairperson)
- Hon Terry Waldron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Community and consumer representatives
- Ms Jenni Curtis representing Aboriginal education and training interests
- Ms Kay Gerard, CEO, Food, Fibre and Timber Industries Training Council (WA) Inc.
- Mrs Natalie Giancono, Representative, Parents and Friends' Federation of WA Inc.
- Mr Christopher Mitchell, Executive Officer (Regional Development Australia, Kimberley) as representative for the Western Australian Local Government Association
- Mr Lincoln Rose, Senior Vice-President, State School Teachers' Union of WA Inc. (SSTUWA), as representative for the STTUWA and Independent Education Union of WA
- Mrs Elizabeth Sudlow, Representative, Isolated Children's Parents' Association of WA
- Mrs Brenda Williamson, President Yuna CWA, as representative for the Country Women's Association of WA Inc.

Funder and provider representatives
- # Mr Stephen Baxter, Executive Director, Statewide Planning and Delivery, Department of Education
- Dr Tony Curry, Director School Improvement, Catholic Education Western Australia
- Dr Ross Kelly, Director, Policy, Planning and Research, Department of Training and Workforce Development
- Prof Sue Trinidad, Director, National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Curtin University, as representative for Western Australian Universities

Secretariat
- Ms Mia Betjeman, Principal Executive Officer

    # attending events on 29 August 2016 only

Appendix 3
Mid West Regional Discussions – 29-31 August 2016

	Monday 29 August 2016	
	Name	**Position/Organisation**
1.	Mr Greg Thorne[40]	Regional Executive Director, Midwest Educational Regional Office
2.	Ms Jo Brennan	Acting Manager, Engagement and Transition Midwest Educational Regional Office
3.	Ms Margaret Maxwell	Regional Consultant, Aboriginal Education Midwest Educational Regional Office
4.	Ms Yvette Tormey	Lead School Psychologist, Midwest Educational Regional Office
5.	Ms Nicci Godsman	Coordinator Regional Services, Midwest Educational Regional Office
6.	Mr Shane Rutter	Aboriginal Youth Services Procurement Project Officer Midwest Educational Regional Office
7.	Mr Jamie Strickland	Director Regional Coordination Department of Aboriginal Affairs – Midwest Regional Office
8.	Mr Gavin Treasure	Chief Executive Officer, Mid West Development Commission
9.	Mr Steve Douglas	Manager, Strategic Projects, Mid West Development Commission
10.	Mr Trevor Price	Assistant Director, Communities and Learning Mid West Development Commission
11.	Ms Natalie Nelmes	Director, Geraldton Universities Centre
12.	Ms Jenny Kessell	GUC Education Coordinator, Geraldton Universities Centre
13.	Mr Greg Kelly	Principal, Geraldton Senior College
14.	Tayla Brown	Student, Geraldton Senior College
15.	Jasmine Brown	Student, Geraldton Senior College
16.	Ms Julie Campbell	Principal, John Willcock College
17.	Mrs Caroline Rowcroft	President of the Joint John Willcock College/Geraldton Senior College P&C and Chair of the Geraldton School Colleges Council
18.	Mr Robert Crothers	Principal, Nagle Catholic College
19.	Ms Debbie Carson	Chair, College Board, Nagle Catholic College
20.	Ms Glenda Sibson	President, P&F Association, Nagle Catholic College
21.	Haylee Nguyen	Student, Nagle Catholic College
22.	Tyson Robert Watkins	Student, Nagle Catholic College
23.	Ms Anne Faichney	Head of Middle School, Geraldton Grammar School
24.	Ms Jenny Rolston	Chair, Board of Governors, Geraldton Grammar School
25.	Liam Sipila	Student, Geraldton Grammar School
26.	Rukaya Msuo	Student, Geraldton Grammar School
27.	Mr Paul Arundell	Principal, Strathalbyn Christian College
28.	Mrs Anna Hollander	President, P & F Association, Strathalbyn Christian College
29.	Kaleb Crossley	Head Boy, Student, Strathalbyn Christian College
30.	Shelby Rathjen	Head Girl, Student, Strathalbyn Christian College
31.	Ms Sally O'Dea	Regional Officer, Geraldton Catholic Education Office

