Australian Learning City Policy And Development

Taipei Learning City
International Conference

15-16 December 2011

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Preface

This paper on the development of learning communities in Australia has been prepared for an international conference convened by the Taiwan Ministry of Education and the Taipei City Government in Taipei on 15-16 December 2011. The conference is focused on ideas, including international experience, to assist Taipei to develop as a Learning City.

As there has been considerable diversity in the Australian federal system in approaches to Learning City development, with local initiatives particularly important, the paper is focused on developments in two states- Victoria and South Australia. A case study is included on the Hume global Learning Village located in the northern suburbs of Melbourne as an example of good practice in an enterprising local initiative.

The paper identifies two stages in the development of learning communities in Australia since the late nineteen nineties, the initial stage resulting from initiatives by adult and community education providers, and with the role of local government initiatives particularly significant in the second stage. State Government policy during this second stage of development has been influenced by national policy for adult and community education and vocational education and training with the development of closer relationships between these sectors, with some loses as well as gains.

There is growing recognition that cities almost everywhere face a number of major challenges. These include problems arising from rapid growth with more diverse populations, environmental issues including global warming and climate change, the rising costs of health and welfare services in ageing populations and, in some cases, crime and public safety. Often these challenges exist in a context of significant social change with a weakening of social bonds in a more individualistic society.

In this context, the question is posed as to whether the Learning City model should be regarded as a part of a necessary more holistic and integrated response with Learning Cities progressing to a third and more holistic and visionary stage of development. Some suggestions are offered for key features of such a Gen 3 Learning City. Overall the Australian experience suggests that approaches to Learning City development must evolve in line with changes in the social, cultural, economic and political contexts of cities. This will require flexibility and considerable innovation and creativity.

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I. BACKGROUND

Australia has a federal system of government with Commonwealth (Federal),
state/territory, and local government roles which have evolved in various
ways since the federation of the Australian colonies in 1901[1]. Policy for
learning   community development in Australia therefore involves
policy development at each of these levels of government, with the state
and local government roles particularly significant, and relationships –
both formal and informal – between these levels of government.

While national policy for education development sets a general framework
for initiatives taken by the state and local governments, especially in
respect of the strong vocational orientation towards the role of adult
and community education in recent years, the role of state governments
has been more significant in recognizing the value and role of community
learning partnerships and, in some cases, the role of the learning
city/community[2] model.

The role of state governments means that there is considerable diversity
between the states in their approach to learning communities and cities.
Most has been done in Victoria and South Australia where there has been
more policy development to support these initiatives. For this reason,
this paper has a focus on developments in these states.

In all states, the role of local government has been particularly
significant, often in response to local initiatives taken by individuals
convinced of the value of learning community developments. This has
added to the diversity in development across Australia with some councils
aware of the role and value of learning communities while other councils
remain wedded to more limited and more traditional concepts of local
government. Moreover, only a minority of local government councils
across Australia have been active in these developments.

To illustrate the potential of an enlightened, innovative approach to
learning community development, this paper includes a case study based on

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[1] The Australian Federation comprises mainly 6 states (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western
Australian, Tasmania, South Australia) and two territories (Northern Territory and Australian Capital territory.
[2] Many of the initiatives in Australia have been in smaller communities so that I have used the generic term
'community' in this paper to denote these initiatives regardless of size and status of the initiative. However,
the same general principles are involved in development.

the development of the Hume Global Learning Village — a learning community initiative taken and sustained by Hume City Council in the northern districts of Melbourne. This is an area with many low income families, a high proportion of migrants born in other countries, and with the need to address ethnic diversity and disadvantage in building an inclusive and cohesive community attuned to the challenges confronting cities under 21st Century conditions.

While the Hume Global Learning Village illustrates good practice in learning community development with success factors identified from the experience of this innovation, it is necessary to emphasize that there is no single model of a learning community/city in Australia. Rather, the story is one of a range of different approaches springing from local needs and conditions with various mixes of partners, so that localization is one of the key themes in Australian learning community development.

Against this background, this paper comments on the origins of these initiatives in Australia and then discusses developments in Victoria and South Australia.

The Hume Global Learning Village is then discussed as a good practice case study which provides insights into possible future developments of learning communities and cities in Australia, and elsewhere.

II. ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPT IN AUSTRALIA AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The initial steps towards learning community developments occurred in several Victorian regional communities in the late 1990s, led by adult and community education (ACE) providers and influenced by some international developments that became known in Australia from participation in international conferences. This pattern of development shows an interesting interaction between grass roots initiatives and innovative concepts that gained currency with leaders in the ACE sector through exposure to international influences. There was no presence by government in this initial exploratory phase of development although subsequent support from the Victorian Government from 2000 enabled a period of consolidation in 10 projects in regional Victoria.

The concept of a learning community owed a good deal to the work of the OECD on lifelong learning which pointed to the value of community partnerships in opening opportunities for learning throughout life. This interest led to the concept of educating cities which was promoted through the first International Congress of Educating Cities held in Barcelona in 1990, with ongoing International Congresses held throughout the decade.

The Barcelona Congress led to a charter of educating cities which was revised at subsequent Congresses and which influenced the concept of a learning city. The concept of a learning city was given further shape in a paper prepared by the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) for the Second Congress of Educating Cities held in Gothenburg in 1992 (CERI/OECD 1992).

This paper articulated themes that became important in learning community development in Australia in linking lifelong learning with community development and in exploring roles that a city can play in promoting lifelong learning throughout the community. Themes such as fostering learning in the whole life cycle, linking learning with a range of community activity, and making learning more accessible resonated in developments in various parts of Australia over the next two decades.

These ideas were taken forward, in the broader context of adult education, at the UNESCO 5th International Conference on Adult Education held in Hamburg in July 1997. The conference adopted the "Hamburg Declaration: The agenda for the future" which set principles for the future development of adult education, which had some impact in Australia.

