Neighbourhood Houses Victoria and Adult Learning Australia

Response to the

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULT LEARNERS IN VICTORIA PATHWAYS TO PARTICIPATION AND JOBS DISCUSSION PAPER

With contributions and full endorsement from

ACEVic & Community Colleges Australia

Opening statement

The ACE sector has a well-documented track record of attracting and supporting high needs learners and delivering better outcomes than any other provider category. It achieves this in a tightly constrained funding environment where providers are not funded to engage learners through outreach activities. Investing in outreach[1] and engagement in the ACE sector is possibly the single most effective strategy that can lead to increased participation by learners with high needs and low language, literacy and numeracy.

Recommendations

The Victorian Government should:

1. Fund wrap-around support staff located within Learn Locals to enable strategic outreach, ongoing engagement and tailored support.

2. Fund appropriately qualified, autonomous adult educators to improve outcomes as opposed to developing generic and narrowly focussed assessment tools.

3. Commission research across the ACE sector in Victoria to fully map the dimension and nature of non-formal and formal adult literacy programs that are running and the current staffing models in place.

4. Fund high quality professional development designed by the sector for ACE educators that focusses on teaching and learning practice to improve outcomes for high needs cohorts.

5. Offer subsidised leadership programs, mentorships and optional pathways to upgrade qualifications for ACE educators to build the sector's capabilities.

6. Support adults with very low literacy by funding purposeful, locally determined, non-formal adult literacy programs as an alternative to foundation skills programs.

7. Remove the two-course rule for high needs learners.

8. Allow temporary suspension of foundation skills enrolments.

9. Commission more research and analysis to determine whether tailoring learning to a specific industry context is an effective or desirable objective in terms of engaging learners with low educational attainment or literacy.

10. Conduct a trial of a regionally based and integrated approach to developing local industry engagement in order to addresses the language, literacy and numeracy needs of Victorians.

11. Develop a detailed and coherent strategy on stackable micro-credentials or skillsets that are standalone or that could be aggregated to achieve an award over time to pathway learners from pre-accredited into accredited learning programs or build their skills for the workplace.

12. Trial a regional planning approach consistent with the recommendations of 'Improving participation and success in VET for disadvantaged learners' to allow for greater coordination and collaboration between the TAFE and ACE sectors, and industry.

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[1] Davies, Lamb & Doecke (2011) identify four critical elements of effective service delivery as outreach, wellbeing, pedagogy and pathways

Theme 1: Ensuring the adult community education sector has sufficient scale and capability to meet the needs of learners, including those who are at risk and/or have high needs

Discussion questions

What best practice assessment tools are currently in use across the adult community education sector?

If Learner Capability Assessment Kits were freely available to Learn Local Organisations and TAFE Institutes, how consistently would they be used?

What other measures of progress could be employed to better understand learner development within pre-accredited training?

NCVER notes that 'for VET learners (and particularly for diverse cohorts), measures of satisfactory completion may involve broader consideration of learner engagement and pathway outcomes. (NCVER 2018).

Literacy development is complex and doesn't follow a linear path. Generic assessment tools that measure an individual's progress can be counterproductive because they tend to ignore this complexity. However, if standardised assessments are to be used as a measure of learner progress, what is being assessed must be completely clear because only assessing some aspects of a complex system will inevitably provide an incomplete picture.

When measuring learner progress, it's important to strike a balance between the learners' needs and the needs of other stakeholders, such as government agencies. Likewise, an assessment tool that narrowly defines literacy as a particular set of skills or cognitive attributes – will not give adults the skills and knowledge they need to respond to our changing workplace and society. Furthermore, Australians increasingly require the ability to manage more of their own health and financial wellbeing including through the use of digital media.

Issues arise when narrow expectations of what counts as successful literacy are deployed as 'an instrument of workplace reform' (Mayer, 2016). And inevitably it's the learners who 'are deemed to have failed' in some way should these narrow expectations not be met (Waterhouse & Virgona, 2005).

Important features of assessments to determine learner progress should include 'changes in self-esteem, critical thinking skills, confidence, social skills, self-identity and self-determination as well as increases in reading, writing and numeracy skills.

Learners must develop skills that enable them to learn how to learn.

Historically, generic assessment tools have failed to meet the needs and capacities of people with very low levels of literacy. However, highly individualised formative approaches may offer a way for adult educators to assess progress and adjust their teaching and learning strategies to better meet the learners' needs.

