South Australia’s young people: emerging issues and priorities

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South Australia’s young people: emerging issues and priorities

## Contents

1. **Introduction**  
   1.1 Project requirements  
   1.2 Defining young people  
   1.3 Policy responses to multiple and complex youth need  
   1.4 Focusing youth policy  

2. **Critical issues and challenges affecting young people**  
   2.1 Participation, social inclusion and building communities  
      2.1.1 Participation in cultural activities  
      2.1.2 Participation in decision making processes  
      2.1.3 Civic engagement  
      2.1.4 Young Aboriginal leadership  
      2.1.5 Young South Australians living in a multicultural community  
      2.1.6 Participation in volunteering  
      2.1.7 Poverty and disadvantage  
      2.1.8 Loss of young people from rural areas  
   2.2 Health, lifestyle and safety  
      2.2.1 Smoking and young people  
      2.2.2 Overweight, obesity and poor body image in young people  
      2.2.3 Mental health and young people  
      2.2.4 Safety and young people  
   2.3 Housing and homelessness  
   2.4 Education, training and skill development  
      2.4.1 Combining learning and employment  
   2.5 Employment participation and access to safe and satisfying work  
      2.5.1 Employment of young Indigenous people  
      2.5.2 Employment of young people with a disability  
      2.5.3 Young carers – education and employment participation  
      2.5.4 Loss of young people to other parts of Australia  
      2.5.5 Young people and work-life balance  
      2.5.6 Young people’s safety at work  
      2.5.7 Young people and mistreatment in the workplace  
   2.6 Young people and the environment  
3. **Executive summary: Key youth policy issues**  
   3.1 Participation, social inclusion and community issues  
   3.2 Health, lifestyle and safety issues  
   3.3 Housing and homelessness issues  
   3.4 Education, training and skill development issues  
   3.5 Employment participation and access to safe and satisfying work  
   3.6 Young people and the environment  
4. **Summarising youth policy relevant trends and issues against SASP targets and objectives**  
5. **References**  
6. **Appendix 1: Examples of key issues identified by a range of actors**  
7. **Appendix 2: SASP targets and examples of related programs**
list of tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1:</td>
<td>Issues identified in international, national and state policy documents and</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>research reports as being of significance for young people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2:</td>
<td>Health risk indicators related to health weight by age group in Australia</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3:</td>
<td>Health risk indicators related to health weight by age group in South</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4:</td>
<td>Psychological distress by age group, South Australia 2006-07</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5:</td>
<td>Education levels by SLAS of high and low disadvantage</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6:</td>
<td>Proportion of 15-19 year-olds not in full-time education and not in</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>full-time employment, by state/territory Australia, may 1999-2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7:</td>
<td>Proportion of total net interstate migration, 15-24 years, by state,</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia, 2006-07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

list of figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1:</td>
<td>Persons attending cultural venues and events, by age, South Australia,</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2:</td>
<td>Number of young persons (15-24 years) born in Australia and overseas born,</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Australia, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3:</td>
<td>Formal volunteering rates, by age group, South Australia, 1995-2008</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4:</td>
<td>What would encourage non-volunteers to participate, by age group, South</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia, 2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5:</td>
<td>Proportion of persons in Adelaide and rest of South Australia, by age group,</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6:</td>
<td>Age standardised prevalence of smoking, 15 to 29 years, 1990-2006</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7:</td>
<td>Prevalence of overweight or obesity, by age groups, South Australia, 18+</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8:</td>
<td>Prevalence of sufficient physical activity by age groups, South Australia,</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 years and over, year 2006-2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9:</td>
<td>Percentage of homeless young Australians and South Australians by age group,</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10:</td>
<td>16 year olds in full time secondary education by South Australia region</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11:</td>
<td>Participation in vocational education and training, by South Australia</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12:</td>
<td>Proportion of 19 year olds in full time education, not in full time</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>education by socio economic status, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13:</td>
<td>Accumulated student higher education HECS debt in Australia, 1989-90 to</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14:</td>
<td>Percentage of 15 to 19 year olds not participating in full time education</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or employment, SA and Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15:</td>
<td>Number of persons underemployed, 15-24 year-olds, South Australia, 2002-2009</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16:</td>
<td>Unemployment rate (moving quarterly average), 15 to 24 year-olds, South</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia and Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17:</td>
<td>Work-life index scores, by age group and gender, Australian work and life</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>index (awali), 2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18:</td>
<td>Percentage change in number of serious workers compensation claims, by age</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group, Australia, 2000-01 to 2005-06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19:</td>
<td>Public transport as method of travel to work, persons employed in Adelaide,</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>age, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
South Australia’s young people: emerging issues and priorities

1 introduction

1.1 project requirements

The Australian Institute for Social Research (AISR) at the University of Adelaide was commissioned by the Office for Youth\(^1\) in South Australia to develop a research paper highlighting the key issues for the wellbeing and general development of young people across the state.

The findings from this project will inform the development of YouthCONNECT, the new strategic policy framework for South Australia that will replace South Australia’s Youth Action Plan (2005–2007). YouthCONNECT aims to foster a collaborative and holistic approach between government agencies, the community and young people to address issues affecting young South Australians. Recognizing that issues affecting young people today are multidimensional and complex in both their causes and their consequences, the new policy framework has sought to combine an integrated approach and innovative multidisciplinary based solutions.

In addition the Office for Youth has acknowledged the significance of consultation in developing the new framework based on the idea that many issues faced by young people can only be comprehensively addressed when all the relevant stakeholders work together to develop a solution. Accordingly, the Office for Youth undertook extensive consultation with various stakeholders in the youth sector that was focused on the opportunities and barriers faced by young people in the state. The consultation involved eight government departments, 13 local councils and seven community organisations.

- The first stage of the consultation process was completed in June 2008. The Office for Youth conducted the Tell It Like It Is state-wide youth consultations involving over 1,000 young people aged between 12–25 years.
- Consultations were targeted to include a cross-section of young people including those identifying as Aboriginal, young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, young people with a disability and young people located in regional areas. Young people were asked to contribute their ideas and thoughts and identify key issues. This project brief sought the following outcomes:
  - An analysis of key international and national research reports demonstrating critical issues and challenges affecting young people generally.
  - An analysis of South Australian specific research and policy documents demonstrating key issues and challenges affecting young people in the state.
  - An analysis of information obtained from Office for Youth consultations with young people, community and government within the context of this broader research.
  - Identification and analysis of specific South Australian youth statistics broadly linked to SASP targets identified by the Office for Youth as being relevant to young people in South Australia.

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\(^1\) The Office for Youth delivers a range of policies, projects and programs to support the South Australian Government’s vision that young people are valued, supported and celebrated as an integral part of the community. It further plays a pivotal role in developing, coordinating and facilitating a whole-of-government response to issues affecting the state’s young people in order to ensure that youth policy is mainstreamed across a wide range of government departments and agencies.
1.2 defining young people

There is no single definition that distinguishes young people from children and adults, with numerous definitions existing. For example – young people are defined by:

- The Australian Government as those aged between 12 and 25 years (Garcia de Heer 2008: 3).
- The South Australian Office for Youth as those aged between 12 and 25 years.

These diverse categorizations have important consequences for the collation and analysis of data relating to youth issues as well as policy development and evaluation of programs directed at young people. Most notably, variations around the definition can, potentially have significant implications for the numbers of people targeted by youth policies and programs (and the numbers excluded) (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions: 2007).

Furthermore, meanings of the term ‘youth’ or ‘young people’ vary between and within different societies around the world in response to fluctuating political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances [UN Programme on Youth 2008]. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2008) for example, defines youth as a stage of life characterized by rapid psychological and physical transition, where young people progress from being dependent children to independent adults.

While physical and mental maturity form part of the distinction between young people and those older or younger than them, the formal definition also involves the legal ascription of rights such as the right to vote or to drive as being an important element of youth [Boese and Scutella: 2006]. As such, the defining of young people brings with it an exclusion and inclusion dimension. Depending on the age used for the definition, young people can be considered old enough to pay adult transport or recreation fees, to drive a car or pay taxes, but not to vote or be considered independent from their parents.

However, it is recognised that an age-based definition implies homogeneity. In reality, young people are a heterogeneous group intersected by a range of identity variables including class, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity and cultural norms and values [Roche et al 2008: 69]. The life transition referred to as ‘youth’ involves very different experiences for young men and young women and for diverse ethnic and cultural groups, partly due to different roles and responsibilities ascribed to young people. The concept only has meaning in relation to specific social, political and economic contexts [Wyn & White: 1997 cited in Boese and Scutella: 2006].

Therefore, the first premise underpinning this paper holds that while some major issues tend to affect young people (relative to the general population) more or less collectively, others will impact on young people according to specific and distinguishing variables.

The second key premise is that young people must be recognised not just as subjects, but also as agents of policies that affect their wellbeing and harness their potential.

The life-cycle conceptual framework

On this basis, the life-cycle approach provides a powerful conceptual framework for policy designed to reflect the vulnerabilities and opportunities for investing in children and young people [World Bank: 2009]. This approach recognises that policy interventions are cumulative: that maximum benefit in one age group can be derived from interventions in an earlier age group and that interventions in one generation will bring benefits to successive generations. The life-cycle framework
can be applied as an assessment tool to identify gaps of different subgroups within a specific lifecycle stage, and as a project planning tool to facilitate prioritisation and selection of those interventions that influence critical risks and gaps.

Finally, the life-cycle approach is helpful because it can be used to identify synergies within and beyond different sectors and areas of intervention (World Bank: 2009). Within this framework, the ‘youth transition’ phase is one of the most critical in the life-cycle. It encompasses the transition from childhood to adulthood, from school to work, and hence involves developing responsibilities and choosing pathways and carries both opportunities and risks (Boese and Scutella: 2006).

Youth development as a national approach builds on the broad principles of the life-cycle approach but incorporates a strong ethos of inclusivity thereby ensuring that programs and services target all young Australians. Accordingly youth development is not about further advantaging those who are already privileged at the expense of those who are not, but nor is it about exclusively targeting young people at risk, already in trouble (or assumed to have the pathology for anti-social behaviour) at the expense of other individuals who also deserve the opportunity to reach their potential (Patterson and Averis: 2003). Youth development programs focus on empowering young people by strengthening personal attributes including building optimism, self-esteem, self-reliance and self-confidence. They also provide opportunities for young people to develop individual skills and expertise in areas of planning, conflict resolution, teamwork and leadership. Positive youth development activities benefit all young people by building on the individuals strengths enabling them to develop relationships with others and actively contribute to the community where they live.
1.3 policy responses to multiple and complex youth need

Policy makers at the local, state, national and international levels have recognised that young people face distinct and often inter-related challenges across a number of spheres. Those considered important from a policy perspective have been canvassed by a number of government and non-government organisations as well as researchers. Appendix 1: examples of key issues identified by a range of actors presents a wider matrix of the issues identified by a selection of key local, national and international agents across the government and community sectors. The most important of these are listed in Table 1.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education and training</th>
<th>Employment and skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Road safety</td>
<td>Environmental issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard of living</td>
<td>The participation of young people in civic and community life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing affordability</td>
<td>Age-based and culturally-based discrimination and abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health issues – physical and mental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible and affordable transport</td>
<td>Family relationships and friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying and emotional abuse</td>
<td>Body image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs and alcohol</td>
<td>Safety and wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability to poverty</td>
<td>Youth justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 illustrates that young people face multiple, compounding and concurrent issues or barriers (UN 2007: xvi) which in turn, highlights the importance of cross-portfolio and whole-of-government policy development.

In responding to these challenges, the State Government of South Australia (South Australia’s Strategic Plan Audit Committee: 2008) has sought to improve the coordination between labour market and education and economic and social policies. In this context it has identified various targets within its South Australian Strategic Plan (SASP) that have direct and indirect relevance for young people in the state, arguing that ‘… more and better job opportunities are vital if people are to lead fulfilling, independent lives and generate future opportunities, particularly for our young people’ and that young people must be given ‘a voice in local decisions’. 
1.4 focusing youth policy

Today’s young people are the most highly educated in history, physically healthier than previous generations and more likely to join the workforce with fewer dependents because of changing demographic trends (World Bank: 2007).

A popular perspective within research and policy discourse today holds that young people have never had so many opportunities for their development.

Simultaneously, young people face challenges that are both unique and more acute than for other generations and an equally popular perspective has concentrated on the problem behaviours of young people, portraying them as generally deviant from society’s expectations and a ‘social problem’ that needed fixing (Vromen: 1997). This two-edged coin may explain why young people tend to be divided into ‘achievers/winners’ or ‘at risk/troublemakers’ (Wyn & White: 1997 cited in Boese and Scutella: 2006).

A less explored, but more valuable, perspective considers young people as agents of change. It lays emphasis on the role of governments and the community sector as providing the opportunities and resources needed to harness the full potential of young people as active citizens who want and are able to participate in society.

As at June 2008, 12 to 25-year-olds made up 18.8 per cent of the total population in South Australia (ABS: 2008c). In July 2009, 15 to 24-year-olds made up 17.4 per cent of South Australia’s labour force. They are critical to the economic and social development of the state (ABS: 2009a). While young people and their families make the decisions in relation to the immediate challenges and opportunities presented to them, public policy is critical to determining the development of young people’s human capital and their potential as key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Young people require specific policy attention because they must navigate many of life’s crucial transitions in a short time (World Bank: 2007). These transitions include moving from school to work, forming families, taking responsibilities for their own health, and becoming full citizens (World Bank: 2006). The development of their human capital can be hampered by policy failures that affect their options, especially the failure to provide or finance adequate services when markets do not work. This is particularly pertinent against the backdrop of a drastically slowing global and domestic economy (World Bank: 2007).

In the South Australian context, the State Government has prioritised specific segments of the population considered to be pivotal to the state’s longer-term development and economic success. Its investment in early childhood development for example has been reflected in the whole of government approach adopted to develop and implement the Early Childhood Development Strategy. At the other end of the spectrum South Australia’s ‘active ageing’ approach has sought to tap into the skills of older people, particularly the ‘younger aged’ (i.e. 60 to 75-year-olds), in economic activity (Economic Development Board: 2009). Such initiatives reflect important and effective efforts on the part of the State Government in recognising the needs and potential of specific sectors of the South Australian population.

