

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR SOUTH WEST LLEN

Focus on vulnerable children and young people

The 2016-17 period has been one of substantial change for LLENs, with a new focus on supporting vulnerable young people and working more in the early years.

In 2016, LLENs transferred to the newly created Vulnerable Children Branch, which sits within the Department of Education and Training (DET), and is jointly funded by DET and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

This meant LLENs moved from a focus on improving the participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes of young people aged 12 to 18, to a focus on young people who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education.

With this new direction, and recognising that disengagement from school is a process that starts early, LLENs are now able to focus on young people in the early years.

Our strategic response

South West LLEN considered what it would take to build the capacity of schools across our region to effectively support their vulnerable students to reach their potential and stay in education for better life opportunities.

We understood that there is no complete solution to the complexity of the situation for young people in regional settings. Rather the challenge is to improve as many of the elements of the situation as possible.

Our strategic response is [South West LLEN's response to vulnerable children 2017–2020](#), which incorporates a set of coordinated and interrelated responses, that collectively have the potential to substantially improve the current situation facing vulnerable students in our schools.

This strategy includes eight key activities:

- Nurture Nest
- Nurture Room

- Hands on Learning
- Trauma Informed Practice in Schools
- Communities of Practice Continuum of Need program
- Communities of Practice Rural Schools program
- South West School's Inclusion and Engagement Network.

Key considerations

Planning for the implementation of *South West LLEN's response to vulnerable children 2017–2020*, identified three key considerations.

1. Initially, the work of LLENs was with young people aged 15 to 18 years, and this later was extended to 10 to 19 years. In recent times, in recognition that disengagement from school is a process that starts well before a young person is 10 years, the focus was extended to young people in their early years to 18. For South West LLEN, which covers Colac Otway, Corangamite, Moyne and Warrnambool, this meant our portfolio has gone from working with 14 secondary and P12 schools, to 59 schools, without any additional funding.
2. An analysis of the Indicator of Community Socio-Educational Advantage ([ICSEA](#)) data for the 59 schools across south west Victoria, indicates that socio-educational advantage tends to be higher in the 16 non-government funded schools, and that socio-educational disadvantage in 40 government-funded schools is growing. (No data is available for the three special development schools in the region.)
3. A range of evidence demonstrates that complex problems, including disengaging from school, are not amenable to quick fixes, rather a range of coordinated, interrelated and sustained responses are required.

In recognition that South West LLEN partnership brokerage capacity does not allow for the effective support of all 59 schools in its catchment area, implementation of our strategic plan will initially:

- focus on government funded schools (40 in total)
- work with a school to adopt a mutually reinforcing set of activities (schools must agree to adopt at least three of eight key activities, excluding small rural schools)
- work with a school to identify and implement any additional intervention activities considered necessary to achieve a range of coordinated, interrelated and sustained

responses.

- secure external funding for each school for each activity.

For 2016 and for the year to date, South West LLEN has secured more than \$110,000 funding from a variety of sources for our partners schools.

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