Several members of the Australian delegation to this conference were impressed by the ideas on learning cities discussed at the conference and brought these ideas back to influence learning community initiatives taken in several Victorian regional cities, with Wodonga and Ballarat in the vanguard of this development.

The learning city initiatives in regional Victoria which emerged around 1999 after the Hamburg Conference were led by practitioners in adult and community education (ACE) and were strongly influenced by prevailing concepts of ACE in Australian society. This is discussed below.

The initiatives taken in a number of regional Victorian communities were strengthened when the new Victorian Government announced in March 2000, through its Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFE), that funding would be available on a competitive basis for ACE providers in non-metropolitan towns to develop Learning Towns.

Funding was provided for ten regional communities (initially nine) for five years up to 2006 under this program to support what may be seen as the initial stage of learning community development in Australia. It is important to note that:

- the funded communities were in rural and regional areas only with no funds for development in Melbourne metropolitan areas;
- the initiatives were led by ACE providers and reflected the objectives and perspectives of adult and community education in Australia.

In this context, it is necessary to consider the features and situation of adult and community education in Australia.

The Ambiguous Position of ACE in Australia

Adult and community education evolved in nineteenth century Australia with a mix of equity, social justice, and recreational objectives. While populist movements in England and Scandinavia influenced social justice objectives in providing opportunities for disadvantaged groups and individuals, so that equity was central to the objectives of the sector from the beginning, the presence of recreational courses added a touch of ambiguity to government and community perceptions of the sector.

While ACE received some government funding, which was generally distributed as grants by State Boards of Adult Education, ACE was poorly funded by governments compared to the three main sectors of Australian education – schools, VET, and higher education.[3] Whether ACE should be seen as the fourth sector of Australian education, or defined in terms of the other sectors-especially VET- was controversial. This debate continued throughout the formative period of learning community development in Australia with Joint Commonwealth/State Ministerial Declarations made in 2002 and 2008 attempting to clarify the philosophy and objectives of ACE in Australia from a government perspective.

In addition to these Joint Commonwealth/State Declarations, several Parliamentary reports attempted to draw attention to the "Cinderella" status of ACE in Australia compared to the well funded and recognized other sectors. A 1991 report of the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education, and Training titled "Come in Cinderella: the Emergence of Adult and Community Education" outlined the case for improved recognition and funding of ACE in the light of the important social and economic roles of the sector. Little changed and a follow-up Parliamentary report "Beyond Cinderella: Towards a Learning Society" attempted to clarify further the important roles of the sector.

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[3] VET comprised technical and further education which was delivered by TAFE colleges (Technical and Further Education) and by private providers in this sector. Higher education was seen as the university sector.

The Joint Commonwealth/State Ministerial Declaration on Adult and
1'Community Education made by the Ministerial Council on Education,
Employment, Training, & Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) recognized that both
Commonwealth and State Governments had an interest in the development of
adult and community education so that a shared vision was necessary as a
framework for development,

The 2002 Declaration recognized dual objectives in the work of the
sector:
- contributing to community capacity building through community
  ownership; and
- the role of the sector as a pathway to further education and
  training for "second chance" learners.

This paper will point out how the second of these objectives has come to
dominate government policy for ACE, at both the Commonwealth and State
levels, being more fully articulated in the subsequent 2008 Joint
Ministerial Declaration. This orientation has had a strong influence on
government policy for learning community development in Australia, and so
has influenced the pattern of development in recent years.

The 2002 Joint Ministerial Declaration, however, recognized both these
objectives of ACE in articulating five goals for the development of the
sector. These were:

1. Expand and sustain innovative community-based learning models.
2. Raise awareness and understanding.
3. Improve the quality of adult community education learning
   experiences and outcomes.
4. Extend participation in community based learning.

These goals fit well with the concept of learning communities emerging in
a number of Victorian regional towns around 2000, and provide an apt
framework of goals for the initial phase of learning community
development in Australia.

I discuss below the evolution of government policy for learning
communities during the later years of this decade towards the dominance
of the second of the objectives (pathways to further education and
training for "second chance" learners), as reflected in the 2008 Joint
Ministerial Declaration and discuss some of the implications for learning
community development in Australia.

Developments in Victoria

Adult and community education in Victoria is promoted by an Adult and Community Education Board (ACFE). The mandate of the Board includes both adult and community education (ACE) and further education which is largely vocational skills provided in TAFE colleges, but which also includes some general education in these colleges.

In March 2000 the ACFE Board called for expressions of interest from ACE providers in non-metropolitan communities (i.e. rural and regional) to develop as Learning Towns. A key objective of this initiative was to address "a growing fragmentation of service providers covering the spectrum of adult education, training and labour market assistance". This concern for greater co-ordination and coherence across the full spectrum of vocational and non-vocational adult learning has been a recurring theme in learning community initiatives in Australia and overseas and is reflected, for example, in the current German Learning on Place program.

The program had a budget of $1.1 million per annum and led to 9 projects (later 10) being funded across rural and regional Victoria. The projects funded included a mix of large regional towns and smaller rural communities. The projects funded are shown below.

Victorian Learning Towns 2000-2005	
Albury Wodonga	A large regional town on the NSW/Victoria border
Ballarat	A substantial regional city in central Victoria
Geelong	Victoria's largest provincial city
Bendigo	A substantial regional city in central Victoria
Horsham	A large provincial town
Southern Gippsland	Covered 2 shires with a number of towns
Wangaratta/Delalite	Two major provincial towns in NE Victoria
Kyabram	A small rural town in the Goulburn Valley
Buloke	A rural shire with 10 small communities

This mix of large regional towns and smaller rural communities enabled a range of strategies to be adopted by the Learning Towns. The provision of funding over 5 years gave sufficient stability for longer-term projects to be undertaken.

