



everyone's family

The Smith Family's 2012-13 Budget submission to the Commonwealth Government

January 2012

Contact person:

Anne Hampshire

Head, Research and Advocacy

Level 9, 117 Clarence St

Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 02 9085 7249

Email: anne.hampshire@thesmithfamily.com.au

Background on The Smith Family

The Smith Family is a national, independent children's charity committed to increasing the educational participation and achievement of Australian children and young people in need. Our **vision** is a better future for young Australians in need. Our **belief** is every child deserves a chance and our **mission** is to create opportunities for young Australians in need, by providing long-term support for their participation in education.

The Smith Family provides holistic and long-term support from pre-school, through primary and secondary school and on to tertiary studies. In 2010-11, The Smith Family supported over 44,000 children, young people and parents/carers through its suite of *Learning for life* programs, including around 33,000 young people on an educational scholarship, approximately 4,500 of whom were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. A further 73,000 children, young people and parents/carers participated in programs facilitated by The Smith Family, such as the Commonwealth Government's *Communities for Children* initiative.

The Smith Family has a strong focus on sustainability and draws its income from a range of sources. In 2010-11, its annual income was just over \$68.5 million. Just under a quarter of this was sourced from Government funding, over 60% from fundraising (donations and corporate support) and bequests, around 8% from the VIEW (Voice, Interests and Education of Women) Clubs of Australia and just over 3% from The Smith Family's commercial enterprise.

Introduction

The Smith Family welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Commonwealth Government's 2012-13 Budget deliberations. The Smith Family is cognisant that the Commonwealth aims to return the budget to surplus in this financial year and that this will be very challenging given the significant reduction in Commonwealth revenues, estimated to be around \$140 billion over 5 years.

Notwithstanding this challenge, The Smith Family would urge that the Government's commitment to '**a stronger, fairer nation**' (Australian Government, 2009), and its vision of '*all Australians having the right to learn, to work, be part of their community and be heard on issues which matter to them*' (Australian Government, 2011), remain central to its 2012-13 Budget.

The Commonwealth Government has repeatedly indicated a strong commitment to addressing disadvantage, particularly entrenched disadvantage. In the interests of individuals, families, communities and the nation as a whole, efforts to address disadvantage must not be put on hold or weakened in the economically difficult times facing Australia. Given Australia's ageing population, the increased level of skills and adaptability required to attain and sustain employment, and the social and economic costs of inter-generational disadvantage, a continued focus on a number of the priority areas previously identified by the Commonwealth is required. These include:

- Improving the **life chances of children** at greatest risk of long-term disadvantage.
- **Closing the Gap** for Indigenous Australians.
- Helping **jobless families** with children to increase work opportunities, improve parenting and build capacity.

- Breaking the **cycle of entrenched and multiple disadvantage** in particular neighbourhoods and communities. (Australian Government, 2011)

Australia's human capital agenda is linked to the above priorities and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has indicated the significance of this agenda through the development of a number of national agreements and related targets. These agreements include the National Education Agreement, the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education and the National Indigenous Reform (Closing the Gap) Agreement. They are complemented by the Commonwealth Government's response to the Bradley Review of Higher Education.

Given The Smith Family's focus on improving the educational outcomes of disadvantaged Australian children and young people and the importance of these outcomes to the economic and social wellbeing of Australia, this submission focuses on initiatives aimed at contributing to the achievement of some of the key educational targets identified by the Commonwealth and COAG, namely:

- Lifting the **Year 12 or equivalent** or Certificate II attainment rate to 90% by 2015.
- Lifting the **Year 12 or equivalent** or Certificate III attainment rate to 90% by 2020.
- Halving the gap for **Indigenous students** in reading, writing and numeracy by 2018.
- At least halving the gap for **Indigenous students** in Year 12 or equivalent attainment.
- 20% of **university enrolments** at undergraduate level to be from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds by 2020.

