MELBOURNE PURE CASE STUDIES

SOCIAL INCLUSION THEME

INTRODUCTION

Melbourne PURE has undertaken a series of case studies of regionally-significant initiatives in which higher education institutions (HEIs) have been engaged. The purpose of the case studies has been to understand better the conditions and the factors which shape effective engagement by HEIs with key stakeholders in the Melbourne region. Each case study has been chosen because it contributes to a larger theme which has been identified as a key priority for Melbourne: regional innovation systems; 'green' jobs'; and social inclusion and active citizenship.

This paper has two purposes: firstly, to provide some conceptual framing of the social inclusion theme: what its key elements are; and, how higher education institutions (HEIs) are relevant. Secondly, to draw together the insights from the series of case studies which have been undertaken on social inclusion in the Melbourne region, in October-November 2009. As this work was undertaken, it became apparent that there were two major cases where we were able to conduct interviews with a diverse sample of stakeholders; they have been documented separately, and are attached to this overview. The other case studies are summarised in the body of the overview.

IN BRIEF:

- Issues related to social inclusion have always been important to governments in all parts of the world.
- Higher Education has expertise that can contribute both through research and application of learning to supporting relevant initiatives. Not only staff, but students can be a wonderful resource for programs where the engagement is supported appropriately.
- Recent debates have tended to focus very much on the question of who gets access to higher education.
- Beyond access, however, the focus on participation needs to be complemented by more innovative thinking and action around where higher education is delivered, and the pedagogy which is used.
- There is no end of engagement activity in which university academics are involved; some is integrated with learning delivery, some is directly the subject of research activity, and some is offered as a public service.
- However, most engagement tends to be the responsibility of individuals or small groups rather than developed and shaped at a Faculty or institutional level (with one or two notable exceptions).
- Government policy settings shape institutional behaviour in quite direct ways, especially where funding hinges on institutional responsiveness.
- Until the policy issues can be addressed, with appropriate internal planning and rewards, the universities' capacity to contribute to social inclusion initiatives within their regions will be deeply undermined.

SOCIAL INCLUSION: A SIGNIFICANT POLICY PRIORITY

In one form or another, issues related to social inclusion have always been important to governments in all parts of the world. In its current iteration in Australia, social inclusion has been given particular meaning in the position adopted by the Australian Labor Party when it was elected to Federal Government in late 2007. One of the early initiatives of the new Government was the appointment of the Australian Social Inclusion Board. Its membership brought together a range of people who had spent much of their lives working to address the circumstances of marginality, poverty and disadvantage which different communities have faced.

Subsequently, the Australian Government has adopted a set of priorities for social inclusion policy and programs to address:

- **Supporting children at greatest risk of long term disadvantage** by providing health, education and family relationships services;
- **Helping jobless families with children and the vulnerable unemployed** by helping the unemployed into sustainable employment and their children into a good start in life;
- **Focusing on the locations of greatest disadvantage** by tailoring place-based approaches in partnership with the community;
- **Assisting in the employment of people with disability or mental illness** by creating employment opportunities and building community support;
- **Addressing the incidence of homelessness** by providing more housing and support services;
- **Closing the gap for Indigenous Australians** with respect to life expectancy, child mortality, access to early childhood education, educational achievement and employment outcomes.

Clearly, these priorities have direct implications for the higher education sector. Indirectly, it is apparent that there is expertise within the sector that can contribute both through research and application of learning to supporting the implementation of relevant initiatives. Not only staff, but higher education students can be a wonderful resource for programs where the engagement is supported appropriately.

RELEVANCE OF HEIs TO SOCIAL INCLUSION

However, recent debates have tended to focus very much on the question of who gets access to higher education. The Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education performance over the past twenty years paid particular attention to student participation rates: how many of which social groups can be enrolled in higher education programs?

This of course does have a regional dimension, as Tony Vinson's work on the spatial distribution of inequality demonstrates:

> … when social disadvantage becomes entrenched within a limited number of localities, the restorative potential of standard services in spheres like education and health can diminish. A disabling social climate can develop that is more than

the sum of individual and household disadvantages and the prospect is increased of disadvantage being passed from one generation to the next. (Vinson 2007, ix).