In the light of the lead role undertaken by ACE providers in directing and co-ordinating the projects, it is not surprising that activities often focused on education initiatives common in the ACE sector. These included talks and community education generally, leadership and careers information activities, and Learning Festivals. Some capacity building occurred in such areas as developing a community portal.

The limitation of these funds to 10 funded projects was controversial, and in 2005 ACFE decided to cease this exclusive funding for Learning Towns, and throw over grants for Community Learning Partnerships on a competitive basis.

This program is now located in the ACFE Board's Capacity and Innovation Fund with funding available for projects to foster innovation and develop capacity in adult, community, and further education provision.

The period of funding of the Victorian Learning Towns may be regarded as the initial stage of Learning Community development in Australia. While some projects were initiated in other states, and the ANTA national Learning Community Project 2001 was funded during this period, [4] the Victorian experience with Learning Towns marked and characterised the initial exploratory phase of Learning Community development in Australia.

A key characteristic was that funding was made available through ACE providers so that initiatives, on the whole, reflected the perspectives and objectives of ACE providers. This raised issues of sustainability when direct funding was discontinued.

On the other hand, a few initiatives sponsored by local government councils such as Marion and Salisbury in South Australia, and the Hume Global Learning Village initiative in Victoria which is discussed below, point to a different pattern of development where the potential exists for sustainability through embedding learning and community building initiatives in the operational programs of councils.

This initial stage of development was well attuned to and reflected the concepts and objectives of adult and community education set out in the 2002 Joint Commonwealth/State Ministerial Declaration on Adult and Community Education with its five goals for the development of the sector.

By 2007 the national context of educational objectives and priorities had shifted significantly as reflected in the 2008 Joint Commonwealth/State Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education. This is discussed below with its implications for Learning Community policy and development in Australia.

III.   EVOLUTION OF CONCEPT TO A SECOND STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

In discussing how the concept of learning communities evolved in Australia, I will comment on developments in South Australia (SA) to

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[4] This is discussed below.

illustrate the important role of local government councils while at the same time there were policy shifts towards a more vocational and employment related orientation that is reflected in the 2008 "Joint Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education". While, for convenience, I have illustrated these trends in South Australia, I must emphasize that the policy shifts reflected in the 2008 "Joint Ministerial Declaration…" were national and also occurred in Victoria as well as in other states, although I comment on South Australian developments as illustrations.

Developments in South Australia

Like Victoria, South Australia (SA) is well known for its innovative approaches over the years to education. For example, Adelaide is the only Australian city that has participated in the Educating Cities program, and is well known for a range of cultural initiatives. Developments in SA, after the early period of innovation in Victoria, reflect the transition from ACE led projects to initiatives embedded in the activities of local government councils. The case study that follows on the Hume Global Learning Village in Melbourne illustrates a best practice example of this second stage of learning community development in Australia.

As in Victoria, development has been guided by a statutory body, the SA Training and Skills Commission set up under the Training and Skills Development Act 2003, and which absorbed the former Adult Community Education Reference Group. The ACE role under the Commission has been continued by an ACE Reference Group reporting to the Commission. This structure sought to integrate the ACE and skills development roles in co-ordinated development while still preserving the ACE identity and role.

The ACE role in building learning communities was articulated in the release in 2006 of a "Community Learning" policy statement by the ACE Reference Group (Training & Skills Commission 2006)

This document articulated a broad approach to community learning which recognized the value of building learning communities as steps towards fostering a learning culture in SA. Four key goals were set out with priorities, Government actions, and with state wide directions identified.

The goals were:
1. Proud to be learning.
2. Learning through living.
3. Learning and growing together.

4. Prospering through learning.

The Community Learning Statement advocated a broad approach to all forms of learning aiming at fostering a vibrant learning culture in the state that promoted the personal, social, community, economic, and environmental benefits of learning.

A number of learning community initiatives emerged in South Australia sponsored by local government councils, mainly in the Adelaide region, that reflected the aims and spirit of the 2006 Community Learning Statement. In addition, four SA regional communities participated in the national ANTA Learning Community Project 2001 which is discussed below.[5]

To illustrate illustrates learning community initiatives taken by SA councils during this period, aspects of the approach by Marion City Council are noted below.

> ### Marion City Council
> The Marion City Council Learning Community Strategy provides a good example of a council acting to progress the principles and objectives set out in the SA Community Learning Statement. In 2005 the Council made a clear commitment to develop as a cohesive learning community with a range of partnerships linking the Council and community in concerted action. The strategic approach adopted is set out, for example, in the 2008-2010 Learning Community Strategy of the Council. Activities such as the Marion Learning Festival were undertaken to build community understanding and support. There were initiatives to promote access and participation, extend partnership building, and to generally promote learning in a wide range of contexts.

Towards New Directions

By 2008 there had been shifts in national policy for ACE towards strengthening the role of the sector in opening pathways to vocational qualifications and jobs, especially for disadvantaged groups without such qualifications. This shift in orientation is reflected in the 2008 Joint Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education which is discussed below.

In SA, a Strategic Review of the ACE Program recommended that funding in future be focused towards increasing participation by people experiencing barriers to learning, training, and

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[5] These were Port Augusta, Port Pirie, the Copper Coast, and Mount Gambier.

employment. Since 2009/10 the ACE Program has focused on funding training that promotes foundation skills development and enhanced literacy and numeracy skills.

The New Orientation in SA
• Multi-literacies. Key literacies such as prose & computer literacy • Foundation skills. Accredited training to build foundation skills for participation in vocational training. • Transitions. Projects that build partnerships between community organizations and TAFE to support pathways for disadvantaged groups. • Workforce development in ACE.

This shift in orientation recognized the importance of the ACE role as a pathway to qualifications, skills, and jobs for disadvantaged groups and had implications for approaches to building learning communities in SA.

Developments in Salisbury and Playford City Councils are outlined below as examples of how this shift in orientation was embedded in approaches by councils to learning city development.