A focus on the above will achieve both short and longer term benefits and are also important foundations for enabling Australia's continued economic and social prosperity when the global economy returns to greater stability and growth. Nations which continue to invest in a human capital agenda during periods of economic slowdown, including a focus on people experiencing disadvantage, are likely to be better placed to take early and sustained advantage of subsequent opportunities for economic growth.

Context: How are Australia's education systems performing?

How Australia's education systems are currently performing is important context for the 2012-13 Budget, particularly in light of the recently completed Review of School Funding and given the current COAG Education Agreement will end in 2013. As the report, *Schooling challenges and opportunities*, prepared by the Nous Group for the Review summarised, "Australia's school system is among the better performing systems in the world...this overall result...is not as strong as it has been in the past, and it masks a wide degree of variability within our educational system. That variability relates to educational outcomes and to equity – that is, the degree to which people from all backgrounds are able to realise their potential in school" (Nous Group, 2011, pp. 1).

Further, the COAG Reform Council's *Education 2010* report shows that progress is being made in some areas but there are still gaps in performance (COAG Reform Council, 2011). These gaps in performance are highlighted by:

- The significant **decline** in the percentage of **Year 9** students achieving the national minimum standard in reading.
- **Lower NAPLAN performance** in all years and for both reading and numeracy achieved by young people from **low SES** compared to those of high SES, with the greatest gap being in Year 9 reading.
- A **decline in school attendance** by Year 10 **Indigenous** students between 2007-10.
- The risk that the **halving the gap targets** for literacy and numeracy for Year 9 students may not be met (COAG Reform Council, 2011).

Data on Year 12 completion rates also highlights the gap between young people from low SES and those from high SES, with the rate for the former being 56 per cent and 75 per cent for the latter (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2009).

Three areas of focus

Given the above and The Smith Family's strong experience working on the ground with disadvantaged children and young people to support improved educational outcomes, this submission recommends three areas for consideration in the 2012-13 Budget:

- A. Enhanced school – community partnerships for low SES schools**
- B. A Careers Mentoring Program pilot**
- C. Programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls.**

A: School – Community partnerships for low SES schools

The Smith Family strongly endorses a dual goal for Australia's education system - namely high performance and high equity. As noted above however, students from low SES are achieving lower NAPLAN scores than high SES students, therefore Australia has not yet achieved the goal of 'high equity'. This goal is in line with Australia's national values and there are demonstrable social and economic benefits that will ensue from such a focus on both high performance and high equity. The fact that nations such as Canada (see for example Nous Group, 2011) have achieved such a dual focus, should provide Australia both with encouragement that it can be achieved, and an incentive for extra effort in this regard.

Central to improving the educational outcomes of disadvantaged children and young people - and hence enhancing the equity of Australia's education system - are strong school-community partnerships. The Smith Family would argue that while there has been some focus on these type of partnerships, to date, this has been a relatively under-developed area in Australia, and one that has been generally lacking in the multi-layered and sophisticated responses required to bring about systems change.

The need for these partnerships reflects the size of the educational equity challenge facing Australia, the increasing complexity faced by schools with high numbers of low SES students, and the clear need for these schools to be able to leverage resources, skills and support from beyond the school system. They are also an acknowledgement that learning and education are the responsibility of the community as a whole and not schools alone. These partnerships can and should include a facilitated

role for businesses which can contribute to the enhancement of key outcomes such as keeping young people engaged in learning and assisting their smooth transition from school to work or further education.

A number of multi-dimensional school-community partnership approaches are currently being implemented around Australia, such as the Extended School Hub pilots being run by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. International experience (see for example McKinsey & Company, 2010 and Coalition for Community Schools, 2009) is emerging that strong school-community partnerships can contribute to a diverse range of outcomes including: improved academic performance and school attendance; reduced student behavioural problems; increased parental confidence regarding their role in their child's education; increased community resources being available for the school; and increased use of school facilities by the wider community. Thus there are gains for individuals, families, institutions, systems and communities in such approaches.