The Bradley Review paid some attention to the potential role of higher education campuses in remote, provincial and outer metropolitan areas. Focused particularly on those regions beyond the metropolitan areas, Bradley commented on the falling participation rates in regional and remote areas and noted the apparently minor effect of the 'regional' loading in the current funding model (see Bradley et al 2008, 110). The implication was that under current scenarios, regionally-based universities and campuses in rural and remote areas would be increasingly difficult to sustain, with negative consequences for participation rates; the wider economic, social and cultural consequences would also be severe, developing a further cycle of social exclusion.

Early responses to the targets established by the Federal Government have focused on questions of aspirations and access. The questions have been framed in terms of encouraging more young people to consider entering higher education, and how to ensure that 'school to university' selection processes enable a more socially representative range of matriculates to gain university places, while maintaining principles of merit. These initiatives appear to have had a strong regional dimension, as institutions have begun to explore various forms of cooperation to raise aspirations amongst school students. While this is obviously important, initiatives and policies also need to focus on ensuring that young people do accept appropriate opportunities to enter higher education. In this respect, the attention given to student financing by Bradley is important.

The Issue of Provision

Beyond access, however, the focus on participation needs to be complemented by more innovative thinking and action around where higher education is delivered, and the pedagogy which is used. Online delivery is of increasing importance, but at the same time, the 'civilising benefits' of the experience of university life involve much more than the delivery of the courses. Notwithstanding the impact of part-time work and an increasingly electronic mode of relationship, the significance of opportunities for developing extra-curricular interests and relationships cannot be neglected. This suggests that place will continue to be an important consideration in how higher education opportunities will be extended to new participants.

This is supported by evidence that in Australia, university attendance is linked closely to residential location. From a study of Melbourne data from students completing Year 12 at government schools, Edwards has demonstrated that alongside academic achievement, proximity and economic factors also influence choice of institution. Because of spatial difference in cultural and economic resources in large cities, the overall university attendance rates differ substantially between suburbs. He concludes with the suggestion that 'if new places and campuses are situated in high growth areas of the outer suburbs of large metropolitan areas, they have the potential to increase participation in these areas' (2009, 70).

The Bradley Review discussed provision in outer suburban settings, proposing some caution in planning for provision in outer suburban areas. They did note at the same time

that most of the future growth in Australia's school-leaver population will be in the outer suburbs of the major cities.

With respect to pedagogy, the concept of partnership is integral, building on the growing experience in many Australian universities with work-based learning. While not a new idea, especially in North America, the recent interest in Australia in developing much more systematic arrangements which link learning in university classes with real community and workplace settings has much to suggest with respect to future innovation in university pedagogy.

Community Engagement

Winter et al highlighted a number of international and Australian projects which have contributed to recognition of the social responsibilities of universities as public institutions, and their role in fostering tolerance, political stability and cohesion (Winter et al 2004, 15). Many academic staff are associated with organisations that are working in one way or another to promote social inclusion, and there have been increasing efforts to promote social entrepreneurship amongst students.

Another important development has been the trend to strengthen the availability of problem-based learning and work placement, or field education, options within degree structures. While these have always been integral to fields such as social work or nursing, their increasing prevalence in other social science-related fields has meant a growing number of students can gain experience working on projects or service delivery in community organisations.

INSIGHTS FROM CASE STUDIES

The four case studies were: the Hume Global Learning Village; the Carlton Project; the VU-Bulldogs Partnership; and Latrobe's support for refugees project. The first two are presented as attachments to this document. They both describe major community (local government) initiatives in which the tertiary sector has made a valued contribution. The two summarised here are more specific, and report on initiatives that are still developing.

They represent an initial opportunity to explore the ways in which the higher education sector is engaged in partnerships to enhance social inclusion. No doubt there are many other examples that could have been explored, but these all involve collaborative arrangements with university or industry bodies, and important community stakeholders.

1.   Western Bulldogs-Victoria University

Two of the most significant organisations in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria University and the Western Bulldogs Football Company have formed a multi-faceted partnership to lead initiatives and develop programs for people in communities in the west. Each has an interest in raising the profile of their own organisation and being associated with the partner, as well as enhancing outcomes on various arenas. A central focus of the partnership is shared interest in sports science, participation and development of pathways and increased learning and employment opportunities for young people.