While such initiatives focussing on the very young and the very old are critical to the State’s development, recognising the value of implementing an integrated (cross-portfolio) service approach to South Australia’s young people is equally critical. South Australia’s Strategic Plan (SASP) contains six broad objectives and under each of these are more specific targets. Many of these targets are directly and indirectly related to young people. The Office for Youth has identified the South Australian Strategic Plan targets that it considers to be the most relevant to young people in South Australia (as listed in Appendix 2: SASP targets and examples of related programs and identified in subsequent sections of this paper). In addition the AISR has also identified various targets under the objective of Expanding Prosperity given that these hold particular pertinence for disadvantaged young South Australians (see Appendix 2).

In progressing these targets, State Government agencies and departments have a series of policies, programs and services placing young people as the primary client base; local and federal governments have also been critical in supplementing or adding to these initiatives (see Appendix 2 for a range of examples). A key strength of many of these services and programs is that they acknowledge the diversity characterizing the youth population and the wide range of issues that affect some more than others.

In a 2005 scoping study of youth policy priorities and directions by the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS), stakeholders including policy makers, advocates for young people and young people themselves acknowledged that ‘one-size-fits-all’ policy approaches to young people are destined to fail and alternatives are required that involve attention to specific groups of young people who may be experiencing social exclusion (NYARS: 2005). As explored in this research paper, this approach is being recognised by governments at the Commonwealth, state and local levels.

2 The ABS only collects labour force data for those aged between 15 and 24 years.
2 critical issues and challenges affecting young people

The current environment of major change in the global economy and social and political institutions constrains the ability of young people to contribute to the development of their societies due to their lack of capacity and limited opportunities for participation. For this reason, there is a pressing need for policies that not only build youth potential, but also youth participation in key policy areas (UN 2007: xvi).

2.1 participation, social inclusion and building communities

Young people remain one of the groups most excluded from mainstream participation mechanisms, with adults often speaking on their behalf.

“When industrialised society, no other age group is as disengaged as young people, particularly those in the 18-24 age bracket” (City of Salisbury 2008: 5)

When their voices are heard, however, young people’s views may be quite different from those of adults and their perspective can add new dimensions to framing an issue or creating solutions. Participation also reaps benefits for young people themselves as it encourages cooperation, negotiation and problem solving (Kickbusch: 2008).

Poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage are key barriers to young people engaging in their communities as active and interested citizens. Socioeconomic disadvantage takes many forms: ranging from poverty or low income to social isolation, inequitable access to services, good quality housing and education. It is thus important that definitions of youth-specific disadvantage extend beyond a lack of economic resources, to encompass many of the serious environmental, structural and social barriers faced by young people and their families (Hetzel et al: 2004).

The concepts of social inclusion and exclusion are closely related, and it is difficult to discuss social inclusion without also discussing social exclusion. There appears to be general agreement in the literature about the dimensions of social exclusion, which Atkinson (2002: 4) summarises as: ‘poverty, income inequality, low educational qualifications, labour market disadvantage, joblessness, poor health, poor housing or homelessness, illiteracy and innumeracy.’ Under the Australian Government’s current approach, to be socially included requires opportunities for: securing a job; accessing services; connecting with others in life through family, friends, work, personal interests and local community; dealing with personal crises, such as ill health, bereavement or the loss of a job; and being heard (Gillard: 2008).

The Office for Youth acknowledges there are gaps in opportunity and achievement between young people doing well and those faced with disadvantage and social exclusion. The Australian Government is addressing broad social gaps in achievement through its productivity and social inclusion agendas (National Office for Youth, Government of Australia: date unspecified).

Researchers have identified a range of barriers that can limit young people’s participation in various spheres of their community:

- negative attitudes to and stereotyping of young people;
- tokenism;
- lack of familiarity with adult decision-making systems;
- lack of trust by adults in the abilities of young people;
- skill deficits in young people; and
- relying too heavily on articulate young people or students to act as a voice for all young people (Saggers et al: 2004).
2.1.1 participation in cultural activities

There are distinct age-based patterns in participation in different types of cultural activities and events. Young people are most likely to participate in cultural activities that involve popular music concerts, dance performances and cinemas. Libraries, the Botanical Gardens and theatre performances are three types of cultural engagement that are enjoyed across age groups – see Figure 1 below.

Objective: Fostering Creativity and Innovation
T4.3 - Cultural Engagement - Institutions: Increase the number of attendances at South Australia’s cultural institutions by 20 per cent by 2014.

Objective: Fostering Creativity and Innovation
T4.4 - Cultural Engagement - arts activities: increase the number of attendances at selected arts activities by 40 per cent by 2014.

While young people are more likely to participate in some cultural activities, they are less likely than older groups to attend classical musical concerts, musicals and operas and other performing arts.

Figure 1
Persons attending cultural venues and events, by age, South Australia, 2005-06
Source: ABS (2007a) Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events, 2005-06, Cat. No. 4114.0

- 15 to 35 years
- 35 to 54 years
- Over 55 years
2.1.2 participation in decision-making processes

Youth participation involves young people being active in decision-making processes related to issues that affect them. Young people make invaluable contributions to communities and are empowered themselves when they participate. Being involved provides young people with opportunities to share in decision-making, develop new skills, pursue an area of interest, and have the satisfaction of using their skills to effect change in the community (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria 2004).

Many organisations now recognise that young people are stakeholders who should be involved in the decision-making done by boards and committees. They also recognise the value of the contributions young people can make to help ensure that services, events or decisions are more relevant and appropriate. Young people can bring fresh perspectives to a board or committee. Their participation can contribute to the diversity of skills and opinions at the table, and help an organisation build more effective links with young people in the community (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria 2004).

In recognition of this, and to encourage youth participation, the (then) South Australian Office for Employment and Youth (2003) commissioned two guides. The first targeted young people and contained advice on structured participation (e.g., in board meetings) and the second targeted organisations, providing a guide to involving young people on boards and committees.

Issue Existing decision-making structures are unrepresentative of young people, women and minority ethnic groups.

Unfortunately, the potential benefits of young people’s participation in decision-making structures are not acknowledged in existing structures. In 2002 the average age of directors in the top 100 companies in Australia was 57. Male directors were significantly older than female directors, and non-executive directors were significantly older than executive directors. Fewer than 10 per cent of Australia’s company directors are women and fewer than 2 per cent come from minority ethnic groups (Braund: 2005).

A survey of 60 chairs and company secretaries revealed that the main process for identifying prospective board members is referral by existing directors (78 per cent) or the MD or CEO (57 per cent) rather than through objective and agreed selection criteria. Compatibility with existing ‘board culture’ was identified as important for selecting names to put forward to shareholders (Braund: 2005).

Objective: Building Communities
T5.1 - Boards and Committees: increase the number of women on all State Government boards and committees to 50 per cent on average by 2008, and maintain thereafter by ensuring that 50 per cent of women appointed on average each quarter.
2.1.3 civic engagement

Young people who have opportunities for participation in their communities have a better chance at successfully transitioning to adulthood. Those who are marginalised and lack such opportunities are more likely to feel alienated and hopeless and engage in high-risk and antisocial behaviour (UN General Assembly Social and Economic Council: 2008). The World Youth Report 2007 argues that to benefit from young people’s capabilities, societies must ensure that opportunities for young people to be engaged in development processes are nurtured and protected. The report identifies a pressing need for policies that not only build youth potential, but also open doors to youth participation in areas such as employment, civic engagement, political participation and volunteerism (UN: 2007, xv-xvi).

In recent years the apparent decline in civic and political engagement across western societies has attracted growing attention among academics, policy-makers and social commentators. The issue of young people’s political consciousness and attitudes to political engagement has attracted special attention (Fahmy: 2006).

Young people in Australia are less likely to be enrolled to vote than older groups [Print, Saha and Edwards: 2004]. An estimated 300,000 Australians aged 18 to 25 do not vote in elections because they have not enrolled [Saha, Print & Edwards: 2005 cited in Boese & Scutella: 2006]. Tracking annual progress on T5.4 is problematic as enrolments are strongly influenced by the cycle of federal and state elections. Beyond this consideration needs to be given to issues that are wider than simply enrolling.

According to research by Saggers et al (2004) local governments throughout Australia are taking up the challenge to increase the participation of young people in their communities in different ways. The Australian Institute for Social Research’s analysis of voter participation in local government elections in South Australia between 1983 and 2006 shows an overall increase in participation, but the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) has advised that no data are collected on voter participation by age group for local government. The lead agency for T5.5 is the Department of Planning and Local Government. The information on electors provided by local government does not include date of birth. Further, under legislation the information that ECSA provides local government from the House of Assembly roll is limited to the name and address of electors and also does not include date of birth. Therefore, it is not possible to analyse the involvement of young people in local government elections.

**Objective: Building Communities**

**T5.4 - Enrolment to Vote:** increase the proportion of eligible young South Australians (18 - 19 years) enrolled to vote to better the Australian average by 2014.

**Objective: Building Communities**

**T5.5 - Local government elections:** increase voter participation in local government elections in South Australia to 50 per cent by 2014.

**issue** There is an absence of data that enable an analysis of the participation of young people in local government elections.

**issue** There is a need to develop strategies to raise awareness among young people of the value of democracy and the importance of participating through enrolling and voting.
2.1.4 young Aboriginal leadership

It is important that minority and disadvantaged young people have their own leaders and role models, and the capacity to achieve this relies in part on structured community leadership development programs that build skills and experience in this area. Such programs need to reflect cultural norms and expectations, and the roles of different age groups in providing leadership and mentoring.

Young Aboriginal people are more likely than other South Australians to experience poverty, racism, poor health, incomplete education and training, and unemployment. Coupled with this, young Aboriginal South Australians live with loss and grief, both historical and intergenerational as well as contemporary loss and grief, as part of their daily experience; this impacts directly on the resilience of individuals and communities (The Youth Affairs Council of South Australia 2009).

The Community Connect Branch of the Department for Families and Communities provides funding to support Aboriginal Youth Action Committees (AYACs). AYACs comprise a state-wide community development model intended to enable young Aboriginal people to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to enhance their personal futures and the futures of their communities. In this way they provide the opportunity for Aboriginal young people to develop their own committee, which plans recreational, cultural and life skills activities within their communities helping minimise problems arising from disconnection. Currently, there are approximately 20 AYACs operating in South Australia, in areas/regions ranging from metropolitan Adelaide, to Meningie to Coober Pedy (The Youth Affairs Council of South Australia: 2009).

Objective: Building Communities
T5.7 - Aboriginal leadership: increase the number of Aboriginal South Australian participating in community leadership and in community leadership development programs.
young South Australians living in a multicultural community

Australia’s young people speak over 200 different languages, and in 2006, 330,000 young people spoke a language other than English at home, with common languages including Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Greek and Arabic.

Between 1997 and 2007 there were 109,000 humanitarian settlers (including refugees, special humanitarian program and temporary protection visas) of whom 72,000 (65 per cent) were under the age of 30. Recently there has been an increase in the settlement of young people from Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan. Due to protracted conflict in these regions, many newly arrived young people have had little or no formal schooling and have spent extended periods in refugee camps.

In the past decade there has been a significant increase in the number of people migrating to South Australia as refugees or humanitarian entrants, and 65 per cent of these are under the age of 30. Young refugees arriving in Australia have diverse educational experiences and attainments. Some have had no formal schooling, others have had disrupted education due to long stays in refugee camps or in flight and have limited numeracy and literacy skills in their first language. Still others have had schooling but not in their first language. Age at arrival plays a significant role in the resettlement of young refugees, with late adolescents (aged 15+) facing additional pressures compared with younger adolescents and children, especially in relation to educational achievement and family (ICMYI: 2001; Multicultural Affairs Queensland: 2001; Ransley & Drummond: 2001 cited in Boese and Scutella: 2006).

There are a growing number of young Australians who have migrated permanently or temporarily from overseas; some such as refugees and humanitarian entrants have special needs with regard to resettlement and transition.

Researchers have identified a number of barriers in accessing employment specific to refugees, including:

- English language problems;
- lack of access to timely information regarding employment and training options;
- unfamiliarity with Australian systems;
- lack of relevant Australian work experience and referees;
- vulnerability once employed and negative experiences in seeking employment, professional recognition and or training; and
- discrimination on the part of employers during the selection process.

Further barriers for young refugees are the lack of support services in their first language while they are at school, lack of qualifications and often their experience of family separation (Multicultural Affairs Queensland: 2001, Ransley & Drummond: 2001, Opi: 2007).

Recent research by the Migrant Resource Centre of SA (Opi: 2007) was undertaken with 430 young people, most of whom were of African background and had arrived as humanitarian entrants – many as unaccompanied young adults or minors. The research identified the multiple and complex needs of this group of young people, and the importance of tailored, case-managed programs of support to assist them with a variety of issues including education (70 per cent had their schooling disrupted due to their experiences as refugees and many drop out of their education in SA or perform poorly), training, employment (60 per cent believed that employers discriminate against them when applying for jobs), housing, health and adapting to a new culture. Forty percent indicated that they were struggling academically while learning English at the same time.

Although the settlement process is a Commonwealth responsibility, and comprehensive programs like the

Objective: Building Communities
T5.8 - multiculturalism: increase the percentage of South Australians who accept cultural diversity as a positive influence in the community.
Newly Arrived Youth Support Services (NAYSS) provided by the Migrant Resource Centre of SA (MRCSA) are available, there are broader State Government interventions that relate to culturally inclusive services, and addressing racism in schools and the wider community which the young people surveyed were experiencing. Much of this can be attributed to inadequate community cross-cultural awareness, and some is identified in the report as reflecting inadequate formal processes for managing allegations of racial discrimination in schools. The MRCSA report notes that simply congregating in groups was viewed as ‘gang’ related behaviour in reality:

We walk in groups because to us, it is a sense of belonging, security and friendship. More importantly, most us have lost either one or both parents and have been living as unaccompanied minors even prior to coming to Australia. So when we congregate or walk together, we are already a family.