In reality, the key feature of a high quality assessment process is a sufficiently qualified, autonomous adult literacy educator.

Discussion questions

How should 'high-needs' be defined, and what learner characteristics would define a learner as high-needs?

What approaches would best support high-needs learners to participate in pre- accredited training?

How can the transition of high-needs learners from adult community education into mainstream education be better supported?

The 'Impact of disadvantage on VET completion and employment gaps (McVicar & Tabasso 2016) report shows that different disadvantaged cohorts experience different levels of VET completion.

Page 20 of the report identifies Indigenous students and those experiencing multiple disadvantage as having the greatest VET completion gaps. However for students with a disability, those 'with multiple medical conditions and … mental disabilities have the lowest percentages of completion (16.5% and 17.5%, respectively), while students with a sensory disability have a course completion rate above 24%'.

In addition, those experiencing insecure housing, substance abuse, family violence and other circumstances that are not specific to particular demographic cohorts, all require additional support to optimise likelihood of success.

Other than the Reconnect program, there are currently no resources to assist with engagement strategies such as outreach for high needs learners (or other disadvantaged learners) despite the fact that this is arguably the most vital part of the process to address current levels of low literacy and numeracy. Davies, Lamb and Doecke (2011, pp. 22–26) outline a range of strategies to improve engagement all of which require resources.

These include:

- Outreach
- Providing easily accessible information
- Bringing learning to the learner
- Targeting high-need groups
- Establishing lasting meaningful relationships

Lamb et al (2018, p. 11) note that:

'Disadvantaged learners are not a homogeneous group, and effective VET providers develop tailored strategies for addressing the various forms of disadvantage.'

They also identified that in addition to case by case support, a number of strategies were 'identified as being particularly useful in supporting positive outcomes for certain categories of learners'.

- over 60% of the training organisations in the regions with the highest rates of completion for unemployed learners use mentoring
- many had partnerships with community agencies for the provision of auxiliary support such as housing, transport and material assistance
- many had support units for particular groups of learners with specific needs

- some employed dedicated staff to manage the needs of specific groups of disadvantaged learners.

Training providers in high-performing regions more often adopt the following strategies:

- using community member programs and engaging in community partnerships

- co-locating education and training with other community services

- delivering programs in community settings

- tailoring programs specifically for learners with low skills

- building relationships with local employers to help learners gain work experience

- providing intensive course and career guidance.(2018, p. 9)

Page 27 of the report further notes that VET students in high performing regions were almost twice as likely to be enrolled with a community provider.

In addition, Lamb et al (2018, p. 10) concludes that '[r]egions are an appropriate frame of reference for both analysing VET performance and developing policies, strategies and practices to support disadvantaged learners' and advocates that:

> 'The development of regional frameworks that coordinate relationships between local community groups, VET providers and regional labour markets would likely benefit all involved. Collaboration helps to develop a comprehensive and coherent approach to the engagement of disadvantaged learners and may help to strengthen the relationship between VET completion and relevant job opportunities.'

A systematic and detailed review of successful Reconnect projects could add to an evidence base of what works well, for which cohorts and in which circumstances.

Data from Deloitte shows that learners who attend a Learn Local RTO have higher transition rates than Learn Local non RTOs. However, the number of Learn Local RTOs continues to decline in the face of policy shifts that undermine their viability.

Given that research shows that delivering programs in a community setting is advantageous for disadvantaged learners, an obvious first step where practical would be provision of more accredited training in LLs facilities, including by non Learn Local RTOs. It is important accessible pathways are available in community or 'place based' settings. Removing these opportunities for engagement in VET and further learning would be short-sighted and not easily rectified. Lamb et al note '[s]mall providers often see themselves as working with individuals not suited to a TAFE environment. This is especially true of higher-need learners, who require close support and attention (mentoring)' (2018 p. 47).

Additionally providing resources to the Learn Local for an initial period of support or mentoring to the learner after transition may be beneficial. However, more evidence about factors that contribute to successful and unsuccessful transitions should form the basis of a response. Properly resourcing the support for high needs learners may improve transition rates and success.

Research shows us that people who disengage from education are disproportionately disadvantaged.

Twenty per cent of young Victorians do not complete Year 12 and completion rates are worse for low socioeconomic status (SES) students in low SES communities. This places these cohorts at higher risk of being disengaged from full-time work, study or training for most of their lives.