Support for the partnership was driven by the senior leaders of both organisations. When commencing, people from both organisations came together for a planning day, sorting out how they would collaborate and the kinds of areas they could focus on. A number of working groups were established to pursue these ideas. Once established, the partnership has grown organically without a central mechanism of coordination, although VU Sports and Fitness and Marketing, and the Bulldogs Marketing sections are important resources. The Vice Chancellor and the Bulldogs Chief Executive Officer communicate directly, as required. The flexibility means that the partnership is continuing to evolve although it is also dependent on key people, particularly at the Football Club.

The core of the partnership is reciprocal sharing of sponsorship, facilities and shared research and development activities and projects. These include gymnasium facilities, the extensive redevelopment of facilities at Whitten Oval to which VU will relocate part of its sports science program, and traineeships. The Bulldogs provide game passes to VU which are used with students, particularly those from international backgrounds. This provides distinct opportunities for them to learn and engage with members of the community. The Bulldogs have Spirit West as a vehicle for engaging with disengaged young people and enabling them to gain renewed access to pathways.

Several of the initiatives have multiple partners, one of the most substantial which is the schools program, conducted in conjunction with teacher education at VU. Students undertake an eight week placement in schools, implementing a Western Bulldogs program. This is supported by appearances by players. The program is linked with schools where the Bulldogs have a particular connection (perhaps separate from the normal VU arrangement), but each partner supports the other in the school environment. The link with schools is expressed also in a developing relationship with Maribyrnong Secondary College which is being developed as an elite secondary school, specialising in sports science. This emerging 'sports triangle', between the three organisations, provides a substantial platform for engaging young people and offering a variety of pathways.

The Western Bulldogs-Victorian University partnership has not been easy. Both are large organisations with clear goals that have been concerned, at times, with protecting their own interests. The development of protocols and procedures has been an important initiative. Both organisations have very extensive constituencies in the west, and can support each other through networking and mutual support in various programs. Given the commitment of both to community engagement, there is an opportunity for significant innovative activities in the foreseeable future.

2.   Latrobe University and Refugees

Latrobe became aware of the need for support programs for refugee students to help them understand how universities operate in Australia.   As there are high refugee populations in La Trobe's catchment areas a refugee support program was seen as an important addition to the student services offered at the university, and they were able to draw on earlier experience at RMIT. Beginning in early 2008, the main focus of the initiative is assisting refugee students to understand how to enrol in an Australian university, and to be aware of all support services available, including scholarships. In addition, the University monitors a student's academic progress each semester and links them with relevant support services if necessary.   The initiative was in accord with the

University's longstanding commitment to access and participation for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Managed by the Equity and Diversity unit, each campus has a member of staff nominated as a "Refugee Contact Officer" who drives awareness of refugee student matters on that campus. Both refugees and asylum seekers are participants in the program. These participants may be current students or prospective students. In addition, university staff who are sympathetic to the needs of refugee students go out of their way to provide additional assistance. There is also an outreach process implemented through school visits and Careers Days to promote the refugee support program; this is the foundation for an extension of community engagement with a wider network of organisations.

Approximately 49 students have been registered under the program, only one of whom has withdrawn. The main constraints to date have been insufficient staff resources to organise mentoring support as part of the program, and the direct financial support available for asylum seekers is limited, although they do have the chance of gaining a residential scholarship. Some funds cannot be used for international students, and asylum seekers are technically international students until they gain a Protection Visa.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Not surprisingly, taken together, the case studies indicate that social inclusion is a significant regional priority to which higher education can contribute. The early learning from the project is that there is no end of engagement activity in which university academics are involved; some of this is integrated with learning delivery, some is directly the subject of research activity, and some is offered as a public service, in addition to other academic responsibilities. However, most engagement tends to be the responsibility of individuals or small groups rather than developed and shaped at a Faculty or institutional level; this can lead to difficulties when staff move. Some of the specific learnings from the case studies have included:

- Engagement with the broader community and not just students, helps make universities accessible and safe to all of the community, in addition to the specific benefits and policy guidance;
- Access to university for those in outer metropolitan areas can be explored through new models (such as the multiversity approach);
- Joint partnerships with community organisations enable better utilisation of resources for cross-fertilisation of ideas, knowledge and resources;
- Benefit is derived from core partners of programs understanding each other better, which assists greater participation and sharing of ideas and actions;
- Communication pathways need to remain open throughout the university structure to enable buy-in and consistency across faculties, thus avoiding duplication and missed opportunities to leverage participation; and
- A central 'driver' within the HEI can help link interactions and build cross-disciplinary support, to prevent duplication or missed opportunities.

