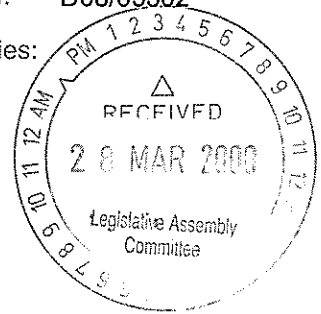


Department of Education and Training
Government of Western Australia

Your ref:

Our ref: D08/05302

Enquiries:



Dr Brian Gordon
The Principal Research Officer
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Dr Gordon

The Department of Education and Training supports and will be interested in the outcomes of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's inquiry into those factors that make for the success or failure of collaborative or 'joined up' initiatives between agencies.

The Department continues to be involved in initiatives with external parties, and has welcomed the opportunity to provide information on these collaborative efforts.

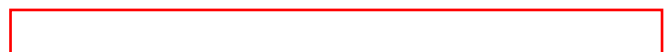
Please find attached a submission to the Inquiry into Collaborative Approaches to Government from the Department of Education and Training which outlines specific initiatives undertaken by the Department and the factors that contribute to the successful or unsuccessful outcomes associated with these collaborative efforts.

Yours sincerely

SHARYN O'NEILL
DIRECTOR GENERAL

27 MAR 2008

Att.



**SUBMISSION TO THE COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING
COMMITTEE**

BY

**THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND
TRAINING**

MARCH 2008



Department of
Education
and Training

1. OVERVIEW

The Department of Education and Training (the Department) provides a world class system of public schooling and vocational education and training for Western Australia.

The Department is responsible for:

1. Planning, resourcing, managing and delivering high quality public school education accessible to all Western Australians.
2. Planning, funding and strategic development of vocational education and training (VET) to meet the needs of students, employers and the community.
3. Administering the legislation that governs the provision of education and training in Western Australia, including the:
 - *School Education Act 1999*;
 - *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*;
 - *Industrial Training Act 1975*; and
 - *Public Education Endowment Act 1909*.
4. Providing strong leadership and strategic advice to all levels of government on education and training.

2. THE DEPARTMENT AND COLLABORATION

Consistent with Strategic Outcome 5.2 of the *'Better Planning, Better Futures: A Framework for the Strategic Management of the Western Australian Public Sector'*, the Department places a high priority on collaborative approaches when undertaking initiatives involving external parties.

The Department is also dedicated to incorporating the needs of the community into government processes, and with the assistance of the recently developed *'Guidelines for Community Participation in Decision-Making within the Department of Education and Training'*, intends to increase collaboration with community. In the *Western Australian Citizenship Strategy 2004 – 2009*, the Government of Western Australia expressed its commitment to building the capacity of all members of the community to become more actively engaged in all levels of government decision-making. The Guidelines reflect the Department's commitment to facilitating meaningful community participation in decisions made in relation to the delivery of education and training services, and in developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions.

3. COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

The Department works collaboratively with a diverse array of external agencies, including Government agencies at the local, state and national level, and non-government agencies such as welfare, training and education organisations to undertake initiatives. The following are examples of initiatives that have been, or are currently undertaken collaboratively, with the factors that contributed to their success or less than success identified.

3.1 Career Link Project – Career Development Centre

The Career Link Project commenced in January 2008 and involves the placement of Community Relations Integration Officers at the Career Development Centre to provide links to community members for information and services located at the centre. The development of a Memorandum of Understanding between Executive Directors, a continuous consultation process, and the availability of resources to assist disadvantaged groups, were highlighted as successful strategies utilised in the collaborative approach.

3.2 Fremantle/Peel District Education Office

3.2.2 Government Interagency Committee

The committee meets once a term to discuss common issues. It is chaired by the Peel Development Commission (PDC) and includes representatives from health, education, policing, water, child protection, roads and disability agencies at the Director or Superintendent level.

3.2.3 'Group of Four'

The Police Superintendent, Education Director, DCP Director and the Mayor from the Fremantle/Peel District meet each term to discuss relevant issues of concern. Youth homelessness and truancy are the issues currently being addressed.

3.2.4 Mandurah Youth Commitment

A local community partnership exists between the City of Mandurah and the Fremantle/Peel District Education Office to provide a range of programs including 'off-campus programs'.

3.2.5 Mandurah Secondary Schools

The Director Schools, a representative from the local police station and the Principals of all secondary schools in Mandurah meet each term to address common issues. These meetings are considered a proactive approach to combating community and school concerns.

The Fremantle/Peel District Office contributed that for each of the above examples, open communication, regular meetings, availability of resources, and a unified approach to the collaborative effort contribute to successful initiatives. The lack of resources, staff and facilities to conduct projects were deemed to be areas to be improved.

