



everyone's family

**The Smith Family's submission to the
South Australian Government's
Every chance for every child
policy discussion paper**

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1. Background on The Smith Family

The Smith Family is a national, independent charity committed to increasing the educational participation and achievement of Australian children and young people in need. Our belief is that 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 for children and young people, from pre-school, through primary and secondary school and on to tertiary studies. We understand, and aim to positively enhance, the multiple influences on the wellbeing of children and young people, including their:

- Personal characteristics/attributes
- Family
- Peers
- Learning and care institutions, eg schools, early learning and care centres
- Community and society.

In 2011-12, The Smith Family supported over 106,000 children, young people and parents/carers nationally. This included:

- Over 34,000 young people on an educational scholarship.
- Close to 39,000 children, young people and parents/carers through our *Learning for life* suite of programs.
- A further close to 33,000 children, young people and parents/carers through a range of government funded programs such as the Commonwealth Government's *Communities for Children* and *Partnership Brokers* initiatives.
- Fourteen percent of the young people we support identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In South Australia, The Smith Family:

- Works in 11 communities¹
- Supports around 3,600 children and young people annually on an educational scholarship.
- A further 7,000 children, young people and parents/carers are supported through a range of programs aimed to support educational participation.
- These programs include early literacy and numeracy programs (*Let's Read* and *Let's Count*), a peer mentoring reading program (*Student 2 Student*), primary and secondary after school support (*Learning Clubs*) and an on-line mentoring program for high school students to support their career and post-school plans (*i-Track*).

The Smith Family has identified three long-term high level outcomes as the focus of its work with disadvantaged children and young people. They are to:

- Increase school attendance to greater than or equal to 90%.
- Increase the proportion of Year 10 students who advance to Year 12 or equivalent.

¹ Christie Downs, Elizabeth Downs, Elizabeth Vale, Hackham, Mt Gambier, Morphett Vale, Port Adelaide/Enfield, Port Augusta, Salisbury North, Smithfield Plains, Whyalla

- Increase the proportion of young people in education, training and/or work.

The range of programs and support we offer across the life course of children and young people, targeting different stages of their development, as well as providing supports to their families and communities, are all focused on supporting children to achieve these outcomes. A more detailed outcomes framework is included at Attachment A.

In developing this submission, The Smith Family has drawn on the knowledge and expertise of its staff who are located in communities across South Australia and have relationships with children and young people, their families and many organisations working to support them. We have also drawn on our programmatic and research and policy experience working with children, young people and families across Australia. This submission aims to identify some of what The Smith Family has identified is currently working well to support the wellbeing of children and young people in South Australia, as well as identifying some areas for enhanced efforts and potentially new directions. The Smith Family will also provide a separate submission on the South Australian Government's proposed Child Development Legislation.

2. Every chance for every child: Government leadership

The Smith Family welcomes the public policy discussion that the South Australian government is leading which is focused on *building a better South Australia for every child*. Government has a clear role to play in developing the frameworks which support all children to achieve their full potential. Government also has an important leadership role in galvanizing cross-sectoral and cross-portfolio action in this area. It has a leadership role in promoting community wide buy-in regarding the importance of the wellbeing of children and young people for the whole population, particularly in times where economic resources are limited and there are a range of demands on government revenues. Government also has an important role to play, in partnership with the community, in identifying how wellbeing and progress should be measured, and for taking the lead in developing the infrastructure necessary to track progress over time. It should also hold itself publicly accountable for regularly reporting on that progress.

While acknowledging the leadership role Government should play in regards to the wellbeing of children and young people, The Smith Family also shares the Government's view that the wellbeing of children and young people is the responsibility of the 'whole community' and that 'partnerships with children, families and communities, and all who provide services and influence children's lives' will be critical in achieving the goal of 'every chance for every child'. The Smith Family's experience delivering programs in South Australia and other states and territories is that philanthropy and corporate supporters should be included in the thinking around sectors and organisations that have the potential to positively influence children's lives, alongside others, such as community services and schools. In 2011-12 for example, The Smith Family received support from over 200 business partners, including corporates, trusts and foundations and universities, reflecting the diversity of organisations that can potentially play a role in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people. This is in addition to other roles corporates for example may play, such as developing family/child-friendly workplaces and contributing to the overall economic strength of the state, which also contributes to the wellbeing of children and young people.

