RIPS, CURRENTS AND SNAGS: INVESTIGATING THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR YOUNG AUSTRALIANS IN THE REGION OF GIPPSLAND, VICTORIA

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ABSTRACT

Monash University (Gippsland campus) is situated in Churchill, Latrobe Valley, located in central Gippsland, eastern Victoria. A large percentage of the Gippsland region comprises of a socio-economically disadvantaged population (Figure 1). In Semester One, 2011 as part of the Bachelor of Primary Education course at Monash, it was decided that a pathway be created to achieve these national ideals and goals through the implementation of swimming and water safety education in Primary schools. Swimming and water safety education represents the specific curriculum to be implemented in rural schools, it is representative of any aspect of the curriculum to be delivered. This paper comprises a narrative memoir by the author of his involvement in the pathway and subsequently the paper sheds light on the barriers, benefits and strategies for implementing such policies in practice.

INTRODUCTION

Primary education university students, choosing the Physical Education (PE) major stream, study the unit EDF2616 Experiencing Aquatic Environments. It is a requirement within this unit and also for Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) teacher registration that PE graduates from initial teacher education programs in the primary school have a current teacher of swimming and water safety qualification (VIT, 2008). The unit at Gippsland campus previously required that students complete this during their own time and presented evidence of this qualification (approximate cost $350). The question was asked that if the students were attending a weekly one hour lecture and a two hour workshop focusing on outcomes relating to aquatics and water safety education then with a carefully designed unit workshop programme why not create a pathway identifying the swimming and water safety course units of competency?

This question initiated the journey of collaboration between Australian Registered Training Organisations (RTO), the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre) and external swimming instructors employed at the venue, local Primary schools and the University sector; Monash University - Gippsland. Through implementing 'hands on' practical teaching and learning experiences for the university students, subsequently the workshops enabled the provision of quality

lessons at no cost for local primary school children (from a disadvantaged socio-economic Gippsland region), who otherwise would not have received swimming lessons. This was of particular benefit as although, a considerable amount of work has been attributed to educating the Australian public about swimming and water safety awareness in a commitment to reducing drowning fatalities, research suggests that rural and isolated schools find it most difficult to conduct aquatic activities (Peden, Franklin & Larsen, 2009, p. 200). Rural communities are defined by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) as "being not metropolitan; not major regional centres; not remote; and having a population within town boundaries of less than 10 000" (Clayton, Blom, Bateman & Carden, 2004, p.6). Churchill has a population of 4 588 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Furthermore, the best time to prepare children for safe aquatic participation and provide the skills and knowledge needed to have a lifelong safe association with water is during childhood (Royal Life Saving Society Australia, 2010).

The discussion paper released in August 2011 titled 'A tertiary education plan for Gippsland, Victoria' (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2011) was written specifically for the context of Gippsland using recent national and state level developments including the Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley Review, *2008). This paper* supports such pathways as it "encourages building on existing partnerships and strengthening articulation arrangements between providers" (p. 4). In the written submissions for the discussion paper specifically focussing within the Gippsland context suggests that "the need for additional training capacity and improved collaboration between providers of tertiary education and industry was identified as a major concern" (DEECD, 2011, p. 10).

There are five key outcomes identified by the Gippsland tertiary education plan project, a derivative of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, and it is specifically the third key outcome that supports the swimming and water safety pathway holistic vision:

3. Improved participation in education and training more generally for the community.

The attempt to create what could be described as a logical pathway led to a process of events that although initially on the surface seemed quite simple, involved a complex process of social relationships between providers (RTOs), external swimming instructors, the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre), local Primary schools and the tertiary sector (Monash University – Gippsland).

> The challenge is to provide for the alignment of the provision of education and the needs of the local industry. Collaborative relationships between TAFE institutes, universities and local industries are critical to establishing meaningful pathways and sustainable economic growth. (DEECD, 2011, p. 11).

The challenge presented various obstacles that were either overcome or evaded, which upon reflection offers insight for all stakeholders in improved future attempts of collaboration between universities with other tertiary sectors or local industries. "There are, however, many barriers to education typical to regional areas. As a result, the number of students accessing higher education in Gippsland is among the lowest rate in the state". (DEECD, 2011, p. 4).

The barriers existed from the initial stages and in reflection could have been possibly avoided through all stakeholders sharing common goals for pathways, which the Discussion paper (August 2011) suggests can be addressed through collaboration and alignment. "The literature on vocational education and training in rural and remote communities identifies a series of barriers that impact upon effective training delivery". The following complicating factors were seen to be influential in training delivery in rural communities:

1. Smaller numbers in training meant that, generally, the finances, resources and infrastructure for supporting such delivery were correspondingly limited.

2. Isolation created particular problems in terms of accessing training and finding the qualified teaching staff to provide training. Lack of public transport was a major factor in lack of access.