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[40]   Also attended the plenary discussion component of the focus group forum held with Geraldton-based government and non-government schools on 29/10/2016.
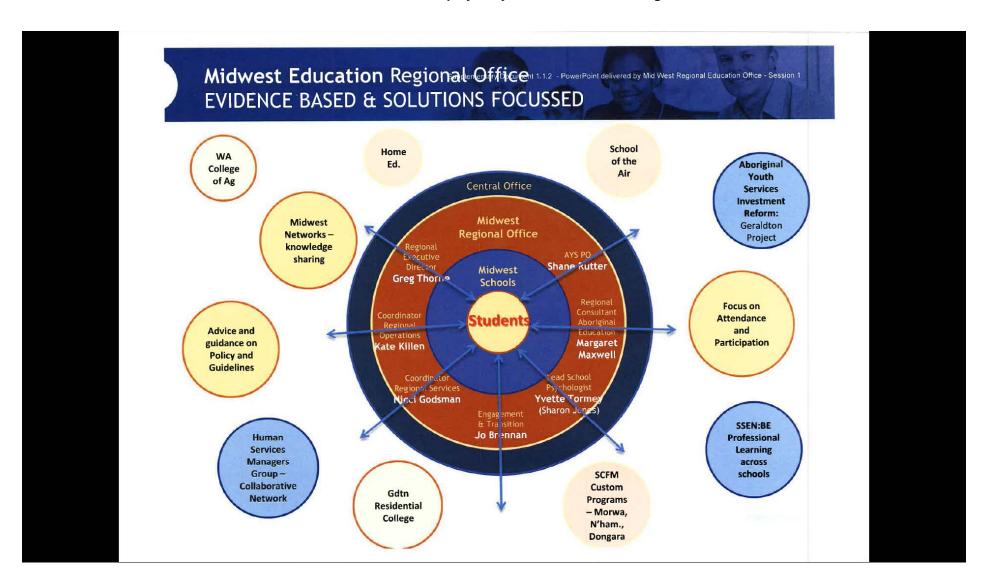
	Tuesday 30 August 2016	
	Name	**Position/Organisation**
32.	Mr Paul Luxton	Principal, Northampton District High School
33.	Ms Sandra Hasleby	Staff member, Northampton District High School
34.	Ms Bec Reynolds	President, P&C, Northampton District High School
35.	Ms Vicki McKenzie	Representative, P & C Association, Northampton District High School
36.	Mrs Loretta Graham	School Council representative, Northampton District High School
37.	Zhara Morris	School Captain (Student), Northampton District High School
38.	Jasmine Woods	Student, Northampton District High School
39.	Sarah Broadhurst	Student, Northampton District High School
40.	Hannah Husbands	Student, Northampton District High School
41.	Ms Shirley Macleod	Principal, Yuna Primary School
42.	Ms Nicki Patterson	Principal, Mullewa District High School
43.	Ms Shannon Simpson	Deputy Principal, Mullewa District High School
44.	Shari Comeagain	Student, Mullewa District High School
45.	Ted Harvey	Student, Mullewa District High School
46.	Waylon Spratt	Student, Mullewa District High School
47.	Waylene Merry	Student, Mullewa District High School
48.	Mrs Tonia Carslake	Principal, Morawa District High School
49.	Ms Tracy Tapscott	Acting Principal, Morawa District High School
50.	Ms Karen Chappell	Chair, School Board, Morawa District High School
51.	Ms Bree Phillips	President, P & C Association, Morawa District High School
52.	Alexandra Whitehurst	Student, Morawa District High School
53.	Jessica Wallace	Student, Morawa District High School
54.	Corrine Moore	Student, Morawa District High School
55.	Brittney Louise Councillor	Student, Morawa District High School
56.	Sam Drew	Student, Morawa District High School
57.	Molly Traylen-Witt	Student, Morawa District High School
58.	Mr Dean Carslake	Principal, Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
59.	Ms Amanda Gaunt	Acting Principal Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
60.	Mr Matthew Purser	Acting Deputy Principal Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
61.	Mr Jim Cook	Chair, College Board Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
62.	Ella Smith	Student, Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
63.	Ashlee Clarke	Student, Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
64.	Tristan Rausch	Student, Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
65.	Jacinta Cooper	Student, Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
66.	Tiarna Kanny	Student, Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
67.	Arran Teakle	Student, Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
68.	Caitlyn Swift	Student, Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa
69.	Mr Grant Woodhams	Chairperson, Morawa Education and Industry Training Alliance (MEITA)
70.	Ms Janine Calver	Principal, Dongara District High School
71.	Ms Rhiannon Lucas	Deputy Principal, Dongara District High School
72.	Mr Darren Simmons	Chair, School Board, Dongara District High School
73.	Ms Kristy Butcher	President, P & C Association, Dongara District High School
74.	Christine Hewer	Student, Dongara District High School
75.	Kylan Elliot	Student, Dongara District High School
76.	Monique Guerini	Student, Dongara District High School
77.	Ms Deirdre Morgan	Principal, Carnamah District High School

