City of Whittlesea submission to
Parliament of Victoria
Education and Training Committee

Inquiry into the geographical differences in the rate in which Victorian students participate in higher education

April 2008
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Introduction

The City Of Whittlesea welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the Parliament of Victoria, Education and Training Committee Inquiry into the geographical differences in the rate in which Victorian students participate in higher education.

The City of Whittlesea strongly believes all Australians should be provided the opportunity to enjoy the personal and economic benefits that education offers. Access to education is vital for Australia’s future and for creating a fair and equitable life for all Australians. Higher education, in particular, is one of the determining factors in improving the social and economic wellbeing of individuals and the community in general.

It is the experience of the City of Whittlesea that geographical location does have an impact on higher education participation in combination with other factors. These include: the socio-economic profile of the residents; the type of curriculum and the nature of available education and training; financial incentives and barriers; and access to broader support services.

This submission provides an overview of the experience of Whittlesea residents in terms of participation rates in higher education; the level of education qualifications attained across the municipality; and the access of alternative post school pathways by residents. Factors affecting the higher education participation rates - early school leaving, youth disengagement and the potential effects on skill shortages are also examined. Finally, the City of Whittlesea makes recommendations to the Education and Training Committee Inquiry to address barriers contributing to the municipality’s low participation in higher education.

Our Municipality

The City of Whittlesea is located 20km north of Melbourne. It is a large municipality covering an area of 490 km² of both urban and rural land. It has a current population of over 130,000 and includes the suburbs of Bundoora, Donnybrook, Doreen, Eden Park, Epping, Humevale, Kinglake West, Lalor, Mernda, Mill Park, South Morang, Thomastown and Whittlesea. The City of Whittlesea is amongst the fastest growing municipalities in Melbourne. Since 2001 approximately 18,000 people have moved into the City and 8,400 houses
have been built. The level of growth is predicted to remain strong over the next 25 years, with a projected increase in population to over 200,000.

The municipality faces the complex and distinctive challenges of balancing the dynamics of urban and rural areas, rapid growth, social disadvantage and high demand for services. The City has one of the most culturally diverse populations, with around 33% born overseas and 57.3% of these migrants born in non-English speaking countries. In addition Whittlesea has the fourth highest population of Indigenous people in metropolitan Melbourne and is the eighth highest in terms of humanitarian settlements (ABS 2006 and City of Whittlesea Social profile, 2007).

In comparison to other metropolitan Melbourne LGA’s the City is characterised by pockets of high socio-economic disadvantage ranking:

- the fifth highest on the index of Socio-Economic Disadvantage
- the fourth lowest on the Index of Education and Occupation
- the fourth lowest on the Index of Economic Resources

(Sustainability Planning Unit 2004)
Higher Education

The City of Whittlesea recognises that access to education, particularly higher education, is a determining factor in improving the well-being and standard of living of society in general. Post-secondary education and training builds the stock of skills important to the economy and is a significant determinant of the future well being of individuals as well as of the nation as a whole.

Higher education, however, is not purely an economic good. It provides many social benefits including that of social cohesion. This is particularly important at a time of significant social and economic change.

The higher education sector has grown tremendously over the past two decades, from around 420,850 students in 1988 to over 984,100 in 2006 (ABS Year Book Australia 1990 and 2008). Between 2001 to 2006 alone, there was an increase of 48,377 domestic students commencing in the higher education sector.

Despite these significant increases on a national level, the number of residents in the City of Whittlesea with higher education qualifications, as well as the current participation rates in higher education, are considerably below the Victorian average.

Education Outcomes for People in Whittlesea

Within our municipality the largest groupings of residents attending educational institutions are children and young people attending primary or secondary schools. In 2006 this constituted just over 20,000 residents.

At the same time there were over 7000 residents attending TAFE, University and other educational institutions. As Table 1 illustrates, the City of Whittlesea has experienced changes in tertiary participation and minimum schooling completed. In particular, University participation and Year 12 completions have increased. Between 2001 to 2006:

- there was a small decline in the number of residents attending TAFE;
- there was an increase in the number attending university;
the proportion of residents who had completed Year 12 increased substantially from 36% to 44%, which represents an increase of nearly 9,500 residents who completed secondary schooling; and,

the number without any schooling declined slightly.

Table 1: Participation in Education - Whittlesea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Change 2001-06</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>2,805</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2,890</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>-85</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>3,530</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>3,346</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>5.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6.8</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schooling Completed</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Change 2001-06</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>39,005</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>29,568</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>9,437</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>13,177</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>11,996</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>1,181</td>
<td>9.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>15,087</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>13,591</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>1,496</td>
<td>11.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>7,233</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6,692</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8 or below</td>
<td>12,094</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>13,046</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>-952</td>
<td>-7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not go to school</td>
<td>2,604</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2,699</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>-9.5</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Social Profiles, Whittlesea at the Census, Sustainability Planning, City of Whittlesea 2007

However, despite some improvements, young people living in Whittlesea are less likely to complete secondary schooling than their counterparts across metropolitan Melbourne and with this comes the flow on effects such as lower participation in higher education and problematic employment opportunities.

Higher Education Qualifications across the municipality

Despite progress in Year 12 completion and increases in University participation, both Year 12 completion and enrolment rates at the higher education levels lag in comparison with the educational outcomes for residents across Melbourne.

When comparing the non-school qualifications of Whittlesea with metropolitan Melbourne the disparities are quite stark. As Figures 1 and 2 illustrate, the City of Whittlesea residents are far less likely to have gained a higher education qualification, such as a Bachelor Degree, Graduate Diploma/Certificate or further postgraduate qualifications compared with figures for metropolitan Melbourne. The percentage of Whittlesea residents over the age of 15 with a university qualification is 23% compared with 36% across metropolitan Melbourne.
Figure 1: 2006 Level of non-school qualifications - Whittlesea

Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION of persons aged 15 years and over with a qualification(b)

Figure 2: 2006 Level of non-school qualifications - MSD

Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION of persons aged 15 years and over with a qualification(b)
Young people in the City of Whittlesea – University Participation

City of Whittlesea participation rates in education by both the 15-19 and the 20-24 year age groups ranks unfavourably compared with participation rates across metropolitan Melbourne and the overall Victorian participation rates.