3. The impact of outside training providers was controversial. While their value was acknowledged for the expertise and facilities that they could bring to the community, they were not seen to have the community's best interest at heart, due to their lack of one-on-one interaction and failure to generally follow up.

4. 'Thin' markets - or markets characterised by low activity and thus lacking depth and volume – meant a lack of diversity in training programs able to be offered, with funding being the main barrier to the provision of a broader range of programs.

5. Access to relevant workplaces was problematic, not only from the viewpoint of finding places, but also because of the problem of public liability and the high increasing cost of insurance.

6. Coordination, promotion and marketing of training packages across all businesses and education and training sectors within rural communities is not sufficiently effective. (Clayton, et al., 2004, p. 7).

Guided by the six factors identified by Clayton et al. (2004), through the narrative memoir by the author, contextual barriers of training delivery are identified and strategies are devised in overcoming difficulties for the benefit of regional education and in particular, Gippsland.
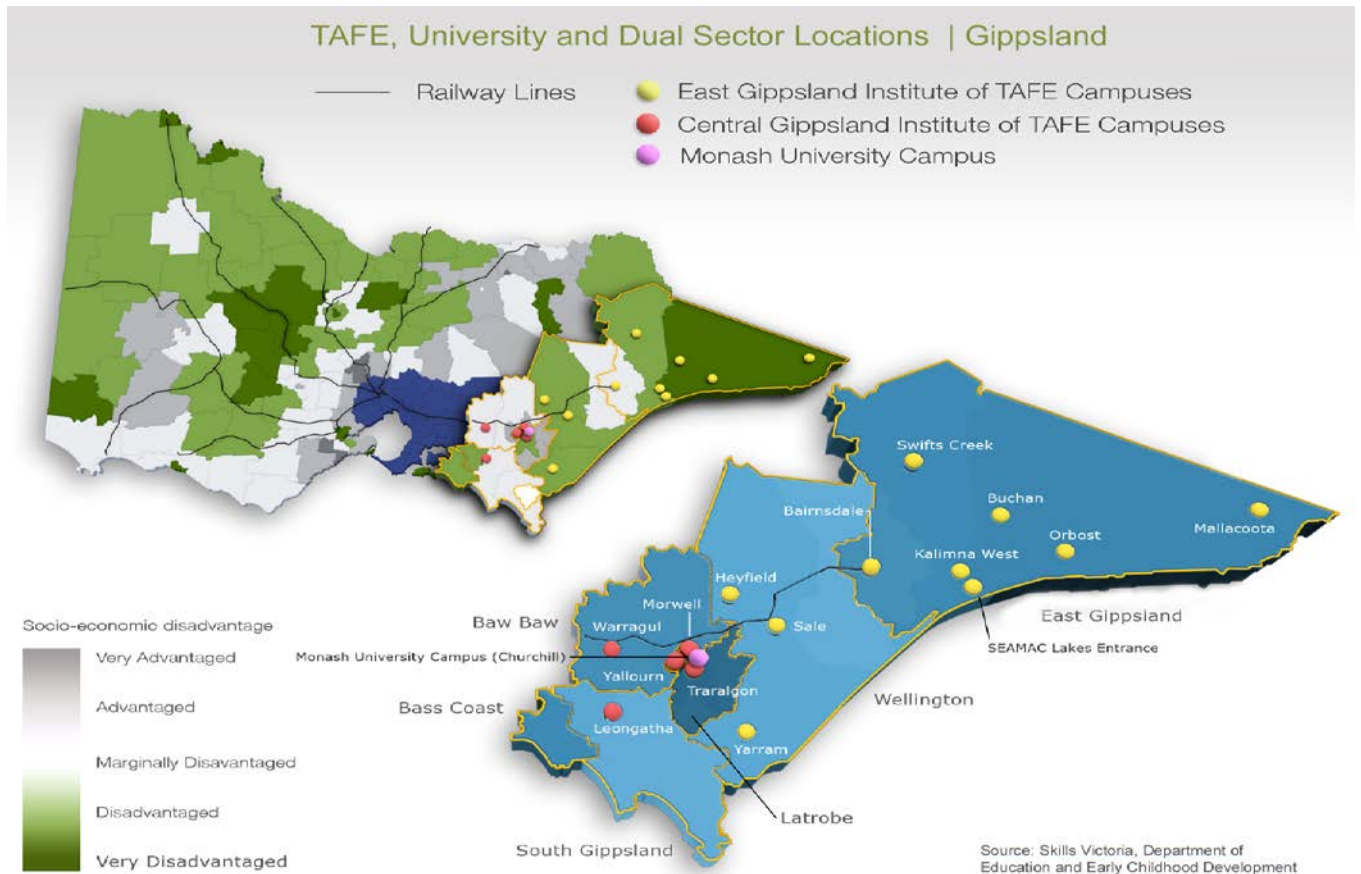
TAFE, University and Dual Sector Locations | Gippsland