International experience (see for example McKinsey & Company, 2010) and that of The Smith Family, including through the Victorian Extended School Hub pilot in which we have a key leadership and facilitation role, also suggests that there are a number of factors required if these partnerships are to achieve long-term benefits for the students, schools, institutions and communities involved. These include:

- **Shared objectives** for the partnership.
- **Good governance** structures and **stable leadership**.
- **Cross sectoral partnerships** including those able to 'bring in' resources from 'outside' the community.
- A **suite of initiatives** that take account of the range of factors that impact on the educational outcomes of low SES students.
- The use of up-to-date **data** to inform planning and a cycle of **evaluation** and continuous improvement which is built in from the start.
- **Funding** arrangements which provide a degree of **flexibility** and are **guaranteed** for a **significant period** of time.

The Smith Family would argue that non-government organisations are well placed in some communities to be a 'facilitator' or 'driver' in the development of the deep and long-term school-community relationships which ultimately contribute to improving the wellbeing of children and young people especially those of low SES. The rationale and evidence for this role for NGOs includes:

- Creating and maintaining effective **cross-sectoral partnerships** that help address educational inequity is **not easy** (Department for Victorian Communities, 2007).
- Building and sustaining the effective partnerships required in disadvantaged communities requires a complex **mix of skills**.
- Facilitating deep and long-term relationships which contribute to improving the wellbeing of children and young people is a '**core competency**' of many NGOs.

- Having NGOs as facilitator/lead agency **reduces the burden** of partnership development and management on school staff and enables complementarity with school staff's core educational skills.
- NGOs can bring a range of **business, community and council groups** to support educational initiatives in disadvantaged communities.
- Credible intermediaries can address school leaders' concerns regarding the match between what a school needs and what potential partners may offer. They can also help **mediate the cultural barriers** between sectors (Victorian Department of Education, 2009) .
- The **effectiveness** and value of NGOs taking on a key facilitation role has been **demonstrated** by the **evaluation** of initiatives such as the Commonwealth Government's *Communities for Children* program (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2009).

Funding arrangements for school – community partnerships and low SES students and schools

As noted above, funding arrangements are an important contributor to strong school-community partnerships. Funding through the National Partnership Agreements and from other funding arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States/Territories has been important in supporting the development of school and community partnerships in Australia to date. The leadership of the Commonwealth is crucial to ensure policy, programmatic and funding arrangements that facilitate and promote strong, long-term and genuine school-community partnerships. These partnerships are a key component of the systems change which is required to achieve improved educational outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people. There is significant goodwill from many sectors willing to contribute to these outcomes, however as identified above, harnessing these partnerships requires funding and NGOs are often well placed to support their development.

The Smith Family also notes the relatively modest expenditure allocated by Governments to low SES students, both in absolute terms and relative to other disadvantaged groups for which targeted funding is allocated (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2011). The social and economic benefits, both for individuals and the community as a whole, warrant an increased and concentrated investment in residualised schools within low SES communities. Such investment should be for a sustained period, including up to 10 years if required, and be accompanied by monitoring and accountability mechanisms to track progress. Change in such schools is not likely to occur through short one or two year investments, but a significant return on investment is likely with sustained support. This investment should include in particular, funding to develop and sustain the school-community partnerships identified above. Developing and strengthening these partnerships at the local level can increase the resourcing and support available in hard-to-staff schools. This in turn has the potential to positively impact on staff turnover which is important given the negative impact of high staff turnover on students' educational achievement (Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff, 2011).

Selecting the schools in which to make this investment will require a sophisticated analysis of a range of factors, including demographics, school leadership, and the local community context.

Similarly, consideration needs to be given to addressing the structural and systemic factors that limit the success of current education equity programs including high staff turnover (Lamb and Teese 2005).