	Tuesday 30 August 2016	
	Name	**Position/Organisation**
78.	Ms Lesley Paterson	Deputy Principal, Carnamah District High School
79.	Mr Dwayne Wooltorton	School Council, Carnamah District High School
80.	Mrs Richelle Essers	Representative, P & C Association, Carnamah District High School
81.	Shania Beck	Student, Carnamah District High School
82.	Shayla Wills	Student, Carnamah District High School
83.	Thomas Smallwood	Student, Carnamah District High School

	Wednesday 31 August 2016	
	Name	**Position/Organisation**
84.	Ms Christine Bevan	Principal, Meekatharra School of the Air
85.	Ms Shona Nash	Manager, Corporate Services, Meekatharra School of the Air
86.	Chris May	Non-teaching staff, Meekatharra School of the Air
87.	Ms Jasmyn Fairclough	Non-teaching staff, Meekatharra School of the Air
88.	Ms Sonia Nelson	Non-teaching staff, Meekatharra School of the Air
89.	Ms Jenny Wilson	Teaching staff, Meekatharra School of the Air
90.	Ms Ruth de Beer	Teaching Staff, Meekatharra School of the Air
91.	Ms Katelyn Condon	Teaching staff, Meekatharra School of the Air
92.	Ms Kelsey Smith	Teaching staff, Meekatharra School of the Air
93.	Ms Stacey Keating	Teaching staff, Meekatharra School of the Air
94.	Mr Oliver Murray	Co-Head of Campus, Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre
95.	Ms Heather Brett	Co-Head of Campus, Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre
96.	Ms Ruth Davis	College Manager, Geraldton Residential College
97.	Ms Natasha Colliver	Chairperson, Board of Management, Geraldton Residential College
98.	Ms Anne-Marie Wilson	Senior Supervisor, Geraldton Residential College
99.	Mr Cameron Sutherland	Senior Supervisor, Geraldton Residential College
100.	Ms Barbara Edwards	Admin/Finance Officer, Geraldton Residential College
101.	Ms Deb Hardie	Manager, Residential Colleges Country High School Hostels Authority
102.	Mr Bill Swetman	Managing Director, Central Regional TAFE
103.	Mr Steve Cooper	Director Organisational Effectiveness, Central Regional TAFE
104.	Ms Jo Payne	Director Training Delivery, Central Regional TAFE

Appendix 4 Midwest Education Regional Office
A useful schematic of the role played by Midwest Education Regional Office

Appendix 5 Case study: Teach Learn Grow
Making an impact – 1:1 tuition and mentoring through volunteers

About: Teach Learn Grow (TLG) is a public company limited by guarantee. It is based at Edith Cowan University, Mount Lawley. It is a Public Benevolent Institution and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.

TLG started in 2011 with 13 volunteers at one primary school in Three Springs.

Five years later in 2016 it has supplied over 520 tutors selected from over 1430 volunteer applications, engaged with 18 schools and provided 50,000 hours of tuition to over 1020 students.

Vision: for every child in Western Australia to have equal opportunities in education regardless of location, background or circumstance.

Mission: to improve the educational outcomes and aspirations of rural and Indigenous students in socio-disadvantaged areas so that they can reach their full potential

Funding sources: Sponsorships and grants, donations and alumni events and funds raised from running the TLG Tutoring Centre which offers paid tutoring as a means of raising funds for the Rural Program.