——— Railway Lines

● East Gippsland Institute of TAFE Campuses
● Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE Campuses
● Monash University Campus

Socio-economic disadvantage

Very Advantaged

Advantaged

Marginally Disadvantaged

Disadvantaged

Very Disadvantaged

Swifts Creek

Buchan

Bairnsdale

Orbost

Mallacoota

Kalimna West

East Gippsland

Heyfield

Morwell

Baw Baw

Warragul

Sale

SEAMAC Lakes Entrance

Monash University Campus (Churchill)

Yallourn

Traralgon

Wellington

Bass Coast

Leongatha

Yarram

South Gippsland

Latrobe

Source: Skills Victoria, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Figure 1: Location of the major tertiary education providers, train lines and SES status, Gippsland. (DEECD, 2011, p. 7).

MEETING HALF-WAY

Once the decision to create a pathway had been made, the next stage involved choosing an Australian Swimming and water safety provider. Programs associated with courses and qualifications for teaching Swimming and water safety include:

- Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) Swim Australia Teacher
- AUSTSWIM training of teachers of swimming and water safety

Swim Australia (Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association) was "launched in 1997 by the Federal Minister for Sport and Recreation to assist develop the Learn to Swim program in Australia to its full potential. ASCTA is a not for profit, membership based organisation that strives to achieve the World's best swimming and water safety Teachers and highest performing swimming Coaches" (ASCTA, 2011). Swim Australia's aim is for all Australians learning to swim and gaining water safety knowledge through safe, enjoyable and quality swimming lessons.

ASCTA is an Australian Registered Training Organisation (RTO) offering 35 units of competency, delivered in all states and territories (Australian Government, 2011). Swim Australia Teacher courses include:

- Swim Australia Teacher (SAT) directed at 4-12 years,
- Swim Australia Teacher of Babies and Toddlers (SAT B & T) directed at 0-4 years,
- Swim Australia Teacher of Competitive Swimming (SAT CS) directed at 7-12 years,
- Swim Australia Teacher Adolescents and Adults (SAT AA) directed at 14 and above,
- Swim Australia Teacher Learners with Disability (SAT LWD) and
- Swim Australia Teacher Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (SAT CALD). (ASCTA, 2011)

Austswim has a close philosophical and working relationship with Swim Australia, Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) and Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) (Austswim, 2009). Austswim programmes for teaching swimming and water safety can be aligned with the units of competency in the corresponding Swim Australia Teacher courses. Austswim is also an Australian Registered Training Organisation (RTO), offering 18 units of competency but not all are delivered within Australian states and territories (Australian Government, 2011). Austswim courses include:

- -Austswim Teacher of Swimming and water safety
- -Austswim Teacher of Infant and Preschool Aquatics
- -Austswim Teacher of Aquatics for People with a Disability
- -Austswim Teacher Towards Competitive Strokes
- -Austswim Teacher of Adults

The third provider contacted was RLSSA which in the state of Victoria is known as Lifesaving Victoria. Courses in relation to Swimming and water safety Livesaving Victoria provide include; Keep Watch, Swim and Survive, Bronze Medallion, Junior Lifeguard Club and Grey Medallion.

Correspondence with providers was initiated and it was anticipated that they would share similar swimming and water safety educational aspirations with that of Monash Gippsland. The response from ASCTA and RLSSA was very optimistic and built the foundations for strong partnerships. Both organisations were flexible in their disposition and offered large discounts in courses so that they were affordable for the university students. It was evident that ASCTA and RLSSA clearly valued the opportunity to promote swimming and water safety, especially within the demographics of Gippsland. It was axiomatic that both providers aimed to promote swimming and water safety to its full potential and in a professional manner. Prioritising 'education' was a commonality of both RTOs which appeared to enable strong collaboration with Monash University Faculty of Education. It did appear that the last complicating factor listed by Clayton et al. (2004, p. 7), point 6 (cf. p. 3), "Coordination, promotion and marketing of training packages across all businesses and education and training sectors within rural communities is not sufficiently effective", was not a barrier within this aquatics context.

It was during a weekend Presenter course where the Austswim business ideology was revealed to the author. Austswim adopted a business model not consistent to the education (swimming and water safety promotion) that was being proposed by the university. It was explained that Austswim was owned by all stakeholders (presenters and qualified swim teachers), where Presenters became franchise owners, who were qualified and registered to sell the Austswim product (personal communication, February 5, 2011). It was recommended that Presenters charge any enrolment $350 of which $215 went to Austswim for the administration costs and $135 went to the Presenter (personal communication, February 16, 2011). The university proposal therefore required a franchisee (University lecturer with Austswim Presenter qualifications) presenting at a discounted price. Such a proposal was inconsistent with the business model in two ways; one, it made other Presenters appear to be quite expensive in comparison to the maximum charge for the students of $215 and two, potentially deduct business away from other franchisees within the Gippsland region.