Investment should also be made in the physical infrastructure of under-performing schools given the negative impact of poor infrastructure on students' self esteem (Social Policy Research Centre, 2011). Recent research undertaken by the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of NSW in collaboration with The Smith Family and a range of other organisations, confirms the impact that a lack of school amenity can have on young people. This research interviewed close to 100 young people experiencing economic adversity in a range of communities across Australia. The research notes:

“Young people wanted their learning environments to be ‘presented well’ and not vandalised. Where schools were poorly maintained young people were less likely to articulate a strong sense of themselves as learners, and those that did, often went to some length to tell us how they could be successful at school in what they saw as a difficult environment...Wherever young people were in poor quality environments they expressed the idea that being schooled in conditions that communicated a lack of esteem created a self perpetuating cycle of disrespect for the environment. As one girl commented ‘because if students saw, I reckon, if they saw that it was better then they would treat it better’. The material environments of young people’s lives communicate to them the value society and its institutions place on them and poor quality environments are detrimental to their well-being” (Social Policy Research Centre, 2011).

Conversely, evidence of the positive contribution physical design can have on student wellbeing and learning outcomes can be seen in the recently re-built Hume Central Secondary College in Victoria. The campus incorporates leading edge design with the latest thinking in teaching and learning to give students access to a contemporary environment. (For further information see <http://www.humecentralsc.vic.edu.au/>). The Smith Family therefore endorses the need to invest in the physical infrastructure of disadvantaged schools and acknowledges the important role the Commonwealth has played and can continue to play in this regard.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Commonwealth and the States/Territories adopt the dual goals of high performance and high equity for Australia’s education systems.**
- 2. The Commonwealth provide national leadership, including through its response to the Review of School Funding and in new COAG National Educational Agreements, to ensure policy, programmatic and funding arrangements that promote strong school-community partnerships.**
- 3. That increased investment be made in schools within low SES communities and that this investment be sustained for up to 10 years if required, with regular monitoring and accountability mechanisms to track progress and allow for on-going improvement. Such investment should include support for school – community partnerships, including a role for non-government organisations, as well as investment in physical infrastructure.**

B: Careers Mentoring Program pilot

Research indicates young people, particularly those from low SES, have a complex range of needs and barriers in transitioning from school to work. Globalisation is resulting in entirely new fields of work, and qualifications, work experience requirements, and school to work pathways, are increasing in both number and complexity. Research from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) has found that young Australians would benefit from support in identifying and navigating these pathways given:

- Student movement within and between University and Vocational Education and Training (VET) is growing and complex.
- Students face difficulties in navigating across the University and VET sectors.
- Students moving within and between VET and University are generally not aware of career services available to them, do not use them, and do not think they need them (Harris, Rainey and Sumner, 2006; Harris, Sumner and Rainey, 2005).

Recent research by The Smith Family complements these findings. In 2011 The Smith Family conducted a comprehensive review of its Tertiary Mentoring Program (TMP) to ensure that it was keeping pace with changes in the tertiary education sector and the labour market. The research included: a survey of Year 12 and tertiary students who receive an educational scholarship from The Smith Family (809 surveys were received); interviews and a focus group with young people; and a literature review of mentoring programs.¹

The research identified the following:

- While the young people often had a general idea of the job or career field they wanted to pursue, they had **limited understanding of the pathways** to reach their goal and rarely had a plan to get there.
- There is a **lack of mentoring, study support and tuition support**, particularly for disadvantaged young people trying to navigate tertiary pathways.
- There are inconsistent and under-utilised **credit transfer** arrangements for VET students seeking higher education study.
- The **location** of institutions and the availability of **transport** can be an issue for rural and remote students.
- Most young people were open to the idea of **mentoring** once they were provided with information about the 'cost' to them (eg time, resources and commitment) and the (potential) benefit (eg skills, experience, contacts).
- Young people's individual **career goal and personal circumstances** are **unique**, with many facing significant challenges (eg care giving responsibilities).
- Effective mentoring programs for young adults are carefully planned and **treat young people as adults**, critically engage them in the generation of knowledge (eg through research and activities), and have clear goals and outcomes for the young people.
- The **priorities for a support program** targeting this age group include:
 - Ensuring a dependable relationship in the young person's life.