The difference between the City of Whittlesea, metropolitan Melbourne and across Victoria is marked for the 19-20 year age cohort. As Figure 3 illustrates, the rate of attendance for 19-20 year olds at university and other tertiary institutions was 28% compared with 41% across metropolitan Melbourne and 36% across Victoria. The percentages of 19-20 year olds attending any educational institution are 53% from the City of Whittlesea, 57% across Metropolitan Melbourne and 36% across Victoria.

**Figure 3: 2006 Rate of attendance of 19-20 year olds at Educational Institutions - Whittlesea**

A similar pattern exists when comparing other Interface Councils (see below). As Figure 4 illustrates, with the exception of the municipality of Nillumbik, in all other Interface Councils, the participation rate of the 19-20 year olds at university or other educational institutions is significantly lower than the metropolitan Melbourne and Victorian rates.

### Definition: Interface Councils

There are nine Interface Councils – Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Wyndham and Yarra Ranges. They lie on the edges of metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria and most are experiencing rapid population growth.
Secondary School

Along with the lower rates of attendance at university and other tertiary institutions, many young people attending City of Whittlesea secondary schools are also demonstrating lower than average VCE completions and many are not applying for tertiary places.

As Table 2 shows, in 2007 50 percent Whittlesea Secondary schools were below the State average in terms of satisfactorily completing VCE. Furthermore, in around one third of the schools, the percentage of students undertaking VCE who applied for a tertiary place, is significantly below the State average.
Table 2: Whittlesea Secondary Schools - students tertiary applications and VCE completions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Percentages of VCE students applying for tertiary places</th>
<th>Percentages of satisfactory VCE completions in 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epping Secondary College</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivanhoe Grammar School - Plenty</td>
<td>Mernda</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalor North Secondary College</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalor Secondary College</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Park Secondary College</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northside Christian College</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Lalor Secondary College</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Monica’s College</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomastown Secondary College</td>
<td>Thomastown</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittlesea Secondary College</td>
<td>Whittlesea</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 20 December 2007

Highlighted cells show percentages significantly below State average. Refer to Appendix A for a more thorough overview of Whittlesea secondary school performances including VET and VCAL.

Statistical information gathered regarding the destination of Year 12 completers show that there is significant disparity in the Whittlesea Year 12 completers who go on to take up university places compared with the State average. Furthermore, though there are other education and training pathways followed by Whittlesea Year 12 completers as well as early leavers, it is important to note that unemployment amongst Year 9/10 early leavers is 20% compared with 5.5% for Year 12 completers.

**Year 12 completers**

Recent information provided by the Hume Whittlesea LLEN clearly indicate that City of Whittlesea young people are gaining access to University at far lower rates than Victoria as a whole:

- 38.7% of Hume Whittlesea young people who have completed Year 12 go on to University. This compares with 47.4% of total Victorian Year 12 completers.
Along with this lower access to University by City of Whittlesea young people who have completed Year 12, is the higher uptake of VET programs (Certificate IV, III, entry level) as well as Apprenticeships and Traineeships:

- 20.4% of young people who have completed Year 12 undertake VET Cert IV compared with 14.9% of the total Victorian Year 12 completers
- 1.7% of young people who have completed Year 12 undertake VET Cert III compared with 1.7% of the total Victorian Year 12 completers
- 4.2% of young people who have completed Year 12 undertake VET Entry Level compared with 2.6% of the total Victorian Year 12 completers
- 5.5% of young people who have completed Year 12 undertake an Apprenticeship compared with 4.5% of the total Victorian Year 12 completers
- 4.5% of young people who have completed Year 12 undertake a Traineeship compared with 3.6% of the total Victorian Year 12 completers
- 5.5% of this group were looking for work compared to 3.7% of the total Victorian year 12 completers

(On Track Survey, 2007 – Hume Whittlesea)

These figures clearly demonstrate that a large proportion of Year 12 completers may not go onto university but do pursue other post-school education pathways.

**Early Leavers in Whittlesea**

There has been much research on the reasons why young people leave school early. Recent information provided through the On Track surveys found that early school leavers have clearly indicated that their *reasons for leaving school* include:

- Wanting to earn money
- No longer interested in school work
- Wanting a job
- Want to do an apprenticeship/traineeship

(The On Track Survey (2007), Northern Metropolitan Region)

Early school leavers have also indicated that they would have *stayed at school* if:

- they could have studied part-time whilst working;
- they experienced greater success in school work;
- school was a more adult environment; and,
- school helped them get work experience.

(The On Track Survey 2007, Northern Metropolitan Region)
Youth Disengagement

Despite significant increases in economic growth and school completions over the past
decade, in May 2007 526,000 young people in Australia were neither in full time study
nor full time work. (M Long 2007)

The proportion of disengaged young people in the City of Whittlesea, that is, not in
full time education, training or employment, tended to be higher than the
metropolitan Melbourne average. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the significant
differences in youth disengagement of both young males and females, across
Whittlesea and metropolitan Melbourne.

Over 6.5% of the 15-19 age cohort and 12.1% of the 20-24 age cohort of the City
of Whittlesea is neither in full time education nor employed. This compares with 5%
of youth disengagement for 15-19 age cohort and 9.5% of the 20-24 age cohort for
metropolitan Melbourne.

The higher youth disengagement rate is one factor limiting the numbers of young
people who proceed to university or other post-school education.

**Figure 5: 2006 Youth Disengagement 15-19 year olds**

Again, a similar pattern exists in other Interface Councils. As Figure 7 illustrates, with the exception of the municipalities of Nillumbik and Yarra Ranges, in all of the Interface Councils, youth disengagement is significantly higher than the metropolitan Melbourne rates.
Factors affecting Higher Education Participation

It has long been accepted that a quality school education is essential if young people are to have access to the greatest possible opportunities in life. Unfortunately a sustained and positive education and smooth transition beyond school are not universal experience across Australia. Despite significant increases in the participation and completion of secondary schooling in Victoria and within the City of Whittlesea, too many young people in our municipality are still at risk of under-performing at school, becoming disengaged, leaving school early, struggling with the transition from school to work and struggling to enter further study.