The paradox in ideologies between capitalism of business and social justice of education, specifically the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (December, 2008), did not enable for a flush alignment when juxtaposed. This is a contentious issue not only amongst various stakeholders when creating pathways and negotiating articulation arrangements, but is exasperated within the university sector itself. Universities are committed to excellence in research and education, in particular Monash University has academic strengthening initiatives that has seen it recently rise considerably in international university rankings. While the university "strives to embrace social justice through practical pathways for

engagement, the drive for excellence is the primary mission of the university" (personal communication, October 13, 2011).

There were Austswim course negotiations prior to the arrival of the author, involving the local leisure and sports centre's Swimming Supervisor and a Gippsland Austswim Presenter. This involved the university students completing the course externally to the university unit. Negotiations between the local leisure and sports centre's swimming supervisor, local Austswim Presenter and Monash University Faculty of Education administrative staff in late 2010 confirmed that there would be a minimum of 100 students, 30 students per course and each student would be charged $280 rather than the recommended price of $365 (personal communication, February 28, 2011). With both courses offering identical units of competency (Table 1), the difference other than price was that ASCTA duration was four years rather than Austswim's three. The provider chosen for the purpose of education was ASCTA and the course was Swim Australia Teacher (SAT).

Table 1 Comparison between providers (Australian Government, 2011)

Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	Austswim	ASCTA (Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association)
Course	Austswim Teacher of Swimming and water safety	Swim Australia Teacher (SAT)
Minimal cost required by provider	$215	$100
Cost for university students	$215	$100
Amount of time valid	3 years	4 years
National recognition	RTO 104975	RTO20948
International recognition	–	International Federation of Swim Teachers Association (IFTSTA)
Units of competency	SRC AQU 003B SRC AQU 008B SRC AQU 009B SRC AQU 0010B SRC AQU 0011B SRC AQU 013B SRC CRO 007B	SRC AQU 003B SRC AQU 008B SRC AQU 009B SRC AQU 0010B SRC AQU 0011B SRC AQU 013B SRC CRO 007B

ASCTA is Australia's peak professional swimming body and courses are recognised by International Federation of Swim Teachers Association (IFTSTA), thus providing a world class curriculum for all stakeholders in support of the commitment to action in achieving the Educational Goals for Young Australians. As part of the SAT Swimming and water safety course the university students provided low ratio quality lessons for local Primary school students over three weeks.

In reflection, the arrival of the author, his efforts to supply innovative solutions to meet the training needs of the Gippsland community and the introduction of ASCTA may have been perceived by the local community as that of an 'outsider'.

> With an open training market, it is possible for training providers who are registered to deliver within a state or across several states, to bid to conduct training anywhere within their scope. Inevitably, this brings some external training providers into rural communities (Clayton et al., 2004, p. 19).

This is associated with problems and in particular barrier number 3 (cf. p. 3):

> The impact of outside training providers was controversial. While their value was acknowledged for the expertise and facilities that they could bring to the community, they were not seen to have the community's best interest at heart, due to their lack of one-on-one interaction and failure to generally follow up.

The discussion paper 'A tertiary education plan for Gippsland, Victoria' (DEECD, 2011) describes an option for the future as being "Institutional possibilities, focussed on the role of tertiary education providers in responding to local need through partnerships and flexible governance arrangements." (p. 12). At times within this pathway it did appear to involve the university tailoring to the need of local industry, moreso than the local industry adjusting to the requirements of university standards. "Current pathways between schools, TAFE institutes and universities are unclear and inaccessible. A coordinated approach is needed to improve pathways between education providers." (DEECD, 2011, p. 23). This imbalance and inaccessibility was exemplified by the demands placed on the author for meeting the swimming course presenter requirements. This was necessary to grant the university students with the Swimming and water safety qualification. A requirement for the Presenter of Swimming and water safety for any provider involved completion of a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110) (personal communication, February 2, 2011).

 While this is the requirement for anyone wishing to become a Swimming and water safety presenter, it did seem somewhat of a paradox that a university lecturer with a number of education degrees, 15 years full time teaching experience in primary and secondary schools, two years full time teaching experience at tertiary and current teacher registration, is then required to complete further study to demonstrate that he can meet the unit of competencies for a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Hence, "some policies and regulations governing funding and the delivery of training were seen by rural providers as working against their efforts to supply innovative solutions to meet the training needs of their communities" (Clayton et al., 2004, p.5). This was associated with frustration by various stakeholders which prevented flexibility.