In rural and regional areas, students have less access than their urban counterparts to education services. They are less likely to complete Year 12; less likely to go to university and more likely to drop out if they enrol.

Health, education and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians continue to be worse than for non-Indigenous people. There is a close association between low levels of education and incarceration for Indigenous Australians, and serious gaps between Indigenous Australians and the rest of the population in terms of mental health.

High levels of psychological distress are associated with lower income, lower educational attainment and unemployment.

Australians with a disability are more likely to be unemployed compared to those without a disability and less likely to have completed Year 12. Forty five per cent of people with a disability in Australia are living either near or below the poverty line.

Older Australians continue to miss out on the benefits of the digital economy and Internet tools that could help them manage their lives better and support them to overcome some of the physical, psychological and social barriers that accompany ageing. While the digital divide is narrowing, divisions persist for vulnerable older people, who are poor, unemployed, have low educational attainment, have a disability, are Indigenous, were born in non-English speaking countries and/or live in rural and regional areas.

Research shows that inclusive learning environments need:

- strategic outreach
- ongoing engagement
- tailored support
- a flexible learning environment.

Discussion questions

Are there other ways to invest in the literacy and numeracy teaching capabilities of the adult community education workforce?

What approach could be taken to achieve a minimum teaching standard?

How can the andragogical approach of adult community providers to literacy and numeracy be enhanced?

We support trialling communities of practice using existing networks and expertise such as VALBEC. These could be established at a regional level and be incorporated with regional planning and coordination trials

Consideration needs to be given to the fact that requirements for accreditation or minimum standards can increase employment costs. Accreditation can also act as a barrier to people who are teach as a passion rather than a profession. Supporting their professional development rather than

requiring a minimum standard may be a more productive approach, with less adverse cost implications for many smaller LLs.

The ACE sector is a significant community asset that has achieved great results for adults with low level literacy. However, the sector has the potential to be optimised to play a much greater role in supporting disadvantaged adults in Victoria with literacy development; particularly in rural and regional locations. Research should be undertaken immediately across the ACE sector in Victoria to fully map the dimension and nature of non-formal and formal adult literacy programs that are running and the current staffing models in place.

Countries with the highest levels of adult literacy and numeracy (e.g. Scandinavian countries) require higher professional skills/qualifications for educators delivering formal adult and vocational education qualifications, which are complemented by non-formal community based and workplace based programs that have different qualification requirements.

There is a role for differently qualified peer educators in community and work environments. However, they must have access to high quality, contextualised and structured professional development that builds their skills and knowledge in andragogic principles, learner engagement and retention; and learning and assessment design, etc. It should also include innovative, evidence-based teaching and learning practice that will motivate adult educators to achieve the best outcome for their learners.

Some ACE adult literacy programs use volunteers to support low cost service provision, more flexible scheduling and individualised support. But paring the least experienced, committed or trained person with someone with the lowest level of literacy is problematic. ACE adult literacy volunteers could be required to complete preservice training and given access to the ACE PD program.

The ACE PD program should be designed by the sector for the sector, and could potentially include a mandated level of PD activity. Relevant peak bodies should be funded to run the PD program as determined by the sector.

Professional development for the sector could potentially include leadership programs and support by qualified adult literacy mentors. Optional and subsidised accredited training for eligible adult educators (for example, those located in designated priority areas) should also be considered.

Discussion questions

Do the current system settings meet the needs of at-risk learners?

Are the foundation skills courses sufficient to meet the needs of learners at the lowest levels of literacy

In order to effectively meet the needs of 'at-risk' learners, pre-accredited funding should include a subsidy for the outreach required to:

- increase participation
- provide high quality assessment processes at the point of engagement
- offer support that enables participation.

Foundation skills outcomes tend to be undermined by the inflexibility of the VET system. High needs learners may struggle with consistent attendance given their life circumstances; for example, they may be dealing with the impacts of insecure housing, mental health, cultural and family obligations, etc. Providers are effectively forced to withdraw high needs learners due to the funding constraints

rather than suspending and allowing them to resume their training when circumstances are more favourable. The 'Improving participation and success in VET for disadvantaged learners' report highlights the value of flexibility, however, this is not facilitated by VET system.

The two course rule is a structural impediment for high needs learners that if removed would have a positive impact on learner momentum.