Salisbury City Council
Salisbury City Council in northern Adelaide showed a progression in its approach to developing as a Learning Community from an initial broad lifelong learning approach reflected in its Learning Directions document, towards employment related outcomes as articulated in national policy for ACE by 2008. This was based around 3 goal areas: lifelong learning objectives, developing generic skills as in the multi-literacies of SA policy, and direct employment outcomes.

Playford City Council
Playford City Council, also in northern Adelaide, shows innovation in linking urban regeneration with a strategic approach to opening pathways to qualifications and jobs. This was undertaken through "Playford Alive" a long term urban regeneration project which provided a continuum from learner engagement to participation in accredited training

to jobs. This approach was based on the assumption that employment is the key to social regeneration. This initiative illustrates community learning being embedded in the work of a council in innovative ways.

Shifts in National Policy

The Commonwealth Government has not had a direct role in the development of learning communities and cities, with one exception which is discussed below, but has influenced initiatives taken by state governments and local government councils through a framework of national policy for education, in particular for adult and community education and VET (vocational education and training).

To strengthen the VET sector, especially in the development and implementation of competency based training, the Commonwealth Government, with the support of the states in 1992 set up an Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

While the role of ANTA was focused on strengthening vocational training and meeting the skill needs of industry, ANTA in 2001 funded a National Learning Community project to give a boost to these developments. This initiative, managed by the author of this paper and Jim Saleeba, provided funds for 9 communities across Australia to carry out a learning audit as an initial step in a strategic approach to developing as a learning community. Communities in all states participated, with four of the projects in SA reflecting the interesting developments occurring in SA.[6] As project managers we visited each participating community twice during the course of the project.

While the 2001 National Project was a one-off and was not followed up, it provided useful insights into the learning audit phase of building sustainable learning communities.

The national shift towards strengthening the role of ACE as a gateway to vocational pathways, qualifications, skills, and jobs – especially for disadvantaged groups– was articulated in the "2008 Joint Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education" (Ministerial Council for VET 2000).

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[6] The participating communities were: Toowoomba (Qld), Deniliquin (NSW), Hamilton (Vic), Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Copper Coast, Mount Gambier (SA), Mandurah (WA), Launceston (Tas)

The Declaration recognized the growing importance of increasing the skill levels of the workforce in a context of structural change in the economy and growing international pressures, and for providing opportunities for all Australians to acquire vocational qualifications, skills, and jobs. This orientation was linked to a joint Commonwealth/State commitment, articulated through COAG, to lift Australia's productivity.[7]

The 2008 Declaration involved 4 key goals and 4 strategies.

Goals	Strategies
1. Position ACE to deliver vocationally oriented courses 2. Enhance ACE providers capacity to deliver vocationally focused courses 3. Increase participation in vocationally focused courses 4. Demonstrate ACE outcomes in delivering human and social capital	1. Facilitate Commonwealth/State partnerships and local partnership arrangements in developing pathways 2. Find ways of optimizing the capacity of ACE providers 3. Develop and action plan to increase participation in vocationally focused ACE courses 4. Develop a framework to build an evidence base for the ACE contribution

As noted above, this shift of orientation in ACE to vocationally oriented pathways to qualifications, skills, and jobs was reflected in policy shifts in both Victoria and South Australia around this period.

The shifts in policy towards the ACE role in SA are discussed above. In Victoria, there were similar shifts that involved the learning town program being replaced by the "Community Learning Partnerships Program" which aimed to broaden the role of ACE through partnership with a broad range of partners in meeting local skill and other needs.

Projects funded under this program supported addressing a broad range of issues, some global such as environment and sustainability, and other local such as responding to disengaged adults with a drug and alcohol addiction.

The Victorian "Community Learning Partnerships Program" has demonstrated the value of a flexible government grants program that has encouraged innovation and partnership building in local communities. While flexibility in response to local needs has been maintained in the Program, the Program has also demonstrated the potential of funding

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[7] The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is a joint Commonwealth/State consultative forum at Head of Government level

programs such as this for targeting particular important issues, such as climate change, to encourage broad community partnership responses.

Concepts and Pragmatism

The Australian approach to building learning communities has been marked by a pragmatic approach and few attempts at conceptual clarification and elaboration into a conceptual framework have been undertaken. This pragmatic approach has drawn on, especially in the initial phase of development, the pool of ideas and ideals shaped by the heritage and experience of adult and community education in Australia. This brought in ideas of equity and social justice which have been influential throughout.

The subsequent more structured phase of development was influenced by government policy, especially the thrusts reflected in the 2008 Joint Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education with its emphasis on the role of ACE in opening pathways to qualifications and skills in the VET sector so as to enhance employability and achieve jobs for disadvantaged groups

While this orientation influenced funding provided by state agencies, various initiatives – such as the Hume Global Learning Village- continued to find their own path to the future.

While there have been few attempts at providing a comprehensive conceptual framework for the development of learning communities, the author of this paper has been involved in several.

These were:

- "VET in the Learning Age" (1999); and
- "Achieving Australia as an Inclusive Learning Society" (2006)

VET in the Learning Age was a project funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) to assess the implications of lifelong learning for vocational educational (VET) in Australia. While learning communities were at a very early stage of development in Australia in 1999, the team recognized the key role of learning communities in building a learning culture and society in Australia. The team recommended a four point framework to build the desired future with learning strategies at four levels.

- Encouraging and supporting learners.

- Building learning organizations
- Developing learning communities
- Creating a learning society

(Kearns et al 1999)

Finding creative ways to connect these levels is central to building a learning culture and society.

The concept of a learning community was defined in broad terms in the report linked to social cohesion, regeneration, and economic development. Further work I did at the time focused on the question of ways to build a learning culture in a country (Kearns & Papadopoulos 2000).