In 2006 more than 20,000 international students studied in Adelaide and the city’s international student numbers jumped by 14.1 per cent, compared to a national rise of 10.9 per cent. South Australia now has 5.4 per cent of the total number of all overseas students (including all types of education) in Australia. Key countries of origin for international students comprised China, India, Malaysia, Hong Kong and South Korea [Multicultural SA: 2008]. The majority of international students come to Adelaide for their higher education. Increasing numbers of international students are coming to Adelaide to go to primary or high school.

There is a need for broader community education and cross-cultural awareness raising to reduce current levels of discrimination and racism being experienced by these young refugees and migrants particularly in schools, but more widely in the community.

Figure 2 shows that in 2006, almost 20 per cent of young South Australians between 20 and 24 years were born overseas. The main countries of origin for people aged 15 – 24 years include China; India and New Zealand [Department of Immigration and Citizenship: 2008].

The number of international students on Adelaide campuses is rising, with an increase of 14.1 per cent in 2006, compared to a national rise of 10.9 per cent. This is a significant source of social and cultural capital for the state.

For Australian and international students to benefit from each other’s presence, the two groups must interact, however, earlier research has found that the students tend to congregate separately, within their own ethnic groups. Elkington (1985) found that almost half of the overseas postgraduate students she surveyed at the University of New South Wales expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of knowledge or interest shown by Australians about their home countries. Nesdale and Todd (1993) in a survey of University of Western Australia students found that 80 per cent of international and 77 per cent of Australian students spent most of their time with members of their own group.

There is a need for strategies that link international students with local students, and which enhance local students’ understanding of other cultures.
Volunteering has distinct age and life-cycle stage-based patterns. At a national level, according to 2006 Census data, the proportion of young people who volunteer is relatively low compared with other age groups (ABS 2007: 91). Similarly, in South Australia, people aged 15 to 34 years were less likely to have volunteered than those aged 35 and over. In 2008, 46 per cent of respondents in this young age category volunteered compared to 51 per cent of people aged 35 – 54 years (Harrison Research: 2008).

However, students in the 15 to 24 year age group have higher participation in voluntary work than other young people. Nationally, 20 per cent of students volunteered compared with 12 per cent of people who were not studying (ABS 2007: 91).

Since the mid 1990s more young South Australians are volunteering, especially if they are students. The proportion of weekly volunteering increases steadily with age.

Research commissioned by Office for Volunteers (Harrison Research: 2008) found that -

- Volunteering among young people has increased between 1995 and 2008 – see Figure 3.
- South Australians appear to start volunteering at a young age.
- The proportion of weekly volunteering increases steadily with age.
Figure 4 indicates there are a number of age-based factors that affect people’s capacity to be volunteers. For young people between the ages of 15 and 24, the predominant barrier is work commitments, which is the case for all age groups, except those aged 65 and over. Family commitments are more important barriers for those in the child-rearing phase of the life-cycle.

**figure 4**

*What would encourage non-volunteers to participate, by age group, South Australia, 2008*

Source: Adapted from Harrison Research (2008) Volunteering in SA in 2008 (p.45)
Poverty continues to be a feature of the lives of some young South Australians despite the state enjoying a period of significant economic growth. South Australia’s poverty levels rose from 6.7 per cent in 1994 to 12.3 per cent in 2006 (SACOSS: 2007). Recent research shows that 12.3 per cent of young single households in South Australia aged 21 to 25 are in after-housing poverty – that is, after the cost of their housing is taken into consideration, their remaining income placed them below the poverty line. This is well above the national average of 8.1 per cent (Carson and Martin: 2001). Young people’s poverty is an issue that is exacerbated by increasing rental costs without a corresponding rise in rental support concessions (YACSA: 2007).

Young people are particularly vulnerable to living in poverty and are much more likely to be living on low incomes than other age groups in society.

Although the total weekly income for single, independent Youth Allowance recipients has risen above All Groups CPI over the 2006-2009 period, these rises have been more than offset by rising costs of housing. This means that recipients cannot afford to live independently even in a one bedroom unit because they would be spending more than 90 per cent of their income on housing and energy alone, and could not afford a healthy diet, or to travel in any significant way to look for work (SACOSS: 2009).

Single, independent Youth Allowance recipients with no additional income are among the most economically disadvantaged groups in society today.

There is a need to provide affordable housing, which could be integrated with student housing, for young people seeking employment or education opportunities in Adelaide.

3 SASP Targets around Poverty and Disadvantage were included by AISR and not the Office for Youth.
2.1.8 loss of young people from rural areas

One of the most significant issues surrounding the loss of population from rural areas is that young people make up a large proportion of those leaving. In 2006, young people aged 15–24 made up 26 per cent of those leaving country inland areas, well above the average of 19 per cent of young people who moved regions across Australia. This loss of young people makes it increasingly difficult for population levels in rural areas, and the communities in these areas, to be sustained. Much of this movement of young people is to large cities and two factors linked to this movement are the employment and educational opportunities available in these cities (ABS 2007b: p. 20).

People have moved to areas with the most buoyant economies, particularly Adelaide, certain mining towns and centres with strong, mixed local economies, such as Clare and Mount Gambier. Regional centres, coastal towns, and towns along the River Murray have also gained population at the expense of the inland centres which were traditionally the economic and social cores of rural communities (Department of Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts [Transport SA]: 2002).

Young South Australians are leaving rural areas at a rate which exceeds the national average.

Figure 5 depicts the proportion of young people in Adelaide, compared with the rest of South Australia. It shows a loss of young people to non-metropolitan areas that begins during the teenage years and peaks in the early twenties, rebuilding slowly until people are in their early sixties, when there is a movement from the city to non-metropolitan areas – associated with retirement.

Objective: Building Communities
T5.9 - Regional population levels: maintain regional South Australia’s share of the State’s population.

Figure 5
Proportion of persons in Adelaide and rest of South Australia, by age group, 2006

Source: ABS (2006) Census of Population and Housing, Population by Age and Sex and Geographic Classification, Cat No. 3235.0

- Adelaide
- Rest of SA
2.2 health, lifestyle and safety

While young people are often considered to be in good health, relative to other age groups, youth is also a period in which many health issues and health-altering behaviours begin and continue to be experienced across a lifetime.

Behaviours that accounted for the greatest burden of disease and injury in Australia in 2003 included tobacco smoking, physical inactivity, alcohol consumption, use of illicit drugs, lack of fruit and vegetables and unsafe sex [AIHW: 2006 cited in AIHW: 2007].

There is now substantial evidence that the complex interactions of the social, biological and ecological environments within which young people grow, impact greatly upon their healthy development and wellbeing [SACOSS: 2008]. Factors such as poverty, lack of education, poor nutrition, food insecurity, inadequate housing and access to basic health services will limit the health of young people [YACSA: 2007; SA Health: 2008]. In this context the UN World Programme of Youth (2008) has recommended that young people should have access to basic health services in the interest of all and of society as a whole and that it is the indispensable responsibility of each government to mobilise the necessary awareness, resources and channels.

Across all these domains there are significant disparities in health and wellbeing between specific groups in the youth population, with substantial health inequalities existing for young people who are ‘at risk’, Indigenous young people and those whose families are socioeconomically disadvantaged [Tenant et al: 2003]. At 30 June 2006, the estimated resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Australia was 517,200, or 2.5 per cent of the total Australian population. The Indigenous population has a younger age profile, with a median age of 21 years compared with 37 years for the non-Indigenous population [ABS & AIHW 2008]. In South Australia the projected indigenous population is estimated to increase from 29,016 to 34,241 between 2008 and 2018; this represents an increase of 18 per cent over the decade (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2009).

Significant evidence exists about disadvantaged Australians including young Indigenous Australians being more likely to have shorter lives, higher levels of disease risk factors and lower use of preventive health services (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: 2008). There are indicators of wellbeing in South Australia which clearly show that the most disadvantaged geographic locations experience greater inequalities, with higher rates of smoking during pregnancy, higher rates of overweight and obesity, more likelihood of homelessness and less likelihood of an adequate diet (Department of Health: 2006).

Addressing the underlying social determinants of health and wellbeing requires a coordinated approach from numerous sectors, both government and non-government, from the community and from individuals (Department of Health: 2006).
2.2.1 Smoking and young people

Tobacco smoking has been identified by the World Health Organisation as a major risk factor (together with alcohol use, low fruit and vegetable intake and physical inactivity) contributing to the burden of disease in developed countries (SA Health: 2008). Tobacco smoking is usually established during adolescence and has often been cited as a precursor to other drug use and is the leading cause of premature death and illness in the developed world (Tyas & Pederson: 1998). In 2007, about one in 18 persons aged 12–19 years smoked daily across Australia. Rates were around 2 per cent for those aged 12–15 years and markedly higher for those aged 16 years and over (AIHW: 2008).

Preliminary findings from the 2005 Australian School Students Alcohol and Drug Survey (Cancer Council SA: 2006) in South Australia indicated that:

- Smoking rates are dropping among young South Australians and are the lowest ever recorded.
- Smoking rates have more than halved in the two decades from 1984 – 2005.
- Smoking rates for young women and men are virtually the same.

As indicated in Figure 6, the proportion of young people smoking has declined from 38.5 per cent in 1990 to 23.4 per cent in 2006; there was no significant difference in prevalence between males and females in this age group in 2006 (Cancer Council SA: 2007). The current proportion of young cigarette smokers in South Australia stands at 23.0 per cent of the 15 to 29 year-old population (Cancer Council SA: 2007). The large decline in smoking prevalence observed from 2002 to 2007 coincides with major adult Quit Campaigns including ‘Bubblewrap’ and the Graphic Health Warnings Campaign including ‘Amputation’ and ‘Voice Within’. December 2004 saw the introduction of smoke-free workplace laws.

Objective: Improving Wellbeing
T2.1 - Smoking: reduce the percentage of young cigarette smokers by 10 percentage points between 2004 and 2014.

Figure 6
Age standardised prevalence of smoking, 15 to 29 years, 1990-2006

Source: Adapted from Cancer Council SA, Tobacco Control, Research and Evaluation (2007) Smoking among 15-29 year-olds in SA.

4 The AIHW notes that estimates of tobacco use by younger people should be interpreted with caution, however, because of the low prevalence and relatively smaller sample sizes compared with those for adults.
While such positive trends are welcome during 2006, those aged between 15 and 19 years had the second highest smoking prevalence of all age cohorts (only those aged 30 – 44 years were higher, at 27.3 per cent). The SASP target rate for 2014 is 17.9 per cent which means that there must be a further 10 per cent reduction of young smokers over the next five years.

### Issue
Smoking prevalence among the 15-29 year age group has declined since 1990. However young South Australians continue to be the second largest age cohort of cigarette smokers in the state, with 23 per cent identified as smoking – well above the SASP target of 17.9 per cent.

Although Cancer Council of SA data indicate a decrease in smokers among 15 to 29-year-olds, national evidence suggests that young males and females living in the most disadvantaged areas had significantly higher rates of smoking [Turrell et al. 2006 cited in Boese & Scutella: 2006]. Smoking behaviour is steeply graded according to socioeconomic status, resulting in those who are the most disadvantaged having the poorest smoking-related health outcomes. Not only does prevalence of smoking increase with socioeconomic disadvantage, the average number of cigarettes smoked per week also increases with disadvantage [Hetzel et al.: 2004].

At risk groups are also more likely to smoke. The most recent South Australian data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate that 52.9 per cent of the adult Indigenous population were daily smokers in 2004-05 (50.3 per cent living in remote areas and 53.7 per cent living in non remote areas). In addition respondents who reported a serious mental illness were more likely to be smokers than those who did not report a serious mental illness. Of concern is the finding that teenage mothers were more likely to report smoking during pregnancy than other mothers (42 per cent compared with 17 per cent for all women) [AIHW: 2007, PHIDU: 2008].

### Issue
In 2008, there was a higher smoking prevalence among people living in areas of most disadvantage compared to those of least disadvantage, and among Indigenous people and people with a serious mental illness.

### Issue
Teenage mothers are far more likely to smoke during pregnancy than other women.

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5 Defined as currently receiving the disability pension based on a psychological or psychiatric illness.
Objectives: Improving Wellbeing
T2.2 - Healthy weight: increase the proportion of South Australians 18 and over with healthy weight by 10 percentage points by 2014.

2.2.2 Overweight, obesity and poor body image in young people

Being overweight or obese in childhood and adolescence can cause a wide range of serious physical and emotional health problems, and increase the risk of premature illness and death in adulthood (Hetzel et al. 2004). In the short term, being overweight or obese impacts on young people’s psychological wellbeing, and increases the risk of developing cardiovascular conditions, asthma and Type 2 diabetes. Long-term health consequences include adult obesity, increased rates of coronary heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers, gall bladder disease, osteoarthritis, and endocrine disorders (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: 2007).

While insufficient physical activity and poor food habits are frequently cited as being prime contributors to rising obesity levels in society, obesity in adolescence is also associated with social isolation, and lower educational and income attainment throughout life (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: 2007). These findings correspond to other research indicating that young people living in the most disadvantaged areas of Australia show significantly higher rates of obesity than those in the least disadvantaged areas based on the Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (Boese & Scutella: 2006).

At the national level, the rate of overweight young people aged 18 to 24 years has risen over the last 10 years. Nearly three in 10 children and young people are overweight or obese (AIHW: 2008).

Issue At national and a state level, the rate of overweight young people has risen over the last 10 years. In South Australia, 23.3 per cent of 16 to 19 year olds, and 44 per cent of 20 to 29 year olds are overweight or obese. Less than half of young people fulfil recommended physical activity guidelines. These trends are exacerbated for those living in disadvantaged areas.

For the first time since 1995, the 2007–08 National Health Survey measured the height, weight, hip and waist circumference of respondents aged five years or more. These data were used to calculate measured BMI and trends are summarised in Table 2 which shows that:

- 24.2 per cent of 18 to 24 year olds are overweight
- and 13.9 per cent are obese.
- Less than half (45.5 per cent) have a BMI within the normal range (ABS 2009d).

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Risk</th>
<th>15-17</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-44</th>
<th>55-64</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Body Mass Index (BMI):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Normal Range</td>
<td>45.5</td>
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<td>32.4</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t eat fruit</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

South Australia’s young people: emerging issues and priorities

Obesity rates increased from 3 per cent to 5 per cent between 2001 and 2004–05 and the proportion of overweight (but not obese) young people rose from 17 per cent to 22 per cent for those aged 18–24 years. Coinciding with these increases, less than half of young people (46 per cent of males and 30 per cent of females) were meeting recommended physical activity guidelines in 2004–05 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: 2007).