As advised by the Lifesaving Victoria General Manager for Education and Training, the "RPL document for the Cert IV is a long process and it is probably easier just to go and sit the course" (personal communication, February 3, 2011). This course while necessary for the training purposes was at a further cost ($1600), was time consuming, it demonstrated a lack of reciprocal flexibility and general ignorance towards what an education university degree comprises, and what a teaching position or the Professional Standards of Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011) involve. Robertson's research (2008, p.19) concluded that "Certificate IV in Training and Assessment may provide the opportunity to develop the applied skills of a novice but not expert teacher". The Certificate IV was a major barrier to creating a pathway opportunity within the Gippsland region. However, through many trips to Melbourne and dedicated work on behalf of the RTO, Innovative Business Training (RTO Number 3875), the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was obtained in time for the semester so that the pathway for the education students was possible. This activity related to barrier number 2. (cf. p. 3), "Isolation created particular problems in terms of accessing training and finding the qualified teaching staff to provide training."

Pathways created included the opportunity for the university students to obtain qualifications in Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) - Swim Australia Teacher (SAT), Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) Bronze Medallion (BM) and RLSSA Resuscitation (RE) courses. By becoming an endorsed service member with Lifesaving Victoria the author was qualified to endorse the BM, RE and Bronze Rescue (BR). The students were required to have current resuscitation accreditation to obtain a Swim Australia Teacher qualification, so this enabled a pathway within a pathway.

ECOLOGY: WEB OF RELATIONSHIPS

> Tertiary education delivery in Gippsland faces issues of thin markets and small campuses. In other words there is a small and dispersed population. Despite this, Gippsland has a number of providers, including large private RTOs, two TAFE institutes, a university and many adult and community education (ACE) providers. A theme emerging in the submissions was the need for better collaboration and partnerships. The case was made for collaboration between tertiary education providers and also between tertiary education providers and local industry. (DEECD, 2011, p. 7).

Thin markets relates directly to barrier number 4. (cf. p. 3). It was advised that within Gippsland this barrier could be overcome through collaboration of stakeholders. Creating pathways between Registered Training Organisations (RTO), namely ASCTA and RLSSA was one of three equally important collaborations required. The other collaborations were with the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre). This included establishing a working relationship with external swimming instructors employed at the venue and collaboration with local Primary schools.

Contact was initially made by informal introductions with the centre leader, followed by e-mail and phone calls, which culminated with a formal face to face meeting prior to the beginning of Semester 1 at the local leisure and sports centre (Wednesday 16 February). This meeting was productive as far as it ascertained each stakeholder's purpose of collaboration. The unit co-ordinator was able to share his vision of involving local primary schools during the unit (at no cost) and the pathway he was creating which was fully supported by the leader. Facilities, costs, equipment, insurance, access and spaces were discussed and where applicable finalised. The unit co-ordinator was introduced to the Swimming Supervisor who also supported the pathways being created although with caveat. It was collaboratively decided that the unit co-ordinator would provide the dates and times for the primary schools' free lessons to be provided by the university students. Also, the Swimming Supervisor would use the sports centre's contact with the schools, through swimming lessons facilitated during the year, to organise the lessons for children where priority was to be given to year levels who would otherwise miss out on the opportunity. This collaboration reinforced a larger partnership established between Monash University, the local City Council and the Australian Government, coinciding with the completion of the local leisure and sports centre redevelopment project. This was directly related to barrier point 5 'access to relevant workplaces was problematic' (cf. p. 3) and was not an issue within this particular context.

Effective communication and effort was essential for this pathway to be created, which involved personal face to face relations within the local health industry. This is promoted by the discussion paper; "The creation of an open, meaningful and collaborative dialogue between tertiary education providers and industry in Gippsland should be encouraged." (DEECD, 2011, p. 20). Collaboration involves a complex process of social relationships. This involved change, change to create a pathway with which brought envisaged improvement for the university unit, subsequently benefits for the community and yet in this context change also brought competition. "Competition rather than collaboration is an issue commonly identified in the research on vocational education and training in rural communities" (Balatti & Falk, 2000; Centre for Reasearch and Learning in Regional Australia, 2001; Clayton, et al., 2004; Owen & Bound, 1998).

The curriculum change implemented resulted in curriculum reform for the university students and the Primary school children. Ewing (2010, p.148) describes the terms with clarity:

Change arguably refers more generally to undertaking something new: a movement from one state, form or direction to another. Curriculum reform implies more than change – it is a direct assertion that this change will bring about improvement or enhancement. Curriculum re-form therefore suggests that students will benefit from the innovative practices, materials or the teacher's change in beliefs and pedagogical approach. In other words, their experiences at school will in some way improve.

