

Literacy & Learning advocacy report

July 2012

Background

Literacy and learning objectives are recognised as an important and emerging focus for NSLA in the vision and strategies for 'Re-imagining Libraries 2012-2016', agreed at the NSLA Meeting in Auckland, November 2011. Prior to the initiation of the Literacy and Learning Project in March 2011, NSLA had not explored collaborative opportunities in this area.

This work package has conducted research to identify successful projects which have produced recognition and attracted funding in the literacy and learning sphere, and which exemplify best practice in current NSLA and other partnerships. In conjunction with work package 2, it provides an overview of the landscape and the key organisations in the learning and literacy sector which libraries may be able to consider for future partnership opportunities. These are the first steps in helping to define literacy and learning partnership objectives and enabling the NSLA libraries to consider and explore potential, collaborative, future opportunities in this area.

The work package considers the results of cross-section research and features six case studies and examples of projects from Australia and New Zealand which have produced advocacy and attracted funding in the literature and learning sphere. This research has not been limited solely to projects based in libraries; desk research has been conducted to see if funding bodies have provided money to agencies other than libraries for literacy work, and two external case studies selected from this research.

The work done by ALIA and the National Year of Reading 2012 in generating political goodwill leading to significant funding, as well as commercial and non-commercial partnerships, was originally considered as a case study for this work package. It has not been included as the evaluation of the National Year of Reading 2012 is focussed on partnerships and the benefits to the library and literacy sector overall of working together. The NSLA Literacy and Learning Group members will be able to consider the outcomes of the National Year of Reading 2012 in relation to this work package when the evaluation report is available (expected to be October or November 2012), and will take note of any significant findings which may impact on the future work of the group.

Executive summary

From the case studies provided, it can be seen that a collaborative approach to the creation and implementation of learning and literacy projects, which deliver on specific outcomes for all partner organisations involved, are likely to succeed in the short term and be sustainable in the mid- to long-term. The reach of literacy projects which have attracted partnership opportunities ranges from quite generic (large possible audience), to a more targeted approach to reach those most in need of improved literacy skills, or a combination of the two.

The ability to deliver on more than one agenda, to present the project or initiative as one which doesn't just increase literacy levels, but has benefits for health, has a clear link to an education curriculum outcome, or up-skills the current and/or future workforce (as examples), is of importance as it broadens the scope of projects and provides multiple outcomes. This ability to be able to deliver on more than one agenda through linking strategies can be seen in the variety of partner organisations which literacy initiatives attract. The types of organisations which contribute financially or through in-kind support to literacy initiatives in library settings or run by libraries ranges from major corporate partners, to other government departments such as education and sport, to philanthropic and charitable foundations.



Credible evaluation of known measurements, teamed with regular reporting back to partners also helps to sustain partnerships. Evaluation can be quantitative and/or qualitative, and can range from formal to anecdotal, but whatever format it takes feedback from end-users and evidence of direct benefits to the target community is seen to be very important to partner organisations. Regular reporting on outcomes and keeping lines of communication open with government ministers and/or local councillors is vital where their support (political and/or financial) is crucial to the continuation of the project or program.

That the project has advocates at many levels, from staff on the ground to CEOs of both the public and private partners and elected members (at local, state or national level as appropriate), improves the range of channels through which the project can be promoted, supported and grown. Engaging staff in the projects, supporting them with training, and providing opportunities for them to extend their professional capabilities and develop new skills appears to assist in the creation of learning-friendly environment within libraries, and can produce some of the most valuable advocates for literacy and learning initiatives in libraries. Allowing staff the space to learn through their involvement in the project or program, and to build a knowledge base, creates opportunities for improvement at all levels.

Recognition of the success of the project is also helpful. This can be recognition by the library profession, or awards from external agencies or other government departments. Awards also provide valuable media coverage and photo opportunities which in turn raise awareness of the project and build understanding in the community.

The results of the partnerships survey and the range of case studies provided show that literacy and learning initiatives delivered by or in libraries appear to have a shared, if broad, definition which leads to attempting to generate expected outcomes for individual projects. The way in which these outcomes can be delivered is many and varied, and does not necessarily involve libraries as a point of contact. The willingness of libraries and other organisations involved in the development of literacy and learning in the community to look beyond their own profession or sphere is one of the many strengths of the partnerships highlighted in the case studies. It can also lead to reaching a wider audience over a greater geographical area, which is important when engaging regional or remote communities in Australia.

Literacy and learning objectives can also be delivered by libraries (as well as other providers) to multiple target audiences, and while many projects focus on early years and school students, there is also an adult audience for learning opportunities across the many different literacies which libraries are able to offer.

The overview of the literacy and learning landscape provided by this report and the partnerships survey means that the group is now in a good position to progress to the next stage of its workplan: an examination of the skills, tools and facilities that are required to support literacy and learning in libraries, and analysis of gaps and opportunities. Taken together, these will lead to the development of organisational learning plans and toolkits, able to be shared for use by NSLA and public libraries.

Case studies:

- A) Better Beginnings (WA)
- B) AnyQuestions.co.nz
- C) Auckland Libraries - Wriggle and Rhyme
- D) NSW Premier's Reading Challenge
- E) LINC Tasmania – 26TEN Network and Communications Strategy
- F) Hume global learning village: a creative learning community (VIC)

Case study A: Better Beginnings, the State Library of Western Australia's family literacy program

Background to the project

Better Beginnings has been developed by the State Library of Western Australia as a family literacy program that aims to support parents as their children's first teacher. It works through strong networks which have been developed with health professionals, local governments and public libraries. It is much more than a gift book program, it provides a series of linked strategies to build relationships between families and community services that support parents and young children.

The program, funded as a partnership between State Government, local governments and Rio Tinto mineral resource mining company, has grown from 11 metro and regional communities in 2004 involving approximately 6,000 families, expanding to 122 WA local governments by 2009. In 2012, all 141 WA local governments will participate in the program, including the Indian Ocean Territories and 80 remote, Indigenous communities. Each year, Better Beginnings expects to reach the families of over 96% of babies born in Western Australia, to help provide children with an introduction to literacy and reading as part of a life-long learning experience.

The partnership with Rio Tinto is just one of many which helps Better Beginnings to reach its potential as a state-wide family literacy program. Other partnership agreements are held with local governments in Western Australia (providing access to the local library network), the Child and Adolescent Health Service, Child and Adolescent Community Health, and the WA Country Health Service.

Background to the partnership

The initial submission to Rio Tinto in 2001 was unsuccessful, but Rio Tinto provided useful feedback that led to a State Library and local government-funded pilot of the program in 2004. This was evaluated by Edith Cowan University and with evidence of the program's successful outcome, Rio Tinto encouraged the State Library to put forward a second submission, which focussed on the aims of creating a large-scale, statewide program which would reach rural and regional areas, promoting early intervention literacy strategies. The successful submission to Rio Tinto enabled the pilot program to be extended state-wide from 2005.