South Australian data suggests a similar story. A higher percentage of South Australians over Australian people are overweight or obese (SA Health: 2008). Of increasing concern to health practitioners and workers in the South Australian youth sector is the issue of obesity in young people, coupled with declining levels of required physical activity. While the data are not strictly comparable across Australia and South Australia, evidence in Table 3, Figure 7 and Figure 8 shows that -

- 23.3 per cent of 16 to 19 year olds, and 44 per cent of 20 to 29 year olds are overweight or obese.
- 54.5 per cent of 16 to 19 year olds, and 62.6 per cent of 20 to 29 year olds eat less than 2 serves of fruit per day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>16-19</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>60-69</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight or obese</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 serves of fruit per day</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 3 indicates, the prevalence of being overweight and obese prevalence rises as age increases. This suggests that patterns established in earlier years influence the prevalence of being overweight and obese in later years, highlighting the importance of early intervention and preventive health strategies.

As can be seen from Figure 7, the incidence of healthy weight rates decreases between the ages of 18 through to 40 and plateaus and improves in the 70-79 year age group. An opposite and mirroring trend is evident in relation to overweight and obesity rates.

**Table 3**

Health risk indicators related to health weight by age group in South Australia

Source: SA Health, South Australian Monitoring and Surveillance System (SAMSS) cited in SA Health (2008: 75)

**Figure 7**

Prevalence of overweight or obesity, by age groups, South Australia, 18+ years

Source: SA Health, South Australian Monitoring and Surveillance System (SAMSS), 18+ years. Cited in SA Health (2008:81)
The incidence of overweight and obesity also varies across different groups of young people. Survey data in 2004–05 show that more than half of Aboriginal South Australians were overweight or obese (SA Health: 2008). Around 40 per cent of Aboriginal South Australians aged 15 – 24 years were classified as obese compared to 25 per cent of non-Aboriginal South Australians according to 2004-05 ABS data (SA Health 2008: 187).

Being overweight or obese are serious health issues for people of all ages. However, poor body image and the issues associated with this, is a health challenge in which young people are over-represented. In the Mission Australia Survey [2007] about 4,300 young people aged 11 to 24 years participated representing 10 per cent of the national total. Sixty-five per cent of South Australian respondents came from Adelaide while the top three issues of significance to the SA sample were body image, suicide and family conflict. The way in which body image disturbance relates to the manifestation of a mental disorder is still inconclusive in relation to cause and effect. However, international and national research has indicated there is a clear relationship between high levels of disordered body image and development of eating disorders as well as a recognised link with depression (Patton et. al: 1999; Orygen Research Centre: 2004).

Other Australian research has found that topics such as tobacco, alcohol and drug use, sexual risk-taking behaviour, crime and anti-social behaviour, depression and suicide should be addressed in physical and mental health promotion programs directed toward young people (Department of Health:2006).

There is a need for South Australian health and mental health services to be resourced and prepared to deal with the growing rate of eating disorders, particularly in young people. They need to be better equipped to deal with interconnected issues: for example, a significant number of girls with anorexia have been sexually abused (Kickbusch: 2008).

Unfortunately there are no SASP targets designed to overcome the physical and mental health issues associated with poor body image among young people, and the Australian Institute for Social Research believes that this represents a significant gap in current targeting.

The Victorian Government was the first government in Australia to conduct a Parliamentary Inquiry into the impact of negative body image on young people, and the findings from this Inquiry led the Victorian Government to allocate $2.1 million over four years to the Positive Body Image Strategy to implement a majority of the recommendations made by the Inquiry. The strategy is the first of its kind in Australia and is focused on awareness-raising, the provision of resources and information, as well as partnerships (eg between government and the media) to encourage the development of healthy body image among young people.

Eating disorders and poor body image are significant health issues for many young South Australians and require a specific State-based strategy and accompanying SASP target.

Data generated by SA Health (2008) indicate that the overall proportion of South Australian adults (aged 16+ years) undertaking sufficient levels of physical activity has increased in 2006–07 (52.9 per cent) and younger people aged 16–29 years were significantly more likely to be undertaking sufficient levels of physical activity than older people. Nevertheless as suggested by Figure 8, 28.6 per cent of young people aged between 16 and 29 years are participating in insufficient or no physical activity (SA Health: 2008). More concerning is that the rate of physical inactivity increases with increasing socioeconomic disadvantage.

Objective: Improving Wellbeing

T2.3 - Sport and Recreation: exceed the Australian average for participation in sport and physical activity.

Taking part in physical activity is important to both healthy weight maintenance and mental wellbeing by reducing feelings of stress, anxiety and depression (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: 2007). The National Physical Activity Guidelines recommend at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day for young people under 18 years of age. However, only 46 per cent of males and 30 per cent of females aged 15–24 years participated in levels of physical activity recommended in these guidelines. In addition more young females (32 per cent) than young males (23 per cent) were sedentary (undertook no or very low levels of physical activity) or undertook low levels of physical activity (38 per cent of females compared with 31 per cent of males) [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2007: 74].

The proportion of South Australians aged 16 and over undertaking appropriate levels of physical activity has increased, and younger people are significantly more likely to be doing so than older people.
Nearly 30 per cent of young South Australians are participating in insufficient or no physical activity. As a group, young women are more sedentary than young men, and socially disadvantaged young people have higher levels of physical inactivity.

There has also been identified, through the SA Thinker In Residence program, the need for the health sector to engage with the education sector to increase the opportunities to improve children’s health literacy, as well as introducing programs related to body weight and body image (Kickbusch: 2008).

There is a need for the health and education sectors to collaborate with a view to improving children’s and young people’s health literacy, and to introduce programs related to body weight and body image.

On a more positive note, in a 2007 study by the South Australian Office for Recreation and Sport (ORS) and the University of South Australia (Uni SA) Physical Education, Exercise and Sport Studies (PEESS) unit in which 3,306 South Australian school students were surveyed, 91 per cent played at least one organised sport regularly in the previous 12 months (Office for Recreation and Sport 2007). The survey also revealed:

- The top three sports included netball, which was the most popular sport for girls, Australian football - the most popular sport for boys - and basketball, which had significant participation by both girls and boys.
- Over three quarters of surveyed students regularly participated in a sport organised by a club, including more than 90 per cent of secondary students living in rural areas.
- For each population sub-group the most prevalent barriers to physical activity as perceived by students themselves were peer group related. Over half (56 per cent) indicated they would try new sports if their friends were also interested and 48 per cent would play more sport if their friends were involved. Other barriers to participating in sports included lack of time and health or injury (Office for Recreation and Sport: 2007).

Source:
SA Health, South Australian Monitoring and Surveillance System (SAMSS), 18+ years. Cited in SA Health (2008:82)

**Figure 8**
Prevalence of sufficient physical activity by age groups, South Australia, 16 years and over.
Major mental health disorders, particularly depression and psychoses, often have their first onset in adolescence and early adulthood. The majority of mental illnesses start between the ages of 15 to 25 years and at least one third of young people will have had an episode of mental illness by the time they turn 25 (SACOSS: 2008). The teenage years are notable for increases in self-deprecation, boredom and depression. Early to middle adolescence (15 to 17 years) is a peak time for developing depression, particularly for young women, and it is known that young people are especially at risk in rural areas (Department of Health: 2006).

Mental health issues are a significant burden of disease for young Australians and South Australians. Young people aged between 16 and 29 were more likely to experience measured psychological distress than other South Australians.

Poor mental health affects young people’s ability to participate in schooling, working and socialising. It can lead to increased substance abuse, poor relationships, increased delinquency, poor self-esteem, unemployment, poor health, family breakdown and is therefore a key contributor to social exclusion (AIHW 2003a cited in Boese and Scutella: 2006). Key findings from a Brotherhood of St Laurence study indicated that:

- Young women and men aged 18 to 24 years are the group with the highest levels of psychological distress (anxiety, depression and worry).
- Young people who come to Australia as refugees or on humanitarian visas often experience ongoing trauma following their flight from persecution, sometimes compounded by detention and the insecurity of stay in Australia.
- Although declining in recent years, suicide rates for young Australian males remain high.
- Young people from poor, Indigenous and rural communities are more likely to commit suicide (Boese and Scutella: 2006).

These concerning trends at the national level are also reflected at the state level. After accident and injury, mental health issues are the most significant burden of disease for young people in South Australia (YACSA 2007: 8). Mental illness also affects younger people in greater numbers than older South Australians. This disparity in the prevalence of mental illness in young people poses significant issues not only to the economic viability and prosperity of our state but also poses serious questions for the ability of our mental health system to cope with the demand for services (SACOSS: 2008).

The level of psychological distress in South Australia — as determined by the Kessler Psychological Distress 10 item Scale (K10) — has decreased from 10.6 per cent to 9.5 per cent of the population, between 2002–03 and 2006–07 for people aged 16 and over.

People in the age groups 16–19 years (12.7 per cent) and 20–29 years (12.8 per cent), however, experience higher levels of psychological distress than other age groups (SA Health: 2008) - see Table 4: Psychological Distress by Age Group, South Australia 2006-07.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Psychological distress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The level of psychological distress experienced by respondents was determined using the Kessler Psychological Distress 10 item scale (K10) — that measures anxiety and depressive disorders in the general population.

6 measures anxiety and depressive disorders in the general population.
The most common causes of injury related hospitalisations among young people were transport accidents (20 per cent of all injury hospitalisations), falls (12 per cent) and assault (10 per cent) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: 2007). Serious injury can often have long-term effects and can include brain and spinal injury. While 27 per cent of road fatalities are aged 16 to 24 years, this age group represents 30 per cent of serious injuries due to road crashes (Email from Department of Transport and Infrastructure 11/09/09).

In South Australia, road traffic accidents constitute the biggest burden of disease for young men aged 15 to 24, and they are a prominent burden of disease for young women in the same age bracket (Department of Human Services: 2001).

Compared with 2005, the number of victims of crime recorded by SA Police in 2006 decreased for all homicide related offences, motor vehicle theft and for sexual assault. In 2006 in South Australia, males outnumbered females in all categories of offences except for sexual assault.

Young people are frequently depicted in the media as contributors to the overall crime rate. In reality, they are also over-represented in terms of being victims of crime.

Of those young people who are offenders, a significant percentage are Aboriginal, and this is a significant over-representation that raises concerns about a cycle of social exclusion, poverty and disadvantage, which is linked to under-achievement academically, and reduced employment chances.

In 2005, Indigenous juveniles accounted for 52 per cent of 10 to 17-year-olds in juvenile detention across Australia. In Western Australia (WA) the corresponding rate was 75 percent, in South Australia (SA) 44 per cent and in New South Wales (NSW) 52 percent [Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP): 2007].

• In 2008, the total number of juveniles apprehended in South Australia was approximately 6000 compared to 5200 (Canny: 2009).

• In 2008, 46.7 per cent of juveniles aged 13–15 years apprehended by police were of Indigenous background compared to 37.0 per cent from non-Indigenous backgrounds. Interestingly for those aged 16–17 years 38.4 per cent were of Indigenous background compared to 54.5 per cent of non-Indigenous background (Canny: 2009).

Young people are frequently victims of crime, and this needs to be understood against the data on young offenders.

• Young males are particularly likely to be victims of crime (with the exception of sexual assault – see below). For example:
  • Males constituted 78.0 per cent (50 people) of the victims of homicide and related offences, motor vehicle theft and for sexual assault. In 2006 in South Australia, males outnumbered females in all categories of offences except for sexual assault.
  • Males accounted for 72.0 per cent of all victims of robbery (756 people), with half of all male victims being aged between 15-24 years.
  • Of all victims of robbery aged 15-19, 84.0 per cent were male.
  • Females represented 84.0 per cent of all recorded victims of sexual assault (1,279 people) with 45 per cent of these aged 10-19 years. Of all victims of sexual assault aged 15-19, 91 per cent were female (ABS: 2007).

• In 2005, Indigenous juveniles accounted for 52 per cent of 10 to 17-year-olds in juvenile detention across Australia. In Western Australia (WA) the corresponding rate was 75 percent, in South Australia (SA) 44 per cent and in New South Wales (NSW) 52 percent [Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP): 2007].
2.3 housing and homelessness

Homeless young people are particularly vulnerable to a wide range of physical and mental health problems, lack of access to basic needs such as food and clothing, and a multitude of dangers including sexual exploitation and violence (Boese and Scutella: 2006). As with all homeless populations, young people have a range of other barriers including mental health, violence towards them or others, and drugs and alcohol. Their life stage often creates further barriers – for example, young people often have more poorly developed skills to be able to live independently including negotiating interpersonal relationships to sustain their accommodation (Cornell-March 2008: 11).

Obtaining an accurate count of the homeless population is difficult as people often move in and out of homelessness and may never be counted. There are two major data sources providing information on the number of homeless people in Australia—the ABS Census of Population and Housing, and statistics collected from refuge services funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).

For some people, homelessness is a short lived experience, while for others homelessness lasts more than one year, and some people experience repeated episodes of homelessness (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: 2009). The most recent ‘Counting the Homeless’ report for South Australia has demonstrated that -

- Sixty-six per cent of the homeless in South Australia were aged 34 or younger compared with the national figure of 58 per cent;
- One-quarter (27 per cent) of the homeless in South Australia were teenagers aged 12 to 18;
- In South Australia the rate of homelessness among men is generally higher than amongst women (54 to 46 per cent). However there were more females in the 12 to 18 age group (54 to 46 per cent) and in the 19 to 24 age cohort (52 to 48 per cent) that experienced homelessness.

- The rate of homelessness among 12 to 18 year-olds exceeds the national rate while the number of 19 to 24 year-olds is equivalent to the national rate – see Figure 9. Given these figures, the age profile of the homeless population in South Australia was significantly younger than the age profile of the national population (Chamberlain and MacKenzie: 2009).

issue Young people comprise a significant proportion of those who are homeless. The percentage of homeless 12 to 18 year-old South Australians is higher than the national figure. However, the overall rate of homelessness among young South Australians has declined since 2001.
Insufficient affordable housing in South Australia is a pressing issue that is impacting negatively on low income groups including young people. Recent research shows that 12.3 per cent of young single households in South Australia aged 21 to 25 are in after-housing poverty – that is, after the cost of their housing is taken into consideration, their remaining income placed them below the poverty line. This is well above the national average of 8.1 per cent, an issue that is exacerbated by increasing rental costs without a corresponding rise in rental support concessions (Carson and Martin: 2001).