Services: free tuition and mentoring to rural and remote students through its flagship Rural Program and eMentor program. A focus is on Year 5 and 6 to get them ready for high school.

The Rural Program sends volunteers out to rural communities to conduct mathematics tutoring during a week-long visit to a school. It runs twice a year and re-visits the same students every 6 months at partnered schools around the State to sustain its impact. During that week TLG tutors also get the chance to interact with the wider school cohort each day and immerse themselves in the local community

Schools are selected and evaluated based on attendance rates and their Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA). They are then separated into two streams, high attendance and low attendance schools, with slightly different programs delivered to each. Midwest education region schools include Meekatharra DHS, Carnarvon Community College, Morawa DHS and Mullewa DHS.

Each volunteer is paired with three students for the course of the week, engaging with them in approximately two x one-hour sessions per day. Volunteers prepare their lessons based on Australian Curriculum mathematics outcomes that teachers of the students have selected prior to their arrival. Teachers choose these outcomes based on topics that their students are having difficulty in as well as choosing outcomes that are relevant to the student's current mathematics studies.

Tutors are matched with 3 students for the week → Tutors prepare and conduct 1-on-1 interactive tutoring with each child every day → Attitudinal and academic improvements are measured at the end of the program

The eMentor program is an online-based mentoring program to upper-primary students transitioning to high school in rural WA which sustains impact over 7 weeks between our biannual Rural Programs. The program centres around tailored activities and discussions with the students on goal-setting, peer pressure, bullying and other difficulties they may come up against or are currently facing as they are about to transition to high school.

Volunteers based in Perth are connected with students in rural WA through Saba Classroom (Centra). This online platform enables volunteers to interact with their students through a video call as well as the ability to screenshare and collaboratively utilise an on-screen whiteboard. Each session with a student runs for 1 hour and volunteers work through a variety of topics and activities related to those topics.

Mentors are recruited and attend training days

Mentors deliver online mentoring support and mathematics tutoring to a matched student

Across 7 WEEKS

Acquired skills, resilience and emotional intelligence are surveyed at the end of the program to measure impact

Schools include:

Karalundi Aboriginal Education Community
Pia Wadjarri Remote Community School
Bayulu Remote Community School
Meekatharra District High School
East Kalgoorlie Primary School
Carnarvon Community College
Coolgardie Primary School
Cue Primary School
Nulsen Primary School
Trayning Primary School
Avonvale Primary School
Kondinin Primary School
Leonora District High School
Morawa District High School
Mullewa District High School
Norseman District High School
Menzies Community School
Brookton District High School

TLG volunteers: There is no requirement to be a student of education or a teacher to volunteer; less than 30% of the TLG volunteers are education students.

TLG believes that this provides a point of defence – volunteers bring along a diverse set of skills. This expose students to a new mind set and can open their minds to a career path not previously envisaged. It can also open the minds of volunteers to a new career path – based on data collect by TLG in 2016, 29% of volunteer are now considering teaching as a career option.

Growth:

- Where to from here?
  - Developing funding to enable growth to provide one-on-one tutoring to more students
  - Gather longitudinal data to measure program effectiveness

Program impact:

- 50,000 hours of free tuition since inception
- 76% - students improved their attitude towards school
- 87% - students significantly improved in their mathematics outcome

Feedback

"We are delighted to have TLG work with our school. It is the positive and caring relationships that the tutors build with the students that is of the utmost importance. From there, the students have the trust and confidence to take risks with learning. The program is both educational and entertaining for the students and they love having TLG come. "

"The program was very specific and targeted with measurable outcomes. Students enjoyed 1 on 1 time with the TLG tutors and all made strong connections. This has led to improved self-esteem and motivation from many students."

"Given our environment, some of these kids do it pretty tough. So having someone focus on them one-on-one for that time allows them to take risks that they don't have to worry about in terms of consequences and I think that allows them to achieve their potential."

"I think the mentoring aspect of the program is extremely worthwhile for our students. The chance to have the one-on-one relationship is so important to our students, many of whom don't always get this at home. It is also beneficial to our students to be exposed to study choices that are available and to have a sense of hope for the future."