Research has found that the following factors play a significant detrimental role in the municipality’s higher education participation rate:

- the socio-economic profile of the population;
- Early school leavers;
- the type of curriculum and the nature of available education and training; and
- financial disincentives and barriers.


Higher Education participation and socio economic background – Is there equity?

The Federal government first laid down a comprehensive equity policy in the 1990’s (A Fair Chance for All) the objective of which was to make the student population representative of the wider society. In particular, the policy aimed to promote a more equal representation of students who come from various categories of people considered to be under represented: NESB; women in non-traditional courses; people with disabilities; students from rural and isolated areas; and, students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Over the past two decades the higher education sector has grown exponentially with an increase of over 563,000 students. Over this period low-SES students improved their Year 12 completion rates but not their Year 12-to-university rates, resulting in no change in their overall rate of participation in higher education (Rothman 2003). As Table 3 clearly illustrates, people from low socio-economic backgrounds continued to be underrepresented in higher education, with access rates of this group remaining relatively stable at 14-15 percent, well below the population reference point of 25%. (James 2004)
Research undertaken with senior secondary school students has identified that a major deterrent for students from low socio-economic backgrounds is the perceived cost of higher education (James 2000, 2004).

- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds are more likely than other students to believe the cost of university fees may stop them attending university – 39%, compared with 23% for higher SES students
- 41% of lower SES students believed their families could not afford the cost of supporting them at university
- Over one-third of lower socioeconomic students indicated they would have to support themselves if they went to university.

As Table 4 illustrates, the socio economic background of young people living in the City of Whittlesea influences destination following Year 12 completion. Only 34.4% of those from the lowest socio economic backgrounds go onto University compared with:

- 54.1% from the highest socio economic background of year 12 completers living in Whittlesea, and
- 64.1% from the highest socio economic background of year 12 completers across Victoria.

### Table 3: Students from low socio-economic backgrounds
Access to higher education 1991-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>15.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>14.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>14.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>14.93</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>15.07</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>14.96</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>15.07</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>15.22</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>15.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>15.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>15.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>15.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: James 2004
Table 4: Hume Whittlesea SES and destination following year 12 completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>VET Cert III</th>
<th>VET Entry Level</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Working full-time</th>
<th>Working Part-time</th>
<th>Looking for Work</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hume Whittlesea</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>SES</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lowest</td>
<td>34.4</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower mid</td>
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<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<td>Highest</td>
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<td>8.1</td>
<td>10.8</td>
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<td><strong>Victoria</strong></td>
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<td>lowest</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
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<td>5.2</td>
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<td>14.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<td>Lower mid</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>Upper mid</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The 2007 On Track Survey: Northern Metropolitan Region, DEECD, Office for Policy, Planning and Evaluation

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government work with the Federal Government to develop targeted equity programs to improve the enrolment of people from low socio economic backgrounds in our Universities.
Socio-economic backgrounds and achievement levels

A clear predictor of higher education participation is achievement in secondary schooling. Educational achievement plays a significant role in not only progressing through secondary school but also whether or not higher education is perceived as an option.

Research has also found that there is strong evidence that educational achievement is strongly linked to socio-economic background.

\textit{It is mainly in the low income regions and localities that students face limited educational options and potential ghettoisation into schools with poor educational outcomes. It is these regions and localities that have high rates of early school leaving and poor transition rates to tertiary education and employment. (Education Foundation, 2005)}

Research has shown that up to 70\% of the variation between schools can be accounted for in terms of differences in the socio-economic background of their students. (McGraw 2006a)

Compared with more affluent peers, Australian students from low socio-economic backgrounds are:

\begin{itemize}
  \item less likely to have educationally supportive and physical infrastructure at home;
  \item twice as likely to under-perform in literacy and numeracy;
  \item more likely to have negative attitudes to school, play truant, be suspended or expelled and leave school early;
  \item more likely to struggle with the transition from school to work; and,
  \item less likely to enter university or to succeed in further and vocational education.
\end{itemize}

(Keating and Lamb, 2004; Productivity Commission, 2005; Teese and Poilesel, 2003; Thomson, 2002; Watson and Considine, 2003; Zappala and Considine 2001)

Data collected by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the On Track Surveys illustrates that the median VCE study scores for 7 of the 10 Whittlesea Secondary schools are below the state average (see Table 5). Furthermore results from the General Achievement Test (GAT) also indicates that a large proportion of Year 12
completers with the lowest GAT scores do not go to University (see Table 6). For the GAT results and destination comparison of Year 12 completers between Hume/Whittlesea and Victoria refer to Appendix C.

Table 5: Post Compulsory achievement information
City of Whittlesea – secondary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Median VCE study score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epping Secondary College</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivanhoe Grammar School - Plenty</td>
<td>Mernda</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalor North Secondary College</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalor Secondary College</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Park Secondary College</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northside Christian College</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Lalor Secondary College</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Monica’s College</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomastown Secondary College</td>
<td>Thomastown</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittlesea Secondary College</td>
<td>Whittlesea</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Average* 29

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 20 December 2007
Highlighted cells show percentages significantly below State average.

Table 6: Hume Whittlesea GAT results and destination following year 12 completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>VET Cert III</th>
<th>VET Entry Level</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Working full-time</th>
<th>Working Part-time</th>
<th>Looking for Work</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittlesea</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAT</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The 2007 On Track Survey: Northern Metropolitan Region, DEECD, Office for Policy, Planning and Evaluation
It is also important to understand why young people decide to not pursue higher education if government is to put in place appropriate strategies to enable a smooth transition from school to higher education.

The recent Hume/Whittlesea On Track Survey found that:

- 30.3% of Year 12 completers and 31.7% of early leavers never intended to pursue further education.