In 2002, the International Labour Organization described foundation skills as 'literacy, numeracy, citizenship, social skills, learning to learn skills and the ability to problem solve together' (Newton 2016). However, accredited foundation skills programs largely focus on workplace participation.

Research tells us that literacy is developed through social participation and that low levels of literacy are often intergenerational and linked with entrenched disadvantage.

Adults with low literacy are often the products of poor formal schooling, poverty, family dysfunction and a myriad of other issues that can impede their ability to learn.

A better approach for adults with very low literacy is purposeful, locally determined, non-formal adult literacy programs that address the issue from a holistically perspective and embrace an intergenerational approach if required.

Theme 2: Ensuring the adult community education system is strongly oriented towards jobs and industry

Discussion questions

What would be required to tailor pre-accredited and foundation skills training to a specific industry context?

Would developing pre-accredited micro-credentials result in greater employer understanding of learner achievements in pre-accredited training?

Would insurance coverage for pre-accredited work experience assist learners to develop transferrable industry skills?

Structural changes in the global economy have resulted in a growing demand for a highly skilled and adaptable workforce. Life changing technology is emerging at such a rate that it has become impossible to predict what the roles, skills and jobs of the tomorrow will look like.

A significant percentage of existing jobs across the globe are at risk of automation; particularly jobs that involve routine or repetitive tasks. According to PwC, prioritised employability skills relate to adaptability, innovation, design, problem solving, critical analysis, empathy and creativity.

Given that the landscape of work in the future is largely unknown and with new media, science and technology moving rapidly, a broader more holistic approach to learning and literacy is required. A policy approach that is solely focussed on the skills required by industry fails to recognise the importance of learning in helping adults to adapt to and manage changing roles at work, in families and in their communities.

Pre-accredited and foundation skills training must work to mitigate deep and persistent disadvantage. It should be responsive to the growing rate of change in our society and bring about strong social returns in terms of productivity, community participation, political awareness and active citizenry.

Many adult learners gain an interest in further accredited training or employment as a secondary outcome of engagement in a pre-accredited or non-formal learning program. One of the key strengths of the current pre-accredited model is that enables people to learn that they are capable of succeeding in a formal learning setting, which enables them to consider new possibilities.

The lack of data on learner intent suggests more analysis is required to determine whether tailoring learning to a specific industry context is an effective or desirable objective in terms of engaging learners with low educational attainment or literacy (Deloitte Access Economics, 2017).

In addition the 'Improving participation and success in VET for disadvantaged learners' report (2018,P51) notes that industry focused learning does not strongly correlate with employment outcomes:

'Despite the fact that one of the main purposes of VET is to prepare learners for the workforce, the link between vocational qualifications and occupational destinations — outside regulated occupations — is often weak in Australia.'

The report further notes that 'thinking of the benefits of VET training exclusively in terms of employment is short-sighted'.

These perspectives suggest a more learner centred approach that accommodates the range of motivations learners may have is preferable to focusing on industry specific training at the pre-accredited level. While it may be a valuable option it should be part of a suite of options.

Stackable micro-credentials or skillsets that are standalone or that could be aggregated to achieve an award over time present one way to pathway learners from pre-accredited into accredited learning programs or build their skills for the workplace. Micro-credential or skillsets for pre-accredited learning would require a detailed and coherent strategy that involves strong engagement with the sector.

Insurance coverage that covers pre-accredited work experience for learners must be part of any strategy to provide for work placements and workplace based education.

Discussion questions

What is the best mechanism for adult community education providers to engage with industry on the development of industry- specific literacy and numeracy solutions?

What would make adult community education delivery in the workplace an appealing option for industry to support?

Should LLN training in the workplace require a co-contribution from employers?

General awareness of the existing educational services that ACE organisations offer is not particularly strong among many employers across Victoria. A targeted communications strategy and a roadmap that supports learning partnerships between ACE providers and business would benefit both parties.

ACE providers are well placed to provide the type of learning workplaces want; for example, skills gap training as well as intensive or extensive LLN programs. ACE providers are also agile enough to participate in a co-design process with employees and employers to ensure their individual needs are met.

NCVER notes 'The development of regional frameworks that coordinate relationships between local community groups, VET providers and regional labour markets would likely benefit all involved. Collaboration helps to develop a comprehensive and coherent approach to the engagement of disadvantaged learners and may help to strengthen the relationship between VET completion and relevant job opportunities (NCVER 2018).

We support a trial of a regionally based and integrated approach to develop locally appropriate industry engagement as part of a regional approach to addressing the LL&N needs of Victorians.

Barriers for employers are well known and were outlined in the Skills Reform discussion paper of 2008. Regional planning and industry engagement approaches as recommended by NCVER and based on local relationships with key stakeholders may be effective in increasing industry support for workplace ACE delivery. Properly resourced, the approach could address the constraints providers face by brokering the delivery between stakeholders.

In terms of business investment in LLN training, the Commonwealth's Workplace English Language and Literacy program, which included an employer contribution demonstrated a 'significant link between strong LLN skills and workplace productivity. The program was highly valued because it enabled access, improved communication and promoted a training culture leading to a wider field of workplace training. WELL was seen to equip participants with vocational and LLN skills, increase their

employability prospects and improve social and personal skills. It was consistently evaluated as making a positive contribution to the workplace, especially in challenging and changing economic times (Adult Learning Australia, 2018).

Theme 3: Ensuring Victoria has a cohesive, collaborative adult community education system, with strong connections between adult community education and the mainstream training system

Discussion questions

What are the appropriate models of TAFE and Learn Local collaboration, and how could this become an embedded element of the Victorian VET sector?

What other key elements of a learner- centred system could be highlighted in any formalisation of roles and expectations in adult community education?

Are there strategic implications for the adult community education sector of a more collaborative model between TAFE and Learn Locals?

Effective partnerships are a crucial way of enabling a wider share of the community to engage in learning activities across the spectrum. Partnerships work better within a local context and good practice means finding solutions to local and regional education and training needs. It's important to find some 'common ground' and to focus on ways of working together than enhances opportunities for all the partners (Stehlik & Gelade, 2006).

However, sometimes there are competing interests and not enough incentive or understanding about how the partners can effectively collaborate. These barriers could be resolved through shared goals, regular and ongoing interaction and increased awareness of the 'other' sector's programs, pathways and processes.

The success of a partnership often depends on the people involved and their capacity to partner. It also involves a flattening of hierarchical or power structures and finding ways to resolve the differences in funding requirements.

Also significant is a clear understanding of each other's operational requirements, teaching and learning styles, student cohorts, etc.

The current variability in the quality, scope and sustainability of TAFE and ACE collaborations can be seen as a lack of regionalised planning. Trials of a regional planning approach consistent with the recommendations of 'Improving participation and success in VET for disadvantaged learners' should allow for greater coordination and collaboration between the TAFE and ACE sectors and industry, and could include other key stakeholder such as local governments.

This approach should be independent of any one sector in the same way the LLENs operate independently and could include a focus on disadvantaged learners as well as learners with low level LLN.

Any formalisation of the roles between TAFE and Learn Locals must reflect the broader value of ACE beyond the purely vocational.

If 'thinking of the benefits of VET training exclusively in terms of employment is short-sighted' (Lamb et al, 2018) then thinking of ACE in this way is even more so.

The role that ACE plays in providing an access point into VET through learning that is designed to build confidence and recognition of learners' potential is a key element that facilitates access.

More research is required to determine the extent to which the parallel TAFE & ACE systems produces benefits for different cohorts that would be lost if LL is reduced to a feeder system for TAFE. While we know that overall learners that transition into VET have equal outcomes regardless of the type of VET provider, what is not known is how many of those learners who stayed in the Learn Local system would have transitioned to another provider type if the Learn Local option with its support structures were not available.

Past experience indicates that RTOs are necessarily sensitive to market conditions and this impacts collaboration. Policy decisions that undermine trust and mutual respect between the sectors inevitably undermine collaboration. There is a need to properly recognise the complementary roles played by both sectors in the policy settings and particularly to protect the role ACE RTOs play in providing an essential alternative accessible learning environment for accredited training.

Discussion questions

How could Learner Advocates remain informed about emerging local needs and opportunities across the education network and local labour market?

Are there successful existing models assisting learners to navigate the adult community education system and their career paths?

What other services or supports can assist learners to transition from adult community education provision to mainstream training?

Learner Advocates that are based within TAFE will inevitably lack independence. A better approach would be to focus on strong collaborative partnerships between sector stakeholders combined with sufficient funding for engagement.

Building and maintaining effective relationships with other providers and ensuring their own knowledge of and improved access to pathway information may make the role of Learner Advocates redundant.

A properly resourced regional planning approach as discussed previously may address this.

Providers have indicated that a loss of CERT II courses to use as transitional courses creates an obstacle. Many disadvantaged learners require significant amounts of contact hours to reach competence to complete a CERT III level course and CERT II courses provided a good transition mechanism at a level that is appropriate. However, better funded pre-accredited programs would also assist transition. Lamb et al (2018, p11) confirm the importance of basic courses for people with low levels of prior educational attainment.

Discussion questions

What would be the key elements of a learner- centred system?

What systemic change would need to occur for the adult community sector to reflect a learner-centred system?

What other measures could be taken to enhance performance of the adult community education sector as a whole?

A learner centred system offers engaging learning experiences that promote critical thinking, problem solving, communication, technology, and lifelong learning skills. In a learner centred

system, learners use multiple resources including prior knowledge and experiences to make learning meaningful to them.

The goal in a learner centre system is to draw out adult experiences in order to elicit learning that changes attitudes, believes and behaviours.

ACE is already recognised as learner centred and generally delivers better outcomes for disadvantaged cohorts. ACE enables inclusive learning by recognising that there is a broad spectrum of learners with individual needs and preferences.

ACE learning programs are highly focussed and offered in a friendly, flexible and supportive environment.

ACE organisations also play a significant role in vocational educational training (VET) for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds or for people facing multiple barriers to learning. National NCVER (2016) data indicates that community providers have greater success rates for graduates attaining employment status after training than all other providers.

A learner centred model should prioritise the learner's needs and aspirations at all stages of the learning journey and accommodate the non-linear pathways that result from learner discovery as they move in and through the adult education system.

The following elements should be considered:

Outreach

- Learning options are brought to the learner whether through the workplace or through connections with other agencies and services.

Engagement

- Learners motivations and aspirations are understood and valued.

- Learning is valued as much as a journey of discovery as a journey of intent.

- Learners have adequate information about their chosen courses and its requirements.

- Learners have adequate information about the possibilities for further learning.

- Learners needs are assessed to ensure all of the elements required to support successful learning are in place.

Learning

- Learners are included in course design and delivery.

- Supports are provided to ensure adequate wrap-around services essential to successful participation on a case by case basis as required.

- Learners are able to explore their potential beyond their initial aspirations.

- Learning is available in an environment that suits learner needs. Community locations such as Learn Locals are better utilised by the rest of the system as sites for delivery for vulnerable learners.

Transition

- Learners are able to move in and through the adult education system as their needs and aspirations change. This includes being able to access different levels of the system at different

times including upward, downward and sideways learning.

- Supports are provide to vulnerable learners at points of transition to higher level learning or to new training providers.

- Pathways to further learning or employment are clearly articulated and understood by learners.

- Pathways to further learning or employment are planned for and established between providers and industry.

Attainment

- Learners outcomes are contextualised relative to their goals.

- Outcomes increase options for learners, educationally, vocationally and in their capacity to participate actively in society.

As previously noted, ACE providers capacity for greater learner focus is constrained by the current flat rate funding model.

Discussion questions

How could Learner-Centred trials work in practice?

What elements and attributes facilitate success in place-based models?

What sort of stimulus would be required to make participation in learner-centred trials viable for providers?

How could it be ensured that learner-centred trials respond to the needs of target cohorts?

More work needs to be done to understand which elements of the current Learn Local structure and policy settings support or undermine learner centred practice. For example, does the current requirement for demonstrated pathways to further education or employment limit the range of courses providers offer? If so, how does this impact learner engagement especially given that many vulnerable learners' journeys are non-linear and may start with informal or less structured learning.

It is also currently unclear as to the extent that the lack of resources for outreach and engagement compromise provider's capability in some elements of learner centeredness. Our own sector consultations suggest that where providers have economies of scale they invest in better quality and more learner centred practices at the point of engagement.

We recommend a limited trial of a funding model that invests in outreach and engagement against learner centred principles in a range of contexts, including in those geographic areas where access to further education is limited. This should be informed by an evaluation of the Reconnect program.

Participation by providers in processes to improve collaboration, pathways development, industry and cohort responses need to be resourced in recognition of the time investment and associated costs.

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