In addition to the support that The Smith Family received from philanthropy and corporate supporters, in the 2011-12 financial year, 7,840 Australians volunteered with The Smith Family, contributing more than 340,000 hours of service, equivalent to 176 full time staff or \$10.5 million dollars worth of time. This included significant support for the delivery of our programs, including through business, in roles such as mentors and tutors. All of this contributes to the wellbeing of the children and young people we support.

3. Supporting children and young people at all ages and stages

The Smith Family supports the emphasis in the *Every child* discussion paper on both *early intervention and prevention* and *starting with the whole child*. While cognisant of the importance of the 'early years', The Smith Family would urge that the platform of 'early intervention' not be understood simply as the 'early years', given the importance of the multiple developmental stages and transitions that research shows children and young people go through. The Australian Temperament Project, a longitudinal study of Victorian children, has clearly shown that change is common through those stages of development and that transition points are times both of heightened risk and opportunity for children, young people and their families. The Smith Family would urge that a broad definition of 'early intervention' be used to underpin any policy platform aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people in South Australia. The definition should include the 'early years', but taking a developmental approach, also include 'early in the pathway', so that additional support can be provided for children, young people and their families when challenges first arise, rather than at a crisis point. Such an approach is not only more effective, in terms of achieving positive development and wellbeing outcomes, but is also much more cost effective.

The work of the Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman is informative in this area. Heckman and his colleague Flavio Cunha found that:

'When investments are balanced throughout a young person's childhood – instead of concentrated only on a particular stage, such as preschool or adolescence – society reaps the greatest return...building cognitive and non-cognitive skills is a process that occurs throughout a child's development...Investments accumulate over time, thus skills at a later stage build on the skills of a previous stage, which leads to more productive overall investments. As important as investments in early childhood are in laying the foundation for intellectual and social development, they do not yield optimal returns by themselves. Early investments ...not followed up by later investments are not productive'.²

The Smith Family works both with children and young people, including through the tertiary years. The post-school transition is an increasingly complex one for young people (and their families), with a diverse array of education and training arrangements and a rapidly changing labour market. The latter is particularly felt by young people given their more limited employment experience and their relatively lower level of skills, compared to other jobseekers. Research has also shown that development, including brain development, does not end with adolescence, with young adulthood bringing new challenges and experiences that may continue to impact brain development. This

² A report from America's Promise Alliance *Every child, every promise: Turning failure into action*.

physical development is also accompanied during the post-school transition period with potentially major changes in other areas of their life, such as relationships, living arrangements and efforts to 'find their place in the world'. It is also continues to be a time of significantly high rates of mental health problems.

In light of the multiple changes, challenges and opportunities which occur in this period of transition, The Smith Family would strongly urge that South Australia take a policy approach which covers both children and young people, and includes the post-school transition. The Smith Family is aware of the age-related legislative parameters, however from a policy perspective, it believes that a broader age range is required in order to ensure a continuity of support and care for young people.

4. Some of what's working well in South Australia

i. Children's Centres

The Smith Family's experience on the ground confirms the strengths and the promising progress being made in a number of areas identified by the *Every chance* discussion paper. The principle of placing the child/young person and their family at the centre of service delivery is strongly endorsed, rather than expecting children/their family to 'fit' into services not designed to respond to their diversity of experience and their changing needs. While the Children's Centres across the state are in different stages of development, due in part to the length of time they have been established and the community in which they are operating, they provide a good basis for enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people in South Australia. For example through our exposure to the Port Adelaide/Enfield Children's Centres we have witnessed the growth in opportunities and services being offered to families. This includes a range of outreach programs to young mums and some more disengaged families, and some home based initiatives such as *Learning together @home*. The Centre is well located and provides good access to potential users, and overall highlights some of the strengths of the Centre model when it is well implemented.

ii. ICAN and Communities for Children

Tailoring services to meet the needs of children and families who are most vulnerable, particularly at critical times, is also a strong policy platform that The Smith Family endorses. This approach is realising some positive benefits for children and young people with examples including the Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN), which has seen a rapid expansion in the number of students enrolled in Flexible Learning Options (FLO) to close to its 3% target. The recent expansion to primary schools is to be commended, given that disengagement from education can begin at an early age for some young people. The Interim Report of the current evaluation of ICAN (ARTD Consultants, 2012) has however highlighted some of the challenges the program is facing, particularly in the areas of:

- Data reporting
- Accreditation of alternative learning programs
- Administration demands
- Provision of sufficient case management, particularly in country areas.