Young South Australians are more likely to be in receipt of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) than other South Australians. In 2005-06, 42.0 per cent of all South Australian SAAP funding went to young people (SACOSS: 2008). People aged 15 to 24 years were much more likely to go to SAAP agencies than people in other age groups (Tenant et al, 2003, p. 12).

Young South Australians are also more unlikely to own (or be paying off) their own homes than in the previous decade. In 1993, 48.0 per cent of 18 to 34-year-olds owned their homes compared to 44.0 per cent in 2004 (SACOSS 2008).

**issue** After-housing poverty among young people is high relative to Australia. 12.3 per cent of young single households in South Australia are in after-housing poverty, compared with a national average of 8.1 per cent. Young South Australians are more likely to be in receipt of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program than other Australians.

7 The SAAP is the main government source of support for people who are homeless.
2.4 education training and skill development

Education and training are critical for young Australians and for wider productivity (Social Inclusion Initiative: 2009; OECD: 2009; Department of Health: 2006; NYARS: 2005). Research has demonstrated that when young people successfully complete Year 12 or equivalent, their future prospects of health, social status and employment are greatly increased (Koen & Duigan 2008: 1). Evidence collated by the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) (2008: 18) suggests that achieving a minimum of at least 12 years of education is optimum to meeting the challenges of a skilled economy (DFEEST 2008: 18).

Lack of education and work experience are specifically associated with long-term disadvantage including chronic unemployment and underemployment, a shorter working life, lower income and an increased likelihood of ending up in poor quality jobs with few opportunities for career development (Marsh & Perkins: 2006). Consequently, the Australian Government recently committed $2.5 billion to enable all secondary schools to apply for funding to build Trade Training Centres, in order to improve access to trade/VET training in secondary schools and to increase retention rates (OECD: 2009). Notwithstanding such findings and initiatives, Australia has been characterised by a relatively low retention rate in education beyond age 16, as compared with many other OECD countries. Hence, too many young people still lack the basic skills needed to embark on a successful long-term career in the labour market (OECD: 2009).

In South Australia the State Government has acknowledged the importance of education and training for its young population through various SASP targets related to the objective of expanding opportunity. In recent years the State Government has committed to re-establishing South Australia as the national leader in school retention rates, a benchmark that the state had achieved in the early 1990s (Government of South Australia: 2009). At present, the ACT and Victoria have the lowest rates of young people not in full-time education or employment.

**trend** In 2008, South Australia achieved its highest school retention rate in 13 years, with 75.3 per cent of students remaining in state schools to Year 12, compared with the 67.2 per cent rate recorded in 1999 (Government of South Australia: 2009).

In 1998, 12.2 per cent of South Australians aged 15 – 64 years had a bachelor degree or higher; in 2008 this had risen to 21.8 per cent. While the rise is positive, South Australia lagged behind the national average in 2008 which stood at 25.5 per cent (ABS: 2009).

**issue** While the number of South Australians completing Year 12 has grown in the decade after 1999, South Australia still lagged behind the national average in terms of young people with a bachelor degree or higher.

The long-term decline in the proportion of students taking science and mathematics is not unique to South Australia. Reversing this trend will pay large dividends for the state’s economic growth over the long-term, and for the students themselves throughout their working lives (EDB: 2009).

Attitudes developed during the primary years of schooling and maintained during the early secondary years lead to successful aptitude for studies at senior secondary level and beyond in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Interventions and resources aimed at encouraging student interest in STEM from an early age should be a priority to engage and capture the imagination of students in the upper primary and early secondary school years. Partnerships are needed between school, community, industry and universities that can offer young people positive images of what STEM professionals do (EDB: 2009).
Within the broader goal of increasing participation in full-time secondary education, it is also important to develop strategies that encourage studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Living in a disadvantaged location affects young people’s participation in education. Table 5 shows that nearly 88.0 per cent of 16-year-olds from the 10 highest ranked SLAs are in full-time secondary education average compared with only 62.0 per cent who live in the lowest ranked SLAs. It also shows that young Indigenous people are far more likely to live in disadvantaged areas, as are low income or welfare dependent families.

Young South Australians living in disadvantaged areas are less likely to be in full-time education. Participation in secondary education varies by geographical region – see Figure 10. In South Australia, the highest levels of this participation are in the region of Southern Adelaide and the lowest are in the Northern and Far Western Region.

### Table 5

**Education levels by SLAs of high and low disadvantage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lowest 10 ranked SLAs</th>
<th>Highest 10 ranked SLAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% aged 0-14 years</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of total population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% aged 15-29 years</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of total population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Indigenous</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of population aged 0-19 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of 16 year olds in full-time secondary school</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of students with a TER in science or maths</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total population participating in VET</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welfare</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of children in welfare dependent or low income families</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of families that are welfare dependent or low income</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the Northern and Far Western Region has the highest VET (vocational education and training) participation rates in the State – see Figure 11.

**Figure 10**
16-year-olds in full-time secondary education by South Australian region


**Figure 11**
Participation in vocational education and training, by South Australian region per 100 (total population).

Objective: Expanding Opportunity

T6.19 - Non-school qualifications: by 2014, equal or better the national average for the proportion of the labour force with non-school qualifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>VIC</th>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>TAS</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>AUST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Lamb and Mason (2008) originally cited from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Cat. No. 6292.0.55.001

Table 6
Proportion of 15 to 19 year-olds not in full-time education and not in full-time employment, by state/territory Australia, May 1999-2008

As indicated in Table 6, the percentage of young South Australians not in full-time work or education in 2008 (13.8 per cent) has declined since 1999 when it was 15.8 per cent. However, this is slightly higher than the national average of 13.3 per cent and falls short of the target set.

There is a strong correlation between the Socio-economic Status (SES) of the area in which a young person lives and the likelihood of them being in full-time education or work at age 19 – as Figure 12 demonstrates. Based on the SEIFA Index of relative socioeconomic disadvantage, 29.2 per cent of young people in the most disadvantaged areas are in full-time education compared with 56.4 per cent of their peers living in the most advantaged areas. Fewer than one in five 19 year-olds living in high SES areas are either unemployed, in part-time work or not in the labour force, and not studying full-time (ABS: 2006 cited in Lamb and Mason: 2008).

**Trend**

The percentage of young South Australians not in full-time work or education in 2008 (13.8 per cent) has declined since 1999 when it was 15.8 per cent, but is slightly higher than the national average of 13.3 per cent.

**Issue**

13.8 per cent of young South Australians are not in full-time education or full-time employment, which is slightly higher than the national average.

Objective: Expanding Opportunity

T6.19 - Non-school qualifications: by 2014, equal or better the national average for the proportion of the labour force with non-school qualifications.
4.1 combining learning and employment

A significant number of students combine study and part-time employment.

While this may be considered a positive mix of learning and earning, in many cases, it also results in time-management pressures for young people who have to juggle the demands of study and work. This appears to be an issue that particularly affects young women, a high proportion of whom have part-time jobs (Youth Collaboration et al: 2007).

**trend** A significant number of students combine study with part-time employment.

**issue** Young people are finding it increasingly difficult to support themselves in education and training and face time management pressures in balancing study and work.

Figure 13 shows that the accumulated student HECS debt in Australia reached $11,186,000,000 in 2004–05, and has increased progressively over the past 15 years. As young people make up the majority of university students, the debt burden falls disproportionately on them (Department of Education, Science and Training: 2004).
In 2003, nearly all (98.0 per cent) secondary students surveyed who worked part-time stated that they worked because they want ‘spending money of their own’. However, fewer than 9.0 per cent of students reported working because their ‘family needs the money’. Therefore, it appears that students generally use their income from part-time work for discretionary spending and not to supplement family income. Part-time employment was also seen as providing other benefits — more than 80.0 per cent stated that they enjoyed the work and over 90.0 per cent stated that it provided a sense of independence. More than 80.0 per cent of secondary students who worked part-time in 2003 felt that their work would assist them in obtaining a job after they finish studying, but fewer than 20.0 per cent indicated that they wanted similar work for their post education career.

This indicates that, rather than providing relevant on-the-job training, future employment benefits of part-time work for secondary students come from signalling general work aptitude to prospective employers (Robinson: 2001). The generic work-related skills developed by students are valuable in their own right.

In line with national trends, the participation rate for VET students in South Australia [aged 15 - 64] has fallen between 2003 and 2007 and remains below the national rate. During the September quarter 2008, 15 to 24-year-olds accounted for 58.5 per cent of apprentices and trainees in training in South Australia which was below the equivalent national rate of 59.6 per cent (NCVER: 2008).

**Objective: Expanding Opportunity**

**T6.21 - VET participation: exceed the national average for VET participation by 2010.**

The participation rate in VET in South Australia is below the national average and has been so for most of the past decade. In the September quarter of 2008, 15 to 24-year-olds accounted for 58.5 per cent of apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia, which was below the national rate of 59.6 per cent.

Fewer than one in five 19-year-olds living in high SES areas are either unemployed, in part-time work or not in the labour force, and not studying full-time (ABS 2006 Census data quoted in Lamb and Mason, 2008).
2.5 employment participation and access to safe and satisfying work

Paid employment is central to social inclusion, providing opportunities to develop skills and confidence while reducing income inequalities. And social inclusion is vital to economic development, helping to ensure a supply of suitably skilled labour (EDB: 2009).

The labour force to population ratio for 15 to 24 year-olds in Australia is 60.6 per cent (ABS: 2009a). Unemployment, underemployment and poor quality jobs undermine this objective for many. On a global scale unemployment figures among young people are higher than the average unemployment rate throughout Europe, with few exceptions. Long-term unemployment is devastating for all workers, but for young workers this has to be addressed as a risk of jeopardising their long-term employment and life prospects. The intention of many governments, therefore, is to actively provide opportunities for young people to enter the labour market and once there to maintain their presence (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions: 2007).

In the present economic crisis, government should increase the funding of training and workforce development opportunities for those people who are on the margin of the labour force, those who are at risk of losing their jobs or who are on short-time, and those whose training contracts are at risk (Economic Development Board 2009).

Until recently most young people have been facing low risks of unemployment. In March 2008, for example, more than 65.0 per cent of young people had a job in Australia, the highest level recorded since 1978 (OECD: 2009). This has been reflected in recent policy which has focused on the importance of attracting and retaining younger workers (and other under-represented groups) in the workforce to counter existing and projected skill shortages brought about by a sustained period of economic growth and an ageing workforce.
The global economic crisis has, in the short-term at least, negated (or delayed) some of these skill and workforce pressures. Australia had the advantage of entering the recession with a relatively low level of long-term youth unemployment. In 2007, around 10.0 per cent of unemployed young people experienced a long spell of joblessness in Australia, compared with an OECD average of 19.6 per cent (OECD: 2009).

The South Australian Government has incorporated young people’s employment into the SASP through several targets relating to growing prosperity.

However, there remains scope for initiatives tailored to the needs of under-employed young people, and young people who experience significant disadvantage in accessing viable employment opportunities.

This includes young people with a disability, young refugees, young people living in socially and economically disadvantaged areas, and young Indigenous people.

**Issue** Young South Australians are experiencing growing rates of underemployment. Nearly 26,000 young people employed part-time are seeking more hours of work. Since 2008, there has been a significant increase in the number of under-employed South Australians.

**Figure 15** indicates that there has been a significant increase in the numbers of ‘underemployed’ South Australians between 2008 and 2009. Underemployment is defined as the number of people working part-time who would prefer to work more hours (whether they are available to or not).

---

**Figure 15**

*Number of persons underemployed, 15 to 24 year-olds, South Australia, 2002-2009.*

Source:
ABS (2009b), Labour Force Data on SuperTable, Cat. No. 6291.0.55.003

*February Quarter each year.*
According to ABS labour force data, in the March quarter 2009, South Australia’s labour force participation rate for people aged 15-24 was **70.0 per cent** compared to 70.9 per cent nationally. On this measure, South Australia is ranked third lowest of all the states, ahead of New South Wales and Victoria (ABS 2009a).

**Figure 16** illustrates that over the past 30 years, the unemployment rate for 15 to 24year-olds in South Australia has consistently been above the national average.

**Unemployment rate (moving quarterly average), 15 to 24year-olds, South Australia and Australia.**

Source: ABS (2009a) Labour Force Data on SuperTable, Cat. No. 6291.0.55.001.

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**Figure 16**

---

**issue** Labour force participation by young South Australia’s stands at 70 per cent, compared to 70.9 per cent nationally.

Following the recession in 1992, the rebuilding of the economy saw a rise in part-time and casual work (the casualisation of the workforce). For many Australians, part-time employment is their first experience of the world of work. This is particularly the case with younger workers. For instance, those under the age of 25 years account for 28 per cent of part time workers, but represent 18 per cent of the overall workforce (ABS: 2007). Moreover, part time employment among young people has grown strongly over the past three decades (Abhayaratna et al: 2008).

While part-time work can be a welcome option for some people, in South Australia during the February quarter 2009, there were **25,900** people aged 15-24 who were employed part-time who stated that they preferred to work more hours. This was the highest level since 2002 (ABS: 2009a).
employment of young indigenous people

In 2006, only 48.0 per cent of Indigenous school-leavers had a job compared with 80.0 per cent for non-Indigenous young people. This means that the unemployment rate among Indigenous young people was at least **2.5 times higher** than that of the non-Indigenous youth population. This gap has not changed significantly over the past decade (OECD: 2009).

**Issue** Young indigenous people face significant difficulties in obtaining employment. Their rate of unemployment is at least 2.5 times higher than that of non-Indigenous young people.

Objective 6 of the South Australian Strategic Plan has an accompanying target to increase the employment of Aboriginal employees in the public sector from 1.2 per cent to 2 per cent by 2009.

