

# **ACTION PLAN**

## **to implement the Ministerial Declaration**

### ***STEPPING FORWARD - improving pathways for all young people***

#### **Background**

In July 2002 Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for Education, Training, Employment, Youth Affairs and for Community Services signed up to the joint Ministerial Declaration *STEPPING FORWARD - improving pathways for all young people*. This joint Ministerial Declaration outlines Ministers' commitment to young Australians and provides a common direction for improving social, educational and employment outcomes for all young people.

MCEETYA asked the Transition from Schools Taskforce to develop an action plan for the declaration which includes ways of strengthening community support for young people through partnerships across all levels of government and with local communities.

#### **The Action Plan**

This document is a companion to the Ministerial Declaration *Stepping Forward – improving pathways for all young people*. The Declaration provides the vision, outlines the challenges and declares the commitment of Ministers to all young people.

When they met in July 2002, Ministers agreed on five key areas for action. The Action Plan is presented as a set of five tables – one for each of the five key areas for action agreed to by Ministers. The plan outlines a vision in which all stakeholders work with young people to assist them to attain their goals and aspirations. A collaborative approach to youth transitions will make a major contribution to developing their capacities as creative, enterprising and fulfilled individuals.

The plan is intended as an enabling framework to guide the implementation of the declaration in the areas for which MCEETYA has responsibility.

Achievements will be:

- underpinned by shared understanding and vision,
- guided by a set of principles,
- strengthened by new ways of working together,
- part of an integrated approach towards implementing:
  - the National Goals for Schooling,
  - the Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework and
  - the new Career and Transition Framework,

A key resource will be *Stepping Forward – Sharing what works* which is a collection of data relating to young people in transition. It can be found at [www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/stepping/recommendations/about.htm](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/stepping/recommendations/about.htm).

The intent of the Declaration is to promote a holistic approach to the range of options that young people are faced with as they move towards independence. This can only be realised if there is commitment to the Action Plan from other key partners including other Ministerial Councils and stakeholders in the private and community sectors. The effect of the Declaration will be strengthened and magnified by partners sharing its vision and making a commitment to all young people to face and address the challenges it identifies. The principles set out below have universal application, and can be used to keep all parties focussed and moving in a common direction.

## **Five Key Areas For Action**

- Education and training as the foundation leading to pathways for effective transition for all young people;
- Access to career and transition support;
- Responding to the diverse needs of young people;
- Promulgating effective ways to support young people; and
- Focused Local Partnerships and Strategic Alliances

## **Principles**

Partnerships share the load and increase possibilities and opportunities. Drawing on the challenges set out in the declaration, the principles essential for developing and implementing policy and programs that effectively meet the needs of young people include:

- Focus primarily on the interests of young Australians
  - recognise the diversity of young people
  - be inclusive, flexible and adaptive
- Collaborate and cooperate across sectors
  - identify opportunities for whole of government/s approaches
  - identify opportunities for cross sectoral or trans-discipline approaches
  - identify opportunities to add value and build on what works
  - review programs already underway in other jurisdictions, sectors and disciplines before embarking on new initiatives
- Communicate, consult and collaborate
  - listen and respond to young people
  - engage young people in finding solutions
  - share what works and what doesn't
- Promote Partnerships and Networks
  - identify opportunities for further strengthening existing partnerships and building new partnerships
  - actively support networks that draw together jurisdictions, government departments, industry, families and communities
- Connect and ensure coherence
  - ensure services are interconnected at the local level in such a way that young people find them to be transparent and coherent
- Participate meaningfully
  - ensure education is relevant

- ensure young people have the information, skills and support needed to negotiate the transition to adult life and to make informed life decisions
  - encourage young people to take increasing responsibility for their own lives, support their peers and contribute to their community
  - emphasise that young people are active agents within career choice and life transition processes
- Evaluate and review
    - ensure all policies, programs and partnerships include mechanisms for review and evaluation to ensure ongoing relevance and success
    - ensure the effectiveness of this Action Plan by asking jurisdictions to report on progress they have made against the Plan through building on existing initiatives and commencing new initiatives. A progress report will be presented to MCEETYA in 2004.