If the program is to be able to continue to build on the positive impact it can make in enhancing the wellbeing of young people who have disengaged or are at serious risk of disengaging from

education, these issues coupled with those relating to funding, particularly in primary schools, will need to be addressed. Given the clear and appropriate target of ICAN (ie the 3% of young people who are significantly disengaged) consideration also needs to be given to how best support those students who are 'partly disengaged' or 'moderately engaged' (using the ICAN Student Risk Profile). The Smith Family sees these groups as a key target for early intervention and prevention strategies, including through new forms of school-community partnerships, which are discussed later in this submission.

Another initiative which is tailoring services to meet the needs of children and families who are most vulnerable, particularly at critical times, is the Commonwealth Government's *Communities for Children* program. The Smith Family is a Facilitating Partner in nine *Communities for Children* sites. . This experience, coupled with the program's national evaluation and our work with the program in areas such as the Southern Metropolitan region of Adelaide, affirms the value of such a model for enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people. The program's strengths include bringing diverse sectors, organisations, and individuals from a particular community together, so that they can identify gaps and priorities and plan together to implement, over time, a range of strategies to address those priorities. The program provides a potential springboard in the South Australian context for further enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people. Thinking through how the proposed Regional Trusts for Children and Young People might work with the strong governance arrangements which already exist for initiatives such as Communities for Children and ICAN will be critical if such Trusts are to be established. As the National Evaluation of the United Kingdom's Children's Trust Pathfinders found, 'working with the grain of previously established collaborative practices was essential, particularly where the organisational boundaries of different services overlapped' (University of East Anglia, 2007).

iii. *Local programs responding to the needs of children and young people*

As mentioned above, The Smith Family provides a range of programs in communities across South Australia, all of which provide tailored support to meet the needs of children and young people. The demand for these programs from children, young people, parents, as well as from schools and early years centres, attests to their value. In particular our experience has shown that programs that both build the skills of young people and enhance their networks with a range of significant others, are very well regarded. These include *student2student (s2s)*, *Learning Clubs* and *i-Track*.

The use of on-line technology through programs such as *i-Track* is enabling young people in communities such as Mt Gambier, and from 2013, Port Augusta, to be connected with significant others who are located in other communities across the state and receive mentoring and support for their career and post-school pathways. This is particularly important in communities where employment, education and training options may be limited or where there are relatively low levels of post-school education. Similarly our *s2s* reading program which is operating in communities such as Whyalla is enabling additional resources to be brought to that community to support young people whose reading age is behind their chronological age to support them to improve their reading. In a state such as South Australia where there is a significant proportion of the population residing in dispersed communities across the state, finding innovative ways to use technology and deliver programs is essential if young people in regional and rural communities are not to experience significant disadvantage.

iv. *Programs supporting children through enhancing skills development of those who care for them*

A critical step in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people in South Australia is to ensure the ongoing training and development of those who care for them, including parents/carers, early learning and care staff and teachers. The Smith Family, in partnership with academics from Charles Sturt University and the Australian Catholic University, has developed and implemented *Let's Count*, a program aimed at improving the early numeracy of children. The program achieves this by training early years educators to:

- Develop their skills to explore and talk with children about the numeracy they notice in their everyday lives.
- Work with parents/carers to develop their knowledge, confidence and skills to use everyday experiences to explore numeracy with their children.

A national pilot of *Let's Count* was conducted in 2011 in five communities across Australia, including in Smithfield Plains and Elizabeth in South Australia. The program was very well received by early years educators and parents and the evaluation of the program (which occurred over a 5 month period) highlighted the following positive outcomes:

- Early years educators' confidence, liking and disposition to maths increased.
- Early years educators were able to apply what they'd learnt in their educational settings with children.
- Early years educators' ability to engage with parents re early numeracy increased.
- There was some evidence of increased parental confidence re maths and their ability to talk with their children about it.
- There were some indications of children being more engaged with numeracy.