Curriculum change is a complex process (Sparkes 1991), socially complex (Fullan 2001: 69), a fact which is often ignored (Hall 1992) as educationalists in many countries appear to be extremely resistant to real (deep) change, often experiencing only surface or superficial change (Sparkes 1991). Fullan (2001) suggests that a fully implemented innovation or reform will involve changes in:

1. curriculum materials,

2. teaching practices,

3. beliefs or understandings about the curriculum and learning practices

Furthermore, 'Effective strategies for improvement require an understanding of the process, a way of thinking that cannot be captured in any list of steps to be followed.' (2001, p. 71). The problem of educational change, as the implementation of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (December, 2008) involves, is more a question of the 'difficulties related to planning and coordinating a multilevel social process involving thousands of people' (p. 69). Real change involves transformation of people's beliefs about their surroundings which can be threatening and stressful for the teachers involved (Sparkes 1991).

Transformations often result in conflict, loss and struggle which are fundamental to successful change (Fullan 1982). The appellation 'real change' is referred to by Dinan-Thompson (2001, p. 9) more appropriately as 'authentic change' which includes the 'important elements of emotion and the role of interactions in teacher change'. Hargreaves (1997, p. 109) warns that if emotional dimensions are ignored during curriculum change then 'emotions and feelings will only re-enter the change process by the back door'. Therefore, authentic change takes into consideration the micro-politics which often cause change to fail (Datnow, 1998; Dinan-Thompson, 2002; Sparkes, 1990). Micro-politics are closely associated with competition; "The open training market is portrayed as having generated sometimes unhealthy competition between various providers who are working in the region" (Clayton, et al., 2004, p.10).

It is teaching practices and teacher's beliefs and/or understandings about the curriculum and learning practices which enable penetration of authentic curriculum change to a deeper level. Swimming and water safety reform involves teachers valuing their influence on children and believing the difference they can make in reducing drowning fatalities through implementing swimming and water safety

education. Hence, by teachers observing the university students conduct swimming lessons, it was anticipated that this could initiate teachers and education students to act collaboratively and cooperatively in promoting swimming and water safety. This is an opportunity that has not been available for the teachers before due to the barriers that are associated with teaching in a rural school. Data gathered in a recent study (Whipp, Hutton, Grove & Jackson, 2011) found that teachers working collaboratively with external providers is associated with positive perceptions about the value of the physical activity, enables teachers to develop confidence and is less stressful. Curriculum change and reform is a process that involves teacher stress which may result in obstruction.

Impediments were evident within the web of relationships. Confirmation of which schools, classes, numbers and ability groups attending were left to the very last minute, which proved to be difficult for the author and education students who were not as informed as they had envisaged. Another barrier that caused initial damage to the collaborative pathway, and as such the ASCTA reputation, which was difficult to rebuild within the community, was the misinformation the Swimming Supervisor provided the Primary school community about the lessons. The first time the author met with the classroom teacher and teaching assistants he needed to reassure them about the safety of the lessons and defend the Swim Australia Teacher Swimming and water safety programme. The Swimming Supervisor referred to the SAT programme the university students were completing as a subordinate program. "The training market is a competitive one." (Clayton et al., 2004, p. 28). This behaviour was not consistent with the Austswim proclaimed close philosophical and working relationship with Swim Australia (Austswim, 2009).

During the Primary School lessons there were problems with a Swimming Supervisor advising education students to use strategies that were not appropriate. An example of this was when a child in Year 2 did not want to participate in an aspect of the lesson. The education student was understanding and gently encouraged the child to have a rest and have another attempt when he felt comfortable. The Swimming Supervisor moved across to the student and child, assertively demanding that the student force him to do the activity and not to give him a choice. The education student knowingly did not respond to the Swimming Supervisor and continued the correct practice. Later it was reinforced by the classroom teacher that the education student had managed the particular child very well and built a good rapport which was evidenced by the child's application. This was one example of the difficulties in attempting to align a four year university degree, comprised of in-depth studies in discipline content and pedagogy, with that of a qualification completed in a weekend and supplemented by 20 hours of on the job experience. Further, Robertson (2008, p.19) suggests that even the next sequential qualification from the swimming instructor, the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, "does not embed the opportunity to develop the suite of knowledge bases required for autonomous training in diverse and complex environments". Naturally, alignment of a tertiary education university degree with the industry

course was not flush, an argument that cannot be ignored when marrying up two education disparities.

The complex process of curriculum change within the Gippsland community is represented by the ecological model. The complex layers of relationships between individuals and groups, involving personal, interpersonal and environmental factors which can be categorised as constraining and enabling, is captured within the social-ecological model (Figure 2) designed by Sallis, Cervero, Ascher, Henderson, Kraft & Kerr (2006). While this model identifies potential environmental and policy influences on four domains of active living: recreation, transport, occupation, and household, it also accentuates the dynamics involved in this specific pathway; community collaboration for Swimming and water safety. McMurray (2007) supports the model suggesting that community is a socio-ecological concept and

> systems of dynamic, interactive relationships between people and their physical, geographic, personal and social networks. Communities are ecological in that the relationships within the community not only connect people to the community, but give back to the community what it needs to sustain itself (p.13).