One of the key aspects of the Better Beginnings program from the start was the rigorous, academic evaluation of the project by Edith Cowan University, which provided a potential corporate sponsor with the evidence they needed to justify the cost of involvement. The ongoing relationship between the State Library and Edith Cowan University now provides a longitudinal study of parents and children who have been impacted by Better Beginnings.

Current situation

In May 2009, the State Government committed \$6.8M to the State Library's Better Beginnings program from July 2010–June 2014. This figure includes \$2.8M from the Liberal-National Government's 'Royalties for Regions' initiative over four years.

At the same time Rio Tinto, having already invested \$710,000 in the program from 2005 onwards, committed to providing an additional \$1M to the program over four years. Having supported the program in its early stages, the company was keen to maintain its relationship with Better Beginnings as a state-wide program that contributes to Western Australia's development beyond the contributions of Rio Tinto's business activities. The company recognises that there is a link between investment in the early years and long-term positive education and health outcomes. As an employer with a positive employment strategy which aims to develop skilled Indigenous employees local to its mines, Rio Tinto was also keen to support targeted services for Indigenous families in remote communities. Better Beginnings outputs, in building future skills development and community capacity, have real meaning for Rio Tinto's business model.

This money, and the timeframe over which it has been committed, ensures the continuation and expansion of Better Beginnings, as well as the development of new initiatives to further support the literacy needs of Western Australian families.

How was this achieved?

The move from a successful project which had been rolled out year-on-year by making a small amount of external, corporate funding go a long way, to a government-backed initiative with a mid-term future, was achieved through multiple channels.

Direct contact by the State Library's CEO to the Minister for Culture and the Arts was extremely important, as this put the focus on the individual. Discussions had been held with one sitting minister, then a surprise state election was called and a new minister from the opposing party was installed. This set the process back but was not catastrophic, and discussions were restarted with the new minister. Both ministers from different sides of the political spectrum could see the worth in the project, proving that the literacy issue was one that transcended party politics.

The breadth of Better Beginnings partnership workings was also important, as this demonstrated how the project could tie in with other government priorities. These ranged from finding links to the education agenda to supporting the work of community and child health nurses in providing positive parenting messages and the link between literacy and health.

The evidence base provided by the Edith Cowan University research was extremely important in highlighting the benefits to communities (or in the case of politicians, their constituents) when putting the case to government ministers. The scholarly research indicated that the base program had a huge impact on modifying behaviours, changing perceptions and verifying the importance of sharing books with children from birth.

Having an external corporate partner on board, particularly one which has a clear commitment to community investment in Western Australia, meant that another avenue for lobbying was available. Rio Tinto's input into the process was not constrained by the protocols of the public service.

Better Beginnings and its government/business partnership funding model has been widely recognised as a model of best practice. In 2006, the program was a category winner in the WA Premier's Awards for Excellence in Public Sector Management. This was followed in 2007, when the program won the WA state award in the Community Partnerships category of the Australian Business Arts Foundation Awards, and was a national finalist in the Australia Council Arts for Young People Award.

The Better Beginnings program has taken a long time to build to the level of success which it is currently achieving, and the ability to remain flexible and to renegotiate partnerships and funding agreements as the program grew and changed has been important in sustaining the relationships over such a long time.



Department of Regional Development and Lands



RioTinto

Western Australian
Local Governments

Case Study B: AnyQuestions.co.nz – an example of advocacy working to support literacy in New Zealand schools

Launched in 2004, AnyQuestions.co.nz is a free online reference service for all New Zealand school students. AnyQuestions.co.nz librarians work online in real time with students to assist them in developing their information literacy skills by supporting them to independently find the information they need. The service is open Monday to Friday 1–6pm and is funded by the Ministry of Education to provide a quality information literacy service and has well over 5,000 online interactions with students annually, with growing use in 2011.

UiaNgāPātai.co.nz is the te reo Māori counterpart to AnyQuestions.co.nz. The entire transaction is conducted in te reo Māori and it operates on an appointment basis.

ManyAnswers.co.nz is the home to hundreds of questions that have been asked on AnyQuestions.co.nz and UiaNgāPātai.co.nz, with over 750 entries in both English and te reo Māori. It provides support to students outside the hours when operators are online. This service is proving very popular, with over 55,000 visits and over 103,000 page visits in 2011.

The AnyQuestions.co.nz service is provided in partnership by the Ministry of Education, National Library of New Zealand and public libraries. The service is facilitated by the National Library, managed by a fulltime service manager and part-time trainer and is staffed by librarians from the National Library and public libraries throughout New Zealand – from Warkworth (north Auckland) to Dunedin. AnyQuestions.co.nz has up to 140 operators nationwide.

Background to AnyQuestions.co.nz:

AnyQuestions.co.nz / UiaNgāPātai grew out of a discussion amongst public library managers who wanted to develop their online services for young people, but faced challenges in terms of technology, expertise and staffing resources. This was of particular concern in smaller libraries, but all could see the benefits that a national service would provide. The foundation partners worked together to develop a number of approaches to advocate to their stakeholders and funders about the value of participating in the development and delivery of this service for young New Zealanders.

AnyQuestions.co.nz was presented as providing a valuable source of professional development and an opportunity for staff to develop and practise their skills in a collaborative, dynamic and future focussed environment. Other organisations were especially drawn to the service as AnyQuestions.co.nz met their requirement for engaging with and meeting the needs of young people.

Over the years, the interactions have moved from simple, quick reference queries to more complex questions, with more than 10% of transactions now taking over 30 minutes of online dialogue between student and librarian.

The quality of the service - its design, approach and impact - has won many awards for innovation and use of best practice. National awards include:

- Society of Local Government Managers Award for Process Management
- Government Information Systems Buzzie Award for Technology in Society.
- Finalist, TUANZ Innovation Awards.
- LIANZA 3M Award for Innovation in Libraries.

How the consortia works:

AnyQuestions.co.nz was established and operates on a partnership basis, providing a strong foundation of commitment, support and ownership. A Service Overview Group of senior managers from each library and the Ministry of Education provide strategic leadership for the service.

The Ministry of Education funds the delivery platform, service management and training costs. The service uses relatively inexpensive open source software that has been customised locally and which will work in any internet browser.

Partner libraries contribute staff time to resource the service. This varies depending on the size of the library, with Auckland Libraries and National Library supplying the largest number of operators. In exchange the operators who are involved in AnyQuestions.co.nz receive extensive training which enhances their performance at the local level. A considerable amount of effort is devoted to creating a community of practise around operator performance.

Partner libraries also supply knowledge and expertise towards the development of the AnyQuestions.co.nz service through portfolio groups and the Service Management Team. These groups directly influence how the service evolves, contributing to everything from the development of coaching and review packages, to the ongoing development of the AnyQuestions.co.nz website and software.

The AnyQuestions.co.nz service manager and Service Overview Group chair keep in regular electronic contact and meet in person with the Ministry of Education representative on a biannual basis in order to ensure that the Ministry's goals are being met and a strong connection with the service directions and developments is maintained. Providing timely, accurate and regular reports on service performance and developments and ensuring Ministry requirements for evaluating the service are met has also ensured ongoing support.