¹ The young people who participated in this research were of low SES.

- Supporting the young person with career planning and getting their first job.
- Enhancing the young person's confidence and self-efficacy.

The combined research above suggests that despite significant investments by the Commonwealth and States/Territories and many organisations and institutions, there is still significant work to be done to support the education, training and employment outcomes of young adults from low SES background. The research also provides the foundations for a *Careers Mentoring Program* developed by The Smith Family, for which it is seeking funding to pilot. The proposed pilot would focus on low SES young people in two states and target students currently on a scholarship from The Smith Family as they turn 18 years of age. The projected annual intake to the program is 75 young people (mentees) per state who would be matched with 75 mentors per state. Support would be provided to the young person for a minimum of 12 months, with the option of it being extended beyond this period.

The purpose of the program is to help the mentees identify and navigate education, training and work experience options related to their career goal. The program would include:

- A **structured mentoring relationship** with a supportive adult from a corporate or the wider community. Mentees and mentors would meet at least once every 2 months.
- A series of **structured career development activities** that the mentors and mentees work on together. These might include: skills mapping and transferability; researching and analysing specific jobs and required qualifications and work experience; identifying alternative TAFE, University and/or apprenticeship pathways to specific careers; and networking.
- **Additional and regionally specific resources** to support the development of the mentee's career plan and exploration of alternate pathways (eg career fairs, experience events at educational institutions and through industry associations, alternative entry pathways for local universities).

The pilot program would originally run for a period of five years which is an appropriate timeframe on which to measure the educational outcomes and labour market participation of young adults. A comprehensive evaluation would be undertaken prior to any potential scaling to other states/territories.

A draft outline of the program model is at Appendix A and a proposed budget for the five year pilot has been developed. By utilising and enhancing The Smith Family's existing relationships with low SES young people, corporates, volunteers, educational and VET institutions and the wider community, the pilot program will significantly leverage a range of resources and hence limit the funds required to undertake it. The total budget for the pilot (excluding the evaluation) is approximately \$590,000 per state, which is approximately \$1,500 per mentee, a modest outlay given the potential economic and social benefits of the pilot.

Recommendation:

- 4. The Commonwealth fund part or all of the financial costs associated with the *Career Mentoring Program* pilot.**

C: Programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls

As identified in the Introduction and Context sections of this submission, there has been significant national attention on enhancing educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. This focus, however, has generally not taken into account both Indigenous background **and** gender. Further, while a number of programs have been developed that focus on improving educational outcomes for young Indigenous boys, there have been far fewer developed for young Indigenous girls.

Women play a critical role in the economic growth of communities, particularly Indigenous communities, and as such, The Smith Family sees the need for a stronger policy and programmatic focus on gender equity for young Indigenous girls. The Smith Family has a range of programs which have a particular focus on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's participation in education, with the most comprehensive being *Girls at the Centre* and *KIKASS*. The former focuses solely on girls, the latter has been nuanced to reflect the particular needs of both young girls and young boys.

Girls at the Centre is a school-based initiative operating in Alice Springs that aims to keep young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls in Years 7 to 9, engaged in learning. It supports around 50 girls each year and targets the 'middle years', given the evidence that shows the importance of this period for influencing young people's aspirations and long-term education and employment outcomes (Beavis, Murphy, Bryce and Corrigan, 2004).

The program provides integrated and comprehensive support and its key elements are:

- **Girl Coaches** – who encourage the girls to raise their aspirations, work hard and realise their potential. The Coaches work with the girls to develop an Individual Aspiration Plan and an understanding of the steps needed to achieve the goals set out in the plan. The Coaches facilitate a *World of work, pathways to employment* initiative which includes visits to work sites, TAFE and university and guest speakers and workshops on how to choose and apply for employment.
- **The Girls Room** - a safe and comfortable space at school for the girls to receive support, develop friendships and skills, and make healthy breakfasts and lunches. It is also a 'safe' place for the Coaches to meet with parents and staff.
- **Curriculum enhancement** – this provides an opportunity for the girls to improve their motivation and confidence and to achieve success outside the classroom, through a range of sports and arts programs.
- **Breakfast with a Mentor** - a weekly opportunity for the girls to share breakfast and hear from an inspirational role model.
- **Brokered program elements** - such as a presentation skills workshop; the *Families and Schools Together (FAST)* initiative, a parent involvement and prevention program which strengthens the critical family/school relationship; and the *Core of Life: Making Good Choices about Mothering* initiative which teaches about the realities of pregnancy and childbirth.

- **Experiential mentoring** – this includes a visit to independent girls’ schools in Melbourne. The girls stay in pairs with host families, attend school, visit TAFE and university as well as have an opportunity to explore Melbourne. This helps to build aspirations and relationships.

Girls at the Centre is currently being externally evaluated (through funding provided by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Work Place Relations) but data to date suggests the program is supporting improved school attendance and participation as well as academic outcomes.

Keeping Indigenous Kids At Secondary School (KIKASS) is a school-community based program supporting Indigenous students to stay involved in school and transition successfully to further education or employment. It operates in Bairnsdale in the East Gippsland region of Victoria and is part of a range of initiatives The Smith Family is running in this area.

KIKASS aims to provide comprehensive support to the students and their families and has three components:

- **A financial scholarship** - enabling students to take part in extra-curricular activities. This is additional financial support for students who are already receiving a *Learning for Life* scholarship from The Smith Family.
- **Personalised support** - focusing on education, goals and career aspirations.
- **Personal development** - activities aimed at building self-esteem, confidence, teamwork and leadership skills.

As part of the ongoing development of the program, and in particular in response to the needs of young Indigenous girls, The Smith Family developed *Red Shoes*, an after-school learning club run in partnership with Bairnsdale Secondary College. It aims to increase the attendance and retention rates of Indigenous girls through a series of strategies aimed at building confidence and self esteem. It also aims to build a network of supportive relationships which nurtures the girls and enables them to complete their education.

A recent evaluation of *KIKASS* and related initiatives in the region, highlighted that the majority of participating students surveyed (77%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that participating in the program has helped them become more aware of future career and study options. Only one of the 18 students surveyed did not know what their training, education and employment plans would be for the first 12 months after they finished high school. Quantitative data indicates that there have been some important improvements in educational outcomes for Indigenous students in this area in recent years:

- Enrolment of Indigenous students in the Senior Campus of Bairnsdale Secondary College (Year 11 and Year 12) has increased, from one to two students in previous years, to 17 students in 2011.
- The number of Indigenous students in Years 10 and 11 enrolling in Vocational Education and Training in Schools courses has increased from 22 students in 2009 to 40 in 2011.

- Attendance of Year 9 and 10 Indigenous students at Bairnsdale Secondary College has improved from 20% in 2001 to 80% in 2011.

In addition, the evaluation found significant qualitative evidence from participants and their parents of the importance of the *Red Shoes* initiative in enhancing their confidence, aspirations and engagement with education (Wilkinson, 2011).

The evaluations of *Girls at the Centre* and *KIKASS* suggest that integrated and comprehensive programs can have a significant impact on the educational outcomes of Indigenous girls. The decline in school attendance by Year 10 Indigenous students noted above in the Context section (see COAG Reform Council, 2011) is evidence of the need for continued and enhanced investment in programs which are contributing to improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal young people, including programs with a particular focus on girls.

Recommendation:

- 5. That the Commonwealth expands funding to initiatives that enhance the educational outcomes of young Indigenous girls. Such funding should include a component for evaluation to ensure the ongoing development of the evidence base of effective programs.**

Conclusion

The long-term social and economic costs of not enhancing the educational outcomes achieved by low SES students at an aggregate level are clear. As Access Economics noted in its 2005 report “Education is increasingly becoming the ‘engine room’ of modern economies. If we get this part of the economy right, most other things ought to fall into place (or be better placed), because increased investment in education boosts both productivity and participation.” This report found that increasing the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate to 90%, would increase GDP by 1.1% by 2040, clearly justifying in economic terms such an investment.