Clearly this indicates that many young people are opting out of higher education as an option at an early age – prior to the final years of schooling.

The City of Whittlesea recommends that greater support be provided to students at the earlier years of secondary schooling to assist transition from secondary schooling to higher education.
Refugees And Newly Arrived Migrants

The cultural diversity of the City of Whittlesea is very appealing to refugees and newly arrived migrants. The municipality rates the eighth highest in terms of humanitarian settlements between 2002/03 and 2006/07 and seventh in terms of non-humanitarian settlements. Around 4,600 overseas migrants arrived in the municipality between 2000 and 2006 (City of Whittlesea Social Profile 2007).

Many refugee and newly arrived migrants have very poor literacy skills, limited English proficiency, struggle to understand the new environment and are still coping with the traumas of their refugee experience (Refugee Education Partnerships Project 2007, Whittlesea Community Connections 2005).

Resources and services available are not adequate to meet the needs of these new arrivals, particularly young refugees. The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) has found that:

- Young humanitarian entrants do not currently receive adequate literacy support in schools.
- The length of time young people are able to access specialist language courses at ELC/S is inadequate.
- The lack of appropriate ESL support and educational and vocational pathways for young humanitarian entrants in the age range 15-25 is of particular concern.
- Schools are having a great deal of difficulty catering to and retaining this group.
- Newly arrived young people with low literacy are at high risk of early school leaving if they get frustrated due to their lack of progress.
- Those leaving school can often be highly motivated by their desire to earn a wage, but do not have the Australian work experience or formal qualifications to find and retain full-time work. (CYMI 2006 from Staying Connected 2006).

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government provide additional, targeted and appropriate resources at both a state-wide and local level to facilitate improved educational outcomes for refugee and other newly arrived young people and their families.
Indigenous People

The City of Whittlesea recognises that Indigenous Australians experience profound disadvantage in many areas of their lives. Health is poor, life expectancy is lower and incarceration and unemployment rates are higher than for other Australians. In terms of education, Year 12 completion and participation rates in higher education are significantly lower than for non Indigenous people.

The City of Whittlesea has the fourth highest Indigenous population in metropolitan Melbourne and has experienced a rapid 24% increase in its Indigenous population between 2001 and 2006 (ABS 2006 Census). With 38.7% of the population under the age of 15 years and 24.3 % are between 15-24 years of age.

There are significant differences in the education outcomes for Indigenous and non Indigenous residents in our municipality and across Melbourne. As Figure 8 illustrates there is great disparity in the rate of Year 12 completion between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous Whittlesea residents and a greater disparity compared with the metropolitan Melbourne rate.

**Figure 8: Year 12 Completion or equivalent - Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Young People - Whittlesea and Metropolitan Melbourne**

Source: ABS 2006

Furthermore, across Australia Indigenous students are more likely than non-Indigenous students to leave school before completing Year 12. The difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people who leave school prior to Year 11 within Whittlesea and the rate across metropolitan Melbourne is illustrated in Figure 9.
Figure 9: Early School Leavers (before Year 11) Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Young People - Whittlesea and Metropolitan Melbourne


Some of this relationship could be explained by differences in the socio-economic characteristics and literacy and numeracy levels of Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups. However, studies have shown that lower educational expectations among Indigenous students, and lower levels of engagement with school, also appear to be among the contributing factors (LSAY August 2005:3).

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government provide additional, targeted and appropriate resources at both a state-wide and local level to facilitate improved educational outcomes for Indigenous young people and their families.
Improving Educational outcomes

Compared with the metropolitan Melbourne average, young people living in the City of Whittlesea are:

- more likely to leave school early;
- less likely to complete Year 12;
- more likely to have lower GAT and median VCE scores;
- less likely to attend University; and,
- more likely to disengage from school and employment.

The City of Whittlesea, together with other Interface Councils, has previously made submissions to the State Government calling for investment in long term and sustainable solutions targeted at improving the education and training outcomes of our young people (Staying Connected 2006, Living on the Edge 2007).

Furthermore, recent consultations with young people in the City of Whittlesea identified that in order to succeed in their life course, they desired and needed support in the transition from primary school to secondary school. Young people also emphasised that they wanted support in relation to their social relationships and peer group, and support to strengthen the capacity of their families to support and understand them as adolescents. (YouthPlan2030)

State Government policy and action plans clearly recognise that education plays an important role in creating opportunities and addressing disadvantage, in particular enabling young people to reach their full potential; keeping young people on track, and; facilitating the building of stronger communities:

‘We need a world class education system for all abilities and aspirations so that young Victorians can realise their full potential….and we need to identify young people at risk of disengaging from education and training. Research shows that completing Year 12 or an equivalent qualification….results in better health, greater likelihood of earning higher incomes, and less likelihood of being unemployed.’ (A Fairer Victoria 2005)

“Young people are engaged with school, training or employment. They have options for staying connected to learning.’(Future Directions 2006)

‘Strong communities, where people are actively involved in community life, have better health, higher school retention rates and lower rates of
unemployment and crime...Communities with high levels of participation and social connectedness are better placed to deal with disadvantage.” (A Fairer Victoria 2005)

Educators, families and industry are all concerned with the significant numbers of early school leavers and have called for greater investment in programs and services to facilitate young people to stay in school. Research commissioned by the Business Council of Australia highlights that investment to increase the proportion of young people who have Year 12 equivalent education will bring significant social and economic benefit in the longer term. (BCA 2003)

**That the State Government adequately** funds a range of prevention and early intervention strategies to support young people to remain engaged at school and to improve the educational achievements of young people who live in Interface areas. These strategies need to:

- Focus on all young people within Interface schools, but particularly those in Years 5 – 9;
- Be located within Interface municipalities;
- Provide alternative curriculum options;
- Provide case work support and counselling for young people;
- Engage with parents, providing individual and parenting support, as well as linking parents to the school community;
- Build community capacity, acknowledging that when communities, families and schools work together with young people, young people are more likely to stay connected with their community and their education;
- Provide subsidies to meet the costs of attending school;
- Develop and monitor a fund to meet the costs of post-secondary education for young people who cannot afford it; and
- Develop young people’s participation in schools, in areas such as a negotiated curriculum, activity in governance and accreditation for student involvement in community projects.
Support Services

Young people experience significant emotional, physical and intellectual change, with the likelihood of variability in health and wellbeing. (Centre for Adolescent Health, 2005 in Staying Connected 2006) Therefore, it is imperative that they be provided with the services and tools necessary to navigate through this period of change.