On the basis of this positive evaluation, the program is now being expanded to a further 18 communities over the next three years. As part of this expansion, the program will run in Port Adelaide/Enfield in 2013 and early years professionals have already indicated they are very keen to be involved, receive the training and commence delivering the program to families. The expansion of the program is being accompanied by a longitudinal study which will track changes in the maths competency of children exposed to the program over the 12 months prior to them commencing school.

Given the positive outcomes being achieved by the range of diverse initiatives mentioned above and the clear demand for many of them, The Smith Family would urge that consideration be given, as part of the development of the *Every chance for every child* policy platform, to identifying ways to strengthen and expand such initiatives.

5. Some areas where further effort is needed in South Australia

i. *Making a difference*

The Social Policy Research Centre at the University of NSW, in partnership with a range of government and non-government organisations, including The Smith Family and the (then) Social Inclusion Unit of the Government of South Australia and the (then) Department of Education and Children Services South Australia, has recently concluded a four year research project exploring young people's experiences of economic adversity. The study involved interviews with close to 100 economically disadvantaged young people in eight communities, as well as interviews with 13 parents/carers and 24 service providers. These interviews took place over an 18 month period. The research was interested in the lived experiences of these young people and sought to bring their voices to national discussions regarding poverty and disadvantage. It had a particular focus on locational and educational disadvantage and the quality of home, neighbourhood and school environments, and disadvantage.

The findings from the report highlight that Australia – including South Australia – still has some way to go if we are to realise the goal of *every chance for every child*. *Making a difference* found that young people:

- Chose schools and subjects where costs were lower, in order to place as small a financial burden on their families as possible. This included them opting to not do subjects they were naturally interested in or gifted at, because of costs. For some, this resulted in less engagement in school, decreased self esteem and wellbeing, and more limited future opportunities.
- Chose not to go on school excursions or camps, despite the learning and peer engagement opportunities they provided, because of costs.
- Didn't participate in sports or extra-curricular activities because of costs.
- Adapted their preferences re schools, subjects and extra curricular activities.
- Who regularly missed out on the experiences and activities accessible to their peers, narrowed their interests and desires as a way of protecting themselves and their parents from having to say 'no'.

The research also found that:

- Where schools and community facilities were not well maintained, young people took that as a reflection on the level of respect in which they were held.
- Where learning environments were poorly maintained, young people were less likely to articulate a strong sense of themselves as learners or to sense they were valued by the school.

The areas where many of the young people lived were characterised by a scarcity of services and opportunities such as sport and recreational facilities, public spaces, quality housing, good transport, and access to adequate and secure employment. Local infrastructure and services provided by councils, state and federal governments shape the local dynamics which impact on young people's learning. In areas where there are shortfalls in these areas of provision, *Making a difference* found

that this places an undue burden on schools which are the main and sometimes only site where social policy interacts directly and universally with the lives of children and young people.

The Smith Family notes and welcomes the South Australian Government's new infrastructure and upgrading of some existing infrastructure in low SES communities. The continuing maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure in low SES communities is an important foundation for supporting the wellbeing of children and young people.

As well as identifying some of the areas where further effort is required if all children and young people are to realise their potential, the *Making a difference* research highlighted a number of solutions:

- The ongoing importance, for policy and program development, of directly listening to the voices of children and young people.
- Families need more money to better support their children and family stability. Income inadequacy must be addressed in jobless, unemployed and insecurely employed families. The Smith Family notes the role of the Commonwealth Government in this area but would also urge complementary state government efforts in this important policy area given its clear link with the wellbeing of children and young people.
- The importance in high poverty contexts of affordable opportunity structures for children and young people (sports clubs, arts based programs, work opportunities etc). These opportunity structures need to be responsive to local dynamics and actively promote diverse social networks. Rich learning experiences in schools and out of schools (including creative enrichment, mentoring, recreational, etc) that enable young people to mix widely, at low or no cost to families, are critically important so young people experiencing economic adversity '*can participate on an equal footing*'.
- Schools need to be responsive and respectful of complex family circumstances.
- Strong school-community partnerships can bring a whole range of resources and opportunities together and provide a key platform for supporting the improved wellbeing of children and young people.
- Place-based responses are critical, as are well maintained and resourced local environments, secure affordable housing, integrated educational provision, and infrastructure that connects people to strong labour markets.