The economic challenges currently facing Australia make the prioritising of various funding options particularly difficult for any government. However these challenges also highlight that ongoing investment in Australia’s human capital agenda, including for those experiencing disadvantage, is critical for Australia’s short and long-term social and economic prosperity.

The Smith Family therefore makes the following recommendations to the Commonwealth for inclusion in its 2012-13 Budget:

Recommendations:

- 1. The Commonwealth and the States/Territories adopt the dual goals of high performance and high equity for Australia’s education systems.**
- 2. The Commonwealth provide national leadership, including through its response to the Review of School Funding and in new COAG National Educational Agreements, to ensure policy, programmatic and funding arrangements that promote strong school-community partnerships.**
- 3. That increased investment be made in schools within low SES communities and that this investment be sustained for up to 10 years if required, with regular monitoring and**

accountability mechanisms to track progress and allow for on-going improvement. Such investment should include support for school – community partnerships, including a role for non-government organisations, as well as investment in physical infrastructure.

4. The Commonwealth fund part or all of the financial costs associated with the *Career Mentoring Program* pilot.
5. That the Commonwealth expands funding to initiatives that enhance the educational outcomes of young Indigenous girls. Such funding should include a component for evaluation to ensure the ongoing development of the evidence base of effective programs.

References

- Access Economics (2005), *The Economic benefit of increased participation in education and training*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Sydney
- Australian Council for Educational Research (2011), 'Assessment of current process for targeting of schools funding to disadvantaged students', *Report prepared for the Review of Funding for Schooling Panel*, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra.
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2009), *National report on schooling in Australia 2009*, ACARA, Sydney.
- Australian Government (2009), *A stronger, fairer Australia*, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra.
- Australian Government (2011), *Foundations for a stronger, fairer Australia*, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra.
- Beavis A., Murphy, M., Bryce, J. & Corrigan, M. (2004), *Post-school plans: aspirations, expectations and implementation*, The Smith Family, Sydney
- COAG Reform Council (2011), *Education 2010: Comparing performance across Australia*, COAG Reform Council, Sydney.
- Coalition for Community Schools (2009), *Community schools research brief*, Coalition for Community Schools, Washington
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (2009), *National evaluation (2004–2008) of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2004–2009*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- Harris, R., Sumner, R. & Rainey, L. (2005), *Student traffic: Two-way movement between vocational education and training and higher education*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide.
- Harris, R., Rainey, L. & Sumner, R. (2006), *Crazy paving or stepping stones? Learning pathways within and between vocational education and training and higher education*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide.
- Lamb, S. & Richard, T. (2005), *Equity programs for government schools in New South Wales: a review*, Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Melbourne. Melbourne.
- McKinsey & Company (2010), *Extended service school models: International case studies*, The Smith Family, Sydney.
- Nous Group (2011), 'Schooling challenges and opportunities', *Report prepared for the Review of Funding for Schooling Panel*, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra.
- Ronfeldt, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S. & Wyckoff, J. (2011), 'How teacher turnover harms student achievement', *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 17176*, NBER, Cambridge.
- Social Policy Research Centre (2011), *Making a difference, Building on young people's experiences of economic adversity, Draft Final Report*, SPRC, Sydney.
- Wilkinson, L. (2011), *John T Reid Charitable Trusts East Gippsland Project evaluation report*. The Smith Family, Sydney.

Victorian Department for Communities (2007), *A literature review on cross-sector partnerships for the Agora Think Tank*, Department for Victorian Communities, Melbourne.

Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood (2009) *Boardroom to classroom: The role of the corporate and philanthropic sectors in school education*, Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood, Melbourne.

Appendix A: Career Mentoring Program Model