Current situation

AnyQuestions.co.nz has undergone a number of enhancements and redevelopments since its launch in 2004, including the creation of ManyAnswers.co.nz in 2008, a shift to new open source chat software in 2011 and a full website refresh to create a more user-friendly environment for students.

AnyQuestions.co.nz continues to thrive and develop. All the foundation partner libraries remain with the service and further libraries have joined as service providers. It continues to be seen as a key service offer for young people by partner libraries, and as an effective method for achieving professional development and ongoing training for library staff. The opportunities that come from participating in a nation-wide service is seen as broadening the horizons for all, seeing libraries as a collective offer for the country. During the upheaval of the 2011 Canterbury earthquakes, for example, the service was able to assist students struggling with the closure of schools and libraries in the region and the existing strong networks provided a good basis to ensure service continuity and good communication.

Support and advocacy for this service happens at many levels. The operators take a great deal of pride in the service, actively advocate for service enhancements and promote the service at every opportunity. The management team provide the information and resources needed to ensure that evidence of delivery and performance, critical for ensuring continuity of both funding and participation, is provided. Further strength is gained from taking a collaborative approach to promoting the service alongside other products and services offered to support learners by, for example, taking shared trade stands at teacher conferences, and seminar presentations, etc. The Overview Group also contribute by ensuring that the service development is aligned with wider services development across their libraries, sharing successful approaches to inform the directions and developments that will keep AnyQuestions.co.nz relevant and effective into the future.

Case Study C: Auckland Libraries - Wriggle and Rhyme

The award-winning Wriggle and Rhyme has been a four-year collaborative program delivered in Auckland Libraries. Over this time there has been a marked increase in the use of libraries by babies between birth and two years, and their families. In June 2012 the ownership of Wriggle and Rhyme will transition into the hands of Auckland Libraries as the final formalised stage in the handover process from the Regional Sporting Trusts is complete. Wriggle and Rhyme has been a runaway success story in terms of the collaborative nature of the programme and the customer experience this initiative has provided.

What is Wriggle and Rhyme?

It is a weekly music and movement programme with a set of 14 different activity guides that look at seven specific areas of a baby's development. Each week a different topic is introduced on a rotational basis and parents learn about why the movement they are doing with their child is important for their baby's development. The sessions are a half-hour in duration and there is time for socialising and asking questions at the end.

Where did it all start?

Timeline:

- 2005/06: Sport Auckland, a Regional Sporting Trust (RST) was running an Active Movement program for 0-5 year olds in a community centre for a parenting group. This was funded by several community organisations.
- 2007: The Active Movement program was opened up to the public and participant numbers continued to increase as it outgrew its premises.
- Late 2007: The local library manager identified this as a program that would fit with libraries' goals and negotiated for Sport Auckland to pilot a programme for 6 months tailored to 0-2 year olds. The trial was based at two libraries, both within low socioeconomic areas with a 'trending younger' demographic. It was an unprecedented success and changed the landscape of library use with the biggest issue being where to store dozens of baby buggies and car seats that arrived once a week.
- 2008: A further group of libraries within the former Auckland city area undertook to deliver Active Movement for babies and toddlers. While the sporting trust's outcomes were focussed around developing motor skills for healthier futures, libraries were able to build on this with their vested interest in the development of pre-literacy skills, caregiver/baby bonding, library familiarisation, the creation of strong community links, membership and library collection use. The sporting trust provided an activity leader to share the running of the sessions in the libraries with trained library staff.

As a result of a comprehensive evaluation Sport New Zealand approached a further three RSTs in the greater Auckland area to invite them to roll this out to the library groups in their regions with Sport Auckland project managing. Negotiations commenced and "Wriggle and Rhyme" Active Movement for Early Learning was born.

What happened next?

In October 2009 six councils and their associated four sporting trusts agreed to work collaboratively to develop and implement Wriggle and Rhyme under the umbrella of the Active Movement Regional Libraries Project (AMRLP). A three-year memorandum of understanding was drawn up to run until 31 May 2012. The funding was threefold with funding from Sport New Zealand, Regional Sporting Trusts and Library groups, with shared responsibility for support, training and delivery. The collaboration was such that while the funding and professional development support was a constant, the hands on component was one that would be gradually withdrawn during the last year in preparation for libraries running this programme wholly.

Sport New Zealand required the following outcomes from the program:

- Participants (parents/caregivers) educated on the importance of fundamental movement skills.
- Increased number of new participants and retain existing participants (children 0-2 years, parents/caregivers) in Active Movement libraries program each term.

- Parents/caregivers are engaging in Active Movement – fundamental movement skills and activities with their child (0-2) at home.
- Active Movement sessions sustained in the 50 libraries across the greater Auckland region beyond the first 2 years.
- Increased community awareness of the importance of quality physical movement for children under 5.

At this point, 50 (out of a possible 55) libraries across the greater Auckland region picked up Wriggle and Rhyme and advisers were placed at each of the RSTS who developed training and ongoing professional development for those in libraries delivering the program.

Each RST also contracted “Activity Leaders” who initially ran every other session of Wriggle and Rhyme in the libraries which lead the way for library staff to repeat the session the following week. In the first 18 months of delivery attendance numbers surpassed 55,000 babies and toddlers. In mid 2011 with the withdrawal of the activity leaders, library staff became responsible for all the face-to-face delivery of Wriggle and Rhyme. An extensive and ongoing training program was available for the additional staff required as back up for these sessions.

The following three years has seen the program achieve some important milestones:

- Libraries needing to add additional sessions to cater for the big crowds.
- Additional libraries coming on board to deliver Wriggle and Rhyme with the amalgamation of Auckland Council in November 2010.
- Wriggle and Rhyme receiving the “Project Collaboration Award” at the 2011 New Zealand Sport and Recreation Awards.

Wriggle and Rhyme is also being successfully delivered to the Auckland Women’s Prison as part of a wider libraries project initiated by legacy Manukau Libraries (South Auckland)

As the community relationship with Wriggle and Rhyme draws to an end, libraries will be carrying on the legacy delivering Wriggle & Rhyme weekly in 52 libraries across the city. In order to ensure ongoing quality assurance and professional development, Auckland Libraries have contracted one of the regional sporting trusts to manage and provide this for them. In many ways it is a full circle relationship, but the real winners on the day are the customers who have and are experiencing the benefits of attending Wriggle and Rhyme sessions.

This media statement was released to announce that Wriggle & Rhyme was the recipient of the Project Collaboration Award in 2011. It focuses on the partnership and the community benefits received as a result.

Wriggle & Rhyme wins 2011 SPARC award

20/04/2011

The Wriggle & Rhyme programme has picked up the Project Collaboration Award at the 2011 NZ Sport and Recreation (SPARC) Awards on Monday 18 April.

The award recognises the unique partnership between Auckland Libraries, Sport Auckland, Sport Waitakere, Counties Manukau Sport and Harbour Sport, which has enabled children and their parent/caregivers to participate in Wriggle & Rhyme programmes in libraries across the Auckland region.



The Wriggle & Rhyme sessions are based on SPARC's Active Movement initiative which aims to provide positive movement experiences to stimulate brain and body development among youngsters.