The City of Whittlesea believes that many of our young people are ‘falling through the cracks’ and experiencing lower educational outcomes because access to appropriate support services are either unavailable or are inadequate to meet their needs.

Over the past two years the City of Whittlesea together with other Interface Councils has highlighted major problems experienced by young people in our municipalities. Specifically, we have highlighted that they have significantly lower educational achievements, demonstrate a higher prevalence of at risk behaviours and are more likely to be unemployed, engage in self-harm behaviours and experience depressive symptoms (Staying Connected 2006).

Furthermore, young people and their families in the City of Whittlesea, like other Interface Council residents, are disadvantaged in relation to the provision of local human services. In addition, local residents are geographically isolated from service centres and current service provision is not keeping pace with population growth and demand.

The City of Whittlesea believes that many of our young people are ‘falling through the cracks’ and experiencing lower educational outcomes because access to appropriate support services are either unavailable or are inadequate to meet their needs.

Research and consultation commissioned by the Interface Councils on a State-wide basis indicate that:

- there is no comprehensive, coordinated service system that enables continuity of care and responses to the range of needs of young people and their families. There are insufficient services to meet current demand, much less projected demand; and,
- early intervention and youth support services are cost effective - financially, socially and emotionally – for young people, their families and the rest of society.
The nine Interface Councils – Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Wyndham and Yarra Ranges – have initiated a ‘Youth on the Edge’ campaign to raise awareness of the issues and to advocate for funding to increase youth services across these municipalities. (Living on the Edge 2007: Youth on the Edge 2007)

The Interface Councils are seeking to have these needs addressed through the development of a locally based comprehensive, coordinated service system that enables continuity of care and responds to the range of needs of young people and their families. An appropriate service system is essential if growing communities are to be resilient and able to support young people and their families.

_Without this, the needs of young people cannot be addressed adequately nor can the educational, health and social outcomes for young people living in Interface municipalities improve to the levels of their counterparts living in the rest of metropolitan Melbourne._ (Staying Connected 2006)

Recommendations by the Interface Councils are consistent with State Government policy and strategies:

‘Young people want access to good information and advice… about managing the risks or harm associated with their behaviours. Young people care deeply about their mental health and wellbeing and are concerned about the rising rates of anxiety and depression among their peers. They want greater access to support at early stages to prevent issues escalating and to be equipped to manage their own situations’ (Future Directions 2006)

‘Interventions and programs need to be put in place early, because prevention-based approaches work best’; (Future Directions 2006)

_Poor mental health significantly reduces life chances and can contribute to homelessness, unemployment, criminal behaviour and family breakdown. A Fairer Victoria includes substantial investment in mental health services in 2007 to improve the lives of those Victorians experiencing mental health problems_’ (A Fairer Victoria 2005)

Specifically, the Interface Councils have called for additional investment in Generalist Youth Support and Counselling Services and Youth specific Mental Health services.
The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State government funds the employment of Generalist Youth Worker positions on the basis of 1 EFT per 3000 young people aged 10 - 24 living in the municipality, that focus on enhancing the capacity of mainstream and universal services to contribute to young people living successfully in their communities through capacity building, early detection and youth development.

Generalist Youth Workers are effective in:
- providing an important universal service base;
- responding to immediate concerns of youth people and their families;
- providing a strong link to a range of other more intensive support services; and,
- facilitating partnerships and networking between service providers.

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State government resource the provision of locally-based, youth specific Mental Health services, including,
- crisis outreach;
- multi-disciplinary staff, including youth friendly GPs, case workers, psychologists and consultant psychiatrists; and,
- youth specific intake services in each region.

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government fund Adolescent Health Teams in Interface municipalities, to provide primary health services to young people; These teams should comprise:
- Family and youth counselling
- Youth worker
- Community nurse with specialist skills in working with adolescents
- Health promotion and prevention strategies and programs
- Case management capacity to work with young people with complex care needs
- After hours service provision.
Other post-school pathways

The City of Whittlesea recognises that a variety of post-school education and training pathways is necessary to develop an educated and highly skilled society. Though higher education provides tremendous opportunities and career options, other post-school pathways can be just as rewarding. Higher education does not necessarily correspond with the expectations and aspirations of some young people, increasing the likelihood of disengagement.

“….school curriculum primarily designed and organised with an academic focus seems to undervalue and demean the values of a large number of students whose interest and needs it ignores….contributes to the frustration of a significant number of students, the number of early school departures, narrowing of career perspectives and skill shortages in a range of industries” (Van Lint – year unknown)

VET programs, VCAL and Apprenticeships and Traineeships provide options and opportunities for young people not interested in higher education.

Year 11 and 12 Early Leavers

Of the young people who left school early in Years 11 and 12 many go on to take up VET programs, or Apprenticeships and Traineeships. Nonetheless, participation of young people in Whittlesea compares unfavourably with young people across the State, with lower uptake of these programs as well. (On Track Survey, 2007 – Hume Whittlesea)

Year 9-10 Early Leavers

Of the young people who left school in year 9-10, many go on to undertake other post-school pathways in a similar fashion to their older counterparts. However, 20% were unemployed, which is well above the State average of 15.6%: (On Track Survey, 2007 – Hume Whittlesea)

Despite reasonable take up rates of VET, Apprenticeships and Traineeships, there are still many young people disengaged and not experiencing a smooth transition from school to post school education and training.