ii. *New forms of school-community partnerships*

The *Making a difference* research, combined with growing international evidence and The Smith Family's experience piloting school-community partnerships across Australia, endorses the need identified in the *Every chance* discussion paper, for new "community hubs and 'one stop' locations in places that attract children and families, such as schools". As identified above, schools are the main and sometimes only site where social policy interacts directly and universally with the lives of children and young people. As such, they offer a critical opportunity for enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people. However, schools in disadvantaged communities cannot be expected to realise this potential alone, given the resources available to them and the general shortfall in provision that their communities experience. The Smith Family would strongly urge that South Australia build on the inherent platform offered by schools, the current Children's Centres and ICAN initiatives, and very importantly the emerging national and international evidence of initiatives such

as *School-Community Partnerships* to enhance the wellbeing of children and young people. South Australia is particularly well placed to lead the way in developing a system which is integrated and comprehensive and able to seamlessly support children and young people across the different stages of their development, given the existence of Children's Centres and ICAN. Given the age and type of young people these initiatives target, The Smith Family sees new forms of *school-community partnerships*, which use an early intervention and prevention approach to particularly target those who are moderately engaged or partly disengaged, as the key third platform for ensuring the wellbeing of children and young people in South Australia.

School-Community Partnerships are also known in Australia as extended service schools, full-service schools, or community schools. In these different incarnations they represent a comprehensive partnership model that has been extensively trialed and evaluated, particularly in the UK. In South Australia, school-community partnerships would be a logical extension of initiatives such as Children's Centres and ICAN that seek to achieve more integrated service provision for children and young people.

In Victoria, this type of partnership has been described as 'schools delivering extended services to the community, either on site at the school or off site at a nearby venue. These activities are delivered before, during and after school hours through genuine partnerships with external agencies.' These may include before or after-school programs, adult learning opportunities or community use of school facilities. Similarly the United States' Coalition for Community Schools describes this type of partnership as both a place and a set of partnerships between school and community. It has an integrated focus on academics, youth development, family support, health, social services and community development. 'By extending the school day and week, it reaches families and community residents.'

A recent Foundation for Young Australians literature review (Black et al 2010) outlined a number of ways that effective extended service school models have been shown to benefit young people.

They:

- Enable earlier identification of children and young people's needs and quicker access to services.
- Increase their engagement and participation in school.
- Improve their educational outcomes.
- Improve their self-confidence and well-being.
- Create a more positive school environment.
- Improve communication between schools and families.
- Improve family engagement in the school.
- Build community connectedness and capacity.
- Widen schools' external contacts, networks and partnerships and enhance social capital.

Thus there are gains for individuals, families, institutions, systems and communities in such approaches.

It is clear that as well as improvements in student outcomes, school-community partnerships can serve as a mechanism for developing stronger service delivery between schools and other service departments, such as public housing or health services (University of Ballarat 2011). This view is

consistent with that of Australian Council for Educational Research. In its recent essay about school-community collaborations it found that 'Governments, too, benefit from schools connecting more strongly with business and community groups. These kinds of relationships can help grow local economies and potentially reduce the costs of service provision through less duplication of services and shared responsibility' (Lonsdale et al, 2012).

A number of 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 and in which as a non-government agency, The Smith Family is playing a lead role. At their best, these approaches:

- Acknowledge the multiple factors that influence educational outcomes for children and young people.
- Emphasise that the role of schools is to prepare young people for life and to create a foundation of *learning to learn*, rather than preparing them for a specific and potentially time-limited career.
- Have a strong focus on relationships, both at the individual level and also between agencies and institutions at a systems level.
- Have a strong focus on the voice of young people themselves within the planning, design and implementation stages.
- Have clearly defined outcomes which are seen as the collective responsibility of a range of parties and accountability processes which allow for ongoing improvement.
- Move well beyond 'joined up' service delivery to fundamental paradigm shifts which centre on the young-person and take account of the multiple life contexts and identities of students in the 21st century.