The theory is that movement is a child's first language, so it is important to provide babies with whole body movements right from birth.

Parents and caregivers also join in and can learn fundamental movement skills and fun movement activities to put into practice at home.

"Wriggle & Rhyme is one of our most effective programmes. It aligns with the role of libraries in supporting reading, literacy and learning for all ages, and it helps build strong communities," says Allison Dobbie, Libraries and Information Manager, Auckland Council.

The programme evolved from Sport Auckland's Active Movement for Babies pilot programme and was first introduced in Auckland in 2008.

The partnership between the four regional sports trusts and a grant from SPARC enabled the programme to be expanded and it is now delivered in 50 libraries across greater Auckland.

Ashlie Gauld, Special Projects Manager of Sport Auckland says the success of the project is due to the innovation and hard work that each partner organisation has contributed.

"All partners look forward to seeing Wriggle & Rhyme continue to evolve and develop, getting more young children and their parents/caregivers participating every week."

In its first year Wriggle & Rhyme saw more than 70,000 participants (children and caregivers) across 50 Auckland libraries. Since then the number of participants have continued to grow.

The programme has now been introduced successfully in other areas of New Zealand.

Case Study D: The NSW Premier’s Reading Challenge, supported by Dymocks Children’s Charities

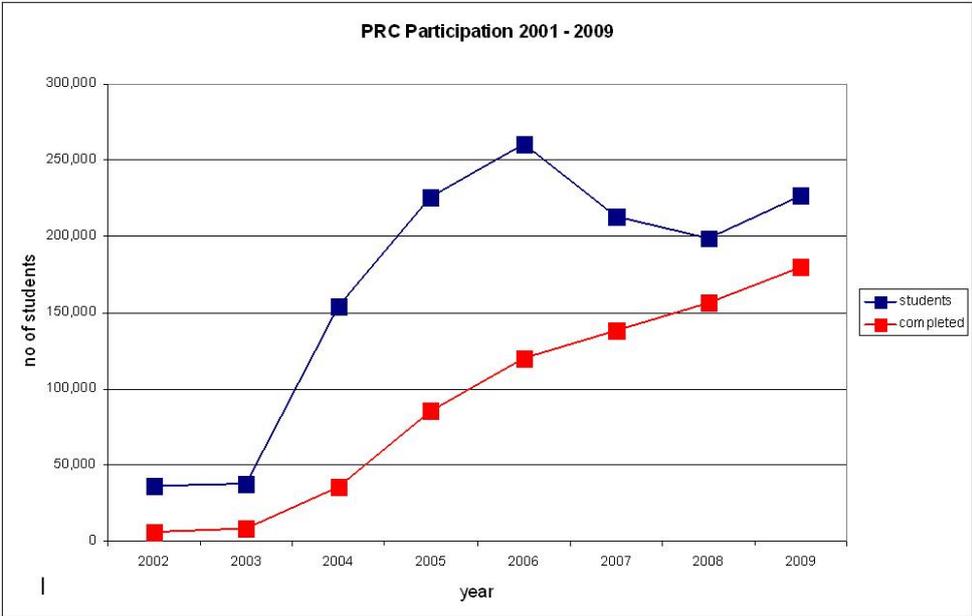
Background to the project

The NSW Premier’s Reading Challenge was launched in August 2001, facilitated by the NSW Department of Education & Training. The program’s aim was to encourage young people’s interest in reading. The initial program was focused at students in years 5-8 but it was subsequently expanded to target students from Kindergarten to Year 9. Students are challenged to read 20-30 books in one year, at least 15 of which must come from a NSW Premier’s Reading Challenge list compiled by a committee comprising of representatives from the Australian Society of Authors, Teacher Librarians, the Board of Studies and the English Teachers’ Association.

Each annual challenge lasts a school year, and schools are encouraged to participate as a whole-of-school project, to align the challenge with the school’s literacy strategy and to embed the challenge in the school curriculum. The NSW Premier’s Reading Challenge aims to support K-6 English by encouraging the reading of a wider range of texts on less familiar topics which form the basis of achieving reading outcomes; and to support 7-10 English by encouraging students to read for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis and pleasure and can be used to illustrate students’ success in reading widely.

Delivered through schools, the challenge encourages home-school partnerships to support reading for leisure, as most of the reading is completed at home. The challenge also contributes to computer literacy outcomes as it is delivered electronically with students from Years 3-9, and some independent readers in Years K-2, entering their own reading records online from home or at school.

In the first year, 5,900 students successfully completed the challenge. In 2010, more than 180,000 students from almost 2,000 schools successfully completed the challenge, reading well over 4,834,000 books.



Graph showing the annual increase in participation in the Premier’s Reading Challenge from 2002 to 2009.

Background to the partnership

In February 2003 Dymocks Children's Charities (formerly Dymocks Literacy Foundation) came on board as the Principal Partner for the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge and has continued to be the major supporter of this program, including in the current year, 2012. Dymocks Children's Charities is an Australia-wide, tax-deductible charity that raises funds to invest in programs that assist kids learning to read and write effectively.

By investing in the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge, the Foundation aims to be an active partner in fostering a love of reading for interest and for pleasure; encouraging an awareness of the value of books and what could be found in them; and assisting students to use books to think about who they are relative to their families, their communities and the wider society.

Current situation

During 2010 and 2011 Dymocks Children's Charities extended their association with the NSW Department of Education & Training to initiate a two year pilot study to create "The Book Bank". This project aimed to engage over 1000 primary students from five priority schools from four key demographics (Inner west; Western (outer) suburbs; Regional and Remote communities), and to promote reading for pleasure.

Each student was given a book of their own each term. These books belonged to the students who could create their own "Book Bank" or library at home. However, during the course of the term, once the students had read their own book, they were encouraged to deposit their book into the class "Book Bank" and share their book with their fellow classmates. Each book had a sticker inside which identified both the recipient and owner of the book, as well as all the students who had read the book. The sticker also had space for a comment from each student. Each classroom had a designated "Book Bank" shelf and students and teachers could monitor and record the sharing of books on a book bank poster in each classroom. At the end of each term the books were returned and handed back to their original owners to take them home to form part of their own "Book Bank" (home library).

The "Book Bank" project is tangentially linked to the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge. Once children in a class have had the experience of reading and sharing "Book Bank" books, teachers can encourage the children to 'read five more and you've completed the challenge', and suddenly the goal becomes tangible and achievable for previously reluctant readers. It has now been expanded to seven schools, and operates like a book club for children with kids recommending books to each other and sharing resources. Choice is paramount, and children can choose a 'challenge' book, a 'just right' book, or a 'holiday' book, guided by their teachers but not pressured in any way. No prices are shown on the catalogues from which the books are chosen, so the children don't associate their choice with monetary value.

Dymocks Children's Charities leverage off parent-company Dymocks to expand their relationship with publishers (they don't actually purchase books through Dymocks) to make each dollar go further. They are now looking at matching funding with schools to expand the program in future – the cost is between \$25 - \$50 per child, which as Jacque Stratford, Managing Director of Dymock's Children's Charities said, "is nothing compared to turning round a child's attitude to reading for life".