It has been rare to find examples of inter-institutional collaboration on initiatives to enhance social inclusion. While academic staff are engaged regularly in projects involving

colleagues from other institutions, some with a regional focus, it is rare for such initiatives to occur at an institutional level. At the very least, the underlying framework of competition seems to determine that it is easier to collaborate formally with bodies in other states or even internationally than with others from the same region.

It is not hard to find some of the specific obstacles to more effective engagement by universities with regional priorities. Government policy settings can shape institutional behaviour in quite direct ways, especially where funding hinges on institutional responsiveness. The very nature of academic work, both student learning and staff research, can separate those at the computer screen of university life, from regional stakeholders. This can result from differing perceptions of knowledge, contrasting languages, timelines and interests.

This is profoundly evident in Australia, as the higher education sector is framed by increasingly competitive domestic and international market-places. These pressures are likely to become more intense following the Bradley Review's proposals in relation to student entitlements and choice of where they can study. The criteria for measuring research quality also emphasise greater competition, against narrowly defined academic criteria.

Unlike the United Kingdom, there is no mandated commitment to third stream activities, nor a funding model which supports these initiatives. Not surprisingly, then, only a few institutions actively foster coherent strategy and infrastructure for regional engagement with systematic alignment of learning and research activities, with critical success factors, with academic work planning and appropriate reward systems.

How does this picture of university engagement with regional development affect the efforts to promote greater social inclusion?

In the first place, one cannot underestimate the importance which is placed on social inclusion. Regional (and national) authorities, universally it would seem, regard social inclusion as a key goal. Furthermore, their expectation is that their higher education institutions will be involved integrally in their efforts to achieve such goals. At the very least, this involves provision of pathways for young people from all backgrounds within the region to gain skills, a rounded appreciation of citizenship, and the capacity to contribute to the economic and social life of the region.

Secondly, it recognises that higher education institutions can contribute directly to initiatives which help to understand and address circumstances of privilege, inequality and disadvantage within the region. Research, service learning, and community initiatives can all mitigate the local circumstances of social exclusion.

Thirdly, it promotes the view that universities can contribute to strategic conversations about enhancing regional infrastructure and economic activity so as to generate employment and other resources, such as housing and health services, which add to regional prosperity and well-being.

All of this occurs in Victoria. However, it is highly problematic, as all the evidence suggests that universities are caught amidst a policy framework which promotes increasing

competition, notwithstanding the evidence that partnership and collaboration are integral to the successful initiatives (see OECD 2007). While there are wonderful examples of partnership, they tend to be fragmented, lacking overall strategic vision, and have much more in common with bodies outside the higher education sector, rather than with other universities. Until these policy issues of partnership and strategy can be addressed, and appropriate internal planning and reward arrangements introduced, the universities' capacity to contribute to social inclusion initiatives within their regions will be deeply undermined.

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Attachment 1

<p style="text-align:center">**PURE CASE STUDY REPORT**</p>

<p style="text-align:center">**OPPORTUNITIES FOR CARLTON**</p>

<p style="text-align:center">**THEME: Social Inclusion**</p>

INTRODUCTION

Melbourne PURE has undertaken a series of case studies of regionally-significant initiatives in which higher education institutions (HEIs) have been engaged. The purpose of the case studies has been to understand better the conditions and the factors which shape effective engagement by HEIs with key stakeholders in the Melbourne region. Each case study has been chosen because it contributes to a larger theme which has been identified as a key priority for Melbourne: regional innovation systems; 'green' jobs'; and social inclusion and active citizenship.

The learning which results from the case studies will be shared with the other 17 regions which are participating in PURE internationally, especially those with which Melbourne has common interests in the key themes. It will be used also to identify opportunities for policy development, for new initiatives, and for enhancing the HEI contributions to the existing initiatives.