A number of the questions opened up in VET in the Learning Age were then taken up in 2006 when I was commissioned by Adult Learning Australia to prepare a report on future directions for lifelong learning in Australia.
 "Achieving Australia as an Inclusive Learning Society" (Kearns 2006) developed the 1999 framework further by adding technology and an ongoing network building and connecting process (an implicit recognition of the role of civil society) to the earlier framework of learning by individuals, in communities, in workplaces, and in society overall. The importance of building human, social, and identity capital emphasized in this report drew on research by the London University Research Centre on the Wider Benefits of Learning (Schuller et al 2004).

While the reports cited above reflected conditions at the time they were written, I feel that the socio-economic context of our cities has changed radically since that period, so that the need exists to reconceptualise the Learning City idea in terms of the big challenges confronting cities where community learning can make a contribution. I have offered some suggestions in Attachment 1 for what I have termed a Gen 3 Learning City.

IV.   THE HUME GLOBAL LEARNING VILLAGE: A CASE STUDY[8]

The experience of the Hume Global Learning Village (HGLV) since 2003 illustrates the key role that an innovative local government council can play in developing and implementing a vision of an inclusive learning community that integrates social, economic, and cultural development in a diverse community with considerable disadvantage. This experience demonstrates a good practice model that has been sustained through three cycles of development since 2004, and which has the potential to develop

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[8]   While I have selected the Hume Global Learning Village to illustrate good practice principles in Australian Learning City development, other initiatives cited in this paper, including the developments in South Australia discussed above also illustrate these principles in various ways. In addition to these examples, I have noted several additional good practice examples in Attachment 3 which show initiatives in a range of urban and rural contexts.

further in response to emerging needs.

Hume City Council has a local government role in an area of northern Melbourne that has been the home for successive generations of immigrants to Australia since the nineteen fifties, with all the challenges arising from ethnic diversity and meeting the needs of new arrivals in Australia, many from non-English speaking countries. Needs arising from this situation have given Hume City Council a strong interest in social justice that led to the Hume Global Learning Village initiative, and which has sustained the initiative since 2004.

In 2010, 29.3% of Hume residents were born overseas in 145 countries of birth, and with 36.2% of residents speaking a language other than English at home. Immigrants from countries such as Turkey, Vietnam, Iraq, Italy, United Kingdom, Lebanon, and New Zealand add to the diversity and richness of the
cultural mix in Hume (Hume City Council, 2010)

Origins in Social Justice

Hume City Council in 2001 adopted a Social Justice Charter which has been revised in 2003, 2004, and 2005 with the addition of an Inaugural Citizens' Bill of Rights in 2004. The Charter has been regarded as a "living document" with systematic reviews and with action plans to address disadvantage. Regular annual reports have been prepared for the community, reporting on progress in implementing the Charter.

Action plans under the Charter have addressed needs in these areas: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Affordable Housing, Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling, Community Empowerment, One City Many Cultures, People with Disabilities, Poverty, and Young People.

Harnessing Community Learning

The social justice thrusts of Hume City Council may be seen as setting the context, guiding vision, and objectives for the emergence of the Hume Global Learning Village as a strategy for harnessing the power of community learning in progressing the vision enunciated in the Council's Social Justice Charter.

The concept of the Global Learning Village brings together the village connotations of community and identity with strong social bonds, the power of lifelong learning in many contexts, and the somewhat more ambiguous "global" associations which may be seen as a link between the localization thrusts of the village concept with the pressures and

requirements of the international global environment confronting citizens of the village. There is power in this amalgam as a guiding concept.

Individual enterprise was also important in achieving the Global Learning Village concept in practical ways that would provide a framework for sustained development. The contribution of Frank Maguire and John Cain were particularly important in this early entrepreneurial phase of leadership and development that provided a basis for subsequent more broadly based collective leadership. [9]

The Hume City Council concept of the Global Learning Village was set out in 2010 in the following terms:

> "The Hume Global Learning Village is the catalyst, facilitator, leader and driver of Council's vision for Hume as a learning community. The Village is a partnership that empowers people to embrace learning as a way of life in homes, community settings, educational institutions, and businesses of Hume."

This concept envisaged the Village as a web of key community learning facilities and services which was defined broadly and with a capacity to extend as the village matured.

Early decisions taken that provided a framework for development of the initiative included:

- development of the Village would be guided by a high level Advisory Board;
- the work of the Board would be supplemented by a Committee with strong community participation;
- an initial target would be to secure a modern library for Broadmeadows, the centre of the district;
- a strategic approach would be taken to planning for the Village with a three year plan to co-ordinate initiatives.

These decisions were important in giving direction to the implementation of the HGLV, and provided a framework to sustain the venture.

A Structure for Advice and Participation

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[9] Frank Maquire grew up in Broadmeadows the son of immigrants and later became the Broadmeadows member of the Victorian Parliament. His important role in this initiative illustrates how the Global Learning Village vision attracted the support of many community leaders with links to the Broadmeadows district. As noted below, John Cain is a former Premier of Victoria, Chair of the HGLV Advisory Board and Chairman of the State Library of Victoria.

The dual structure of a high level Advisory Board and a Committee has served the HGLV initiative well. The Advisory Board is chaired by a former Premier of Victoria, John Cain, and includes the Chairman of the Committee, several community participants, a professor from RMIT University which has provided strong support to the initiative since its inception, and the author of this paper. It is usual for the CEO of Hume City Council and senior officers of the Council to attend meetings while joint meetings with the Council members are held from time to time. The Advisory Board has been a source of new ideas and a stimulus to innovation throughout the duration of the initiative.

The Committee role supplements that of the Advisory with members providing a variety of community perspectives. The role of the Committee has been important in the process of linking community networks to the development of the Global Learning Village, and to keeping in touch with related developments such as the Broadmeadows School Regeneration Project.