Case Study E: LINC Tasmania – 26TEN Network and Communications Strategy

Background

The Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan 2010-2015 aims to increase the proportion of Tasmanians with the literacy skills needed to meet the demands of everyday life – in their families, communities and workplaces.

Launched in January 2010, the action plan has three main strategies:

1. the establishment of an informal community and workplace network of adult literacy support
2. the establishment of a state-wide team of literacy coordinators, supported by a pool of trained volunteers, to drive the Adult Literacy Network
3. the development of key indicators to measure improvements in adult literacy support and outcomes.

LINC Tasmania and Skills Tasmania are jointly responsible for the action plan's implementation.

Issues

The action plan acknowledges a range of existing business, community and government organisations providing literacy support to adult Tasmanians, albeit in a fragmented and uncoordinated way, and calls for greater collaboration and a more systemic approach to meeting the needs of Tasmanians with low literacy skills.

The plan also recognises that encouraging people to get help to improve their literacy skills is often difficult because of the stigma associated with low literacy and the low level of community awareness of the benefits of improved literacy and about how and where to get help.

Current situation

Action plan implementation commenced in July 2010. Key actions are now well progressed, in particular the establishment of the LINC Tasmania literacy services team comprising 23 literacy coordinators and approximately 570 volunteer tutors in regional and urban locations across Tasmania (Strategy 2).

Work to establish Tasmania's adult literacy network (Strategy 1), including LINC Tasmania, and to raise community awareness of adult literacy (Action 1.6) has now commenced. The first phase of this work has involved the research and development of an adult literacy brand identity to:

- **inform** the community about the low levels of adult literacy skills in Tasmania
- **build understanding** around the benefits of improving literacy skills
- **shift** community mindsets about literacy
- **engage** all Tasmanians to make a difference.

The 26TEN brand identity (Attachment A) has been developed, based on qualitative research conducted in early 2011. This process involved testing possible creatives and insights with focus groups of people needing literacy support, people who know someone who needs literacy support, service providers (including volunteers) and employers.

26TEN had very high level support across all focus groups. The combination of 26TEN's offset deck of alpha-numeric characters (representing the 26 letters of the alphabet and numbers 0-9 in the base ten number system) and 'Tools for life' tagline was almost unanimously preferred by participants because it was considered:

- short, sharp and simple
- recognisable – even by those requiring literacy support – and shows basic elements of literacy that are not intimidating
- practical and action oriented.

26TEN was also favoured by focus group participants because:

- it doesn't mention 'literacy'
- it doesn't apportion blame, imply judgement or have negative connotations
- it explains what 26TEN actually is but still has an element of mystery and cleverness.

The second phase of work to establish Tasmania's Adult Literacy Network and raise community awareness of adult literacy is now underway. This phase seeks to make 26TEN a replacement for the term 'adult literacy' and includes:

- the development of a 26TEN partners program to encourage, business, community and government organisations to join the 26TEN network – to bring together, coordinate and strengthen the range of quality adult literacy services, programs and resources available to Tasmanians
- the development and implementation of a public communications strategy, including the development of a website to give the 26TEN network a home and
- an advertising campaign to inform the Tasmanian community (and specific target audiences) of the benefits to be gained by improving literacy skills and that the 26TEN network is an organised resource ready and available to help.

26TEN is intended to help build community awareness and understanding with a view to changing attitudes and behaviours over time. It is expected that the 26TEN network and related communications strategy will effect change (similar to that achieved through *beyondblue's* efforts to de-stigmatise mental health) so that more Tasmanians are encouraged to improve their literacy skills and are better able to meet the literacy demands of everyday life.

The 26TEN brand identity will be made available for use by business, community and government organisations able to demonstrate a commitment to supporting Tasmanians with low literacy skills – for example, through targeted support services and skills development programs, increased use of plain language communications and improvements to customer service and workplace practices.

The newly established Tasmanian Adult Literacy Coalition of Interest will act as the 'custodian' of 26TEN on behalf of partner business, community and government organisations and, with the support of LINC Tasmania, will 'authorise' and manage its use through processes and standards to be established.

\$290k is available to support the development and implementation of the 26TEN communications strategy in 2012-13.

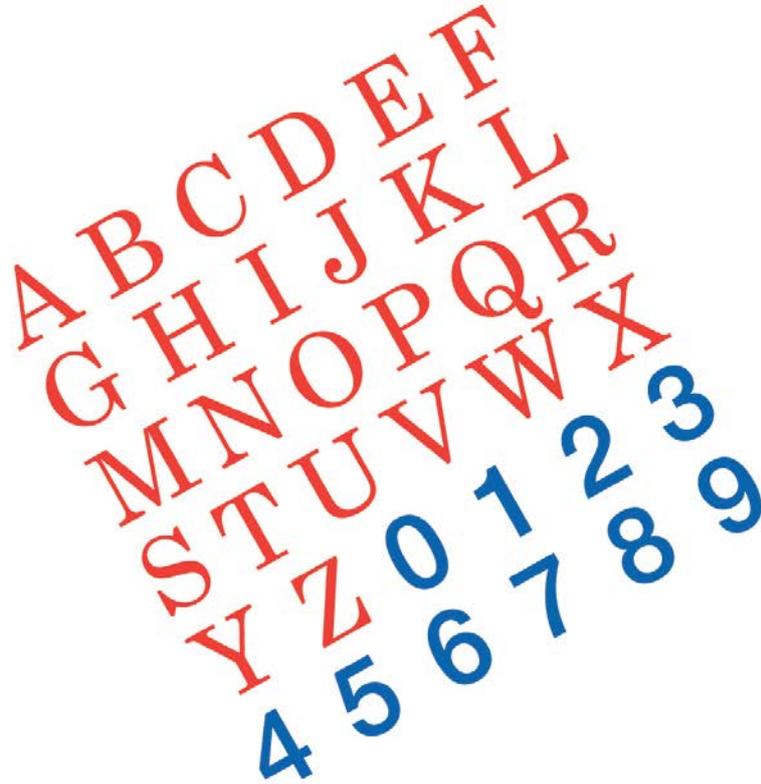
LINC Tasmania has recently finalised a Request for a Tender process, governance arrangements have been agreed and a team of LINC Tasmania personnel has been established to drive the 2012 program of projects (Attachment B).

A 26 October 2012 launch of the 26TEN network, website and campaign is anticipated and it is proposed that the launch event involve the Premier, Minister for Education and Skills and representatives of 26TEN launch partner organisations.

It is envisaged that the 26TEN advertising campaign will run for four months from 26 October 2012, and that a celebration of adult literacy occur annually on 26 October (26TEN day).