Appendix 6 Case study: Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre

Background

Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre (the Centre") was established in 2010. It is part of the Edmund Rice Education Australia's national initiative, Youth+. It is a Catholic Education Western Australia CARE school and a Registered Training Organisation.

The Centre responds to the needs of young people in the Midwest community of Western Australia. The young people include young men and women of secondary school age who have typically experienced one or more significant and complex educational, social, health and wellbeing situations which demand unique responses. The Centre provides an educational framework where teachers and youth workers supports social and wellbeing needs along with their academic requirements. Teaching and learning is characterised by small class sizes and a flexible curriculum that draws on individual interest and needs.

"With a dynamic staff including youth workers, administration personnel, teachers and contract specialists, we are able to deliver an engaging curriculum including Certificate level courses, Numeracy and Literacy programs and a diverse array of appealing activities. Youth+ and the Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre celebrate the unique character and hopes of young people of secondary school age through offering programs which meet the individual needs of young people with small group learning, service provision from teachers and youth workers and learning experiences which support their social and emotional needs along with their academic requirements.

The accredited education services provided give young people from this area the opportunity to re-engage in education in a supported learning environment. Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre workers aim to build trusting relationships and educational pathways for young people who are currently disengaged from education. The school achieves its mission through the underpinning of 4 Principles. These are: Respect, Safe and Legal, Participation (having a go) and Honesty. These Principles are used by the Young People and the staff to encourage learning; build personal relationships and resolve conflict.

Enrolment acceptance at the Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre is dependent upon the outcome of an interview, composition of classes and the existing conditions of the current student group. Young people at the Geraldton Flexible Learning Centre are empowered to take responsibility for their actions and their learning."[41]

School profile as at August Census 2016 – Geraldton FLC

	Total	Female	Male	Female ATSI	Male ATSI
Year 7	9	5	4	5	3
Year 8	16	7	9	6	6
Year 9	20	10	10	8	10
Year 10	10	2	8	2	7
Year 11	20	12	8	10	7
Year 12	11	6	5	6	4
Total	86	42	44	37	37

86% of our cohort are indigenous

Summary – enrolment profile			
Youth justice referral = 19	DCP guardian = 6	Guardian employed = 8	Young parents = 4

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[41] GFLC Annual Report 2015 p3 **

Attendance:

The Centre has good impact – example: one child from the Gascoyne was attending school two days out of every 180 days but since they have been at the Centre (for six weeks) they have attended every day but one - when they were sick.

As with other schools cultural business and transiency do affect the cohort on any given day.

Students may not be used to systems, rules and the Centre bridges them – "lift them up to the rung of the ladder". Examples - students may come from mainstream schools in town, we receive referrals from schools, students may have come from juvenile detention situation straight into a school but there is no transitional program to get back into the community after detention.

Programs:
- Three onsite groups
  - Younger cohort (11) – activity-based

  - Project group – project-based learning with curriculum areas embedded in the projects (example: collect rubbish, map rubbish to retailers and wrote letter to retailers about waste – this captures literacy, numeracy and communication/community)

  - Transition group – e.g. transition to further education or employment (literacy/numeracy and VET). The Centre is a Registered Training Organisation and offer VET and work with other organisations)

- After hours group – if the Centre is overwhelming for a student, each afternoon staff stay back and run a program for those uncomfortable with a crowd so that they can eventually desensitise and join the day program.
- Outreach program – if enrolment is "too hard" we make home visits – go to bedroom door (with parent/carer permission) and talk for a few days per week – relationship build, bring them onto Centre site.
  - Example: one particularly energetic students was continually being expelled for being disruptive; the Centre put him in the classroom on an exercise bike – and he could use an iPad to do his study. This worked very well.
- Mobile program – teacher and youth worker in a bus using facilities around the town

Cultural programs – is the first secondary school to offer language programs - originally offered to indigenous students and then opened to non-indigenous students – very receptive both ways.

Community connection – aim to get out and about around town for positive experiences for all, aim to change perspectives of client from that of a negative interaction.