The particular initiative which is the subject of this case study, the 'Opportunities for Carlton' Project, contributes to understanding of the social inclusion theme. A separate paper outlines the concepts and issues which arise in relation to this theme.

BACKGROUND TO INITIATIVE

The 'Opportunities for Carlton' project has been an important framework for many initiatives in and around the housing estates in Carlton, a historic Melbourne inner city area. Carlton has over 14,000 residents and is known as a vibrant, cultural, retail, entertainment and leisure precinct. It is a diverse and unique neighbourhood with a combination of private and public housing, tourist destinations and home to large educational and health institutions. Students comprise 47 per cent of the population; 23 per cent of the housing is public, of which three quarters is in high-rise housing estates.

Initiated in 2007, the 'Opportunities for Carlton' project is a 'community strengthening' project which has set out to explore innovative ways to improve community safety and amenity, health and wellbeing; and educational and employment outcomes for the entire Carlton community. The Opportunities for Carlton project came out of development of the Carlton Community Infrastructure Plan when Melbourne City Council Office of Housing and the Department of Planning and Community Development recognised a range of unmet needs amongst the large and diverse population in Carlton which community infrastructure alone would not address. This, together with the proposed redevelopment of the Carlton high-rise estate, led to the 'Opportunities for Carlton' project, which was begun in 2008.

Through a process of consultation, network building and workshops, a broad cross-section of the Carlton community stakeholders have identified some major issues, begun to identify possible solutions and agreed on the themes, priorities and actions. The key issues to be addressed are: healthy Carlton; work and learning; Carlton together; and facilities and infrastructure. The Carlton Community Plan will evolve as the community identifies new priorities, with a strong underlying philosophy of place-making.

STRUCTURE AND FUNDING

There are a number of layers to the governance arrangements to ensure appropriate information sharing, coordination, participation and advocacy for Carlton.

- The Carlton Opportunities Network forms a cross-community steering group that meets quarterly to oversee the implementation of the Carlton Community Plan;
- Working Groups which meet monthly for each of the priority areas;
- An Intergovernmental Co-ordination Group to provide project support and strategic advice;
- An internal City of Melbourne Committee comprising cross-department officers who support the operations of the Working Groups and project generally.

There is an extensive range of organisations drawn from the government (local, state and federal), business, health and recreation, residents, community sector and education and training, including the University of Melbourne, that has become involved in the wider network. Overall, the initiative has benefited also from key policy settings. Within the overall framework of the Victorian Government's commitment to 'Fairer Victoria', there has been strong interdepartmental cooperation, together with close cooperation with Melbourne City Council.

The Victorian Government has provided extensive funding support over three years, sufficient to employ two full-time staff. The Council has also provided significant staff and in-kind support, with smaller contributions from the Office of Housing and Bendigo Bank. Many other partners have provided at time extensive in-kind support and volunteer labour.

MAIN ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The project has encompassed a wide diversity of projects, many of which have been initiated by the various stakeholders as their contribution towards the project's major priorities. These have included:

- A survey by the Office of Housing to collect a broad range of baseline data on people's circumstances and attitudes to the proposed redevelopment of the high-rise estate;
- Various arts projects, offered principally by the City of Melbourne, including the 'big photo party, a visiting community artist, and the 'People's Tours of Carlton' recording produced by 3CR;
- The Carlton Community Day run by University of Melbourne students ;
- An Information Technology Centre has been established at the Church of All Nations, part of which has been supported by University students and the I.T department in providing computers
- An Employment Round Table;

- Planning for an aged services hub in the high-rise redevelopment;
- A youth tutor and mentor program in partnership wit the University of Melbourne (drawing on university students and in the future it is hoped Alumni will become involved.);
- 'science morning teas' offered for three years now by Melbourne Museum, and supported by students from all faculties since the Carlton project began; and
- The family, harmony and safety project.

Some of these are short-term initiatives, to establish momentum in the project, while others will be oriented to much longer term outcomes. A Carlton Community website is being established as a key mechanism of communication about project activities and related developments.