Attachments

- A 26TEN brand identity
- B
 - i. 26TEN Network: 2012 Program of Projects
 - ii. 26TEN target outcomes and audiences



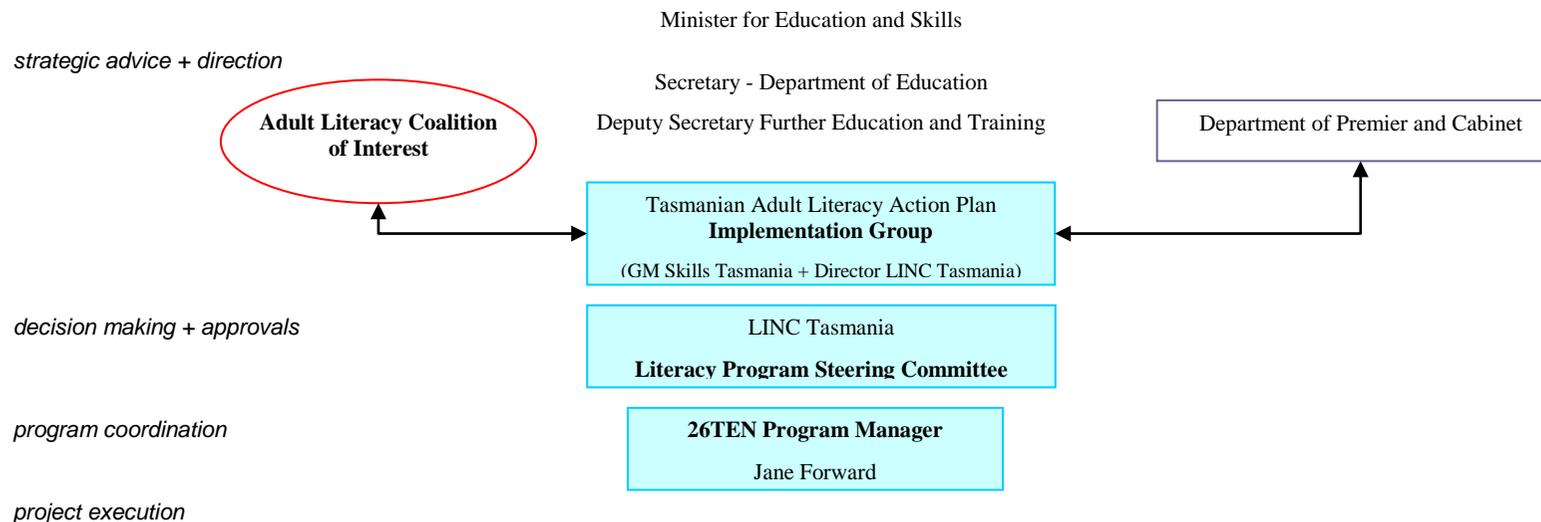
26TEN

Tools for life

26TEN Network

2012

Objective: to raise awareness about adult literacy and to support collective action by a network of business, community and government organisations – so that community attitudes change, stigma is reduced and more Tasmanians develop the literacy skills they need to meet the demands of everyday life



Trademark Project manager: Anita Favretto	Campaign Project manager: Anita Favretto RFT outputs: creative concepts + testing, production, media buying, campaign execution	Partners program Project manager: tbc (<i>Siobhan Gaskell</i>) RFT outputs: style guide, partner start-up kit	Plain English Project manager: tbc
Contractor services Project manager: Jane Forward * contract management RFT outputs: communications strategy, pre + post-campaign evaluation	Website Project manager: Pip Hankin RFT outputs: website design + production	Launch partner sign-up Project manager: tbc	Awareness training Project manager: Hugh Fielding
		Launch event Project manager: Anita Favretto RFT outputs: launch event concept	Heroes + stories Project manager: Janet Parsell



26TEN Network Target Outcomes	Tasmanians with low literacy skills	Tasmanians who know someone with low literacy skills	Service providers	Employers
Increased awareness and understanding of the benefits of adult literacy skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased awareness and understanding of how and where to access adult literacy support	✓	✓		
Increased participation in adult literacy support services and programs	✓			
Increased enquiries and/or referrals of people with low literacy skills to adult literacy service providers where appropriate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased awareness and understanding of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barriers associated with low literacy • needs of people with low literacy and • support services and programs available to people with low literacy skills 			✓	✓
Increased participation in activities, programs and networks to support people with low literacy skills and their skills development			✓	✓

Case Study F: Hume global learning village: a creative learning community

From: <http://apo.org.au/research/hume-global-learning-village-creative-learning-community>
Accessed: 05/06/2012

Hume global learning village: a creative learning community

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Structured abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the paper is to document the development of the Hume Global Learning Village from the establishment of the Safe City Task Force, the building of the Hume Global Learning Centre, the development of the Hume Global Learning Village Concept, the academic and other partnerships, research and learning activities that this supports. It outlines the vision and learning strategies that underpin the development of the HGLV, and concludes with factors that have contributed to keeping Village members involved and provides an indication of future developments.

Design/methodology/approach: The approach is a practical outline of a local government partnership with higher education in the context of a geographic learning community that has led to the development of a 20-year strategy for learning.

Originality/value: The value of this paper is that it provides an opportunity to stimulate thinking about local government and its role in learning which is not a traditional role.

The key to this is the linkages with higher education especially in terms of access to research capacity and learning which contributes to policy about relevant topics such as lifelong learning, social and emotional learning, youth, secondary school regeneration, active ageing and so forth.

Practical implications: The outcomes of the HGLV development demonstrate the strong link between economic development and the practical applications for those communities where education results are lower than average. Increasing the participation rate of the population involved in learning contributes to economic development and provides a more socially inclusive society.

Keywords: learning community, Hume Global Learning Village, lifelong learning.

Paper type: Practical Paper

1 Introduction to Hume City

Hume City is located on the urban-rural fringe, just 20 kilometres north-west of Melbourne, Victoria. Its 504 square kilometres comprise approximately 65% rural land, 25% urban land and 10% occupied by the Melbourne Airport. It covers the regions of Sunbury, Craigieburn and Broadmeadows. Within those regions there are a number of industries including Melbourne International Airport, freight, engineering, automotive manufacturing, steel, plastics, electronics, communications and tourism.

It has a population of 164,000. It has a very culturally diverse population with over 140 nationalities speaking 125 languages other than English at home, with 28.8% of the population being foreign born. In addition, the indigenous community is 0.6% of the population which is higher than the Melbourne average (HCC 2006). The City has a large number of young people, with 32.5% of its residents aged 19 years and under, while 8.1% are aged 65 years and above. It is also a multi-faith community, with many religions practised in Hume.

Within the City of Hume, the Broadmeadows SLA has significantly lower levels of educational attainment when compared to the metropolitan Melbourne Statistical Division (MSD). Almost one in five residents has only completed secondary college to Year 8 (age 14) or less. Factors such as lower levels of education, cultural and language barriers, other inequalities and barriers such as higher levels of disability and significantly lower levels of home internet access are strong negative contributors to this demographic.