Research has identified the need for Aboriginal apprenticeships and traineeships to be linked to ongoing and long term employment, and for greater use of structured work experience and secondment programs across a range of agencies for young Aboriginal people (Barnett, Spoehr & Parnis: 2007).

**Issue** Early intervention that builds career and training pathways for Young Indigenous people is critical to their long term employment opportunities. The SA Public Service can play a key role in achieving this by building on existing traineeship and apprenticeships schemes, reconfigured to include a public sector career path.

The Indigenous population is relatively young, with a median age of 21 years compared to 36 years for the non-Indigenous population. **Australia’s skills shortage, combined with the younger age profile of Aboriginal Australians, provides a substantial opportunity to increase the participation in employment of Aboriginal people.** Project findings reinforced the importance of early intervention in building pathways for Aboriginal people (including young Aboriginal people) into the public sector and for a coordinated approach across the public sector to provide pre-employment work experience (including pre-traineeship and pre-apprenticeship) and school-based career development strategies that link young Aboriginal people to a public sector career path (Barnett, Spoehr & Parnis: 2007).
2.5.2 employment of young people with a disability

An estimated 27,900 South Australians aged between 15 and 24 have a disability (ABS: 2004) equating to 14.0 per cent of the youth population in this age group. In addition, young Indigenous people are much more likely than non-Indigenous young people to have a disability (13.9 per cent compared to 6.6 per cent) (Social Inclusion Board: 2008).

Young people with a disability participate in education and employment at much lower rates than young people without a declared disability, and require specific support to enable them to make an effective transition from education to employment.

There has been significant research undertaken that highlights the difficulties faced by young people with a disability in participating in education and in employment, and their participation rates demonstrate the extent of those difficulties. Approximately 38.0 per cent are employed full-time compared with 53.0 per cent of their peers without declared disabilities (Social Inclusion Board: 2008).

Their VET subject completion rates are also lower than those of students with no declared disability – 75.0 per cent compared with 82.0 per cent (Cavallaro et al: 2005). Educational achievements and VET outcomes vary from one type of disability to another and students with multiple disabilities have poorer outcomes than those with a single disability (Kate Barnett & Associates: 2002; Cavallaro et al: 2005).

Analysis of VET system data shows that about 54.0 per cent of all people with a disability have left school at or before the end of Year 10, compared with 39 per cent of all VET students (Kate Barnett & Associates: 2002; Cavallaro et al: 2005). Severity of disability and lower levels of educational attainment have a compounding effect on participation in the paid labour market and employment rates. Having a qualification higher than Year 12 significantly reduces unemployment rates for mild and moderate restrictions and, to a lesser extent, for severe restrictions (Cavallaro et al: 2005).

Studies of the cost to the economy of people with disabilities of working age receiving financial support from the welfare system versus the benefits to the economy if they were participating in the workforce have been conducted in most OECD countries, including the UK, the US and Australia. All have confirmed that the costs and potential benefits are substantial. An analysis commissioned by ANTA in 2001 (and updated in 2008) modelled a net gain to the Australian economy of between $2.2 to $4.1 billion per annum if people with disabilities participated at the same rate as the general population (Dockery, Birch & Kenyon: 2001). The revised and updated modelling drew estimates that were comparable to the original research (DEEWR: 2008a).

The importance of a policy focus on transitions

Transitions occur at various stages through life and for all people, involve periods of vulnerability because of the change involved. Transitions are usually more extreme for those with complex need or who experience some form of disadvantage, and require significant support, provided by those with specialist capacity.

Transition planning is increasingly being understood as a process that should address needs holistically and thus requires collaboration across a range of sectors, with a case management model that coordinates support and links the young person to appropriate opportunities (typically across sectors). Transition planning for students with a disability is best practice for all students because it takes an individualised approach that addresses need while seeking to maximise potential.

Examples of national best practice exist in South Australia. Austipced by DFEEST, the State Transition Program [which builds a pathway from school to VET with support from DEN providers] and the VET to Work Support and Transition Project [which builds a pathway from VET to work] are linked initiatives that partner school and VET providers with DEN (Disability Employment Network) providers. Both are models that can be adapted for any student requiring additional assistance due to disadvantage.
Young people also play a key role as unpaid carers, in the process making a substantial contribution to their own families and to the wider community. According to the 2006 Census, 5.0 per cent of people aged 15–24 (119,400 young people) provided unpaid care to a person with a disability. Of these young carers, 30,300 (25.0 per cent) were co-resident carers, in most cases living with a relative, commonly a parent, needing assistance (ABS 2007: 108).

It is important that policy reflects both the challenges and opportunities presented to these young carers. Many young people identify valuable skills gained from the caring relationships. However, the literature has also found that the caring role can bring “significant and pervasive negative effects” that include reduced life choices and limited future opportunities, poor physical and mental health, and the serious risk of leaving school early. Approximately 60.0 per cent of young primary carers between the ages of 15 and 25 are unemployed or not in the labour force (compared to 38.0 per cent for the general population in this age group) (Carers Australia: 2002).

issue There is a gap in policy and services designed to support young carers, including young Indigenous carers, and to ensure that their caregiving responsibilities do not reduce their education and employment opportunities.

Australia’s current service system appears to lack responsiveness to the needs of these often unidentified and isolated young people and many young carers receive no support at all. For example, 98.0 per cent of young primary carers had never accessed respite assistance. Research undertaken by Carers Australia (2002) concluded that many government programs exist that could benefit young carers through sharper targeting and more flexibility. Much of the reform needed was found to rely on cross-portfolio collaboration.

Young Indigenous Australians (aged 15-34) were 1.8 times more likely to be carers than non-Indigenous Australians, related to the earlier onset of long-term health conditions in the Indigenous population.

Interstate migration has detracted from South Australian population growth for some time and a high proportion of the loss has involved young people. This includes young adults aged 15-29, especially young women (Hugo: 2006) and young professional workers – the same cohort the state will need in coming years (EDB 2009: 69) has comprised the most likely groups to move away from South Australia. Losses due to interstate migration, primarily of young people, have resulted in older populations with lower proportions of people of child-bearing age and subsequent low levels of natural increase (ABS 2007:3).

issue South Australia is experiencing a high loss of young working age people to other states. The median age of South Australians in 2003 was 38.3 years, compared with 38.9 years in 2007. South Australia has the second oldest population of all the states and territories largely as a result of lower fertility, disproportionately low migration gain and higher net interstate losses (ABS: 2008c). As the population ages, pressures on the labour market to provide a reasonable quality of life for all citizens have increased, making it imperative that young South Australians are able to access and enter the labour market in South Australia (SACOSS: 2008).

In percentage terms, more young people are moving away from South Australia than most other states and territories in Australia, apart from Tasmania and New South Wales (ABS: 2008). Table 7 shows that 23.9 per cent of net total interstate migration out of South Australia occurred in the 15 to 24year-old age cohort.
This outflow largely involves a loss of skilled and highly educated young people while inflow mainly involves older and less well-off people – creating a major population challenge for the state, and its workforce (Hugo: 2008).

### 2.5.5 young people and work-life balance

The nature of participation in work changes over the life-cycle. Pocock et al’s (2009) findings from the third Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI) survey of work-life interference in Australia found that young women have the poorest work-life interference while across both genders young workers show significantly poorer work-life interference scores than older people. Figure 17 provides details.

The same study also revealed that just over one in five Australian employees (22.4 per cent) had made a request for some work flexibility in the past year before the survey. However, incidence of requests was much higher among younger workers, with **29.8 per cent** of 18 to 24-year-olds making such a request, compared to only 14.4 per cent of 55 to 64-year-olds. People seek flexibility for diverse reasons. The higher rate of requests by younger people may reflect, to some extent, their participation in education and training, and the need to make requests to accommodate work and study (Pocock et al, 2009: 54).

**issue** While younger workers [aged 18 to 24 years] report the shortest working hours, this group is also most likely than other age groups to request more flexibility in their work arrangements.

**Objective: Improving Well-Being**

**T2.12 – Work-life balance:** Improve the quality of life of all South Australians through the maintenance of a healthy work-life balance.

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### table 7

Proportion of total net interstate migration, 15-24 years, by state, Australia, 2006-07

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/territory</th>
<th>15-24 years Proportion of total interstate migration*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>-25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>-9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>+19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>-23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>+28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>-219.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>+482.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>+71.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Negative number represents outflow of young people from the state/territory. A positive number represents inflow.*
Other research by Auer and Elton (2008) indicated that -

- Young workers want a life outside work - they are interested in work-life balance and avoiding overly long hours.
- They expect career transitions, flexibility in work arrangements including part-time work, and will choose jobs/workplaces/bosses to get what they want.
- They are concerned about the impact on relationships of unsociable hours associated with shiftwork. This was especially significant for young people forming friendships, finding a partner and developing and sustaining relationships.
- In addition young people are increasingly aware of the negative health impacts caused by too much stress at work.
- Young people were likely to experience periods of time where work or home commitments would peak for a relatively short time and put them under particular stress.

While the availability of decent jobs is a precondition to ensuring that all young South Australians have access to rewarding careers, specific strategies are required to remove the barriers to employment and career opportunities that young people encounter and to make the transition between education and employment smoother.
2.5.6 young people’s safety at work

Objective: Improving Well-Being
T2.11 - Greater safety at work: achieve the nationally agreed target of 40 per cent reduction in injury by 2012.

Young people, especially those new to the workplace, will encounter unfamiliar risks from the jobs they will be doing and from the working environment. According to European data, young workers have higher non-fatal accident rates compared to the average working population. In 2003, 4.7 per cent of young workers aged 18–24 years had an occupational accident with more than three days lost, compared to an average of 3.3 per cent [European Agency for Safety and Health at Work: 2007]. The incidence rate of non-fatal accidents at work per 100,000 workers was more than 40 per cent higher among those aged 18–24 years as compared to the total workforce or those aged 55-64 years [European Agency for Safety and Health at Work: 2006]. Education and awareness-raising are important strategies in increasing workplace safety, but different age groups require tailored information. SafeWork SA’s Youth Gateway aims to provide young people with valuable information and resources about working conditions [industrial relations] and occupational health, safety and welfare.

According to the ABS [Cat. No. 6324.0 - Work-Related Injuries, Australia, 2005-06], in 2005-06, 64 people experienced a work-related injury or illness in the last 12 months per 1,000 people who had worked at some time in the last 12 months. Both men and women experienced higher work-related injury/illness rates in the younger age groups. The 15-19 year age group had the highest rate with 78 per 1,000 people [91 per 1,000 men and 65 per 1,000 women], followed by the 20-24 year age group with 75 per 1,000 people [98 per 1,000 men and 51 per 1,000 women]. People aged 55 years and over recorded the lowest rate of work-related injuries/illnesses with 50 per 1,000 people [51 per 1,000 men and 48 per 1,000 women]. In South Australia for people aged 15-29 years the share of total injury claims has fallen from 30.5 per cent in 2000-01 to 27.2 per cent in 2006-07.

issue The 15-19 year age group had the highest rate work-related injury or illness amongst all age groups in Australia.

figure 18
Percentage change in number of serious workers compensation claims, by age group, Australia, 2000-01 to 2005-06.
Among the findings of research conducted by SA Unions (2009) in conjunction with the Centre for Work and Life at the University of South Australia, it was noted that:

- Nearly 60 per cent of respondents were casual, part-time employees creating challenges for ongoing training, education and information about occupational health and safety;
- 50 per cent reported not to have a specified time for a break during their shifts;
- 13.5 per cent of workers reported working over 38 hours per week;
- 38.8 per cent were not paid for working overtime;
- 45.8 per cent of respondents claimed their workplace either didn’t have, or they didn’t know who was, an occupational health and safety representative.

Young workers are particularly vulnerable to mistreatment in the workplace and poor workplace conditions.
It is often suggested that the increased attention paid to the state of the natural environment in the media and school curricula is resulting in the creation of a particularly environmentally-aware cohort of younger Australians.

Research conducted in 2003-04 with approximately 56,000 young people across Australia identified a number of findings about young people’s attitudes towards the environment, including the following:

- Over 40 per cent of 14 to 17-year-olds identify themselves as environmentalists, this is in fact well below the national average of 66 per cent.
- Respondents aged 18-24 reported the second lowest level of identification with environmentalism, while those aged 50 to 64 reported the highest.
- While older Australians are much more likely than younger Australians to identify as environmentalists and participate in recycling, when it comes to fear about the state of the environment and the need to act immediately to protect it, there is a high degree of similarity between the views of the youngest and oldest age groups [Denniss: 2005].

In 2005, the transport sector accounted for about 14.0 per cent of Australia’s net greenhouse gas emissions. Between 1990 and 2005, the carbon dioxide equivalent emissions (CO2-e) from the transport sector grew by 30 per cent or 18.5 million tonnes (ABS 2008a). The Australian Government has introduced initiatives such as the National Travel Behaviour Change Project, to encourage people to reduce their reliance on private motor vehicles and consider more sustainable modes of travel, such as public transport (ABS: 2008a).

In Australia, most people travel to work by motor vehicle. Some people combine car travel with other forms of transport, such as public transport and walking. Of the 7.9 million people at work on Census Day (8 August) 2006, 6.3 million (79.0 per cent) travelled to work by motor vehicle, while 850,900 people (11.0 per cent) took public transport and 960,500 people (12.0 per cent) rode a bicycle, walked, worked from home or used some other form of transport (ABS: 2007).

**Objective: Attaining Sustainability**

T3.6 - Use of public transport: increase the use of public transport to 10 per cent of metropolitan weekday passenger vehicle kilometres travelled by 2018.

**Objective: Attaining Sustainability**

T3.7 - Ecological footprint: reduce South Australia’s ecological footprint by 30 per cent by 2050.

**trend** Young people are more likely to use public transport than older age groups.

Data from the 2006 Census indicate that younger people were more likely than older people to use public transport for their usual journey to work or study. In 2006, over one-quarter (26.0 per cent) of people aged 18-34 years used public transport as their main method of travel to work or study, compared with 11.0 per cent of people aged 55 years and over (ABS: 2008a) – see Figure 19a.