The main business involved fully so far has been the Bendigo Bank, perhaps because others see the project as being too strongly focused on the housing estate at this stage. Another reason might be that many business managers live elsewhere than in Carlton and do not necessarily see the connections. The Employer Roundtable brought over fifty local large and medium sized businesses together to discuss local employment strategies with a number of developing initiatives to come out of the round table.

Some of the initiatives have been very demanding and time-consuming, as all of the volunteers need training and sometimes, interpreters as well, but this is also part of the strength and success of the project. It has become a two-way arrangement, with local service organisations also assisting the University with some of its initiatives in the community.

ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Many organisations have noted the apparent change of policy at the University of Melbourne, with a new emphasis on community engagement. As it is, the Opportunities for Carlton project has been an opportunity to draw staff and students from Melbourne University into community engagement, in close cooperation with Melbourne City Council. Several schools and faculties within the University have become involved, and in addition to the relationship that has developed with Melbourne City Council, a link has been initiated also with Bendigo Bank. Without the more active University relationship, it would have been very difficult to get students involved as volunteers as the process can be just so time consuming - community organisations do not have the time to take on this responsibility wholly themselves.

The specific focus of the University activity has been more effectively integrating refugees and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds into the community, breaking down stereotypes, and invigorating community engagement at Melbourne University. The project has aimed also to build relationships with people in the Carlton high-rise flats, especially the Somali community, to move attitudes and to encourage people to consider study, when they might not otherwise have done so.

Apart from specific initiatives such as the Carlton Community Day, which was organised with the support of student social entrepreneurs, there has been an emphasis on sport and education, with Melbourne students providing assistance with homework classes, job

readiness training and primary school programs. The Student Ambassador and Leadership Program (SALP) has also been a helpful means of supporting engagement. International students constitute a significant part of the residential community in Carlton, so there have been some initiatives to engage with them, and to help to facilitate their links with other community activities.

Overall the Knowledge Transfer and Partnerships unit at the University of Melbourne has played a key role, in relation in particular to generating ideas and coordinating activities. The principal achievements have been ongoing communication with the community, and greater openness and exposure of the University. This will need considerable ongoing support for it to be sustained. Their contribution to many of the project's forums have been noted by many other stakeholders.

There is a wealth of goodwill in different parts of the University, and senior academics have been strongly supportive of student involvement. However, the lack of any discretionary funding has limited the possibilities, and it has been an ongoing challenge to get all staff at the University understanding why community engagement matters, and to put time and resources into being a 'public-spirited university'. The University's role would be stronger still if there was greater recognition from funding agencies that this is a valuable activity.

RMIT has been invited to become more involved with the project, and might do so through its association with the Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN).

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

An important source of impetus to university and museum involvement in the Opportunities for Carlton project will be the increasing emphasis within education policy on a more comprehensive linking of all parts of the education system, from early childhood to university, and subsequently to the labour market. This inevitably requires a shift for an organisation to see its particular resources contributing to a larger set of outcomes in partnership with other parts of the sector.

The partnership in various activities with Melbourne City Council, facilitated in part through the Office of Knowledge Capital, has been an important vehicle for bringing people into the community and shifting attitudes within the University. Many external people still find it hard to gain access to the University, and to navigate to the right places to get to the appropriate contacts. The Knowledge Transfer and Partnerships Office has been established to help to overcome this problem but it is too early to determine whether this is making the University easier to navigate.

There are extensive opportunities for continuing to enhance the relationship. The project is likely to continue in one form or another for some considerable period of time, so the more that the long-term stakeholders in Carlton (such as the University) are involved, the better. There is huge potential for students to enhance their skills through the volunteer programs, while the university can help more generally by enabling access to various kinds of expertise through its internal and external networks. From the perspective of community members, the university facilities could also be used more extensively for community access but this is not a straightforward issue.

For the potential relationship to be achieved, it would be helpful to:

- Celebrate the achievements to date;
- Broaden the planks that currently constitute the platform of engagement;
- Develop a more systematic approach to engaging young people;
- Understand better how to develop a common 'pace of action' between the university, and the government and community partners.