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Nonetheless, it is noted in the report *Melbourne's North – a New Knowledge Economy* that Hume City is a growth area. It enjoys rapid population growth and has new opportunities to emerge as a knowledge economy, while including the retention of a high-tech manufacturing base. By 2030 the population of Hume City Council is predicted to climb to 242,000. The suburb of Broadmeadows has been identified by the State Government of Victoria as one of 5 Central Activities Districts around Melbourne and is targeted for substantial CBD type growth including several hundred new white collar jobs, while the outer areas provide Greenfield site opportunities for incubator developments (NIEIR, 2009). The challenge is to ensure that local citizens benefit not only in terms of having the skills to take advantage of employment opportunities, but that regard is given to an inclusive society and one that values the environment. These are the drivers of Hume City as a creative learning community.

2 Hume City as a Learning Community

Australia now has a decade of practice in the development of Learning Communities of Place and Hume City and the Hume Global Learning Village is often quoted as a good practice example in the development of a Learning Community in Australia (Kearns, Longworth et al. 2008). In fact, during this time, led by the Safe City Taskforce, chaired by Frank McGuire, Hume City took a radical and positive approach to community building by focusing on learning as the key to social and economic wellbeing for all citizens. McGuire notes that the three foci of attitude, education and opportunity and “having a go.” are what underlie the spirit of the Hume Global Learning Village (HGLV) today.

McGuire secured key partnerships and funding to establish the Hume Global Learning Centre (HGLC) and HGLV with the support of the Victorian Government, the Pratt Foundation, *The Age* and the Ford Motor Company.

A founding feature of the HGLV was the establishment of the first public library in Broadmeadows known as the Hume Global Learning Centre. It has become a beacon of learning for Hume City. As the Federal Minister for Calwell, Maria Vamvakinou MP, noted in a speech to Parliament in 2009 this building is a wonderful and unique example of a genuine community centre of learning, and hence social inclusion. It is an iconic building that visibly celebrates learning. At the same time, other community infrastructure such as a health services hub around maternal and childcare, the Visy Cares Learning Centre in Meadow Heights was also established.

An important factor is that the HGLV development has been driven at the Local Government level. The Hume City Council's vision for Hume is a prosperous, sustainable and vibrant city; renowned for social justice, lifelong learning and community inclusion. Hume was the first Council in Australia to adopt a Social Justice Charter and a Bill of Rights. The Council takes the view that economic and social development issues are inextricably linked, and that partnerships and innovative collaboration benefit the community.

The learning vision articulated for Hume City in the Council Plan 2030 is to: *Enhance life experience, employment opportunities and contributions to the community by inspiring and facilitating the participation of Hume residents in lifelong learning, regardless of age, ability or ethnicity, resulting in reduced disadvantage and improved quality of life.*

The vision was developed by Hume City Council, residents and members of the Hume Global Learning Village (HGLC) and emphasizes the importance of valuing learning in all its forms (formal, informal and non formal) and embedded in many different settings – the family, the community, the school and the workplace. Learning involves change which is undertaken on an individual basis or as a social activity (Wheeler and Faris, 2006).

Lifelong learning fosters the lifespan and life-wide learning, that is, all the phases of life from early childhood, to school years, to the adult learner and the older learner, and all areas of learning. It cultivates democratic values and according to Faris should build human and social capital including aboriginal value and knowledge base (Faris 2006).

The operation of Hume City's lifelong learning agenda is through the Hume Global Village Network.

3 Hume Global Village Network background

The HGLV is a collaboration of over 700 organisations with an interest in learning in Hume City, representing schools, neighbourhood houses, libraries, TAFE.'s, universities, council officers, job services providers, businesses, community and sporting groups, government departments; trainers, tutors and individuals. The Hume Global Learning Village (HGLV) was established on 30 May 2003 and members began work on creating a shared strategy to increase learning opportunities and encourage lifelong learning in Hume. The role of the HGLV is as the catalyst, facilitator, leader and driver of the shared vision for Hume as a learning community.

The work of the Village members, the HGLV Advisory Board and Council has been defined by a number of strategies including the Social Justice Charter, two, three-year learning strategies - Learning Together 1 (LT1) and Learning 2 (LT2) covering the period 2004-2010 and Board and Committee Terms of Reference.

In particular, the development of each learning strategy has involved Council, residents and members of the HGLV in a creative process of consultation. The first strategy (LT1) contained 8 themes with 56 projects. At the end of 2006, before drafting LT2, HGLV members reflected on what they had learnt about working with Council on community education over that period. The enthusiasm of the Village members was noted and one factor that was recognised was the leadership shown by Hume City Council and especially the partnership with the Learning Community Department and the Research Department to improve the evaluation process to ensure that data was relevant, timely and more targeted to meet the reporting requirements to Council and Councillors as an evidence base for future development.

The second learning strategy (LT2) became a key reference for all forms of learning opportunities in Hume for the period 2007-2010. It documented what had been successfully learnt so far, how those key findings could be improved upon and introduced new learning opportunities (HCC 2007). It incorporated five key learning themes which reflected a phases of life approach based on a German model that Kearns noted appeared relevant to Australia (Kearns 2005). The themes are:

- Inspiring lifelong learning in Hume
- The Hume Global Learning Village network
- The early years
- The school years
- The adult years
- The older years.

Each theme had an outcome, a context and details of learnings so far. Each outcome had one or more key performance indicators (KPI). The Hume City Council Research Department worked directly with the HGLV Research Action group on an evaluation framework that included the most effective means of collecting data including the use of resident surveys on learning. The information has informed the Learning Community Department's reporting requirements to Council.

While the data collection has become much more streamlined, the real story and the creativity lie behind the statistics. For example, a recent HGLV Advisory Board Briefing to Council noted the following achievements. This is by no means a comprehensive list.

- Increasing **lifelong learning** opportunities, for example, HGLV forums, Four Seasons of Learning, Festivals of Learning, Learning Advocate Program, Bilingual Story time, Home Library Service, an Annual Research Conference, HGLV Members and Residents Surveys.
- Promotion of **life-wide learning**, for example, Baby First Book Bag, Best Start, Bilingual Storytelling, homework clubs, Hume Youth Leadership program with Leadership Victoria, Active Aging in Hume.
- Promoting new and innovative ways of bridging the **digital divide**, for example, computer clubs, NetHelp, purchasing 22 laptops to take out into community locations for internet training, the Hume i-tech Challenge awards targeted at schools.
- **Celebrations of learning**, through the Four Seasons of Learning and Learning Festivals.
- Establishment of **new learning facilities**, for example, the Broadmeadows Schools Regeneration Project, Community Hubs, the proposed learning centre at Craigieburn.
- **Recognition of learners and educators in the community** has heightened awareness of those involved in the daily work of teaching (for example, Inspiring Teachers Scholarships) and those learners who inspire us all (for example, Inspiring Story Ambassadors).

A small sample of the activity is highlighted in the HGLV Progress Report January to March 2010 which notes that during this period an average of 28,325 people per month walked into the Hume Global Learning Centre and an average 114,674 loans per month were made. The Bilingual Storytime program was delivered to 1,241 adults and 2,761 children in languages covering Arabic, Assyrian,

Turkish, Vietnamese, Sinhalese while 614 First Book for Baby Bags were distributed and 624 students accessed Your Tutor Online Homework Assistance.