Young workers’ and older workers’ use of motor vehicles for commuting differed from that of other workers. Those aged 15–19 years were most likely to be passengers in a car (33.0 per cent of all 15 to 19-year-old workers on Census Day 2006) and the least likely to drive a car to work (43.0 per cent). Young male workers were more likely to drive a car to work than young women workers (46 per cent of young men compared with 40.0 per cent of young women workers aged 15–19) (ABS: 2007).
In both 2001 and 2006, the main method of travel to work in the Adelaide (C) was private transport. However, over this period there was an increase in the proportion of people using public transport. Females were more likely than males to use public transport to travel to work in Adelaide (C), as were those in a younger age bracket and those on lower incomes.

The highest users of public transport to work in the Adelaide (C) tend to reside in areas located further from the city as compared to the highest users of private transport who resided within closer proximity to the city (ABS 2009). The Town of Gawler (M), which is on the northern fringe of the Adelaide Statistical Division, had the highest proportion of employed residents using public transport to travel to work in the Adelaide (C) in both 2001 (37.0 per cent, or 201 people) and 2006 (41.9 per cent, or 227 people). In 2006, Tea Tree Gully (C) had the second highest proportion of residents travelling to work in Adelaide (C) by public transport (35.9 per cent, or 2,853 people). This may reflect that the LGA is serviced by the O-Bahn Busway (ABS: 2009b).

There is a lack of primary data on the patterns of resource use (quantity and quality) by young South Australians; in this context there is a clear need for research.
summary of issues

This review of research, data and policy has identified a range of issues for the consideration of south Australian youth policy-makers executive summary: key youth policy issues.

These are summarised in this section under the broad themes of Participation, Social Inclusion and Community; Health, Lifestyle and Safety; Housing and Homelessness; Education Training and Skill Development; Employment Participation and Access to Safe and Satisfying Work; and Young People and the Environment.

3.1 participation, social inclusion and community issues

Existing decision-making structures are unrepresentative of young people, women and minority ethnic groups.

- While young people are more likely to participate in some cultural activities they are less likely than older groups to attend classical musical concerts, musicals and operas and other performing arts.
- There is a need to develop strategies that raise awareness among young people about the need to enrol to vote and how to do this.
- There is an absence of data that enable an analysis of the participation of young people in local government elections.
- Too many young Aboriginal South Australians are disenfranchised and disconnected from the broader community. Current opportunities for these young people to engage within and outside of their communities are limited and often fail to create the necessary pathways to self-empowerment and advancement.
- There are a growing number of young Australians who have migrated permanently or temporarily from overseas; some such as refugees and humanitarian entrants have special needs with regard to resettlement and transition.
- There is a need for broader community education and cross-cultural awareness-raising to reduce current levels of discrimination and racism being experienced by young refugees and migrants particularly in schools, but also more widely in the community.
- There is a need for strategies that link international students with local students, and which enhance local students' understanding of other cultures.
- Young people are particularly vulnerable to living in poverty and are much more likely to be living on low incomes than other age groups in society.
- Single, independent Youth Allowance recipients with no additional income are among the most economically disadvantaged groups in society today.
- There is a need to provide affordable housing, which could be integrated with student housing, for young people seeking employment or education opportunities in Adelaide.
- Young South Australians are leaving rural areas at a rate which exceeds the national average.
3.2 health, lifestyle and safety issues

Young people are frequently victims of crime. Young males are disproportionately represented among recorded assaults and robberies while young women are disproportionately represented in sexual assault crimes.

- Smoking prevalence among the 15-29 year age group has declined since 1990. However young South Australians continue to be the second largest age cohort of smokers in the state, with 23 per cent identified as smoking – well above the SASP target of 17.9 per cent.
- In 2008, there was a higher smoking prevalence among people living in areas of most disadvantage compared to those of least disadvantage, and among Indigenous people and people with a serious mental illness.
- Teenage mothers are far more likely to smoke during pregnancy than other women.
- At the national and state level, the rate of overweight young people has risen over the last 10 years. In South Australia, 23.3 per cent of 16 to 19 year-olds, and 44 per cent of 20 to 29 year-olds are overweight or obese. Less than half of young people fulfil recommended physical activity guidelines. These trends are exacerbated for those living in disadvantaged areas.
- Eating disorders and poor body image are significant health issues for many young South Australians and require a specific state-based strategy and accompanying SASP target.

3.3 housing and homelessness issues

- Young people comprise a significant proportion of those who are homeless. The percentage of homeless 12 to 18 year-old South Australians is higher than the national figure. However, the overall rate of homelessness among young South Australians has declined since 2001.
- After-housing poverty among young people is high relative to Australia: 12.3 per cent of young single households in South Australia are in after-housing poverty, compared with a national average of 8.1 per cent. Young South Australians are more likely to be in receipt of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program than other Australians.
### 3.4 education training and skill development issues

Young people are finding it increasingly difficult to support themselves in education and training and face time management pressures in balancing study and work.

- While the number of South Australians completing Year 12 has grown in the decade after 1999, South Australia still lagged behind the national average in terms of young people with a bachelor degree or higher.
- Within the broader goal of increasing participation in fulltime secondary education, it is also important to develop strategies that encourage studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- Young South Australians in disadvantaged areas are less likely to be in full-time education.
- 13.8 per cent of young South Australians are not in full-time education or full-time employment, which is slightly higher than the national average.
- The participation rate in VET in South Australia is below the national average and has been so for most of the past decade. In the September quarter of 2008, 15 to 24-year-olds accounted for 58.5 per cent of apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia, which was below the national rate of 59.6 per cent.

### 3.5 employment participation and access to safe and satisfying work

- Young South Australians are experiencing growing rates of underemployment. Nearly 26,000 young people employed part-time are seeking more hours of work. Since 2008, there has been a significant increase in the number of under-employed South Australians.
- Labour force participation by young South Australia’s stands at 70 per cent, compared to 70.9 per cent nationally.
- 13.8 per cent of young South Australians are not in full-time education or full-time employment.
- Young Indigenous people face significant difficulties in obtaining employment. Their rate of unemployment is at least 2.5 times higher than that of non-Indigenous young people.
- Early intervention that builds career and training pathways for young Indigenous people is critical to their long-term employment opportunities. The SA Public Service can play a key role in achieving this by building on existing traineeship and apprenticeships schemes, reconfigured to include a public sector career path.
- Young people with a disability participate in education and employment at much lower rates than young people without a declared disability, and require specific support to enable them to make an effective transition from education to employment.
- There is a gap in policy and services designed to support young carers, including young Indigenous carers, and to ensure that their caregiving responsibilities do not reduce their education and employment opportunities.
- South Australia is experiencing a high loss of young working age people to other states.
- The 15-19 year age group has the highest rate work-related injury or illness amongst all age groups in Australia.
- While younger workers (aged 18 to 24 years) report the shortest working hours, this group is also most likely than other age groups to request more flexibility in their work arrangements.
- Young workers are particularly vulnerable to mistreatment in the workplace and poor workplace conditions.

### 3.6 young people and the environment

There were no issues identified from the available research, however the following trends were evident:

- Young people are more likely to use public transport than older age groups.
- Older Australians are much more likely than younger Australians to identify as environmentalists.
- There is a lack of primary data on the patterns of resource use (quantity and quality) by young South Australians; in this context there is a clear need for research.
4.0 summarising youth policy relevant trends and issues against SASP targets and objectives

In this section, a summary is provided of the key trends and issues identified by the review of available research, data and policy, mapped against the relevant SASP Target and Objective.

**fostering creativity and innovation**

**SASP Target and Objective:**

**T4.4**

Cultural Engagement – arts activities: increase the number of attendances at selected arts activities by 40 per cent by 2014.

**Trend identified**

There are distinct age-based patterns of participation in cultural activities in South Australia, with young people favouring popular music, dance performances and cinemas. They also engage with libraries, the Botanical Gardens and theatre performances.

**building communities**

**SASP Target and Objective:**

**T5.1**

Boards and Committees: increase the number of women on all State Government boards and committees to 50 per cent on average by 2008, and maintain thereafter by ensuring that 50 per cent of women are appointed on average each quarter.

**T5.4**

Enrolment to vote: increase the proportion of eligible young South Australians (18 – 19 years) enrolled to vote to better the Australian average by 2014.

**T5.5**

Local Government elections: increase voter participation in local government elections in South Australia to 50 per cent by 2014.

**T5.7**

Aboriginal Leadership: increase the number of Aboriginal South Australian participating in community leadership and in community leadership development programs.

**Issue identified**

Existing decision-making structures are unrepresentative of young people, women and minority ethnic groups.

There is a need to develop strategies that raise awareness among young people about the need to enrol to vote and how to do this.

There is an absence of data that enable an analysis of the participation of young people in local government elections.
SASP Target and Objective:

**T5.8**

Multiculturalism: increase the percentage of South Australians who accept cultural diversity as a positive influence in the community.

**Trend identified**

In the past decade there has been a significant increase in the number of people migrating to South Australia as refugees or humanitarian entrants, and 65 per cent of these are under the age of 30.

**Issue identified**

South Australia’s growing number of young refugees and humanitarian entrants have special needs with regard to resettlement and transition.

Trend identified

In the past decade there has been a significant increase in the number of people migrating to South Australia as refugees or humanitarian entrants, and 65 per cent of these are under the age of 30.

**Issue identified**

South Australia’s growing number of young refugees and humanitarian entrants have special needs with regard to resettlement and transition.

Trend identified

In the past decade there has been a significant increase in the number of people migrating to South Australia as refugees or humanitarian entrants, and 65 per cent of these are under the age of 30.

**Issue identified**

South Australia’s growing number of young refugees and humanitarian entrants have special needs with regard to resettlement and transition.

Trend identified

In the past decade there has been a significant increase in the number of people migrating to South Australia as refugees or humanitarian entrants, and 65 per cent of these are under the age of 30.

**Issue identified**

South Australia’s growing number of young refugees and humanitarian entrants have special needs with regard to resettlement and transition.

**T5.6**

Volunteering: maintain the high level of volunteering in South Australia at 50 per cent participation rate or higher

**Issue identified**

Older Australians are much more likely than younger Australians to identify as environmentalists.

The number of international students on Adelaide campuses is rising, with an increase of 14.1 per cent in 2006, compared to a national rise of 10.9 per cent. This is a significant source of social and cultural capital for the state.

Since the mid 1990s more young South Australians are volunteering, especially if they are students. The proportion of weekly volunteering increases steadily with age.

**Issue identified**

There is a need for strategies that link international students with local students, and which enhance local students’ understanding of other cultures.

**T5.5**

Local Government elections: increase voter participation in local government elections in South Australia to 50 per cent by 2014.

**Issue identified**

There is an absence of data that enable an analysis of the participation of young people in local government elections.

Young people are particularly vulnerable to living in poverty and are much more likely to be living on low incomes than other age groups in society.

Single, independent Youth Allowance recipients with no additional income are among the most economically disadvantaged groups in society today.

**Issue identified**

There is a need to provide affordable housing, which could be integrated with student housing, for young people seeking employment or education opportunities in Adelaide.
South Australia’s young people: emerging issues and priorities

SASP targets and objectives

building communities

SASP Target and Objective:

**T5.9**

Regional population levels: maintain regional South Australia’s share of the State’s population

Issue identified

Young South Australians are leaving rural areas at a rate which exceeds the national average.

improving wellbeing

SASP Target and Objective:

**T2.1**

Smoking: reduce the percentage of young cigarette smokers by 10 percentage points between 2004 and 2014.

Issue identified

Smoking prevalence among the 15-29 year age group has declined since 1990. However young South Australians continue to be the second largest age cohort of cigarette smokers in the state, with 23 per cent identified as smoking – well above the SASP target of 17.9 per cent.

In 2008, there was a higher smoking prevalence among people living in areas of most disadvantage compared to those of least disadvantage, and among Indigenous people and people with a serious mental illness.

Teenage mothers are far more likely to smoke during pregnancy than other women.

T2.2

Healthy weight: increase the proportion of South Australians 18 and over with healthy weight by 10 percentage points by 2014.

At national and a state level, the rate of overweight young people has risen over the last 10 years. In South Australia, 23.3 per cent of 16 to 19 year-olds, and 44 per cent of 20 to 29 year-olds are overweight or obese. Less than half of young people fulfil recommended physical activity guidelines. These trends are exacerbated for those living in disadvantaged areas.

Eating disorders and poor body image are significant health issues for many young South Australians and require a specific state-based strategy and accompanying SASP target.
improving wellbeing

SASP Target and Objective:

T2.3
Sport and Recreation: exceed the Australian average for participation in sport and physical activity

Trend identified
The proportion of South Australians aged 16 and over undertaking appropriate levels of physical activity has increased, and younger people are significantly more likely to be doing so than older people.

Issue identified
Nearly 30 per cent of young South Australians are participating in insufficient or no physical activity. As a group, young women are more sedentary than young men, and socially disadvantaged young people have higher levels of physical inactivity.

There is a need for the health and education sectors to collaborate with a view to improving children’s and young people’s health literacy, and to introduce programs related to body weight and body image.

Mental health issues are a significant burden of disease for young Australians and South Australians. Young people aged between 16 and 29 were more likely to experience measured psychological distress than other South Australians.

Young people are frequently victims of crime. Young males are disproportionately represented among recorded assaults and robberies while young women are disproportionately represented in sexual assault crimes.

Road traffic accidents constitute the biggest burden of disease for young men in South Australia, and are the most common cause of injury for all young people.

T2.7
Psychological wellbeing: equal or lower than the Australian average for psychological distress by 2014.

T2.8
State wide crime rates: reduce victim reported crime by 12 per cent by 2014.

T2.9
Road Safety – fatalities: by 2010, reduce road fatalities to less than 90 persons per year.

T2.10
Road Safety – serious injuries – by 2010 reduce serious injuries to less than 1000 per year.
**expanding opportunity**

**SASP Target and Objective:**

**T6.6**

Homelessness: Halve the number of ‘rough sleepers’ in South Australia by 2010 and maintain thereafter

**T6.15**

Learning or earning: by 2010 increase the number of 15-19 year olds engaged fulltime in school, work or further education training (or combinations thereof) to 90 per cent.

**T6.16**

SACE or equivalent: increase yearly the proportion of 15-19 year olds who achieve the SACE or comparable senior secondary qualification.