Figure 2   Ecological model of four domains of active living. (p. 301)
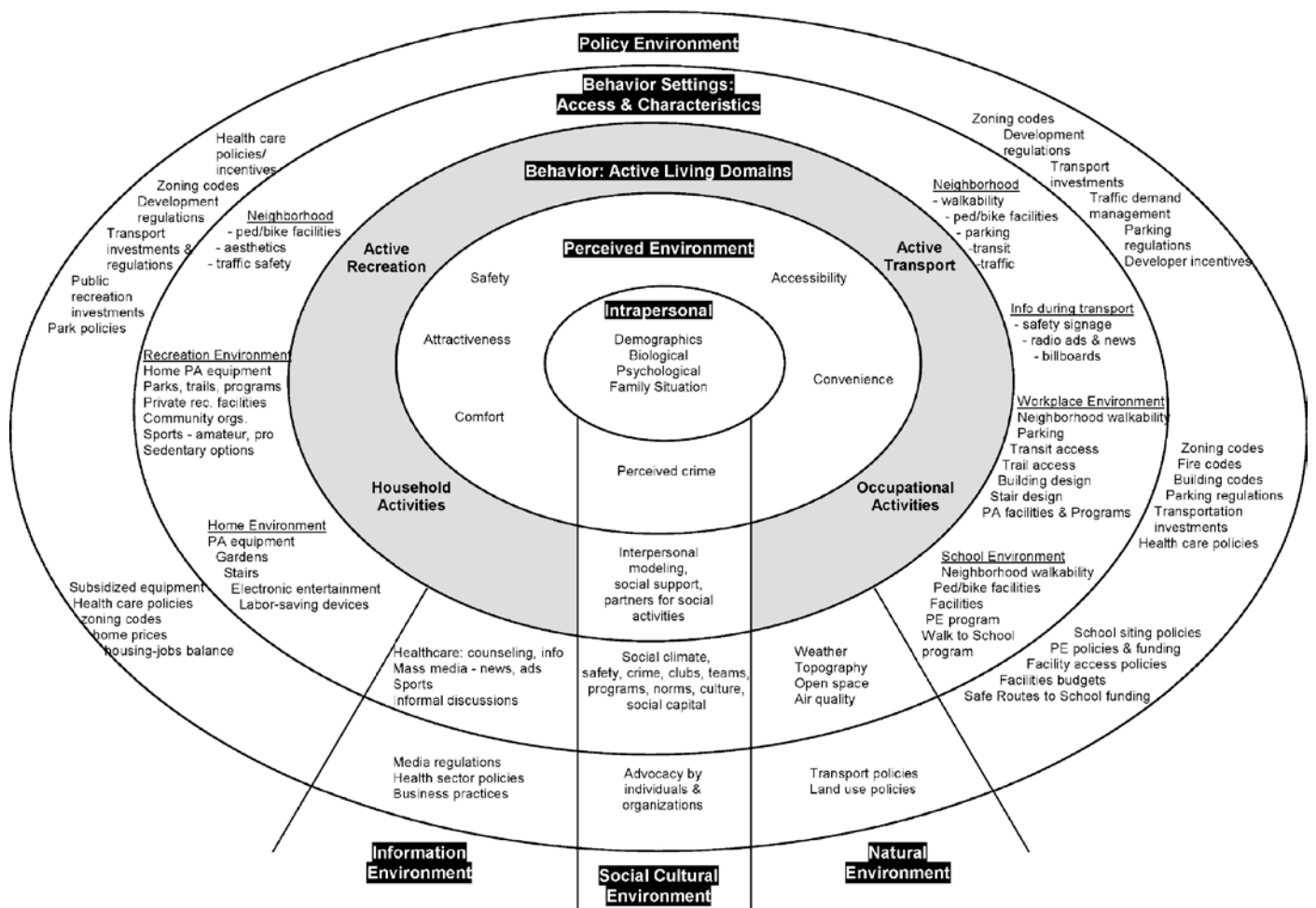
IS THE EFFORT WORTHWHILE?

From a Gippsland tertiary education perspective, aquatics educational perspective, Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, rural and isolated schools and university perspective, the effort of creating pathways is vindicated and rewarded, that is, when viewing the big picture. The process has begun, involving collaboration between industry, namely RTOs, the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre), local Primary schools and the University sector; Monash University – Gippsland. A process that can be reflected upon, reassessed, amendments made and relationships strengthened.

Creating pathways and collaborating within the Gippsland community requires time, personal skills and effort. Feedback from various stakeholders evidenced that such effort was appreciated. The unit co-ordinator was commended by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Swim Australia (ASCTA) based on feedback the education student participants expressed in the SAT student evaluations summary (personal communication, June 24, 2011).