The work of the Village members and Hume City Council has been widely recognised at state and national level awards including in 2005 achieving the Prime Ministers Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships.

3.1 Twenty-year strategy

The work of Village members, residents and the Hume City Council in this area has been resoundingly endorsed by Councillors with adoption of the 3rd Generation Learning Strategy which will be a 20 year strategy, aligned with the Council Plan 2030. This longer timeframe allows for innovative approaches to be developed to tackle generational issues in a more aspirational way. Within this strategy there will be a series of shorter term (3-4 year) plans which will allow for specific reporting requirements relating to time specific and tangible outcomes. [diagram omitted]

3.2 Academic partnership

The partnerships with universities and the local TAFE college have been particularly important in the development of a sustainable learning community framework. As discussed in an AUCEA position paper, university-community engagement is a collaborative relationship which should lead to beneficial outcomes (AUCEA 2006).

There are real benefits to universities in working in partnership with a community at all levels of endeavour, that is, research, learning, teaching, the student experience and social inclusiveness. University representatives from RMIT, Victoria University, The University of Melbourne and Kangan Institute have been involved in the HGLV from the beginning, in all areas. Academics and practitioners undertake research about their work in Hume. Hume City Council and the Village have provided work integrated and service learning experience for university students. Academics have incorporated visits to HGLV as part of their course structure. Universities are also represented on the HGLV Committee and HGLV Advisory Committee.

This partnership is leading innovation and creativity. In particular, currently discussion is underway about:

- the development of post-secondary education in Hume including a Multiversity concept for the provision of higher education in Hume, aimed at increasing participation rates of Hume residents in higher education.
- the establishment and fostering of international bilateral links between the HGLV and like-minded initiatives around the world.
- the promotion of lifelong Social and Emotional Learning in Hume City.
- the Hume Broadband Initiative intended to provide more equitable access to low cost high speed broadband internet for residents, health, education, Not-for- Profits and small businesses.

At the grass roots level, Village members have been able to reflect on their own practice by becoming members of a Research Action Working Group – a sub-committee of the HGLV Committee. Established in 2004, the aim of the group is through an action learning/action research approach to monitor, coordinate and disseminate research findings from the Village. Village members can also be co-opted for particular expertise.

The annual Hume City Research Day¹ is one way academics and practitioners can disseminate their work. Presentations must be about research and practice that is happening in Hume City and be linked to the current learning strategy. It is an action learning/action research process and each year the quality of presentations has improved. It has gone from an initial information gathering and networking exercise, to one of exploring themes of relevance to Village members, for example, this year's theme is creativity and innovation while last year's theme was social inclusion.

Now in its fifth year, it has become a fixture on the HGLV calendar and as far as we know Hume City Council is the only local government in Australia to sponsor an annual research day on learning. This year's research day was held on 27 August and the program reflected the diversity of activity that is happening. The day commenced with a keynote speaker to enthuse members and this year Tania de Jong AM, Founder of Creativity Australia and Executive Producer Creative Innovation 2010 is talking about "The Artful Human – Creativity and Lifelong learning.". Village members presented on work in early childhood, youth attainment and transitions, bi-lingual story time, community hubs, the future of tertiary education in Hume City, Australian public libraries and universities in partnership, accessing

training and education opportunities for CALD communities in Hume, online learning and work with disadvantaged youth.

Last year's keynote, Rhonda Galbally, AO, (CEO, Our Community) really inspired participants and praised the City of Hume for investing in its learning community and congratulated Village members on the work they do. Galbally believes that an investment in learning communities can have a huge impact on the health and well-being of a community. It is about building hopeful communities, belonging communities and in control communities. The learning community can take on a number of forms – a geographic place, a network of learning organisations within that place and can also include online communities and the HGLV is developing all of these frameworks. There are structures for learning, people learning shoulder to shoulder, a sense of hope, belonging and of control.

The other major role of the HGLV Research Action Working Group is to assist the Hume City Council Research Department develop and monitor the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the current learning strategy (LT2). To date this has involved assistance and advice on the KPIs, the production of two Hume Residents.' Learning Surveys (2008 and 2010) and a HGLV Members.' Survey (2009). This work contributes to the sustainability of the learning community development and informs reports back to the Council and the rate payers.

The work on evaluation and the research day are ways that academics and community members can work together on the development of the Village concept. It is an opportunity to build the knowledge base, to provide impetus to move the HGLV agenda forward and to provide the latest knowledge in the field (local and international) and to challenge our thinking. It has been a challenge to evaluate such a complex network structure such as the Hume Global Learning Village.

3.3 What is a creative learning community?

Florida (2003) argues that creativity comes from the people. Transformation will happen when there is a mix of diverse, tolerant people open to creativity. "Creativity must be motivated and nurtured in a multitude of ways by employers, by people themselves and by communities where they locate (Florida, 2003, p5)."

Faris as an early adopter of the learning community concept notes that a learning community of place is one in which lifelong learning is explicitly used as an organizing principle and social/cultural goal in order that the learning resources across five different sectors (civic, economic, public (museums, libraries, social and health agencies), education and voluntary/community), are mobilized so that sustainable economic development and social inclusion are attained in the emerging knowledge-based economy and society (Faris 2001, 2004, 2006).

Hume City Council has now had six years of building on the Faris definition and putting the HGLV learning community concept into operation and some key factors that have been identified by Kearns and others that contribute to the sustainability of a learning community are:

- An identified community need.
- Passionate entrepreneurs with vision that inspire action and build **partnerships**.
- Key leadership role of local government.
- A management structure and strategies in place to support this.
- Clear **performance** targets and measurements.
- Communications strategy that keeps people not just informed but contributing and **participating** (Wheeler, Phillips et al. 2005; Kearns, Longworth et al. 2008).

These factors also incorporate the 3 Ps – partnerships, participation and performance as mentioned by Cara et al as critical in the development of learning communities (Cara and Ranson 1998; Faris 2001).

Kearns et al (2008) noted that learning communities provide frameworks for partnerships and innovations in communities and regions which contribute to building social, human, identify and economic capital in communities. In doing this, learning communities contribute to both inclusion and productivity objectives and widen learning opportunities for members of those communities. They note that learning communities need to develop sustainable strategies that will drive ongoing innovation, creativity and benefits. By developing a 20-year 3rd Generation Learning Strategy, Hume City is putting in a timeframe that will allow for innovative approaches and partnerships in tackling longer term learning issues.

4 Conclusion

Hume City Council plays a stewardship role in driving the learning community vision forward which is backed by significant resources. However, it cannot achieve creativity and innovation without the support of key partners, Village members and residents. The HGLV Board noted that the HGLV and Hume City Council relationship is highly interdependent. It is transforming from a hierarchical relationship to one of a network of cooperation involving Councillors, Council staff, Village members and other key stakeholders in a mutually respectful, but energetic and productive relationship. In doing this, Council is reframing the role of Local Government with regards to the learning community concept. It is the people within those networks and partnerships that are the heart of the Hume Global Learning Village as a creative learning community.

For more information on The Annual Research Conference visit the research subcommittee's website at www.humegloballearning.vic.gov.au

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