WHAT TASMANIA NEEDS FROM EDUCATION
A REGIONAL ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Purpose

This report has been prepared as a submission to the Regional Development Australia Tasmania Committee to support the creation of a regional development approach to boost educational levels in Tasmania. This report explores the Tasmanian context and how regional development can help educational attainment. Through the production of this report the Regional Development Australia Tasmania Committee has been able to identify areas where education and regional development intersect within which there is a role for the Committee to facilitate action. RDA Tasmania continues to work with representatives of the key education and employment organisations to inform its work: University of Tasmania, Department of Education, and Department of State Growth including Skills Tasmania.

Executive Summary

Education is vital to Tasmania’s productivity and quality of life and is increasingly linked to the prosperity of regional economies. Developing a skilled and educated population will offer Tasmania the resilience and innovation to maximise opportunities and face future challenges. In general, Tasmania is behind in educational attainment and labour force skills. It also experiences slower economic growth than other regions. The reasons for this are many but they are in all well understood and policies are in place to address some of the key issues, such as post year 10 training and education.

Activity within the school ground, campus and workplace is already improving educational outcomes, for example the school system delivers Year 10 students on par with similar regions. Where regional development approaches to education come into play is when there is an identified need to bring more partners into the process to amplify results or reverse negative trends. A structured, multi-disciplinary approach can tackle previously unsolvable problems and this is something communities around the globe are experiencing right now. There will be areas in Tasmania where education and the economy intersect and a regional development approach would be effective. These need to be identified using evidence and expertise and as this is a state-wide issue there needs to be direction given by state level organisations as to where efforts should be focussed. RDA Tasmania recommends this is where a regional development approach to education begins:

Initiators:
RDAT
UTAS
TCCI
DPAC
DSG / Skills Tas
Dept. Education Tas

Engage Stakeholders:
Dept. Employment
Dept. Education
TasTAFE
Schools
RTOs
Local Gov
Tas. leaders (Think Bank)

Deliver:
Agreed vision
Scalable framework
(appendix 2)
Background

Regional Development Australia – Tasmania

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is an Australian Government initiative established to encourage partnership between all levels of government to enhance the growth and development of Australia’s regional communities. RDA committees operate under a national RDA Charter and report to the Australian Government on key outcomes. A national network of 55 RDA committees has been established and RDA Tasmania represents the entire state of Tasmania.

RDA Tasmania is a not-for-profit organisation that has a formal partnership between the Australian Government, the Tasmanian Government, and the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT). A key focus of RDA Tasmania is on the economic, social and environmental issues affecting communities.

Committee members of RDA Tasmania are committed volunteers who have been chosen by the Australian Government due to their understanding of, and experience in, a range of areas including their professional and industry background, community networks, skills and experience.

RDA Tasmania is able to work with all levels of government, industry and community to pursue challenges and opportunities relevant to our region. RDA Tasmania produces an annual Regional Plan that outlines RDA Tasmania’s vision for the region and identifies priorities.

Priorities are informed by statistical data in the regional profile, Australian and State government policy imperatives and stakeholder consultation.

Acknowledgement

RDA Tasmania gratefully acknowledges the assistance of University of Tasmania (UTAS) and the Commonwealth Department of Employment in the provision of research for this document.
1. Why we need what we need from education

Education is increasingly linked to productivity and living standards.¹ Lifting productivity growth is the key to Tasmania and Australia’s prosperity, economic growth and social wellbeing.² Productivity growth depends on education to provide an innovative and resilient population, who are able to maximise opportunities and face future challenges.

The graph below demonstrates the strong positive relationship between educational attainment and employment outcomes. Those with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in the workforce and less likely to be unemployed³:

Figure 1 Educational attainment and labour market outcomes (Tasmania, 25-34 year olds)

Tasmania needs to expand and grow its education levels and its economic activity. It is not positioned to compete internationally on commodity prices, low staff costs or by offering an unregulated business environment. Instead it needs a workforce that combines technical and business management disciplines to compete on quality and innovation. Australian Government research shows that businesses who strategically innovate are twice as likely to report productivity increases. The highest single reported barrier to innovation is skilled people.⁴ The world is now moving quicker than ever with the ongoing emergence of new technologies and the opportunities from international collaboration. Pupils starting school today have to be prepared for working in industries which we can’t even understand yet, such as nano-fabrication, human bionics and advanced engineering.⁵

¹ Ashton, DN. and Green, F. Education, training and the global economy, hdl.voced.edu.au, 1996
² ACOLA, The Role of Science, Research and Technology in lifting Australian Productivity
³ Department of Employment, The Tasmanian Labour market: where the jobs are and what employers want, 2013
⁴ Department of Industry, Australia Innovation System Report, 2012
Improvements in human capital can enhance the innovative and productive capacity of a region. Developing a highly skilled and educated population can be the difference between a resilient region and one that struggles. Individuals with greater education and skills can pursue a wider range of employment opportunities, adapt to new processes and technologies, and improve their standard of living\(^6\).

### Key points:
- **Is Tasmania on a trajectory to withstand the future demands on education and employment?**
- **Learn + Earn = Growth**

### 2. Education in Tasmania

RDA Tasmania’s Regional Plan 2013-14 profiled the value of human capital in Tasmania, which is one of the key drivers of regional development.

In general, Tasmania is behind in educational attainment and labour-force skills. Slow economic growth has for many impacted their transition from education to employment, particularly with the population being so regionally dispersed. Tasmania’s students transfer into education post year 10 is below the rate of other jurisdictions. In addition a social gradient can be observed, at one end of the scale there are negative perceptions towards educational and career attainment\(^7\). At the other end a cohort willing to leave the state to pursue opportunities.\(^8\)

#### 2.1 Educational attainment

Educational attainment is positively linked to higher levels of employment and labour force participation, higher wages, and higher levels of productivity. Literacy and numeracy levels for students at age 14 are critical determinants of future achievement (particularly in terms of whether they continue at school, enter university, and secure high-status, well-paid jobs). There is also growing evidence that education has a positive causal effect on such social outcomes as better health, greater civic engagement and reduced crime\(^9\).