This feedback was reinforced in the university unit evaluation completed by the students where the best aspects of the unit included:

> Learning how to teach swimming and the opportunity to teach kids how to swim in prac. All aspects that we learnt about related to teaching primary kids (which hasn't happened in the last 2 yrs of PE). The Unit co-ordinator's explanations and teaching was fantastic with the use of his prior experiences etc. and also his hard work to help us reach success in all tasks. (personal communication, September 2, 2011).

The children from the local Primary schools were excited to be taught by the education students during each of the three weeks. Parents came to support their children and comments from teachers, teaching assistants, parents and the children expressed their gratitude for the lessons provided. One teacher wrote; "My kids had a ball with the swimming. They were disappointed that it was only for the extra two weeks (one week was a holiday for this school). Like I said to you then, any time you need children feel free to approach us. We are very willing to assist." (personal communication, July 23, 2011).

Positive experiences for children and their families, builds an optimistic image of Monash University within the community. The discussion paper 'A tertiary education plan for Gippsland, Victoria' (DEECD, 2011) listed raising aspirations and improved awareness as a targeted strategy, specifically "school engagement/outreach programs addressing the perception of tertiary education in the primary and secondary school environment" (p. 21). This was raised as a priority as "low aspirations and attitudes towards education in Gippsland are a major concern" (p. 22).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This paper comprises a narrative memoir by the author of his involvement at tertiary education (Monash University) to deliver the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (December, 2008) and as a derivative of this national policy, the specific recommendations outlined in 'A tertiary education plan for Gippsland, Victoria'. A conscious effort has been made by the author to be fair in the presentation of events and data gathered. The purpose is not to be conceited in reflection, but rather to delve below the surface of policy implementation to offer insight into the complex layers of relationships encompassing the process of curriculum change, emotional dimensions that cannot be ignored.

Change was a result of collaboration between stakeholders for pathways created within the Gippsland community. Stakeholders involved in the implementation of swimming and water safety education in Primary schools included; Australian Registered Training Organisations (RTO), the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre) and external swimming instructors employed at the venue, local Primary schools and the University sector; Monash University – Gippsland.

Strategies that literature suggests enable success (Clayton, et al., 2004, p.23) and are supported within this narrative memoir include:

- identifying group needs and targeting the training to those needs

- bringing learners together enables the course to be cost effective

- providing life-skills training

- relationship between the training provider and the enterprise

- establishing open communication and clear links with key stakeholders interested in the delivery of vocational education and training within the community

Transformations often result in conflict, loss and struggle which are fundamental to successful change (Fullan 1982). An ideological prioritisation of 'education' appeared to enable strong collaboration between stakeholders. Adversely, the paradox in ideologies between capitalism of business and social justice of education, specifically the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (December, 2008), did not enable for a flush alignment. The strategy recommended for overcoming such differences is 'flexibility' (Kilpatrick & Bell, 1999), "without such flexibility the diverse needs of stakeholders cannot possibly be met" (Clayton, et al., 2004). Flexibility involves content, delivery modes, location, recognition of prior learning, existing qualifications and skills.

Flexibility should not involve a 'dumbing down' of the standards or outcomes but rather moving the 'goal posts' to demonstrate contextual consideration, so as "not to further disadvantage particular rural learners" (Clayton et al., 2004, p.7), finding alternative but equal practical pathways for engagement. "Because of the nature of

rural communities, and some of the policies and regulations governing vocational education and training, quality training provision is seen by some researchers as not always possible." (Clayton, et al., 2004). It involves creative approaches but requires bureaucratic rules and regulation support. Flexible governance arrangements need to be reciprocal between all stakeholders so that pathways can be achieved with limited obstructions. At times arrangements within this project appeared to involve the university tailoring to the need of local industry, moreso than the local industry adjusting to the requirements of university standards. This appears to be the major barrier for the university sector.

It is paramount that collaboration between various sectors within the community of Gippsland (identified as an area of major concern) is viewed as a learning process. There are barriers to education, some typical to regional areas and this paper sheds light on such barriers, strategies that overcame such barriers, along with the benefits of implementing such policies in practice. However, this research paper is limited by its nature. It would be recommended that a deep research project be conducted to ascertain verisimilitude of findings involving participants representing the various stakeholder perspectives. This would involve verification and ethical clearances. Such a project is supported by the discussion paper 'A tertiary education plan for Gippsland, Victoria' (DEECD, 2011) recommending "greater independence for Monash Gippsland to: have a research capacity aligned with the needs of the region, such as a focus on health care" (DEECD, 2011, p. 18). Hence, the process begun has potential to be further developed and enhanced by research. This paper offers insight for all stakeholders in improved future attempts of collaboration between universities with other tertiary sectors and local industries.

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