The Chairman of the Committee, Ken Thompson, mentioned in a discussion that he saw particular value in a visit a small group he led made to England to observe fresh ideas in providing education and related services. A key feature of the development of the HGLV has been the capacity to benefit from good ideas from around the world, so that this has served as an ongoing stimulus to innovation. The Hume Global Learning Village is now the only Australian participant in the PASCAL International Exchanges so that this provides an on-going source of good ideas to fuel the further development of this initiative.[10]

Community participation and involvement has been an objective of the Village throughout. Community organizations and individual citizens may become Members of the HGLV, and so stakeholders in the success of the venture. There are currently some 800 Members. The further suggestion has been made that all ratepayers in Hume could have the opportunity to become Members of the initiative.

Getting Runs on the Board and Community Visibility

The initial target to secure a library for Broadmeadows gave an impetus to the thrusts of the Village, and gave visibility to this aspiration

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[10] The PASCAL International Observatory emerged from the work of OECD on lifelong learning and learning cities and regions. It operatives from hubs in universities in Glasgow, Melbourne, Johannesburg, and Northern Illinois. PASCAL has undertaken a number of projects with the PASCAL International Exchanges (PIE) one of these based on online exchanges between 10 cities around the world. Information on this initiative is available on the PIE web space (www.pie.pascalobservatory.org). General information on PASCAL is available on www.pascalobservatory.org.

when this was achieved. Melbourne's leading newspaper, The Age, was approached to sponsor the library, and agreed to do this, securing naming rights for The Age Library. The new library became the focal point of a Global Learning Centre which also included meeting and training rooms, computers, and spaces for exhibitions, displays and community events. The Global Learning Centre has served as the hub of development to date. The Age newspaper is represented by a senior executive on the Advisory Board.

Government funding was subsequently obtained for a second community learning centre in Hume which will also incorporate a public library. This centre, to be based at Craigieburn, is currently under construction and will open early in 2012.

A Strategic Approach to Planning and Development

The Hume Global Learning Village has adopted a strategic approach to planning and development with three generations of strategic planning implemented since 2004, in each case following extensive consultation with the community. In addition, a long term strategic plan for the period up to 2030 has been developed aligned with strategic planning for Hume City Council for the same period. Embedding planning for the Village in overall strategic planning for Hume City Council has been a significant trend in the evolution of the Village that is a journey as yet not completed.

Strategic planning for the HGLV has involved:

- "Learning Together 1 2004-2007"
- "Learning Together 2 2007-2010"
- "Learning Together 3 2010- 2013"
- "Learning Together 2030: Shaping Lifelong Learning in Hume City to 2030".

Learning Together 1 (2004-2007)
This plan was developed in the initial entrepreneurial phase of the HGLV. It was a bold, vision setting, network building phase driven by enthusiasm for exciting ideas. New forms of partnership emerged with a major strengthening of social capital in Hume. An ambitious 56 projects were built into the plan for 2004-2007. The main achievement was the opening of the Broadmeadows Global Learning Centre incorporating a high class library and learning conference facilities. Hume Council in 2005 won the National Award for Excellence in Local Government. A review of the outcomes of "Learning Together 1" highlighted the need for stronger evaluation of each project with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) built into planning.

Learning Together 2 (2007-2010)

This was a period of consolidation following the burst of energy and achievement of the initial development phase. The plan for these years was structured on a phases of life framework with projects built in for all phases of the life course. This approach meant that early childhood and active ageing received appropriate attention. This structuring in a clear framework throughout all phases of the life course opened the way for initiatives such as family learning strategies and intergenerational learning, and laid the foundations for themes taken up in "Learning Together 3".

Learning Together 3 (2010-2013)

"Learning Together 3" has been able to build on the foundations laid in the initial two cycles of development (2004-2010) so as to progress towards the long-term vision set out in "Learning Together 2030". This plan reflects a maturing of relationships and partnerships over the previous six years, and may be seen as the beginning of the mature stage of development of the GLV.

"Learning Together 3" was structured around three goals and sub-goals to progress projects in each goal area. The goals are set out over.

1. To embed a culture of learning in the Hume community.
2. To strengthen pathways to learning, employment and share prosperity for the Hume community.
3. To strengthen the Hume Global Learning Village by expanding and consolidating the commitment of the partners through collaborative planning, community engagement and advocacy.

Projects being undertaken during 2010-2013 include the Hume Broadband Initiative, a University for Hume City (Multiversity concept), a three-year Intercultural project, and an Intergenerational Learning project.

Learning Together 2010-2030

The current three year strategic plan sits in a framework of long term strategic planning up to 2030. "Learning Together 2030" has been linked to the Hume City Council Strategy Plan for the same period, and so is embedded in strategic planning for the Council up to 2030. The 2030 strategic plan has the same three goals as those listed above for 2010-2013 so that it provides a framework to carry these goals forward over the twenty years after 2010.

Communication and Community Involvement

A number of approaches are adopted to foster community understanding of lifelong learning and the objectives of the Village. Four themed forums are conducted each year while a regular magazine titled "Imagine, Explore, Discover" provides information and stories with visual images of learning in many contexts. "Village Voices" is a monthly online publication that provides training and learning opportunities for Members and the community. Residents may become Members of the Village as mentioned above. Projects undertaken under the Village program provide many opportunities for community involvement.

Fuelling a Cascade of Innovation

The Hume Global Learning Village has been innovative from its inception with innovative ideas driving the development of the Village. Various policies such as the annual research conference, and the broad spectrum of projects undertaken have contributed to fostering a learning and innovation culture. Cultural change is a long term undertaking, as the 2030 strategic objectives of the Village recognize, but the Village is well on the path.

The Ideas Lab

A good example of the innovative path the Village has taken is provided by the Ideas Lab located in the Broadmeadows Global Learning Centre. This initiative was supported by the Victorian Government, Hume City Council, and several major ICT companies to foster innovation in applications of ICT in education and training.[11] The Lab aims to challenge the way we think about teaching and learning, and to find new and innovative ways in which we can apply technology to create improved learning opportunities for all.