3.3 Capital Works Program – Infrastructure

The Capital Works Program, initiated by the Department's Infrastructure Directorate involves the management, construction, maintenance and disposal of buildings by identifying, planning and procuring the best value asset solutions. The provision of contractors, and private sector consultants, joint representation, continual dialogue, mutual professional trust, expertise and knowledge of inter-agency processes were highlighted as strategies that impacted positively upon the collaborative approach. An area of improvement that was identified was the lack of resources and maintenance to provide updates on the shared website of the agencies involved.

3.4 Provision of New Schools – Infrastructure

The Department's Infrastructure Directorate plans the provision of new school sites in partnership with a number of government and non-government agencies. Several strategies that were valuable in collaboration include, continued communication and regular meetings with key stakeholders, statewide coordination, and clearly defined policies and structured plans. The uncertain planning outcomes, deficiencies in resources and staffing, and the impact of these issues on policy review were considered areas that required improvement in this partnership.

3.5 Bunbury District Education Office

3.5.1 Strong Families Program

The Strong Families Program involves facilitating additional agency involvement in cases of child protection and encouraging accountability in the production of a collaborative action plan. The agencies involved found that links between managers, the capacity for schools to consult and seek advice and the support for the mandatory Child Protection Program were strategies that had a positive impact on the initiative. The lack of resources to address preventive intervention and the heavy workload which meant priority was given to only the most urgent cases, were designated as areas for improvement.

3.5.2 Community Safety and Crime Prevention

The Community Safety and Crime Prevention initiative undertaken by the Bunbury District Education Office centres on inter-sectorial planning and is a collaboration undertaken by local agencies, Departments and the City of Bunbury.

3.6 Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate

3.6.1 Aboriginal Employment, Training and Education Officer (AETEO) Program

The AETEO Program commenced in 1994 and aims to foster regional community based employment and economic development initiatives for Aboriginal people. The initiative engages key local Aboriginal community organisations and establishes and maintains partnerships with local industry, employment, education, and training organisations. The involvement of local Aboriginal people with strong regional networks and local knowledge, major Aboriginal organisations with established infrastructure and local standing, and competition for participation in the program have contributed to successful outcomes. The AETEO arrangements for 2009 address the lack of incentives to maximise outcomes to improve the collaborative process.

3.6.2 Follow the Dream Program – Aboriginal Education and Training

The Follow the Dream program is an aspirational program supporting high achieving Aboriginal students to complete Year 12 and enter university or other studies. With the assistance of the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation the program has expanded to service high schools in 24 sites across the State. Strategies that contributed to this success included the placement of a school based coordinator, development of a local steering committee, and enhancing the program utilising recommendations from a research study.

3.6.3 School – Community Partnerships

The Department has initiated a range of strategies to assist schools in providing culturally appropriate education for Aboriginal students, and effectively engaging with Aboriginal parents and the local Aboriginal community. The availability of quality resources and training, and a continued consultation process were deemed to have a positive impact on this collaborative effort. Insufficient levels of Aboriginal community participation in meetings emerged as an issue for improvement, with the recommendation that additional support from school principals would further enhance this initiative.

3.6.4 Indigenous Aerospace Initiative

A new initiative commenced in 2005 to train a group of Aboriginal people as pilots to prepare them to access employment in the aviation industry. The establishment of links with the aviation industry, monthly reference group meetings and the evaluation of potential industry participation have been strong contributing factors in the performance of the program.

3.6.5 Annual Aboriginal Teachers' Conference

This initiative provides a forum for Aboriginal teachers and administrators throughout the State to share professional training, development and networking opportunities. These conferences provide a platform for consultation, information sharing, and involvement in workshops, presentations and training sessions. As the initiative has been operational for a number of years, input from all stakeholders and participants has allowed progressive adjustments to be made to meet requirements, and therefore all collaboration strategies were reported in a positive light.

3.6.6 Leading from the Front (LFF)

This Western Australian Primary Principals' Association initiative is designed to provide targeted professional development and support for principals to improve their abilities and practices in Aboriginal education. Strategies which impacted positively on the collaborative effort include the provision of resources and training, availability of mentoring, and the sharing of knowledge and experience in seminars. This program has been deemed a successful collaboration with very few negative issues arising.

4. SUSTAINING COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

In order to sustain the effectiveness and productivity of collaborative initiatives there are a number of fundamental factors that are required. As evident in the recurring references in the examples above, strategies such as continued consultation, communication and meetings with stakeholders to address strategic and operational issues, and the provision for professional development and training, contribute to the successful outcome of collaborative approaches. Another factor underlying the success of interagency partnerships is the early clarification of the issues to be addressed, including identification of operational principles and available resources, which ensures that all parties are working in parallel to achieve a successful outcome.

Further, feedback received highlighted the view that collaborative efforts are generally dependent on established working relationships with individuals, rather than the designated role. Therefore in order to assist in this regard, strong strategic and operational principles underlying each initiative are required. For example, by ensuring that each agency is responsible for internal arrangements that guarantee the continuity of membership, the calibre of collaborative approaches is upheld.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information pertaining to the response outlined in this submission, including contact details for those responsible for specific initiatives, please contact