Staffing

Staffing

Principal	HoCs	HoW	Teachers	Youth workers	Admin and other
0.33	2	0.8	4	5	2

Young parents - Mothers room with clothes, nappies, costs but must parent own child - we do not offer day care. Student cohort comfortable with large families and therefore babies and young children being around.

SWD and NCCD - Students with Disability (SWD) = 3 but many more with disability in the mental health sphere
Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD).

SWD = 3

NCCD Summary 2016				
Disability category	Support within QDTP	Supplementary	Substantial	Extensive
Physical		1		
Cognitive		2	2	2
Social-Emotional	8	8	14	1
Sensory				
Total	**8**	**11**	**16**	**3**

A day at the Centre

The day structure at Flexi
1. Team meeting
2. Bus runs and classrooms open for any young person who chooses to make their own way in
3. Bus runs return and breakfast offered
4. Whole school morning meeting
5. AM learning blocks
6. Lunch
7. PM learning blocks
8. Bus runs head off
9. After hours program

While this is happening we might be meeting with young people and family regarding an incident, taking an expectant mother to a medical appointment, sourcing medicine, supporting a young person with a psychologist/ counselling appointment, preparing a food parcel, providing a hygiene pack, washing, mending and providing clothing and attending agency meetings

Appendix 7 Case study: Morawa – a shared vision

Morawa Independent Public School Cluster[42]

The Western Australian College of Agriculture - Morawa (WACA) and Morawa District High School (DHS) are integrated K – 12 learning communities.

Both schools maintain their unique personalities but combine to form a well-structured learning environment for students that is multi-faceted, and involves a range of teachers, subjects, opportunities for community development and support. Both WACA and DHS became Independent Public Schools in 2013.

Strong links between both schools, with the Shire of Morawa, the Morawa Education, Industry and Training Alliance (MEITA), Central TAFE (formerly Durack) and industry partners the cluster can offer students a broader range of carer pathways and industry opportunities.

Senior school students have the opportunity to follow an extensive range of subjects within rural, school and farm campuses. By aligning timetables of the schools, students in Years 10, 11 & 12 may transit between campuses and classes, training programs and further education, with ease, maintaining continuity in their career pathway.

Students are able to complete certificates in Agriculture, an ATAR program for those that are university bund, vocational programs with certificate courses and a work readiness program. The Morawa Mining and Agriculture Academy and Karara Mining Limited provide scholarships and apprenticeship opportunities for students. This collaboration between schools, the MEITA and the wider community has enabled the pooling of practical, academic, cultural and industry experience and resources to provide students with greater opportunities and better options to more specifically meet their educational needs.

By aligning timetables of the schools, the cluster arrangement provides students with the opportunity to study a broader range of subjects through flexible use of staff and resources across the two campuses. Students from years 10 to 12 can transit between schools to attend a greater variety of classes and training programs on offer. This has enabled college students to access ATAR subjects available at Morawa District High Schools with eight students enrolled in fours ATAR courses. Staff expertise is also shared across campus and this has led to a combined approach to professional learning and to the implementation of common programs such as Classroom Management Strategies (CMS) and Positive Behaviour Strategy (PBS) at both schools and in a number of feeder primary schools. Thus there is overlapping of the staff peer mentoring performance improvement program and classroom observation programs. These networks are promoting a collaborative approach to teaching and learning, increasing access to professional learning and providing a platform for staff to share expertise and resources.

RREAC noted that Morawa is in a unique position due to community cohesiveness, MEITA initiatives, integrated leadership, geographical differences and collaborative process. Both the DHS and WACA are government and are complementary suppliers within the one sector, not between government and non-government sectors

The education vision for Morawa is community-owned; *"There is a shared vision in school and across community - so it is not person dependent. We all know where we are going"*

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[42] Government of Western Australia, Department of Education Services, *Morawa District High School 2015 Independent Review Findings.* Available http://morawadistricthighschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Final-review-Document.pdf.

The IPS Reviews for both DHS and WACA note that whilst the shire population is declining both WACA and the DHS are attracting increasing numbers (e.g. WACA – a 48% enrolment increase from the start of 2014 to semester 1, 2015). Ultimately local numbers are limited by a boarding capacity of 72. [43]

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[43] ibid.