**T6.19**

Non-school qualifications: by 2014, equal or better the national average for the proportion of the labour force with non-school qualifications.

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**Issue identified**

Young people comprise a significant proportion of those who are homeless. The percentage of homeless 12 to 18 year old South Australians is higher than the national figure. However, the overall rate of homelessness among young South Australians has declined since 2001.

After-housing poverty among young people is high relative to Australia. 12.3 per cent of young single households in South Australia are in after-housing poverty, compared with a national average of 8.1 per cent. Young South Australians are more likely to be in receipt of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program than other Australians.

While the number of South Australians completing Year 12 has grown in the decade after 1999, South Australia still lagged behind the national average in terms of young people with a bachelor degree or higher.

Young South Australians in disadvantaged areas are less likely to be in full-time education.

Within the broader goal of increasing participation in fulltime secondary education, it is also important to develop strategies that encourage studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

13.8 per cent of young South Australians are not in full-time education or full-time employment.

Young people are finding it increasingly difficult to support themselves in education and training and face time management pressures in balancing study and work.

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**Trend identified**

In 2009, South Australia achieved its highest school retention rate in 13 years, with 75.3 per cent of students remaining in State schools to Year 12; compared with the 67.2 per cent rate recorded in 1999 (Government of South Australia: 2009).

The percentage of young South Australians not in full-time work or education in 2008 (13.8 per cent) has declined since 1999 when it was 15.8 per cent, but is slightly higher than the national average of 13.3 per cent.

A significant number of young people combine study with part-time employment.
expanding opportunity

SASP Target and Objective:

T6.21

VET participation – exceed the national average for VET participation by 2010.

Issue identified

The participation rate in VET in South Australia is below the national average and has been so for most of the past decade. In the September quarter of 2008, 15 to 24 year olds accounted for 58.5 per cent of apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia, which was below the national rate of 59.6 per cent.

growing prosperity

SASP Target and Objective:

T1.12

Employment Participation: increase the employment to population ratio, standardised for age differences, to the Australian average.

Issue identified

Young South Australians are experiencing growing rates of underemployment. Nearly 26,000 young people employed part-time are seeking more hours of work. Since 2008, there has been a significant increase in the number of under-employed South Australians.

Labour force participation by young South Australia’s stands at 70 per cent, compared to 70.9 per cent nationally.

Young indigenous people face significant difficulties in obtaining employment. Their rate of unemployment is at least 2.5 times higher than that of non-Indigenous young people.

Early intervention that builds career and training pathways for young Indigenous people is critical to their long-term employment opportunities. The SA Public Service can play a key role in achieving this by building on existing traineeship and apprenticeships schemes, reconfigured to include a public sector career path.

Young people with a disability participate in education and employment at much lower rates than young people without a declared disability, and require specific support to enable them to make an effective transition from education to employment.

There is a gap in policy and services designed to support young carers, including young Indigenous carers, and to ensure that their caregiving responsibilities do not reduce their education and employment opportunities.
South Australia’s young people: emerging issues and priorities

SASP targets and objectives

**growing prosperity**

**SASP Target and Objective:**

**T1.23**

Interstate Migration: reduce annual net interstate migration loss to zero by 2010, with a net inflow thereafter to be sustained through to 2014.

**Issue identified**

South Australia is experiencing a high loss of young working age people to other states.

**improving well being**

**SASP Target and Objective:**

**T2.11**

Greater safety at work: achieve the nationally agreed target of 40 per cent reduction in injury by 2012

**T2.12**

Work-life balance: Improve the quality of life of all South Australians through the maintenance of a healthy work-life balance

**Issue identified**

Young workers are particularly vulnerable to mistreatment in the workplace and poor workplace conditions.

**Trend identified**

While younger workers (aged 18 to 24 years) report the shortest working hours, this group is also most likely than other age groups to request more flexibility in their work arrangements.

**attaining sustainability**

**T3.6**

Use of Public Transport: increase the use of public transport to 10 per cent of metropolitan weekday passenger vehicle kilometres travelled by 2018

**T3.7**

Ecological footprint: reduce South Australia’s ecological footprint by 30 per cent by 2050

**Trend identified**

Young people are more likely to use public transport than older age groups.

**Issue identified**

There is a lack of primary data on the patterns of resource use (quantity and quality) by young South Australians; in this context there is a clear need for research.
5. references


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### 6. Appendix 1: Examples of Key Issues Identified by a Range of Factors

#### Community/NGO (South Australia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation/Agency</th>
<th>Examples of Issues of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YACSA</td>
<td>Health and wellbeing; law, justice and safety; living; learning and working; young people (minorities); youth participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACOSS</td>
<td>Youth unemployment; gender pay inequality; access to employment for indigenous young people; access to education and training for disadvantaged young people; access to health services for disadvantaged young people; mental illness; access and affordability of housing; access to transport.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Local Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation/Agency</th>
<th>Examples of Issues of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide City Council</td>
<td>Affordable housing; student housing; youth employment; gaps in service delivery for students living away from home; youth participation; access to recreational facilities; engagement with cultural events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbelltown City Council</td>
<td>Social pressure (from peers, parents and family, school, media and popular culture); consumption of alcohol; illicit drugs use; use of prescription drugs for recreational use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Playford</td>
<td>Limited support and access to information in schools; few alternative education programs and flexible learning options; limited leisure and recreation options; limited awareness of mental health issues; challenges of young parenting; youth homelessness; limited appropriate and low cost cultural and creative activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### State Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Examples of Issues of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government of Victoria</td>
<td>Educational and work opportunities; preventative and responsive health services for young people; strengthening mental health services for young people; sexual health issues; promoting a healthy and active lifestyle; new initiatives for young people who are homeless or at risk to assist them to move towards independence; youth participation and consultation; boosting leadership skills; support for students with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouthNSW</td>
<td>Reduced rates of crime, particularly violent crime; reduced levels of anti-social behaviour; increased participation and integration into community activities; more students complete Year 12 or recognised vocational training; improved health and education for Aboriginal people; better access to training in rural and regional NSW to support local economies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Youth Council</td>
<td>Youth homelessness for 17-year-olds and under; youth violence; youth justice; safer ‘Schoolies’; school retention; linking local, state and national consultation mechanisms; youth health.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
South Australia’s young people: emerging issues and priorities

**national**

organisation/agency
The Australian Government
(Australian Youth Forum: Consultation Key outcomes)

examples of issues of significance
Bullying (including cyber) and peer pressure; democratic participation; drugs and alcohol abuse; education and training – primary/secondary and tertiary (including Voluntary Student Unionism and fees); environmental sustainability/change; family breakdown; homelessness and housing affordability; indigenous issues; jobs and employment; meaningful work opportunities; mental health (including body image); multicultural youth issues; political empowerment; settlement of humanitarian arrivals of young people; social inclusion.

**international**

organisation/agency
Commonwealth Secretariat
(Report of the Stakeholders Meeting on Youth Mainstreaming 2008)

examples of issues of significance
Young people’s contribution to peace-building; social development and transformation; the need to mainstream youth issues into policy and budgeting; the needs of marginalised youth; opportunities for business generation and self-employment in the tourism, agriculture and environment sectors; as well as expanding entrepreneurship training to include global trading and market opportunities.
7. appendix 2: SASP targets and examples of related programs

SASP targets for youth consultations and SASP targets* added by Australian institute for social research

objective 1: growing prosperity

Target

**T1.12 Employment**
Employment Participation: increase the employment to population ratio, standardised for age differences, to the Australian average.

Related examples of programs for young people
- Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) <Service to Youth Council>
- Southern Edge <Office for Youth and the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations>
- JobJuice <Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations>
- Water Industry Traineeships <SA Water>
- GetSET For Your Future <City of Salisbury>

**T1.23 Population**
Interstate Migration: reduce annual net interstate migration loss to zero by 2010, with a net inflow thereafter to be sustained through to 2014.

objective 2: improving wellbeing

Target

**T2.1 Preventative Health**
Smoking: reduce the percentage of young cigarette smokers by 10 percentage points between 2004 and 2014.

Related examples of programs for young people
- Smoke Free Kids <SA Health> (N.B. aimed at children between 10 to 12 years old)
- OxyGen(informing young people about tobacco & its use) <Australian Department of Health and Ageing>

**T2.2 Healthy weight**
Increase the proportion of south Australians 18 and over with healthy weight by 10 percentage points by 2014.

Related examples of programs for young people
- Right Bite <Department of Education and Children’s Services>
- Eat well be active community program <Department of Health>

**T2.3 Sport and Recreation**
Exceed the Australian average for participation in sport and physical activity by 2014.

Related examples of programs for young people
- Kurrangga Park BMX Track <Adelaide City Council>
- City Sk8 Park <Adelaide City Council>
- Children and Youth – Growing for Gold <Office for Recreation and Sport>
- BMX and Skate Park Facilities <City of Mitcham>
- Burnside Youth ‘Come and Try’ Program <City of Burnside>
- Secondary School Sport SA <Department of Education and Children’s Service>
- DECS Aquatics Program <Department of Education and Children’s Service>

**T2.7 Psychological wellbeing**
Psychological wellbeing: equal or lower than the Australian average for psychological distress by 2014.

Related examples of programs for young people
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) <Children Youth and Women’s Health Service>
- The Second Story [TSS] <Children Youth and Women’s Health Service>
- Amigos [Recreational and support program for young people experiencing a mental illness] <City of Charles Sturt>
**objective 2: improving wellbeing**

**Target**

**T2.11**
Greater safety at work: achieve the nationally agreed target of 40 per cent reduction in injury by 2012.

**T2.12**
Work-life balance: improve the quality of life of all South Australians through maintenance of a healthy work-life balance.

**T2.8**
**Public Safety**
State Wide Crime Rates: Reduce Victim Reported Crime By 12 per cent By 2014.

**T2.9**
Road Safety – fatalities: by 2010, reduce road fatalities to less than 90 persons per year.

**T2.10**
Road Safety – serious injuries: by 2010, reduce serious injuries to less than 1000 per year.

**Related examples of programs for young people**

**Youth@Work** [SafeWork SA’s Youth Gateway]  
<SafeWork SA>

**YouthLinx**  
<Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations>

**Mentoring Coordination** <FACS>

**Breaking The Cycle** <Social Inclusion Unit>

**Police Rangers** <SA Police>

**Blue Light Crime Prevention Program** <SA Police>

**Operation Flinders Foundation** (Program for Young Offenders & Youth At Risk)  
<City of Playford>

**North on Target Crime Prevention Program** <City of Tea Tree Gully>

**Shop, Skate & Sing – Youth Outreach Program** <City of Playford>

**Youth Driver Education Program** <SAPOL>

**Road Awareness and Accident Prevention Program**  
<SA Metropolitan Fire Service>

**Roads 2 Survival Program** <Trauma Service Royal Adelaide Hospital>

**Save a Young Life** <Driver Safety Education Unit Offered Through Community Studies (SACE)>

**Risk Taking (Learners)** <SAPOL>

**Driver Intervention Program** <Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure>
objective 3: attaining sustainability

Target

T3.6 Climate Change
Use of public transport: increase the use of public transport to 10 per cent of metropolitan weekday passenger vehicle kilometres travelled by 2018.

T3.7 Ecological Footprint
Ecological footprint: reduce South Australia’s ecological footprint by 30 per cent by 2050.

Related examples of programs for young people
Youth Environment Council (YEC) <Department for Environment and Heritage>
Youth Conservation Corps <South Australia Works - Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology>

objective 4: fostering creativity and innovation

Target

T4.4 Creativity
Cultural engagement – arts activities: increase the number of attendances at selected arts activities by 40 per cent by 2014.

Related examples of programs for young people
Sounds of summer <City of Marion>

objective 5: building communities

Target

T5.1 Women in Leadership
T5.1 – Boards and committees: increase the number of women on all state government boards and committees to 50 per cent on average by 2008, and maintain thereafter by ensuring that 50 per cent of women are appointed on average each quarter.

T5.4 Political Participation
T5.4 – Enrolment to vote: increase the proportion of eligible young south Australians (18 – 19 years) enrolled to vote to better the Australian average by 2014.

Related examples of programs for young people
Active 8 Premier’s Youth Challenge <Office for Youth>
Youth Parliament Program [Office for Youth]
objective 5: building communities

Target

T5.5
Local Government elections: increase voter participation in local government elections in South Australia to 50 per cent by 2014.

T5.6
Volunteering
Volunteering: maintain the high level of volunteering in South Australia at 50 per cent participation rate or higher.

T5.7
Aboriginal Leadership
Aboriginal leadership: increase the number of aboriginal south Australian participating in community leadership and in community leadership development programs.

T5.8
Multiculturalism
Multiculturalism: increase the percentage of South Australians who accept cultural diversity as a positive influence in the community.

T5.9
Regional population levels
Regional population levels: maintain regional South Australia’s share of the state’s population (18 per cent).

objective 6: expanding opportunity

Target

T6.6
Housing
Homelessness: halve the number of ‘rough sleepers’ in South Australia by 2010 and maintain thereafter.

T6.8
Housing stress: halve the number of South Australians experiencing housing stress by 2014.
**objective 6: expanding opportunity**

**Target**

**T6.5**

Economic disadvantage (existing – modified): reduce the percentage of South Australians receiving government benefits (excluding age pensions) as their major income source to below the Australian average by 2014.

**T6.15**

**Education**

Learning or earning: by 2010 increase the number of 15-19 year olds engaged fulltime in school, work or further education training (or combinations thereof) to 90 per cent.

**Related examples of programs for young people**

- Trade Training Centres in Schools Program <Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations>
- Learn2Earn <South Australia Works - Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology>
- Marni Waeindi (aimed at Aboriginal young people) <City of Playford>
- School Based Apprenticeship Program <City of Playford>
- Playford Pathways <City of Playford>
- Step Up - Community Learning <SACE Board of SA>
- South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy <Social Inclusion Initiative>

**T6.16**

SACE or equivalent: increase yearly the proportion of 15-19 year olds who achieve the SACE or comparable senior secondary qualification.

**T6.19**

Non-school qualifications: by 2014, equal or better the national average for the proportion of the labour force with non-school qualifications.

**T6.21**

**Workforce Development and Training**


**Alternative Learning Options Programs**

- South Australia Works - Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology