

School and Beyond
Strategy Development and Rationale

May 2011. V1

Future

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Overview

Baseline Indicators

- 8129 young people (15-24) resident in the region.
- Year 12 attainment rate less than 30% in 2006.
- Non school qualifications 30% in 2006.
- Approx 500 young people on Youth Allowance.

Geographically and rurally isolated region

- Region of 36,000 sq km
- 72% of young people live outside of major population centres of Murray Bridge and Berri.
- Heavy reliance of heavy transport to support the prosperity of region.
- Limited public transport access and networks.
- Poorest level of access to broadband infrastructure.

Environmental (River, Water and Drought)

- Reducing rainfall and climatic conditions impacting on the region.
- River Murray and Lower Lakes Corridor EC declared to 31 March 2012.

Social realities

- Majority of the region classified by the ARIA Index as 'Outer Regional Australia'.
- SEIFA Index and ranking well below State and National averages.

Strategic Rationale (What needs to change?)

Young people within the Murray and Mallee Service Region are significantly educationally, economically and socially disadvantaged when compared against key indicators.

In 2006, less than 30% of the total youth population completed year 12 and only 30% of the same population was able to achieve a non school qualification.

50% of the region remains under Exceptional Circumstances Declaration, meaning that the agriculturally dependent River Murray and Lower Lakes communities continue to experience significant economic hardship.

The majority of the region is classified as 'Outer Regional Australia' which means that most of the population has *significantly restricted accessibility of goods, services and opportunities for social interaction*.

72% of young people live outside of the major service centres of Murray Bridge and Berri. Access to broadband, regionally, has been identified as amongst the poorest level of coverage in the State and the Nation.

The Murray and Mallee Service region faces an enormous challenge to support its young people to reach, and attain, the COAG targets of 90% of young people successfully completing year 12 or its equivalent.

Regional and geographic isolation must be mitigated through the development of a range of innovative learning strategies. Access to either local, or digital, support will be critical.

The region also needs to better understand the transition experiences and inhibitors to transition that are not accurately captured in accessible data and evidence. To this end, the Murray and Mallee Service Region requires the development of a partnership at the most strategic level to better understand the transition experiences of young people so that a regional response can be applied in a coordinated manner.

Strategic Responses (What can S&B do about it?)

1. Commission a targeted Murray Mallee Blue Print that provides a deeper understanding of regional needs, particularly:
 - An understanding of the true SACE/Year 12 attainment (or it's equivalent) rate for the region.
 - The inhibitors to transition (such as literacy, criminology, mental health, drugs, parental/cultural attitudes).
 - The regional policy impact of the AEDI/ARIA/SEIFA/ICSEA Index for access to services for young people. (2012).

2. In response to the Murray Mallee Blue Print findings, formulate a range of longer term strategies. (2012).

Education and Training

Poor educational attainment

- Year 12 attainment rate less than 30% in 2006.
- Non school qualifications 30% in 2006.
- ATSI attendance patterns poorer than general school population.
- Regional retention to year 12 significantly lower than DECS average.
- Year 12 attainment level of full population well below average.
- Post secondary attainment of full population well below average.
- 50% of Australian workforce well below functional literacy levels.
- Current forms of education fail to build critical thinking skills
- VET sector reform identifies the focus on learner needs, better service provider coordination and regional workforce development.
- Region has highest rate for early school leaving.
- Higher than State average for VET participation.

Externally delivered education

- Secondary students commuting outside of region
- Growing external enrolments at University

Strategic Rationale (What needs to change?)

Educational attainment within the Murray Mallee Service Region is of critical concern. Industry profile, geographic location and limited access have all contributed to this poor record of performance.

Whole of region educational attainment is amongst the lowest levels in the State and Nation. Historically, there is a trend towards early school leaving, with nearly half of the region reporting their highest level of education as year 10 in 2006. The region has the highest percentage of early school leavers in the State.

Australian workforce literacy data suggests that nearly half of the entire population have a literacy level well below the functional level required to fully participate in the workforce. Anecdotally, the region experiences a higher incidence of low literacy skills due to the traditional industry profile.

The region has a high level of educationally disadvantaged groups. Nearly 23% of the current State School population are either from a non English speaking background or have English as a second language. Indigenous participation in education is also markedly reduced. Attendance rates of aboriginal secondary students are, on average, between 15 and 20% lower than the general school population.

A more positive trend for the region include a higher than State average of VET participation and attainment. This again is reflective of the traditional industry profile of the region.

Poor levels of educational attainment mean that the region will be challenged to sustain it's competitiveness in an increasingly global market.

To support the growth in educational attainment, the Murray and Mallee Service region will need to immediately develop a range of innovative learning strategies that support, not only the whole community in their learning, but particularly the most educationally disadvantaged.

Immediate consideration must be given to the development of innovative strategies that provide alternative learning spaces, address literacy and numeracy skills and build both critical thinking and interpersonal skills.

These strategies must also take into account digital delivery, to maximise access for all learners and their learning needs.

Strategic Responses (What can S&B do about it?)

3. Influence and advance the Murraylands Education Precinct partnership, particularly to ensure the inclusion of alternative learning spaces (pre and post compulsion). (2011).
4. Influence and advance the Raukkan Learning Centre partnership, particularly to ensure the integration the needs of all alternative learners (not just aboriginal learners). (2011).
5. Promote, facilitate and explore other alternative learning spaces, namely Riverland (Bangalore - ALOC project) and Murraylands (Murray Bridge – Community Learning Centre – ICAN project) (2011 and 2012).
6. Pilot better identification of LLN skills of learners prior to training. (2011/2012).
7. Actively work to contextualise Language Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) needs into training programs. (2011/2012).
8. Increase LLN capacity of VET and secondary schools practitioners in the region. (2011/2012).
9. Facilitate a critical thinking skills forum for the region. (2011).
10. Facilitate critical thinking skills teacher practicum for all VET and secondary schools practitioners and/or young people in the region. (2012).
11. Facilitate soft skills professional development training and/or direct delivery to young people. (2011/2012)
12. Facilitate the expansion of the Mallee Distance Learning Cluster model for:
 - VET students (2011).
 - Post compulsion VET students (2013).
13. Facilitate the development of a cross regional reference group to explore the development of a digital learning strategy. (2011/2012).

Jobs Growth anticipated in retail, manufacturing and construction.

New *industry* growth predicted in:

Murraylands (Primary)

- Transport & Logistics
- Retail
- Health
- Construction

Murraylands (Secondary)

- Energy
- Manufacturing
- Tourism
- Animal Production
- Food

New *industry* growth predicted in:

Riverland (Primary)

- Tourism
- Value added food
- Retirement
- Health

Riverland (Secondary)

- Retail
- Construction
- Transport

Strategic Rationale (What needs to change?)

The Murray Mallee Service Region faces imminent occupational and skill restructuring due to changing industry composition and the ongoing challenges associated with an agriculturally dependent economy.

Regional development and local government authorities within the region have proactively developed investment attraction strategies that clearly identify desirable industry growth.

Concurrently, active economic development efforts deployed over the last five years have realised considerable new investment within the region including a modern intermodal transport precinct, several major retail precincts, investment in new energy generation, a motor sports park, large scale property development and a state of the art racing precinct.

Under the leadership of Regional Development Australia, Murraylands and Riverland (RDA MR), the Murray and Mallee Service Region is able to quantify future jobs and investment growth based on known activity within the region.

The *Murraylands Jobs and Investment* report, together with the *Riverland Investment Prospectus* project has informed the development of this Strategic Plan. RDA MR will commission an expanded *Murraylands and Riverland Jobs and Investment* report later in 2011.

It will be important for educators and community members within the region to form strategic alliances or partnerships with both the RDA MR and the business and industry sector to ensure that young people are prepared for the identified growth.

The identified jobs and investment growth is largely driven by modern approaches to industry development and therefore it is critical that educators and community ensure that the partnerships formed are innovative and with a futures dimension.

Strategic Responses (What can S&B do about it?)

Murraylands

Immediately facilitate a regional skill building and awareness response for the:

14. modern transport and logistics industry sector (incorporating the Monarto Intermodal Hub concept) (2011).
15. retail sector (incorporating the Murray Bridge Retail Precinct upgrade) (2011).
16. health and community services (incorporating the Flinders Rural Clinical School) (2011 – X-Regional).
17. Construction sector (incorporating the Gifford Hill Joint Venture) (2011).

Build on partnership broker learning's from 2011 and facilitate a regional skill building and awareness response for the:

18. Energy industry sector (incorporating regional solar and peaking power generation initiatives). (2012).
19. Manufacturing sector (working in partnership with Murraylands Manufacturing). (2012).
20. Tourism (incorporating the Riverland learnings from 2011 and the Murraylands Tourism Partnership). (2012).
21. Food (incorporating the Riverland learnings from 2011). (2012).

Riverland

Immediately facilitate a regional skill building and awareness response for the:

22. tourism industry sector (incorporating the River Murray Trail concept) (2011).
23. food sector (incorporating the Riverland Prospectus concept) (2011).
24. health and community services (incorporating the Flinders Rural Clinical School) (2011 – X Regional).
25. Retirement living sector (incorporating the Riverland Prospectus concept) (2011).

Build on partnership broker learning's from 2011 and facilitate a regional skill building and awareness response for the:

26. Transport industry sector (incorporating the Murraylands Intermodal project from 2011). (2012).
27. Retail (incorporating the Murraylands learning's from 2011). (2012).
28. Construction (incorporating the Murraylands learning's from 2011). (2012).

Parents and Families

Profile

- An ageing region.
- Decreasing population of 15-24 year olds.
- Minimal overall population growth.
- Significant Greek (NESB) population.
- Higher than State average of indigenous persons.
- Indigenous employment rate remarkably lower in Riverland.
- Higher than State average of people with a disability.
- Above average rate of children living in jobless families.
- Almost three times the State rate of CAMHS clients.
- 1132 young people have accessed support from the two Headspace sites.
- Increasing use of internet to advertise jobs.
- Localised needs of migrants demand tailored educational responses.

Strategic Rationale (What needs to change?)

An analysis of the parent and family profile for the Murray and Mallee Service Region identifies a region with significant pockets of disadvantage that ultimately inhibit successful transitions for young people.

Population projections for the Murray and Mallee suggest that the region is ageing rapidly and that by 2025, without intervention, the number of 15-24 year olds will decrease by between 15 and 25%.

The region has a higher than State average of indigenous people, and in particular, indigenous young people. The region also has a higher than State average of young people living in jobless families. Historically, and anecdotally, there is intergenerational unemployment.

The Murray and Mallee region has received large numbers of both humanitarian and work based migrants. Accurate statistical data in terms of population numbers is difficult to locate, but anecdotally and through project reports, the region has received a range of migrants from Afghanistan, India, China, Sudan and Uzbekistan. Many of the migrants are families and the needs of their children have driven specific responses from the school sector, particularly Murray Bridge High School and Renmark High School.

Young people within the region are experiencing significant mental stress, with the CAMHS client rate, in 2006, being as high as 36.5 per 1,000 of population. This rate is three times the State average. The arrival of headspace and its ability to provide early mental health intervention has provided much needed support. Headspace client data indicates that since inception in 2008, that 1132 young people have accessed support services from two (Murraylands and Riverland) sites.

Access to support services for parents, families and young people is compromised by the limitation of both their geographic location and access to broadband. This is of particular concern given the growing incidence of internet advertised job vacancies,

with the Murraylands identified as one of regions with the fastest increases in this form of job advertisement.

Accurate data and understanding of the needs of marginalised (aboriginal, migrant, rurally isolated) parents and families is difficult to access within the Murray and Mallee Service region. School and Beyond are required to assume a leadership and facilitation role to unearth the true transitional experiences of these parents and families and work towards the development of tailored, but strategic responses.

Strategic Responses (What can S&B do about it?)

29. Facilitate, develop, monitor, review and evaluate an Aboriginal Parent Taskforce in the Riverland. (2011).
30. Facilitate a regional response to the needs of aboriginal parents and their children in the Murraylands region. (2011)
31. Facilitate a regional response to the needs of the children of migrants and families from a Non English Speaking Background (NESB) or with English as a Second Language (ESL). (2012).
32. Pilot an individualised Case Management program for aboriginal students at Glossop High School. (2011).

Community Profile

Profile of disadvantage

- Highest index indicators in State
- Disproportionate number of agencies 'helping'
- Changing regional profile due to regional re-structuring following drought.

Strategic Rationale (What needs to change?)

There are a high number of marginalised parents, families and young people within the Murray Mallee Service Region. To this end, the region is well serviced by a range of service providers that provide direct counselling to parents, families and young people. However, the sheer volume of agencies can make it difficult for parents to accurately assess the best provider for their needs and referral processes between agencies can be problematic.

It will be important for School and Beyond to assume a leadership role and facilitate better discussions between agencies to ensure that the needs of parents, families and young people are better serviced and met.

Strategic Responses (What can S&B do about it?)

33. Convene a Murray and Mallee Service Provider Forum of those service providers who directly deliver services to parents and families (eg Centacare, AC Care, Lutheran Care etc) to better understand transitional experiences with a view to building a coordinated regional response. (2011).
34. Facilitate the development of a sustainable business mentoring program that identifies, develops and assists a range of mentors to support young people on their learning journey. (2011/2012).

Existing Programs

Greater engagement with existing programs required:

- ICAN
- Youth Connections
- Headspace
- ALOP
- PACE
- DEEWR – Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plan

Strategic Rationale (What needs to change?)

The Environmental Scan has identified the complexity of issues, challenges and opportunities faced by the Murray Mallee Service Region. It has also identified the range existing programs, partners and providers that deliver complementary services designed to improve the transition experience of young people.

The role of School and Beyond has become critical. The Murray and Mallee Service Region requires an agency that understands the needs of young people and the environment in which they live and that they can expect to transition into.

More importantly, the region, and its young people, require an agency that is able to transcend the complexity, and web of services, designed for their benefit. The role of School and Beyond is one of coordination. Coordination of effort and coordination of improvements. Coordination must be undertaken in a strategic, targeted and deliberate manner.

School and Beyond must develop a strategic knowledge of agencies and their initiatives so that they are able to influence and facilitate educational and transition reform within the Murray and Mallee Service region.

Proposed Strategic Responses (What can S&B do about it?)

Strategies that support the above.

35. Active participation in the formation of the DEEWR, RESJ as a key regional response to the minority Government. (2011).
36. Work with the Youth Connections provider (Services to Youth Council) to identify the core challenges and opportunities in the regional case management model and together build a strategic response. (2011/2012).

Existing Partnerships

Greater engagement with **alternative education** sites required:

- Murraylands Education Precinct
- Raukkan Learning Centre
- Riverland ALOP site development
- Career Development Services – particularly outreach
- Flinders Health Learning Centre

Greater engagement with **business and industry** required:

- Monarto Intermodal Common Purpose Group
- Gifford Hill Venture

Greater engagement with **education and training** providers required:

- Principals Leader Forum
- VET Coordinators

Greater engagement with **Regional Leadership** required:

- Regional Development Australia
- Murray Mallee Local Government Australia
- Regional Communication Network

Greater engagement with **wellbeing sector** required:

- Murray Mallee Mental Health Forum
- Disability Forum
- Murraylands Migration Network

Strategic Rationale (What needs to change?)

In order to raise attainment within the Murray and Mallee Service Region, effort will be required across all levels of the continuum. Effort is required at the most operational level through to the most strategic level of discussion in the region.

To facilitate and coordinate this effort, strong stakeholder engagement will be required. School and Beyond will be required to develop and deliver an engagement strategy that informs, consults, encourages participation, is truly representative and is locally driven. Most importantly, the engagement strategy of School and Beyond must deliver regional improvements of the most powerful magnitude. In short, School in Beyond is responsible for coordinating a whole of region effort towards an increase in educational attainment.

Strategic Responses (What can S&B do about it?)

Strategies that support the above.

37. Facilitate the development a youth focused career learning program to embed with the Riverland Career Development Centre. (2011).
38. Facilitate an extension of the Murraylands Career Development Service to include an outreach program for young people and their families. (2011).
39. Build and deliver a Communications Strategy that engages, informs and sustains partnership effort within the region. (Ongoing)