Its innovative approach has been based on the idea of a Design Lab to develop ideas, undertake investigations and develop products so as to drive pedagogical transformation. Workshops are conducted across Victoria. A program of the Lab (21 Steps Workshop) has reached over a third of Victorian schools with more than 600 teachers and 500 Principals from some 720 schools participating. The Lab Director has developed strong International links and has conducted workshops around the world.

Innovation in Schools

The aspirations of the Hume Global Learning Village have been supported by the innovative Broadmeadows School Regeneration Project implemented by

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[11] In addition to the Victorian Government and Hume City Council, the partners include Microsoft, Intel, CISC0, and Victoria University.

the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to revitalise schools in the Broadmeadows district.

This project commenced in 2004 involving 17 schools from the low socio-economic district of Broadmeadows, and was said to be the most complex educational change project ever undertaken in Victoria (DEECD 2010, p3)

While the primary aims of the project was to significantly improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes of students in schools in the district and to improve school retention rates to year 12, the project has assessed outcomes in terms of performance indicators in five areas.

1. Improve student performance
2. Greater market share for the public sector
3. Community development
4. Regeneration model for DEECD.

These objectives meant that the Education Department was not only looking for improved student performance and a greater market share of enrolments for public schools, but also saw the project as a pilot to develop a regeneration model that could be applied elsewhere in Victoria. The Village Advisory Board has kept in touch with the Regeneration Project with briefings from time to time.

The project report released on the project in 2010 covering the period 2006-2009 showed a scene of great activity which had encouraged experiment and creativity. This regeneration initiative in schools has complemented the work of the Global Learning Village, so that a number of strands of innovation are converging in progressing the vision of the future Hume.

Success Factors

The Hume Global Learning initiative has been sustained since 2004 through three cycles of learning and development. While this is a venture not yet complete, a number of insights have been gained already from the experience of this initiative that may be seen as lessons. These are listed below.

1. The strong leadership and support provided by Hume City Council throughout has been crucial with the values enunciated in the Council's Social Justice Charter underpinning and supporting this initiative.

2. The advisory structure combining the roles of the Advisory Board

and Committee has interacted to combine community input with broad policy perspectives in what has been a creative process that has generated new ideas.

3. Community involvement has been critical through a range of strategies including consultations, community membership of the Village, a strong communication strategy, and joint projects involving community organizations.

4. A strategic approach to planning and development has been adopted
    through a succession of three year plans which are now set in the framework of a long term strategy to 2030.

5. Active partnership building through projects that linked networks so
    that civil society was a partner with the Council.

6. Activities that addressed priority needs in the community such as
    raising aspirations and enhancing confidence and self esteem.

7. Early visible outcomes from these initiatives such as the opening of
    the Global Learning Centre in Broadmeadows, so that powerful images of the concepts and aspirations were evident to the community.

8. The priority given to communication through print materials (eg Imagine, Explore, Discover magazine), special events, and projects.

9. The broad approach taken over time to linked educational, cultural,
    and economic development driven by action to build a learning culture in the community.

10. An on-going focus on innovation as, for example, in the Ideas Lab
    innovation.

While much has been achieved, the Hume Global Learning Village is a work in progress as the long term strategy set out in "Learning Together 2030" shows. The Global Learning Village is well on the path to building a culture of learning, enterprise and opportunity in Hume in an inclusive

and cohesive community.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Australian experience in developing and sustaining learning communities has been a learning journey that has progressed through several stages since the late nineteen nineties as experience and insights have been gained. While the overall pattern across Australia has been patchy with mixed outcomes, a number of good practice models exist, such as the Hume Global Learning Village and the other examples discussed in this paper and in Attachment 3.

This experience illustrates policy making in an evolutionary context where grassroots initiatives taken in the field are important in complementing the few state and national guidelines. Programs such as Victoria's Community Learning Partnerships have considerable value as innovation strategies that support this approach.

While the role of some state and local governments has been particularly important in this journey, the Commonwealth has been less active apart from a general framework function in the setting of national policy guidelines for adult and community education and vocational education and training. The absence of a comprehensive coherent policy for lifelong learning covering all stages of life has been a barrier in this journey.

Nevertheless, the Australian learning journey has seen closer relationships and partnerships develop between ACE and VET providers, driven by funding programs such as Victoria's Community Learning Partnerships and the South Australian ACE funding program, which have opened up pathways – especially for disadvantaged groups– towards qualifications, skills, and jobs. This orientation has linked equity, social justice, and economic and skill objectives.

While these achievements are important, cities around the world face a number of major challenges that confront traditional ways of organizing public and community services. These include the rapid growth of many cities with more diverse populations, global warming and climate change, the rising costs of health and welfare services in ageing populations, and, in some cases, crime and public safety. These issues challenge the adequacy of the traditional roles of government, market, and civil society, so that it is not surprising that alternative concepts such as the Big Society and Good Society are attracting attention.

In this context, should we envisage the Learning City model as part of the necessary more holistic and creative response with Learning Cities

progressing to a third more holistic and integrated stage of development?

Such a Gen 3 Learning City would mobilize civil society within frameworks supported by governments (national, state, local) to apply community learning and building strategies in addressing the spectrum of health, education, environment, safety, transport and other issues, through partnership, collaboration and a shared vision. Active citizenship would be much more general than now. There are elements of such an approach in Australia, Scandinavia, Germany and elsewhere, but it has not yet been all brought together. Vision and leadership are needed. Perhaps Taipei can provide a lead in showing what a Gen 3 Learning City looks like. I have suggested what I see as some dimensions in a Gen3 Learning City in an attachment to this paper.

But perhaps I have misread history, and perhaps the future Learning City will be a creative amalgam of Eastern and Western knowledge and wisdom in an ever increasingly interdependent and globalised world.