Many students and parents are either not informed or are misinformed about the options in the non-tertiary post-school arena. Teachers are under resourced, curriculum lacks
Recognising this issue, the Northland Secondary College combined with key stakeholders and established the Northland Education Centre (NTEC). The City of Whittlesea recognises NTEC as an important and workable model in providing curriculum and training options to young people and in addressing skill shortages in a thriving and changing economy. NTEC provides an effective model in bringing together industry leaders, parents and educators to inform and expand the options available to young people in our region.

**A case study - Northland Technology Education Centre (NTEC)**

The manufacturing industry in the Northern region was experiencing skill shortages as a result of a reduced number of young people entering the industry. Local manufacturing companies have reported significant, long-term difficulties in recruiting young people into the industry.

Northland Secondary College established a multi-million dollar manufacturing and technology facility, the Northland Technology Education Centre (NTEC) to provide high quality training in areas in which there are skills shortages in Melbourne’s North.

NTEC works with local industry, industry training boards, the LLEN, schools, unions, TAFEs and Group Training companies to facilitate students’ entry into apprenticeships, traineeships and further education on completion of their courses.

NTEC runs VET certificate courses in a number of fields identified as areas in which there were skill shortages: Engineering, Automotive, Electro-technology, Furnishing, Manufacturing Technology and Horticulture to Year 10, 11 and 12 students in both VCE and VCAL. Students can also do full-time pre-apprenticeship programs in Building & Construction, Engineering and Electro-technology.

The College is a state and nationwide model for the teaching of Technology and provides Technology courses to Northland students as well as 280 students from other public and private schools in Melbourne’s North. NTEC showcases the best of these industry sectors and their opportunities. NTEC is committed to:
1. Developing close industry partnerships and responding to industry concerns regarding skills shortages
2. Providing the most comprehensive range of VET Technology programs for students in the region.
3. Maximising students’ employment potential and broadening career options for students
4. Encouraging young women and Indigenous students to pursue careers in manufacturing and technology. (northland.vic.edu.au)

The engagement and partnership with local industry and allied groups seek to:

- Provide a means for education and industry to respond to each other’s needs and concerns on the basis of a partnership founded on mutual respect and shared interests.
- Ensure the flow of skilled and motivated young people into industry sectors of strategic local, regional and state importance.
- Ensure that young people who decide on employment in these sectors do so as a first option based on real information, have clearly developed employable skills and are conscious of how their careers might develop.
- Underpin long-term regional skills needs and economic development potential
- Develop close partnership with local TAFEs so as to guarantee that there will be no duplication of resources or efforts in this transition process.
- Broaden the responsibility for the learning needs and outcomes for students to include local industry sectors.
- Actively encourage local industry responsibility for the definition and resolution of their skill shortages.
- Create a sustainable and ‘seamless’ school-to-work and training process. Genuine industry-school partnerships provide the base for the sustainability of NTEC programs and their best practice objectives. (northland.vic.edu.au)

The City of Whittlesea recommends that:

- Increased training for teachers be provided to better equip them with the knowledge and diversity of careers available
- Programs be developed to engage with young people and their families in the provision of information on possible post school education and training pathways
- Closer partnerships be fostered with education and local industry
• Career preparation be incorporated into the school curriculum
• Programs be developed to explore the Northland Technology Education Centre (NTEC) model and other models as options to implement in the municipality
• Any alternative model be complemented with appropriate support services.
Other factors that impact on higher education participation

Cost of Higher education – a deterrent

Though there have been significant increases in the numbers of people enrolling in higher education, there are a number of developments that work against opening up the higher education sector to people from low socio-economic backgrounds. In particular, the changes to the higher education sector over the past two decades have significantly increased the financial burden on students while the restrictive eligibility criteria to access student income support has made University study very problematic for many people.

Under the original HECS students contributed around 20% of the cost of their education. By the late 1990s this rose to 40%. With the Nelson reforms implemented in 2005, the costs borne by students increased to 56%. The Educational Policy Institute ranks Australia, behind Japan, Chile, New Zealand, UK and USA, as the sixth least affordable higher education system in the world.

Despite the significant increases in student numbers, studies have found that the ‘user pays’ system of higher education has indeed deterred many young people, as well as older people who have never previously undertaken tertiary study, from investing their time and energy into higher education (ACOSS 2004; Robertson, 1990).

A DEST commissioned paper on Equity groups in Higher Education found that the level of access and participation of most identified equity groups across the HECS period was very low but stable. Specifically, students from low socio-economic backgrounds participated in higher education at 61.58% of their population percentage (James et al 2004).

The recent Hume/Whittlesea On Track Survey found that:

- 33.1% of Year 12 completers and 35.8% of early school leavers reported that ‘costs of study’ as their reason for not studying
- 30.9% of Year 12 completers and 40.7% of early leavers reported that it was ‘not worth building a HECS debt’ as their reason for not studying
- 21.4% of Year 12 completers and 31.4% of early school leavers reported that they were ‘only offered a fee-paying place’ as their reason for not studying
- 21.4% of Year 12 completers and 21.1% of early school leavers reported that they did not get an offer as their reason for not studying.

(On Track 2007)
The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government call upon the Federal Government to increase fully funded scholarships available to Universities.

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State government call upon the Federal Government to increase the number of funded University places available in Victoria.

Cost of Living and Student Income Support

Research indicates that a significant factor in participation in higher education is whether or not financial support is available. Other research undertaken over the years consistently shows that the eligibility criteria for student income support is far too restrictive and/or the levels of payments from Youth Allowance and Austudy are insufficient to meet student needs. Subsequently students are increasingly engaging in employment, often for excessive hours and to the detriment of their studies, to meet basic needs whilst they study. (AVCC 2007, SFAN 2004, Senate 2005, Baldwin and McInnis 2002) Significant reform is needed if Government income support programs are to meet the financial needs of students.

As discussed earlier, the sector and the number of Australians with post-secondary education qualifications have grown significantly over the past few decades. However, despite significant increases in student numbers the proportion of students from low SES backgrounds has not changed. Though there are broader issues associated with why people choose or reject participation in higher education, it is rarely contested that financial circumstances and support play a significant role.

The recent Hume/Whittlesea On Track Survey found that:

- 14.3% of Year 12 completers and 19.5% of early leavers indicated that they were awaiting Youth Allowance as the reason for not studying.
- 31.7% of Year 12 completers and 40.7% of early leavers reported that ‘hard to support self’ as the reasons for not studying
- 26% of year 12 completers and 31.7% of early leavers reported ‘financial pressures on family’ as the reasons for not studying.

(On Track 2007)

Furthermore, consecutive studies in 2000 and 2006 commissioned by the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee (AVCC) has found that many Australian
students are experiencing stressful financial situations and many found it difficult to support themselves week to week, with a large proportion lacking adequate financial support (AVCC 2007). These studies established that:

- one in eight students were going without food or other necessities because they could not afford the cost. This jumped to an astonishing one in four for indigenous students;
- the eligibility criteria for Austudy and Youth Allowance and the level of income support were grossly restrictive and inadequate;
- just under 57% of students did not agree that it was worth getting into debt to get an education;
- 49% reported that a great deal of pressure was placed on parents/partners supporting their study;
- a significant proportion of students indicated that their financial circumstances influenced major choices, including their choice of course/program, the university they attended and the mode of study undertaken;
- over 20% of undergraduate students and over 23% of postgraduate students indicated that due to the financial circumstances associated with studying they may have to either discontinue studying, take a leave of absence or defer; and,
- an astounding 11.4% of full time and 16.7% of part time research students indicated that they thought their financial circumstances might lead to a lapse in their candidature.

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government call upon the Federal Government to overhaul the student income support schemes and to expand the eligibility criteria and the level of support available.
Public transport

Transport is a major issue for young people in the City of Whittlesea. Lack of public transport has enormous consequences for young people, including lack of access to health, education, employment and support services. Transport is becoming increasingly important as residential developments move into outlying areas (YouthPlan2030).

The Whittlesea Strategic Transport Infrastructure Study, a joint project involving the Department of Infrastructure, VicRoads and the City of Whittlesea, found that Whittlesea has inadequate public transport provision. Linking Melbourne: The Metropolitan Transport Plan 2002 and the Meeting Our Transport Challenges Statements, identifies transport requirements in the City of Whittlesea including the expansion of local bus services and the upgrading of rail lines along key corridors. The expansion of public transport infrastructure and services will enhance community connectedness, health and wellbeing, reduce social isolation, increase employment, education and training opportunities and maximise access to social and recreation opportunities, services and facilities. They will also make important local contributions to addressing climate change through reduced greenhouse emissions.

The City of Whittlesea has a very high reliance on private vehicle use as the main form of transport with over 90% of trips to work relying on private motor vehicles. As the figure below demonstrates there is a very high reliance by students on private transport with over 70% of students using private motor vehicles for their trips to educational institutions (2006 Yearly Household Survey).

- Over 26% of residents indicated that they would use public transport more but the cost is prohibitive.
- Over 25% of residents indicated that the current level of service is inadequate to meet their needs (either no service is available, current service needs to be extended, accessibility is a problem or there is a lack of links between different forms of public transport).
- Around 20% of residents have called for improvements to the current services, such as frequency, speed and reliability.
- Of the people who used public transport, just under half (49.8%) used a motor vehicle in conjunction with public transport, clearly indicating that there is a major problem with the links between the different forms of public transport.
The recent Hume/Whittlesea On Track Survey found that

- 23.4% of Year 12 completers and 31.7% of early school leavers reported that the cost of travel as the reason for not studying
- 24.6% of Year 12 completers and 30.1% of early leavers reported ‘too much travel’ as their reasons for not studying.

(On Track 2007)

**Figure 10: Travel to Educational Institutions (students) 2006**

![Travel to Educational Institutions (students) 2006](chart.png)

Source: Whittlesea Household Survey 2006

**The City of Whittlesea recommends** that the State Government invest in public transport infrastructure and services across our municipality. Specific recommendations are to ‘fast track’ the rail extension from Epping to South Morang, and realign and increase bus services.
Skill Shortages

The City of Whittlesea recognises that the differential rates of participation in higher education have economic effects as well as social effects. Namely,

- people with higher education qualifications earn higher incomes and are less likely to be unemployed and less likely to rely on welfare;
- people with low education levels are vulnerable and at risk of being marginalised in a knowledge based economy; and,
- skilling of the population is imperative if we are to ensure Victoria’s economic growth.

The overall unemployment rate in Victoria was 5.1% (May 2006). The unemployment rate for

- people with qualifications was 3.7%
- people without qualifications was 6.9%
- people with higher education qualifications was 3%.

‘Skill shortages’ is a phenomenon that has been receiving much attention over the past few years. According to a recent publication of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Victoria is experiencing skill shortages across an array of occupations including: childcare, building and engineering, nursing, health specialists, teachers, automotive trades, engineering trades, construction trades, food trades and information and technology. (DEWR 2008 )

Furthermore, recent studies examining the needs of the future workforce have also identified significant deficits in skills and higher education qualifications. (Shah 2007)

- Victoria’s workforce is changing.
- To remain competitive, Victoria’s workforce must become more qualified.
- A shortfall of 49,000 people with higher education qualifications is projected.
- Victoria must increase course commencements by more than 10,000 per year.
- Industry stakeholders believe significant skills gaps are looming.

Addressing skills shortages requires a multi layered and long term strategy. However industry and educators strongly believe that skillling young people through university and VET offers the greatest potential source of additional skilled workers, and is the most efficient and productive policy approach.((Its Crunch Time 2007: 17)
In particular, it is evident that there are significant benefits to be gained in terms of skill capacities of future workers and citizens, by lifting the performance of students from disadvantaged family or school backgrounds. (It’s Crunch Time, 2007)

Economic analysis undertaken on the impact of increasing the retention of young people in education and training (completing Year 12 or undertaking an apprenticeship) to 90% by 2010 would:

- increase workforce participation by 65,000
- expand the economy by over $9 billion by 2040.

(It’s Crunch Time 2007)

It is clear that immediate far-reaching and comprehensive measures need to be implemented if Victoria is to address current and future skill requirements. Lifting the school retention/completion rate of those young people who are at risk of disengaging is an obvious and tangible target.
Strategies to address any barriers contributing to geographic differences in participation in higher education.

Factors affecting higher education participation

**The City of Whittlesea recommends** that the State Government work with the Federal Government to develop targeted equity programs to improve the enrolment of people from low socio economic backgrounds in our Universities.

**The City of Whittlesea recommends** that greater support be provided to students at the earlier years of secondary schooling to assist transition from secondary schooling to higher education.

**The City of Whittlesea recommends** that the State Government provide additional, targeted and appropriate resources to facilitate improved educational outcomes for refugee and other newly arrived young people and their families.

**The City of Whittlesea recommends** that the State Government provide additional, targeted and appropriate resources to facilitate improved educational outcomes for Indigenous young people and their families.

Improving educational outcomes

**The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government adequately funds** a range of prevention and early intervention strategies to support young people to remain engaged at school and to improve the educational achievements of young people who live in Interface areas. These strategies need to:

- Focus on all young people within Interface schools, but particularly those in Years 5 – 9;
- Be located within Interface municipalities;
- Provide alternative curriculum options;
- Provide case work support and counselling for young people;
- Engage with parents, providing individual and parenting support, as well as linking parents to the school community;
- Build community capacity, acknowledging that when communities, families and schools work together with young people, young people are more likely to stay connected with their community and their education;
• Provide subsidies to meet the costs of attending school;
• Develop and monitor a fund to meet the costs of post-secondary education for young people who cannot afford it; and
• Develop young people’s participation in schools, in areas such as a negotiated curriculum, activity in governance and accreditation for student involvement in community projects.

Support Services

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State government funds the employment of Generalist Youth Worker positions on the basis of 1 EFT per 3000 young people aged 10 - 24 living in the municipality, that focus on enhancing the capacity of mainstream and universal services to contribute to young people living successfully in their communities through capacity building, early detection and youth development.

Generalist Youth Workers are effective in:

• providing an important universal service base;
• responding to immediate concerns of youth people and their families;
• providing a strong link to a range of other more intensive support services; and,
• facilitating partnerships and networking between service providers.

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State government resource the provision of locally-based, youth specific Mental Health services, including,

• crisis outreach;
• multi-disciplinary staff, including youth friendly GPs, case workers, psychologists and consultant psychiatrists; and,
• youth specific intake services in each region.
The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government fund Adolescent Health Teams in Interface municipalities, to provide primary health services to young people; These teams should comprise:

- Family and youth counselling
- Youth worker
- Community nurse with specialist skills in working with adolescents
- Health promotion and prevention strategies and programs
- Case management capacity to work with young people with complex care needs
- After hours service provision

Other post-school pathways

The City of Whittlesea recommends that:

- Increased training for teachers be provided to better equip them with the knowledge and diversity of careers available
- Programs be developed to engage with young people and their families in the provision of information on possible post school education and training pathways
- Closer partnerships be fostered with education and local industry
- Career preparation be incorporated into the school curriculum
- Programs be developed to explore the Northland Technology Education Centre (NTEC) model and other models as options to implement in the municipality
- Any alternative model be complemented with appropriate support services.

Other factors that impact on higher education participation

Cost of higher education a deterrent

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government call upon the Federal Government to increase fully funded scholarships available to Universities.

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State government call upon the Federal government to increase the number of funded University places available in Victoria.
Student income support

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government call upon the Federal government to overhaul the student income support schemes and to expand the eligibility criteria and the level of support available.

Public Transport

The City of Whittlesea recommends that the State Government invest in public transport infrastructure and services across our municipality. Specific recommendations are to 'fast track' the rail extension from Epping to South Morang, and realigning and increasing bus services.
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## Appendix A: City of Whittlesea secondary school performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Percent of VCE Students applying for tertiary places</th>
<th>Percent of satisfactory VCE completion in 2007</th>
<th>Percent of VET units of competence completed in 2007</th>
<th>Percent of VCAL units completed in 2007</th>
<th>Median VCE study score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epping Secondary College</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivanhoe Grammar School</td>
<td>Plenty Mernda</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lalor North Secondary College</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalor Secondary College</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Park Secondary College</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northside Christian College</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Lalor Secondary College</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Monica's College</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomastown Secondary College</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whittlesea Secondary College</td>
<td>Whittlesea</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Average*</td>
<td>Whittlesea</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>29</td>
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</table>

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 20 December 2007
Highlighted cells show percentages significantly below State average.
## Appendix B: Hume Whittlesea – Year 12 completers and Early Leavers - Reasons for not studying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Hume Whittlesea</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 12 completers</strong></td>
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<td>30.3</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Not ready</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awaiting Youth Allowance</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hard to support self</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>37.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Financial pressures on family</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>29.4</td>
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<td>Costs of study</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>37.5</td>
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<td>Not worth building a HECS debt</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Only offered fee-paying place</td>
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<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cost of travel</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Too much travel</td>
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<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No offer</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure of coping</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have to leave home</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preferred course not offered locally</td>
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<td>30.6</td>
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<td><strong>Early Leavers</strong></td>
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<td>31.1</td>
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<td>Financial pressures on family</td>
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<td>Cost of travel</td>
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<td>Too much travel</td>
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<td>31.7</td>
<td>32.8</td>
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Appendix C: Hume Whittlesea and Victoria GAT results and destination following year 12 completion

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>VET Cert III</th>
<th>VET Entry Level</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Working full-time</th>
<th>Working Part-time</th>
<th>Looking for Work</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>38.7</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2.8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1.4</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
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<td>Highest</td>
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<td>7.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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### Appendix D: Hume Whittlesea - Destinations of all school leavers by year level (LLEN and Victoria)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Hume Whittlesea</th>
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<td>Year 12</td>
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<td>Trainee</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Early Leavers</td>
<td>Full-time Work</td>
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<td>Part-time Work</td>
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