In The Smith Family's view, supporting schools in disadvantaged communities in South Australia to be able to leverage the resources, skills and support from beyond the school system, which would enable them to play a bigger role in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people, presents significant challenges. It sees the school-community partnership model as providing an opportunity to respond to these challenges.

The Smith Family would also argue that Non Government Organisations (NGOs) can and do play a key role in facilitating deep and long-term school-community relationships which ultimately contribute to improving the wellbeing of children and young people. Such a role is often necessary because as the Australian Council of Educational Research found 'these kinds of collaborations are not easy to build or sustain. Not all school-community partnerships run smoothly. Finding potential partners and resources, knowing who might have the professional expertise to advise and guide program development, gathering information about an area of identified need, knowing how to monitor and evaluate the impact of a collaboration all take time and require different kinds of knowledge and skills.' (Lonsdale et al, 2012)

The rationale and evidence for the role of NGOs in these newer and deeper school-community partnerships includes:

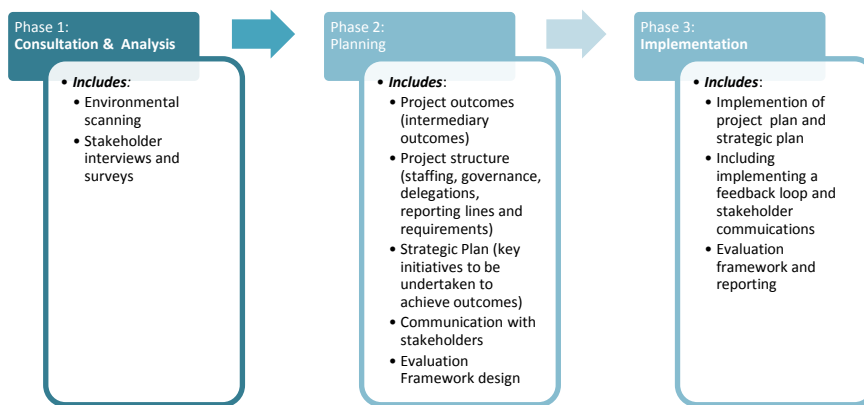
- Creating and maintaining effective cross-sectoral partnerships that help address educational inequity is not easy (Department for Victorian Communities, 2007).

- 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).

The Smith Family would therefore urge that the South Australian Government give strong consideration to developing new and stronger School-Community Partnerships along the lines described above, including with a key facilitating role for NGOs. The model The Smith Family is advocating leverages community assets through the development of school - community - business partnerships to bring community resources into the school. These partnerships are focused on fostering educational and wellbeing outcomes for students through a development model that provides enrichment and development opportunities and removes barriers to learning. A school-community partnership also provides value to parents and has the potential to be a hub for the local community to access a variety of services.

No one community school looks exactly the same as another. This is because a school-community partnership is responsive and adapted to its own community. Therefore there are no standard activities or programs when rolling out a school-community partnership. What is tightly governed and managed is the process to ensure a community school model is designed with the needs of the relevant school/s and community in mind, and within available resources. A school-community partnership development process allows a project to develop a response that is reflective of these dimensions. This process is comprised of the phases outlined below.

Figure 1: Development process



The premise underpinning the school-community partnership model is that they promote a range of new collaborations and integrated relationships that enable the school to act as the catalyst for cultural change in the community, bringing students, their families, school staff and the local community together to adopt shared responsibility for improved outcomes.

Outcomes are defined on a school by school basis contingent on the issues faced by the young people attending the school and its community. At the core is the ‘opening up’ of the school as a hub for integrating a range of community services and activities, making educational outcomes a whole of community responsibility. Existing resources and networks from the local area are leveraged to extend the range of services provided from a school to its student population and the wider community. However, specific skills are required to facilitate this partnership and the resulting activities. The Smith Family proposes a school-community partnership model that incorporates a lead agency approach in order to achieve this outcome.