However, I believe that my suggestions for a Gen 3 Learning City have much in common with the dimensions of a Learning City being considered for Taipei set out in the program of this conference.[12] While some of the language is different, reflecting your history, values and ideals, there is nevertheless much in common in these concepts of 21st century learning cities that both preserve the heritage of humane values and ideals while addressing through learning and community building strategies the big issues that confront all cities. Your program rightly lists, health, ecology, welfare, and public safety among the issues that all modern cities need to address.

As the eminent urban economist Edward Glaeser has reminded us, "the enduring strengths of cities reflects the profoundly social nature of humanity" (Glaeser 2011, p269) We need, then, to find good ways to connect with one another in addressing the big issues that confront cities so that learning throughout life in many contexts becomes a vehicle for revitalizing civilization, culture, and quality of life for all.

I conclude this paper by listing what I see as the lessons from the Australian experience with learning communities and cities for other cities, while recognizing that each city is sui generis with a unique pattern of needs and opportunities.

     1. Localisation should be central with the key role of local government in marshalling community resources for learning

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[12] The program lists wisdom city, human city, ecology, river-bank city, health city, safe city, and welfare city

and embedding initiatives in the on-going work of local government councils to ensure sustainability.

2. Community involvement and a sense of ownership is critical for sustainability through linking networks to the initiative, with good communication, joint projects, and other ways needed to link civil society to the vision of the project for on-going support.

3. There should be a strategic approach to planning with a long term vision and perspectives, and a good sense of the necessary steps to progress towards the vision.

4. While entrepreneurial leadership may be necessary in launching the initiative, it should progress to a form of collective leadership reflected in the governance arrangements so that there is a sense of shared ownership in the community.

5. A whole of life perspective that recognizes changing needs in various life stages should underpin strategic planning.

6. Lifelong learning occurs in many contexts and forms. This should be recognized in strategic planning.

7. Culture and identity are necessary foundations for a sustainable, inclusive, and cohesive Learning City so that cultural institutions should have a key role as avenues for lifelong learning and community building.

8. Modern information technology and the media can have key roles in supporting lifelong learning, community building, and addressing key challenges such as global warming and climate change. There is a need for innovation and creative thinking in the ways technologies are applied

9. Equity and social justice objectives are a necessary underpinning to develop all human capital in the community, and build a cohesive community.

10. Successful Learning Cities are by their nature creative cities so that creativity in many forms and contexts should be actively fostered.

These insights may be seen as part of an emerging international knowledge

base on good practice that reflects both country experience and the work of international organizations and networks such as OECD, UNESCO, the European Commission and its agencies, and PASCAL.[13] The growth of this knowledge base will fuel what Wood and Landry have called "the irresistible urge for cross-pollination" (Wood & Landry 2008, p29). I have no doubt that the aspirations and experience of countries participating in this conference will add much to this common knowledge base and I look forward to our sharing ideas and experience.

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[13] The range of sources now available include several European projects that have been supported by the European Union : EUROlocal, Xploit. Information on some of these sources is given in the paper on German developments by Denise Reghenzani-Kearns.

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SOME KEY DIMENSIONS OF A SUSTAINABLE GEN 3 LEARNING CITY	
OPPORTUNITY CITY	Provides lifelong learning in all life stages as the gateway to opportunities and quality of life
WELCOMING CITY	The city is inclusive and cohesive in addressing disadvantage and exclusion with strong social bonds
CULTURED AND CREATIVE CITY	Heritage, culture, ideas and the arts are valued and are integral in the development of the city. The creative milieu engendered fosters innovation and economic vitality
HEALTHY CITY	A healthy lifestyle for all is actively fostered
GREEN CITY	The city preserves its environment and addresses global warming
SAFE CITY	Strong community partnerships and citizenship combat crime and disorder
LOCAL AND GLOBAL CITY	The city is both strongly local and richly global in its orientation and citizenship

Dimensions for a Gen 3 Learning City

Some Further Australian Initiatives

Some further examples of Australian good practice initiatives are set out below to add to the examples in South Australia and Victoria cited in this paper. These examples generally involve initiatives supported by local government councils, although the Gwydir Learning Region in rural New South Wales provides a good example of how initiatives taken by enterprising individuals then found a base of support in the local government council with a coalition of interested organisations then supporting the initiative.

Melton Community Learning Board
The Shire of Melton in the outer north-western region of Melbourne has sustained a learning community initiative since 1998, and was one of the earliest learning community initiatives in Australia. The current Community Learning Plan 2011-2014 is the fifth Community Learning Plan of the Shire since that time. As in the Hume Global Learning Village, this initiative has matured over this time, building on an evaluation completed in 2010. The current 2011-2014 Plan builds on experience acquired since 1998. See: www.bmllen.com.au for current plan.

Gwydir Learning Region
The Gwydir Learning Region is a story of individual initiative in a socially disadvantaged and economically depressed rural area that then found support from Gwydir Regional Council and a coalition of stakeholders including the New England Institute of TAFE and the University of New England. An interesting evaluation study shows how this initiative came about. See: www.gwydirlearning.nsw.edu.au.

Brimbank Community Learning Strategy
This is a new initiative in the western district of Melbourne, an area with a high proportion of immigrants, mainly from non- English speaking countries, and with considerable disadvantage. The Community Learning Strategy 2010-2013 of Brimbank City Council followed consultations with the community and a report with proposals for the Strategy prepared by Peter Kearns and Denise Reghenzani. See: www.brimbank.vic.gov.au/Brimbank/Strategies.

Learning NQ
This development in Northern Queensland arose from an initiative taken by the former Thuringowa Council. Following amalgamation of the Townsville and Thuringowa Councils Councils, the name was changed to Learning NQ. This initiative has been supported by James Cook University, Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE, business and community leaders. The web site of this initiative is currently being redeveloped and will include the four year strategic plan of Learning NQ when reopened.