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\(^6\) Regional Australia Standing Council, Framework for Regional Economic Development, 2013

\(^7\) West, J, Obstacles to Progress, Griffith Review Edition 39, 2013

\(^8\) Easthope, H. Returning to place; the return migration of young adults to Tasmania, 2006

\(^9\) Price Waterhouse Coopers, Improving Productivity Through Education, November 2012
Educational attainment is improving, with the number of post-school qualifications increasing. The graph below shows the percentage of the population who have post-school qualifications, by level of qualification, and how these percentages have changed between 2001 and 2011.\(^{10}\)

Figure 2 People with post-school qualifications as a percentage of total population, 2001 - 2011, Tasmania

The national rate of attainment of Year 12 or equivalent school or non-school qualification for young people aged 20–24 years has risen over the last decade from 78% to 85% in 2011. While still having one of the lowest attainment rates overall for 20–24 year olds, Tasmania has experienced the greatest increase, from 65% in 2001 to 77% in 2011.\(^{11}\)

Figure 3 Year 12 and equivalent attainment for 20-24 year olds, including COAG targets for 2015\(^{12}\)

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\(^{10}\) Department of Employment, Trends - The Tasmanian Labour Market Review, October 2012

\(^{11}\) ABS, Source ABS 2071.0, Year 12 Achievement and Continuing Education

\(^{12}\) ABS, Source ABS 2071.0, Year 12 Achievement and Continuing Education
More Tasmanian’s finished school at Year 10 or equivalent than the Australian average and less Tasmanians completes Year 12 or equivalent than the Australian average: 13

Figure 4 Highest level of schooling completed, 2011 (percentage persons aged 15+ years)

Within Australia, Year 12 attainment is regarded as a key factor in the formal development of an individual’s skills and knowledge. Those with Year 12 attainment have a greater likelihood of continuing with further study, particularly in higher education, as well as entering into the workforce. Year 12 attainment contributes to the development of a skilled workforce, and in turn, to ongoing economic development and improved living conditions. The Council of Australian Governments’ National Education Agreement (2009) aims to lift the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate for 20-24 year olds to 90% by 2015. 14

Year 12 attainment is increasing in Tasmania 15:

Figure 5 Change in highest level of schooling 2006 to 2011

13 http://profile.id.com.au, Tasmania Highest Level of Schooling
14 ABS, 4102.0 Australian Social Trends, March 2011
15 http://profile.id.com.au, Tasmania Highest Level of Schooling
The three main school education providers are the Tasmanian Government (213 schools), Catholic Education (37) and the Independent schools sector (29). The number of students enrolled at non-government schools in Tasmania as a percentage of all school enrolments has increased from 33 per cent to 41 per cent over the last decade (2000 to 2010). The university sector has experienced growth between 2001 and 2011, whilst overall student numbers in pre-school, infant-primary, secondary, and technical and further education all falling\(^{16}\).

The Tasmanian education system has undergone significant reform over the last five years. The separation of vocational education and training provision to industry and individuals established through Tasmania Tomorrow ceased in 2013. The new TasTAFE independent Statutory Authority caters for all public vocational education and training, combining the Tasmanian Polytechnic and Tasmanian Skills Institute.

The new Liberal State Government has a Plan to invest in education\(^{17}\) that includes strategies such as:
- Extending 21 high schools in rural and regional communities to year 12; and
- Improving retention rates so an extra 2000 young Tasmanians complete their year 11 and 12 studies.

Action on school retention will also be informed by the partnership with the University of Tasmania (UTAS) on the research Linkage Project: Beyond the Compulsory Years in Rural, Regional and Disadvantaged Communities Project. This three-year collaborative project will inform the Department of Education on developing and implementing effective interventions in Tasmania to enhance student retention, attainment and completion\(^{18}\).

Through the provision of a wide range of programs and delivery options including Guaranteeing Futures (pathway planning), Trade Training Centres and Australian school-based Apprenticeships, the state education department supports students to achieve a Year 12 qualification or equivalent.

\(^{16}\) Department of Employment, Trends - The Tasmanian Labour Market Review, October 2012


Tasmania’s target is for 81.6 per cent of students to attain Year 12 or equivalent qualifications by 2015. This target represents Tasmania’s contribution to the national target of 90 per cent Year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2015 set through the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions. Tasmania’s current attainment rate is 78.35 per cent.19

2.2 Education profile of the workforce
The qualifications and educational attainment profile for workers in Tasmania differs significantly from the Australian average. For Tasmania as a whole there are a lower proportion of workers who have completed a non-school qualification than the national average (49.9 per cent for Tasmania and 53.9 per cent for Australia).

There are significant differences between qualifications and educational attainment profiles across individual regions in Tasmania. For instance, the share of employment for those with a bachelor degree or above is highest in Hobart (22.5 per cent; which is just below the Australian average of 22.8 per cent), followed by Launceston (16.3 per cent) and west and north-west Tasmania (11.5 per cent).20

The table below shows that Tasmania Growth in employment over the last five years has been negative; the only region to be so, except regional South Australia that fell only a small amount. Apart from that, Tasmania is comparable to many other regions across Australia, although it is ageing much faster:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cities and Regions</th>
<th>Employ't Nov 2013</th>
<th>Change in employ't 5 yrs to Nov 2013</th>
<th>Aged 45 years or older</th>
<th>With a bachelor degree or higher qual</th>
<th>With a cert III or higher VET qual</th>
<th>Without a post-school qual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>2393.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional NSW</td>
<td>1269.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>2162.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional VIC</td>
<td>741.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>1081.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional QLD</td>
<td>1279.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>603.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional SA</td>
<td>211.9</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 http://lmip.gov.au, Regional Profile Tasmania
21 Department of Employment, Australian Jobs, 2014
The number of Tasmanians in the labour force with educational attainment to year 10 or less is much higher than other states.

Figure 6 Level of Highest Educational Attainment in the Labour Force (percentage persons aged 15-64 years per state or territory)\textsuperscript{22}

2.2.1 Tertiary education and research

Hobart has the highest number of scientists per capita of any city in Australia and is host to 65 per cent of all Australia’s Antarctic and Southern Oceans research scientists.\textsuperscript{23} The University of Tasmania (UTAS) is the only university in the state and has campuses in the south, north and north west of the region.

\textsuperscript{22} ABS, 6227 Education and Work Report, May 2013
\textsuperscript{23} Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, Industry summary, Science and Research
Several world-class research and educational institutions are based in Tasmania, including the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, the CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research Centre; Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre; the Menzies Research Institute; the national Forestry Cooperative Research Centre; the Australian Maritime College; the Australasian Furnishing Research and Development Institute; and the Australian Antarctic Division.

2.3 Workforce challenges

2.3.1 Unemployment
Tasmania continues to have the highest unemployment rate in the country and the gap is increasing. The unemployment rate as at April 2014 was 7.5 percent, the same as it was in April 2013, compared to a national unemployment rate of 5.9 per cent. Unemployment rates vary considerably across the state. In Kingston, an outer suburb of Hobart, the unemployment rate at December 2013 was 3.7 per cent, in contrast to George Town, an industrial town in the north of the state, which recorded an unemployment rate of 14.0 per cent.

The following graph compares employment trends in Tasmania to Australia over the last five years. The red line represents Australia and uses the left-hand scale on the graph, while Tasmania is represented by the blue line and uses the right hand scale on the graph.

Figure 7 Total employment, Tasmania & Australia, March 2008 to March 2013 (000s)

2.3.2 Hours worked
Tasmania has a higher level of part-time work than the national average; it was 34.7 per cent in April 2014 compared to 30.5 per cent nationally. While full-time employment increased by 5.1 per cent.
over the year, part-time employment fell by 4.4 per cent, possible indicating a move from part-time to full-time work\textsuperscript{28}.

\subsection{Participation rate}

The participation rate in Tasmania for April 2014 was 60.9 per cent, up from the 60.2 per cent recorded a year ago. Both male and female participation increased over the twelve months from April 2013\textsuperscript{29}. The current national participation rate is 64.8 per cent\textsuperscript{30}.

\subsection{Ageing workforce}

The workforce in Tasmania is ageing more rapidly than any other state in Australia with mature aged workers (over 40-59 year age group) close to 41.5 per cent of the workforce for all three regions of the state, compared with 38.3 per cent for Australia\textsuperscript{31}.

Furthermore, nearly 40 per cent of employed 15- to 24-year-olds are concentrated in the two industries of retail trade, and accommodation and food services\textsuperscript{32}.

Below is a graph of the Tasmanian Population by Age Group - Five Year Time Series, illustrating the virtually flat population growth, with the exception of the 65 years and over age category that is showing significant growth\textsuperscript{33}.

\section*{Figure 8 Tasmanian Population by Age Group - Five Year Time Series}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{ Tasmania Population by Age Group - Five Year Time Series}
\caption{Tasmanian Population by Age Group}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{28} Department of Employment, Trends - The Tasmanian Labour Market Review, April 2014
\textsuperscript{29} Department of Employment, Trends - The Tasmanian Labour Market Review, April 2014
\textsuperscript{30} ABS, 6202.0 Labour Force, Australia, April 2014
\textsuperscript{31} http://lmip.gov.au, Regional Profile Tasmania
\textsuperscript{32} http://lmip.gov.au, Regional Profile Tasmania
\textsuperscript{33} http://lmip.gov.au, Tasmanian Population by Age Group - Five Year Time Series
2.3.5 Literacy and numeracy

The proportion of adult Tasmanians with low literacy skills is high. The 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that around half of the Tasmanian population aged 15–74 years lack the literacy skills needed to cope with the demands of everyday life and work. For example, 49 per cent of adult Tasmanians do not have the basic skills needed to understand and use information from newspapers, magazines, books and brochures. Overall, at the time of the 2006 Census, Tasmania had the lowest level of adult literacy skills in the nation and there had been no improvement in adult literacy levels since they were last measured in 1996.

Results from the international Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) and Australian Bureau of Statistics released in October 2013, show that on average older Australian’s have lower literacy and numeracy levels than the rest of the population, with assessed scores declining from the late 40s. Literacy and Numeracy skills are presented on a sliding scale with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 the highest. While Tasmania’s literacy outcomes are low, they are comparable with other states.

Figure 9 Proportion at literacy Level 3 or above (By state/territory of usual residence and sex 2011–12)\(^{34}\)

Tasmania has the lowest levels of literacy and school retention in the country\(^{35}\), and year 7 to 9 students are performing below the minimum national standards across all disciplines in national testing (NAPLAN).

The State Government has developed the Adult Literacy Action Plan 2010-2015 to provide a framework to address low literacy outcomes in Tasmania and the number of people participating across the Action Plan’s programs (26TEN, Literacy Skills Development) has increased.\(^{36}\)

\(^{34}\) ABS, 4228.0 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, Australia, 2011-2012

\(^{35}\) ABS, 1307.6 Tasmanian State and Regional Indicators, June 2008
Tasmania’s low levels of adult literacy are influenced by a range of factors including the higher prevalence of older persons in the population, and lower school retention rates and post-school qualifications. Information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggests that Tasmanians in regional municipalities tend to have lower literacy levels compared to those living in major metropolitan areas.\(^\text{37}\)

2.4 Workforce opportunities

It is important to understand both the current and future scenarios for which people are studying and training. Growth is projected in agriculture, tourism and service industries like health, education and retail. Investing in skills ahead of need helps industries to develop.\(^\text{38}\) For Tasmanians studying vocations for which the jobs have not come on-stream yet, transferable and adaptive skills become vital. These traditionally include communicating, team work, problem solving, working with information technology and managing and organising skills. Teaching entrepreneurship is one way to provide an individual these skills, it also helps them learn how to create opportunities for themselves.

2.4.1 Tasmanian Skills Strategy

The four themes identified in the Tasmania Skills Strategy 2013 to 2015\(^\text{39}\) include areas for improvement that affect demand and skill profile:

Table 2 Tasmanian Skills Strategy 2013 to 2015, Themes and Areas for improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Opportunity</td>
<td>Adult literacy&lt;br&gt;Increased participation, retention and achievement by disadvantaged groups&lt;br&gt;Transition and retention support for young people&lt;br&gt;Joining up of services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Systems for Clients</td>
<td>Strong public RTO&lt;br&gt;Increased competition and choice&lt;br&gt;Better information to clients&lt;br&gt;Integrated tertiary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Development</td>
<td>Community, enterprise and industry partnerships&lt;br&gt;Demand-led training&lt;br&gt;Building industry and RTO human resources and e-learning capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills for the Future</td>
<td>Respond to industry transitions&lt;br&gt;Prioritise Government investment in training and skills&lt;br&gt;Emerging industries&lt;br&gt;Skills for sustainability&lt;br&gt;Strategic infrastructure planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{37}\) Department of Education, Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan 2010-2015

\(^{38}\) Australian Innovation Research Centre, Diversifying Tasmania’s Economy, 2012

2.4.2 Changes in industry activity

Employment growth over the last five years has occurred mainly in the service sector, while employment in more traditional industries has declined. Based on the number of people employed in the largest industries, Tasmania appears to have a lower level of economic diversity, when compared to the national average. Tourism directly and indirectly supports around 32 000 jobs in Tasmania or about 13.5 per cent of total Tasmanian employment; the highest proportion in the country.

Industries that employ a greater percentage of the Tasmanian workforce compared to nationally, include retail trade, agriculture, forestry and fishing, public administration and safety, and accommodation and food services. Industries where there is a lower percentage of Tasmanians employed compared to the national average are mining, financial and insurance, and the professional, scientific and technical services industry. Refer to the Tasmanian Employment by Industry Time Series graph below.

Figure 10 Tasmania - Employment by Industry Five Year Time Series

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2.4.3 Skill shortages
Despite high unemployment, Tasmania still experiences skill shortages particularly in trades, health and education. The Australian Government Skills Shortage List Tasmania was updated in February 2014\(^{43}\). The trend of skill shortages in the construction industry is continuing, with shortages in civil, electrical and mechanical engineers. Skill shortages or difficulty in recruiting was experienced in the automotive and engineering trades and shortages of child care workers, midwives and special needs workers were also recorded.

2.5 The cost to Tasmanian of its education levels
Individually we can contribute towards life in Tasmania (school, work, community), but we can also be a cost to society. Education is recognised as the major contributor for providing individuals with the skills, knowledge and experience to deal with life’s challenges and to have a fair-go. Education can make the difference in mitigating an individual’s cost to society.

\(^{42}\) http://lmip.gov.au, Tasmania - Employment by Industry Five Year Time Series
The European Commission has identified three categories of costs of school failure:\(^44\):

- **Private costs**, e.g. unemployment and earnings, health status, lower lifelong learning participation and life satisfaction
- **Social costs**, e.g. criminality, intergenerational effects, unemployment, less social cohesion
- **Fiscal costs**, e.g. lost tax revenue, public expenditure on income support, health, criminal justice

Tasmanian examples for these categories include:

- **Private costs**: female graduates in Tasmania median starting salary is 129.1% of women’s average weekly earnings\(^45\)
- **Social costs**: George Town in the state’s north has a Year 12 completion rate of 42%, the proportion of all families who are jobless is 31%, the proportion of working age population on Centrelink allowance is 35% and of all females aged 20-24 years 43% are disengaged\(^46\)
- **Fiscal costs**: there’s a strong correlation between levels of educational attainment in the workforce and labour productivity\(^47\)

Figure 11 Labour productivity and educational attainment 2008 to 2009


**Key points:**

- Systemic / cultural liabilities
- Never too old to learn
- Tasmania can’t work without jobs

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\(^45\) Graduate Careers Australia, _Graduate Salaries 2012_

\(^46\) Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, _Labour Market Conditions in 2013_, 2013

\(^47\) Eslake, _Economic Growth, Living Standards and Productivity in Tasmania_, 2010
3 Barriers to education

Individually we all face barriers to education and employment. Whether we lack the capacity, support or resources, or experience a system that is blocking us, there is always something that hinders our transition through education and employment.

3.1 Public perception

Give a room of people five minutes to list all the barriers they can think of and you end up with a good impression of how vast the scope of this subject is.

The Northern Young Professional Network’s Vision 20-20 function of June 2014 looked at the issue of jobless families and invited the participants to list the barriers to education and employment. The attendees represented the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. Shared themes run between the barriers, such as social exclusion and service provision, but with over 80 suggestions in five minutes (see Appendix 1 – Northern Young Professionals Network), none with easy solutions and all requiring multiple parties to address it paints a complex picture:

- Affordability of education
- Appreciation of delayed gratification
- Limited career paths
- Travel costs
- Self limiting views

3.2 Barriers identified by research

In Eleanor Ramsay and Michael Rowan’s ‘Tasmanian education today - digging around in the data’ they explore some of the commonly reported statistics, including some featured in Section 2 and provide an analysis of the state of education:

- Parental level of education is a strong influence on NAPLAN results
- Parental occupation is a strong influence on NAPLAN results
- Students in the highest socioeconomic quartile are two and a half years ahead of those in the lowest socio-economic quartile
- Students in provincial and remote schools are behind those in metropolitan schools
- Skills among young people are higher than older people, but with an older population Tasmania ranks lowest on adult literacy and numeracy tests
- The demands on our literacy and numeracy skills are growing in response to the increasing complexity of modern life
- An education that was good enough in the past may exclude people from full participation in their future adult life
- Poverty may be a more powerful influence on educational attainment now than it was in the past
- Up to the age of compulsion (Year 10) Tasmanian students are not much different from countries considered more committed to education, including Sweden, Denmark and Israel
- It isn’t lack of ability, so it must be the lack of opportunities appropriate to the situations of young people presently missing out on education beyond the compulsory years
- Almost all public school students are required to move to a new school to complete their Years 11 and 12 education

48 http://educationambassadors.org.au, Tasmanian Education Today digging around in the data
Almost two thirds, according to TQA data for TCE, fall by the wayside in making this move. To continue education can mean leaving their family and their community, and often going in different directions to most of their peers. Tasmania may be bereft of two of the three factors which the OECD identified as characteristics of countries with educational systems which are strong educational performers capable of effective educational reform; that is, political will and a belief in the potential of all students to learn and to achieve.

Key points:
Complex and vast
It isn’t a lack of ability
Continuing education beyond Year 10

4 Regional development approaches to education

Understanding our region is fundamental to enabling evidence based solutions to be implemented by communities in conjunction with local industry and the tiers of government. Local communities can provide insight into the challenges and opportunities facing their regions and can formulate tailored local solutions. Regional development brings together people and place, it is multidisciplinary, it is asset based and it uses evidence to understand the trajectory a region travels in so it can think long term when designing a policy approach.

4.1 Background concept and examples of models

Regional development has not delivered a one size fits all model because each region has its own idiosyncrasies. Across all models, certain principles are shared to some degree which must be considered when approaching any subject, including advancing educational attainment. These have been summarised by the Regional Australia Standing Council\(^9\):

- Use evidence-based decision making to target and prioritise investment
- Engage regional stakeholders to inform decision making and maximise the value of place-based initiatives
- Develop comprehensive strategies that link and strengthen regional outcomes
- Coordinate across and between governments and sectors
- Encourage partnership funding, leverage opportunities and identify new models for financing projects
- Integrate regional planning

\(^9\) Regional Australia Standing Council, Framework for Regional Economic Development, 2013
With the above principles regularly featured, there are then four topics that most models focus on and then build programs around. The aim is often to develop and invest in, as well as link together:  

- Infrastructure
- Human capital
- Innovation and research / design / expansion
- Integrated regional policies / institutional capacity

The following models are a sample of the many regional development approaches in action around Australia. Each has developed a process to pull together the right stakeholders, agree a vision, establish the scope of their work and design projects around this. Research has shown that they may be transferable, however every region should consider what system best suits them before adopting one. Consultants are available with expertise in each model to facilitate their effective use.

4.1.1 Collective Impact

Origins – Collective Impact has its origins in the USA and was developed in 2010 and is based on the experiences of the Cincinnati’s Strive project, which is included as a case study.

Method – This model emphasises collaboration over isolated activities. The framework for this is built on five conditions for collective success: Common agenda; shared management; mutually reinforcing activities; continuous communication; and a backbone organisation.

Evaluation - TasCOSS are currently promoting Collective Impact in Tasmania and have sponsored events in Burnie and Hobart. Strive in Cincinnati have been able to reverse the decline in educational attainment.

4.1.2 Place based development

Origins - Although having existed in various forms since the 19th Century, it was not until the 1980s that self-titled place-based approaches began to be implemented.

Method - Place-based approaches have five characteristics: (1.) Linked to an identifiable place where (2.) the unique character of the place shapes the specific approach adopted. This allows them to (3.) address a host of interconnected issues associated with that place by means of (4.) a focussed collaboration of people with different backgrounds and from different sectors, while at the same time (5.) engaging the residents to assist in shaping and implementing.

Evaluation - Because of the differences in places and their problems one place-based approach can be dramatically different from another. One of the most prominent features is its ability to adapt and evolve, with some developments now into their second decade. Where the problem is at a population level and is not tied to neighbourhoods, a people-based approach may be more suitable. The Neighbourhood Renewal Program, New South Wales, 2001 to 2006 used this method and the

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50 OECD Observer, How Regions Grow, 2009
52 United Way Toronto, Evidence review of place-based approach, 2012
program’s evaluation uncovered issues, for example Penrith City Council experienced structural constraints with how they delegate responsibility to the community.  

4.1.3 Asset based community development (ABCD)

Origins – The ABCD methodology was created by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann at the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University and explained in their 1993 release, Building Communities from the Inside Out.

Method – A process for communities to self mobilize around their existing skills so they can overcome community challenges. It includes six steps: (1.) Collecting stories; (2.) Organising a core group; (3.) Mapping completely the capacities and assets of individuals, associations and local institutions; (4.) Connecting a broad representative group to build a community vision and plan; (5.) Mobilizing assets for community development; (6.) Leveraging activities, investments and resources from outside the community to support asset-based, locally defined development.

Evaluation – The key to ABCD is how the external agent introducing ABCD acts, so that it becomes the community acting in their interest and without dependency on the external organisation. Communities with deep resentment or hostility towards interference and communities with rigid social hierarchies which are barriers to interaction may not suit ABCD. Communities that have deliberately engaged ABCD have seen a rise in civic engagement.

4.1.4 Regional development platform method

Origins - Regional Development Platform Method (RDPM) has its intellectual roots in Regional Innovation Systems (RIS) and evolutionary economics. These demonstrated that a regional approach to development has advantages over a national innovation system.

Method – RDPM helps to build leadership networks and innovation networks to look for regional business potentials on which it is possible to build the future competitive advantage of a region. The RDPM consists of eight phases: (1.) Benchmarking through the assessment of regional innovation system theories; (2.) Background study of the industries and areas of expertise in the region; (3.) Expert panels; (4.) Assessment of future scenarios; (5.) Definition of potential development platforms; (6.) Conceptualisation of the regional innovation system; (7.) Search of core processes of the regional innovation system and; (8.) Definition of knowledge creation and management system.

Evaluation – Innovation becomes the consequence of many different activities interacting. The theoretical concept behind this may be too complex to be readily used by people unfamiliar with the methodology, and may be demanding for the organisation managing the RDPM to resource.

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53 Prior, Redressing neighbourhood disadvantage: towards a sustainable partnership model driven by local government, 2007
54 http://participedia.net, asset based community development
55 McCall, Regional Innovation Systems, 2010
56 Harmakorpi, V. & Pekkarinen, S. The Concept of the Regional Development Platform and Regional Development Platform Model (RDPM) as a Tool for Regional Innovation Policy, 2003
4.2 Case studies

These three case studies demonstrate frameworks for addressing educational attainment that can be innovative, meaningful and effective:

4.2.1 StriveTogether

Origins - Launched in 2006 by community leaders in Greater Cincinnati to target the problem of being ‘program rich and system poor’.

Method – StriveTogether connects, supports, and facilitates a growing network of communities that are committed to building the civic infrastructure necessary to support the success of every child from cradle to career. The approach requires communities to come together to hold themselves collectively accountable for student success and to continuously improve their support to children by letting data drive action and decision-making.

StriveTogether designed a framework that helps communities build on opportunities existing in their communities:

Table 3 Framework for Cradle to Career Civic Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cradle to Career Civic Infrastructure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Shared Community Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“At first we held each other individually accountable and collectively responsible. This then became shared accountability and differentiated responsibility”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evidence based decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Indicators led us to 8 to 10 outcomes where we could turn up the dial to make a difference”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Collaborative action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Not what you think is best but what the local data shows will be the most effective”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Investment in sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“This supported meaningful engagement and targeted funding where it was needed”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation – StriveTogether has become the flagship case study for Collective Impact. Their previously unsurmountable problem is beginning to be resolved and they are already witnessing improvements in kindergarten readiness, fourth grade reading and first to second year college retention. A 2013 survey of member organisations found nearly 90 per cent consider their work on a collaborative is because of a StriveTogether partnership, and 60 per cent agree that the partnership has helped community-level outcomes.  

4.2.2 Learning Cities

Origins – Learning cities was conceptualised by the OECD in the 1980s and now more than 1,000 cities and urban areas in developed and developing countries have become or are becoming learning cities.

Method – Building a learning city entails a continuous process that involves advocacy, facilitation, capacity-building and the mobilisation of resources. Although each learning city has its own unique situation, they have all given attention to six key areas: (1.) Promote inclusive learning from basic to

57 http://www.strivetogether.org/resources/videos Strive Framework Overview, Edmonson, J. 2013
58 Strive Partnership, 2012-13 Partnership Report
higher education; (2.) Re-vitalise learning in families and communities; (3.) Facilitate learning for and in the workplace; (4.) Extend the use of modern learning technologies; (5.) Enhance quality and excellence in learning, and; (6.) Foster a culture of learning throughout life.

Evaluation – Regions who are engaged in developing learning cities, including Victoria where there are several learning communities, continue to systemically support the initiative.59

4.2.3 OpenIDEO
Origins - IDEO is a global design consultancy that started in California in 1991. OpenIDEO was launched in 2010 and is a web-based platform for innovation in design. It set out to establish a global network of creative, conscientious thinkers who could help IDEO and its partners address social issues.

Method - OpenIDEO leads participants on a design process towards a solution for an identified problem. The phases of the process are Inspiration, Concepting and Evaluation which last 10 weeks, when a final design is chosen. In 2012 they set the challenge: How can we equip young people to succeed in the world of work?60 This challenge was sponsored by Barclays and the University of Lancaster. OpenIDEO received 353 contributions and used their collaborative model to finish with six winning concepts for the sponsors to turn into actions.

Evaluation – This model demonstrates contemporary characteristics missing from more traditional models, such as speed of action, use of technology and openness. Providing resources are available to implement the winning solutions, the process creates meaningful engagement of citizens and experts.

4.2.4 London Thames Gateway Development Corporation
Origins – Secretary of State Michael Heseltine took a helicopter flight east of London above the River Thames. He realised that it formed a natural area with shared problems – decline of traditional industries, pollution, poor transport infrastructure, entrenched unemployment. It was decided that the 16 local government areas, three county authorities and three government regions needed to work collaboratively so the UK government created the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation and allocated funds towards education and skills.

Method – The impetus was passed from the top-down to local schools, further education and higher education institutions to identify areas for infrastructure investment and create networks of regional leaders and innovators. The Corporation was allowed to invest 5% of its capital budget into education infrastructure and up to £0.5m of annual revenue into education programs.

Evaluation – Over a 5 year period to 2010 the Corporation spent £9.5m on school building programs which generated close to £100m in infrastructure investment. Flagship projects include the Financial Services Academy in Tower Hamlets which used professionals from Canary Wharf to teach the skills needed to enter the finance sector. A new Construction Skills Training Centre in Rainham helped locals secure jobs in building projects such as the Olympic Park.61 The complexity of the region and

59 Faris, Learning Cities: Lessons Learned, 2006
60 https://openideo.com Youth Employment Challenge, 2012
61 London Thames Gateway, Passing the Baton; LTGDC’s Contribution to East London’s Future, 2012
its governance model made it difficult and much of the work between education institutes and the region remains at individual levels so the benefits to communities and businesses.\(^6\)

### 4.3 Current Tasmanian examples

Included are examples from Tasmania where education, industry and community are involved in delivering programs meeting specific place-based and sector-based needs.

#### 4.3.1 Trade Training Centres

**Origins** – The Tasmanian Government has accessed the Australian Government’s *Trade Training Centres in Schools Program* as part of its strategy to increase vocational training opportunities for people living in rural and remote areas. There are ten Trade Training Centres in operation; George Town, Scottsdale, Bridgewater, Huonville, St Helens/St Marys, Smithton, Deloraine, Sorell/Triabunna, and two in planning; Queenstown/Rosebery and the Tasman.

**Method** – Trade Training Centres are operated by schools in partnership with TasTAFE and local business and industry in their communities. They provide vocational options for Year 11 and 12 students as well as mature-aged students. Each centre deliver a number of trade competencies (not all at each site) covering; auto-electric, electro technology, bricklaying and plastering, roofing and general plumbing, metals, carpentry and joinery, welding, floor tiling, cookery, aged care, agriculture, aquaculture and horticulture. The competencies are generally up to Certificate II level qualifications which will articulate to Certificate III.\(^6\)

#### 4.3.2 Bigger Things

**Origins** – This project is jointly funded by the State Government and UTAS and is a partnership between UTAS, the Department of Education, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Hobart College, Huonville High School and its feeder Primary Schools and will be rolled out over 5 years from 2014.

**Method** – The project has six clear strategies: (1.) Build aspiration amongst feeder Primary Schools, Huonville High School and Hobart College students towards tertiary education. (2.) Support parents, caregivers and the community to build student aspiration for tertiary education. (3.) Identify and minimise logistical and financial barriers to participation in post compulsory and tertiary education for low SES students. (4.) Promote activities seeking to build student capacity and skills required to transition to tertiary education. (5.) Support teachers to develop their subject area expertise and become champions for tertiary education. (6.) Strengthen VET as an alternative pathway to higher education.

#### 4.3.3 Pathways and participation – guaranteeing futures

**Origins** – The Tasmanian Department of Education’s long term initiative started in 2005 and aims to provide programs and activities to support students in making a successful transition from compulsory schooling to further education, training or employment.\(^6\)

**Method** – Guaranteeing Futures operates state-wide and has given students access to; Career Programs Coordinators, Pathway Planning Officers, and Youth Learning Officers and Youth Transition

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\(^6\) PASCAL Observatory, PASCAL Report to the Thames Gateway, 2010  
\(^6\) Department of Education, Annual Report 2012-13  
\(^6\) http://www.education.tas.gov.au, Guaranteeing Futures
Officers (for students who are disengaged or seriously at risk of not maintaining links with education or training).

4.3.4 Industry advice framework
Origins – This framework manages Skills Tasmania’s interaction with industry. It was developed in late 2013 following the dissolution of the industry-led Skills Tasmania Board on 30 June 2013.

Method – Through this framework Skills Tasmania have a comprehensive system for receiving advice and providing feedback to its endorsed industry partners, regional industry leaders and Tasmania’s RTOs. Skills Tasmania will undertake a review of all the advice at least twice a year and use the information to improve training and workforce development.

4.3.5 Nextgen Challenge
Origins – This education program is run by illuminate SDF and started in 2010.

Method - a week-long session where teams of students from Years 9 and 10 develop and grow an idea for a successful business. The program partners with industry and education stakeholders to provide professional advice and encouragement to the students. Challenges are designed to fit with the Tasmanian economy so they are tackling contemporary issues. It is held three times a year with an event in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

**Key points:**
Innovation happens within frameworks
Don’t assume the solution at the beginning
Always evidence based
Shared accountability, differentiated responsibility

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion
Educational attainment in Tasmania is concerning. With human capital such a key driver for future prosperity, rather than being lauded for its emerging knowledge economy, Tasmania looks like it is missing the capability to deal with the challenges of the modern world.

A good education is the grounding for a productive life. As well as teaching literacy, numeracy and interpersonal keys, education gives us the chance to learn how to learn and learn resilience when faced with difficulties. The adage ‘we are never too old to learn’ is
true and resonates with Tasmania’s ageing population. Education beyond the school ground or campus will be a significant factor in improving skills and knowledge.

The social determinants of education – health, housing, transport, economy, nutrition, environment, ethnicity, religion etc. – links lower educational attainment to socio-economic disadvantaged communities and a social gradient to perceptions of education and employment can be observed.

The economy leads the way of education. Australia’s metropolitan areas, with their growing and diverse economies, outscore regional areas in educational attainment. Tasmania’s economy is the slowest moving in Australia, and its education system is also under performing to meet future needs.

Education is not all about places of learning. The long list of barriers to education and employment demonstrates that what happens beyond the school grounds or workplace is also significant. The social determinants of education mean that even with the very best schools our educational attainment may not improve immediately. In fact evidence shows that Tasmania’s school education system as it is already delivers capable and promising students on par with similar regions. But only up to a point, the age of compulsion – Year 10 – is the ‘sliding door’ moment for Tasmanians. Those who leave education at this point tend to lose out the most.

Dealing with this broad and complex issue requires a multi-disciplinary approach that involves all the key actors and decision makers. Regional development researchers and practitioners provide frameworks and systems which can guide communities through this process. Evidence can be used to show that resources applied to a few key actions will have the greatest benefit at that time. Continuous improvement looks for the next dial to turn up.

The strength in regional development approaches to advancing education and skills comes from how well the problem is framed. StriveTogether focussed on education from cradle to career and OpenIDEO focussed on equipping young people with workplace skills because these organisations had conducted extensive research and engagement to confirm the vision for their work. The scope of their projects enabled them to strategically select the key actions, rather than act reactively.

5.2 Recommendation
A regional development approach to advancing education will help Tasmanians understand they are individually accountable and collectively responsible. Working through the problem will make them aware that there is shared accountability, but differentiated responsibility.

Each approach to regional development involves a framework or process in which activity takes place. There are similarities between each approach with how stakeholders actually get to the point of agreeing what to do. The risk in jumping this stage and going straight to the ‘do-ing’ part is being inadequately resourced, working in conflict and unclear of outcomes – basically business as usual.

A basic framework which summarises the models cited in this report is contained in Appendix 2.
### 5.2.1 Theory into practice

RDA Tasmania recommends that this is looked at as a state-wide challenge that can be addressed by individual communities. It should therefore begin with a steering group of *initiators* who operate at a state level who use their evidence and expertise to define the challenge for education in Tasmania.

The role of this multi-disciplinary team is to define the challenge for Tasmanian communities who want to contribute, in the way best suited to them, towards state-wide education outcomes.

The team should create a scalable framework that has a clear definition of what individual communities should focus on to improve education. This creates a playing field for communities to decide their own tactics for winning. Individual communities will use the framework to arrive at an action plan they can implement.

The proposed first steps are:

**Figure 12 Proposed first steps of a regional development approach to education in Tasmania**

RDA Tasmania is a neutral organisation with relationships at every level of government as well as community and industry. We are able to utilise these relationships to facilitate dialogue and engagement with stakeholders and are willing to initiate the proposed first steps with the stakeholders outlined.

### 5.2.2 Roles for RDA Tasmania

Through preparing this report and engaging with stakeholders a number of roles have been proposed to RDA Tasmania. These include:

- Regional development approaches to education – facilitate the process outlined above and the implementation by communities of a regional development approach
- Trade Training Centres – in partnership with the Department of Education review the place-based governance of TTCs and assess their effectiveness in delivering their goals
- Skills Tasmania - join their group of endorsed strategic partners
Appendix

Appendix 1 – Northern Young Professionals Network
In June 2014 the Northern Young Professional Network held a function on the issue of jobless families in Tasmania. In one activity they gave participants five minutes to list main barriers to education and employment. The list is included here to demonstrate some of the publicly held perceptions of the determinants of educational attainment:

- Access to community organisations educating and training people outside of schools / Girl Guides
- Access to technology
- Affordability of education
- An appreciation of delayed gratification
- Apprenticeships decreasing
- Childcare costs
- Closing down industries and large employers
- Community Housing Ltd
- Constructive activity around students / jobseekers
- Crap jobs
- Crime / criminals / criminal record limits job options
- Decreased communication
- Department of Education
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Diminishing private sector / wealth generating businesses / loss of private sector work ethics
- Disability
- Entrepreneurism in the school curriculum
- Family structure
- Family violence
- Financial
- Fly-in fly-out jobs
- Food security
- Gender differences in experience and perception of education and employment
- Generic ‘work skills’
- Good examples of work / professions / jobs for students and job seekers to experience
- Government jobs more attractive than private sectors
- Grade 10 graduation, no access to further education or training
- Grade 10 graduation, school leavers dinners
- Health
- Healthy foods / diets
- Illiteracy
- Inability to deal with conflict
- Individual negative opinions of education and employment
- Intergenerational disadvantage
• Intergenerational negative opinions of education and employment
• Job hunting process is difficult
• Job readiness resources
• Lack of access to employment agencies
• Lack of access to internet and newspapers
• Lack of encouragement
• Lack of incentives
• Lack of jobs
• Lack of mentorship
• Lack of money
• Lack of neighbourhood services
• Lack of resources
• Lack of role models
• Lack of role models for teachers
• Lack of self confidence / self worth / respect / resilience, risk taking
• Lack of training to get a job
• Lack of training to hold onto a job
• Learning disabilities
• Less jobs available
• Licensing (drivers)
• Limited career paths
• Limited Uni courses in Tasmania / must leave for higher education
• Lots of agencies and organisations in this space / what do they all do? / what don’t they do?
• Low confidence in speaking
• Low pay for teachers
• Mental health
• Need to travel to college
• Numeracy
• Older workforce
• Over qualified
• Peer networks
• Prejudice
• Racism and discrimination
• Reading at home
• Self-limiting views
• Service providers can’t deal with ‘too hard’ clients
• Social division
• Social isolation
• Social media / misuse of social media / publicly available information on individuals impacts their employability
• Social media / power to connect
• Special needs in education
• Stigma/perception associated with different life pathways
• Support for new employees in the workplace
• Support for workplaces for new employees
• Transient jobs
• Transport / living in regional communities
• Trauma
• Truancy
• Volunteering / access to skills development (e.g. Junction Festival volunteers) / volunteering for the dole / volunteering as a stepping stone to employment
• Workplace flexibility
• Young carers
• Young, but experienced staff expectations – age barriers at both ends
Appendix 2 – Basic Framework

The course stakeholders follow can be summarised as:

- Agree the Vision
- Confirm the Scope
- Guiding Principles
- What’s in? What’s out?
- Turn Scope into Outcomes
- Decide the Goal for each Outcome
- Identify ‘Game Changers’
- Program implementation

This is a scalable process and suits a place based approach to development. The same steps could be carried out for an education project in any town, sub-region or the entire state.

Complimentary to this process are a range of activities that projects should consider that help with functionality and adaptability.
These are some of the activities identified by the Collective Impact model:\(^65\):

- Continuous communication
- Appoint a champion
- Readiness assessment
- Leadership identification and development
- Understand how it can be adequately funded for 2-3 years
- Assign management to an ‘anchor’ / ‘backbone’ organisation
- Creating a culture of learning
- Scan of existing efforts
- Common indicators / shared measurement
- Relationship and trust building among diverse stakeholders

\(^65\) Hanley Brown, Kania & Kramar, Stanford Social Review, Channelling Change; making collective impact work
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