Collective action through school and community partnerships can help to strengthen efforts by governments to address educational disadvantage (Black 2008) and in turn the overall wellbeing of children and young people.

iii. *Strengthening the voice of young people in South Australia*

The Smith Family acknowledges the efforts made to date to include the voices of children and young people in South Australia. Our experience, including through the *Making a difference* initiative, confirms the value of strengthening the voice of young people in helping to design policies and programs that might better support them. The Smith Family urges that the South Australian government take further steps to strengthen the voice of young people, particularly those who are perhaps ‘less articulate’ and less engaged in existing forums and advocacy channels.

iv. *A long term perspective*

In further developing the *Every chance* policy platform, The Smith Family would urge the South Australian government to:

- Take a long term perspective, acknowledging that sustained and long-term effort are required to bring about sustainable improvements in the wellbeing of children and young

people. This might include the development of a 10 year strategy and plan to enhance the wellbeing of children and young people in South Australia.

- Ensure the development of frameworks and associated data collection which will enable progress to be tracked over time, including for different groups of children and young people.
- Commit to reporting regularly on progress over time.
- Engage all relevant Departments, agencies and sectors in this process, while acknowledging the clear leadership role of the Department of Education and Child Development. Issues such as housing, safety and transport for example, impact on the wellbeing of children and young people, so a truly comprehensive approach will be required.
- In line with a long-term and sustainable approach, ensure that any new initiatives are trialed over a timeframe in which outcomes can realistically be expected to occur. This is particularly the case for initiatives such as School Community Partnerships where significant time needs to be expended to establish the relationships which are a key foundation for them realising their potential. New initiatives or pilots should be evaluated and those showing promise should be built upon. Government contractual arrangements for such initiatives should reflect the period of time required for change to occur and be cognisant of the inefficiencies inherent in short term initiatives, particularly in regional communities where staff recruitment can be challenging.

Conclusion

The Smith Family strongly supports the leadership being taken by the South Australian government aimed at improving the wellbeing of children in South Australia. It would be pleased to discuss any of the matters raised in this submission and looks forward to continuing to work with the South Australian government and other sectors to enhance the wellbeing of children and young people in Australia. Given the existing foundations in South Australia, particularly the Children's Centres and ICAN, which support the wellbeing of children and young people, South Australia is well placed to play a national leadership role in how best to comprehensively support all young people to realise their potential. The Smith Family would urge that consideration be given to the very complementary role that new forms of *school community partnerships* can play in achieving that goal.

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Attachment A: The Smith Family’s Outcomes framework

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED IN FURTHER STUDY OR WORK

ATTAIN YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT

STAY ENGAGED WITH LEARNING

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY)	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (SCHOOL LEVEL)	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (COMMUNITY LEVEL)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved literacy and numeracy • Improved confidence (self/efficacy) • Improved motivation and aspiration • Enhanced networks and relationships • Enhanced access to support • Improved disposition to engaging with learning • Improved knowledge, understanding • Improved skills • Improved or sustained School Attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to community resources • Increased community use of school resources • <i>Increased parent engagement in school activities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved service collaboration and integration • Enhanced cross sectoral partnerships
<p>#% students and parents reporting increased skill levels #% students test results show increased skill levels #% students or parents reporting increased confidence, motivation or aspiration. % Improved or sustained school attendance #% students/parents/teachers reporting improved school engagement. #% students reporting increased contact with supportive adults #% parents reporting that they are able to get support to keep their child engaged in school #% parents and carers reporting that they are able and motivated to be engaged with education and/or the workforce</p>	<p># activities being undertaken through the school. # agencies delivering services in the school # and quality of partnerships</p>	<p># and quality of partnerships #% partner agencies reporting satisfaction with integrated service delivery co-ordination.</p>
<p>Scholarship and support (KIKASS,G@C) S2s, iTrack, Learning Clubs, Creative Enrichment, Careers/Post school options workshops, Let’s Count, Let’s Read, Tech Packs, Financial Literacy parent engagement</p>	<p>Extended School Hubs (Wyndham, Swan, Gippsland)</p>	<p>Communities for Children Partnership Brokers Community Action Leaders</p>