Attachment 2

PURE CASE STUDY REPORT

HUME GLOBAL LEARNING VILLAGE

THEME: Social Inclusion

INTRODUCTION

Melbourne PURE has undertaken a series of case studies of regionally-significant initiatives in which higher education institutions (HEIs) have been engaged. The purpose of the case studies has been to understand better the conditions and the factors which shape effective engagement by HEIs with key stakeholders in the Melbourne region. Each case study has been chosen because it contributes to a larger theme which has been identified as a key priority for Melbourne: regional innovation systems; 'green' jobs'; and social inclusion and active citizenship.

The learning which results from the case studies will be shared with the other 17 regions which are participating in PURE internationally, especially those with which Melbourne has common interests in the key themes. It will be used also to identify opportunities for policy development, for new initiatives, and for enhancing the HEI contributions to the existing initiatives.

The particular initiative which is the subject of this case study, the Hume Global Learning Village (HGLV), contributes to understanding of the social inclusion theme. A separate paper outlines the concepts and issues which arise in relation to this theme.

BACKGROUND TO INITIATIVE

With the leadership of the Safe City Taskforce a decade ago, Hume City Council took a radical and positive approach to community building by focusing on learning as the key to social and economic wellbeing for all citizens. This meant planning facilities beyond the reach of existing resources and bringing all in Hume City to work together. The mission has been well served by the original three foci of attitude, education and opportunity.

A key issue in the process was the establishment of a library for Broadmeadows. This has had been a matter of concern for both Councillors and residents for many years, but it was only after the change of government in 1999, and through political intervention, that this was achieved. The Safety Task Force's concept of the Global Learning Village was a key concept that gained the support of the Premier of the day and key philanthropists and business people that the Hume Global Learning Centre could be built as the visible face of the much more innovative concept of the Village. 'It takes a village to educate a child; in the 21st century, that child will need to be globally connected'.

The philosophy underpinning the Village was articulated in the Council's Social Justice Charter, which identified a commitment to learning as a key driver for enhancing economic and social well-being. Its ambition is for 'people to embrace learning as a way of life, for all

their life, thereby creating a community that values learning as the key to strengthening individual and community well-being'.

More recently, the growth of information and communication technologies has prompted wide-ranging discussion about learning, as a key theme for individual, community and regional development. This is the spirit in which Hume City Council describes itself as a 'learning city'. For the purposes of this project, this sets a framework which requires those in both school and community settings to reconsider their most basic assumptions about their work, and the place of learning within it. The Village's objectives are:

- To address social inequalities and increase life opportunities for people who are disadvantaged, upholding the principles of equality, access, participation and social justice;
- To inspire and facilitate participation of Hume residents in lifelong learning regardless of age, ability, religion, ethnicity, race, gender, disability or socio-economic status;
- To reduce social isolation of individuals and groups within the community and provide inclusion opportunities and pathways to learning; and
- To build strong foundations for learning by enabling learning opportunities for all.

The Hume Global Learning Village today, is a vibrant, active partnership of more than 600 individuals and organisations within and beyond the city of Hume all working together to promote learning within Hume. The membership encompasses a broad range of organisations from across Hume City, many of which have an explicit interest in learning: libraries and the mobile library, local schools, neighbourhood houses and learning centres, the Hume Global Learning Centre, Visy Cares Learning Centre, Kangan Batman TAFE, local businesses and universities, for example. There are high levels of cooperation and coordination of efforts through joint promotion, joint program development and delivery.

The Hume Global Learning Village and Hume City Council relationship is highly interdependent. In this way, the Council is reframing the role of local government with regard to community learning. Council provides human, physical and financial resources, principally but not only through the Learning Community Department.

STRUCTURE AND FUNDING

The organisational structure of the HGLV includes an Advisory Board whose role is to provide strategic advice to Hume City Council and leadership for the members of the HGLV; and a Committee that oversees the operational activity of the Village. Quarterly forums are an open opportunity for all partners, stakeholders and interested community members to discuss key issues, and contribute to the developing the objectives of the HGLV. The Advisory Board has been chaired by John Cain, former premier of Victoria and has attracted a diverse group of key people from with and beyond the Hume area.

Apart from these formal structures, there is an enormous amount of informal networking and interaction. A lot happens outside the meetings, building on relationships that might have formed through the formal structures and facilitating greater cooperation rather than competition.

Significant funding to support the Village infrastructure is provided by Council, as well as the direct resources to support the specific services which it offers. Other government resources are attracted for particular projects, including major investments in infrastructure. Significant sponsorship has been attracted by key representatives of the Village from private sources, including Ford, The Age, Microsoft and Cisco. The state government has also undertaken a major project in rebuilding and restructuring all schools in the Broadmeadows area, a process which has had considerable engagement from the Council and the Village. The Village was influential particularly in ensuring that spaces were included in the design of the new schools, community and early childhood learning. Most recently, a significant Federal Government investment has been won for a new development that will complement the Broadmeadows facility in a new town centre for Craigieburn, in the northern part of the municipality.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Village activities have been shaped very much by broadly-based consultative processes which generated *Learning Together 1* (2004-2007), which outlined 56 projects. A review of the Strategy in 2007 found that this had been overly ambitious and reflected a process of the Village finding its feet.

This review, together with a similar consultative process, provided the basis for developing *Learning Together 2* (2007-2010). The five key themes in the second strategy were:

- inspiring lifelong learning in Hume;
- informing and supporting the Village network;
- supporting the early years so that every child has a firm foundation for school and later learning;
- improved learning for students in school and other educational and employment pathways; and
- enabling Hume's residents to gain fulfilling and sustainable employment.

There are a number of more explicit objectives and activities linked with each of these major themes.

Each of these explicitly builds on learning from the earlier experience, and sets key performance indicators for the second period. The range of activities supported directly by the Council and through Village members in pursuit of these aims is very considerable. Early learning has been one very strong focus that has connected various parts of the Village. For example, bilingual story telling has been an important service offered to parents and children by the libraries, whereas the primary schools have been important sites for engaging pre-school children and their parents in learning. An important dimension of these initiatives has been that while the ostensible focus might have been learning in the early years, opportunities for parents' learning have been important also. The collocation of the 'U3A' at one primary school has also fostered uncommon and really useful shared learning opportunities.

Other activities that have developed collaboration and contributed to learning for the community have been:

- quarterly 'learning festivals',
- forums on key topics,
- initiatives to recognise teachers who have made outstanding contributions,
- scholarships for teachers,
- promotion of success stories,
- arts projects,
- support for an online tutor scheme,
- a volunteer gateway,
- regular newsletters and publications,
- survey of residents' participation in various learning activities, and
- an annual Research Conference.

Beyond the Council, many of the Village members offer opportunities and events that draw in other Village members as partners. The Village also supports various projects which enhance learning and social justice in the area.

ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Universities, particularly Victoria University and RMIT, and Kangan Batman TAFE College are represented on both the HGLV Board and its Committee, and contribute directly both to ongoing Village activities (such as the Research Conference) and to specific initiatives and projects, such as the Hume Youth Commitment. The PASCAL International Observatory has collaborated on specific projects, with state government funding, helping to bring an international perspective to the Village's activities. The Local Learning and Employment Network is active also as a 'partnership broker' in developing post-school pathways.

Whereas Kangan Batman is a direct provider in many learning fields, the universities, including Melbourne, have been more active in research and development, including support for various action research initiatives. Student placement for field education, and university contribution to evaluation of Village activities, have also been encouraged by the Village.

One issue raised about the university presence was the importance of building trust, and the risk that local knowledge would be subsumed to a hierarchy of expertise. In any kind of engagement, the universities needed to be alert to the importance of trust, and of the mutuality of the learning contribution.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR HEIs

The current low participation rates in post-school training and higher than average unemployment are serious issues to which the HEIs can and must make a significant contribution. Campus closure in Sunbury means that there is no university campus at all in this municipality, which is a serious barrier to increasing participation given the research on the importance of proximity to university attendance. The current Federal Government priority on social inclusion reinforces the Council's existing Social Justice Strategymeans that there is considerable pressure on HEIs to find ways of being more active in this field. However, constraints on resources and time seem to undermine the initiatives that HEIs can support.

Some of the specific opportunities identified in the interviews were:

- Sports science is one activity that could form a starting point for greater engagement, building on the interest in sport that exist already;
- Support for international benchmarking, particularly to support further thinking about different kinds of learning environments;
- Support for the multiversity;
- Problem-solving of systems barriers; and
- Development of strategies to connect better with the diverse and more excluded members of the community.