

GREAT SOUTH COAST EDUCATION ATTAINMENT



Working together for the
success of our children

BEYOND THE BELL

ADDRESSING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN THE GREAT SOUTH COAST

WHY IS EDUCATION SO IMPORTANT?

Completing Year 12 or equivalent is considered the best foundation from which to launch a secure future. It is an international benchmark recognised as the minimum education needed for further study and the workforce. This level of education also has a positive impact on both the economic and health outcomes of individuals.

Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates: 2006 and 2011		
	'06	'11
Warrnambool	61.8	60.6
G21	68	69.9
Great South Coast	56.5	57
Regional Victoria	60.4	61.6
Metropolitan Victoria	74.5	77.7
Victoria	71.5	74.4

Evidence shows that young people not completing a secondary school qualification are less likely to make a successful transition to long term, full-time employment and may be more likely to be disadvantaged in later life.

WHAT ARE WARRNAMBOOL'S COMPLETION RATES?

The Great South Coast region's rates of Year 12 or equivalent (meaning a Certificate II or above) completion are among the lowest in Victoria. In Warrnambool, only 6 in 10 young people (20-24 years) have completed year 12 or equivalent.

The table at left illustrates Warrnambool and the Great South Coast's educational attainment rates when compared to other regions, Melbourne and the Victoria as a whole.

Another common measure is the "apparent retention rate" of students to Year 12 – calculated as the number of Year 12 student enrolments, as a percentage of the number of Year 7 student enrolled five years earlier – i.e. the proportion of students who continue at school through to Year 12.

Warrnambool's apparent retention rate for the period 2007-2012 was 68% compared, to Victoria as a whole with 83.3%.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

The range of factors holding young people back from completing Year 12 or an equivalent qualification are likely to be many and varied. Many circumstances in a person's life, from conception through to adulthood, can create barriers to continuing and completing their education.

There is no one solution, or any one sector, which alone can improve our region's education outcomes. "Beyond the Bell" is an ambitious initiative which aims to identify and implement community actions to address this issue.

Local Action Groups have formed to develop community action plans (CAPs) for each municipality in the Great South Coast region. Partners from across a range of sectors are working together to identify the barriers to achieving higher educational attainment rates in Warrnambool, and work collectively and collaboratively to address them.

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HOW ARE WE DEVELOPING THE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN?

To help understand the local factors which support, or are barriers to educational outcomes, the “Beyond the Bell” initiative has compiled the most recent data for Warrnambool, and has interviewed key stakeholders in the community. This report – the “**Warrnambool Report Card**” is available for download from: www.greatsouthcoast.com.au/projects/education-attainment-project.

While the scope of indicators which may have an impact on educational outcomes is broad, the data in the Report Card is only the beginning of the story. The Local Action Group wants to hear from people across the community about the issues that are a barrier to educational outcomes for their children, students, clients, friends, families and themselves.

The Local Action Group wants to better understand what's holding young Warrnambool people back from achieving optimal educational outcomes. This information will pinpoint the main barriers to optimal educational outcomes, and the ways in which we, as a community, can work together to address these.

HOW WILL WE BE TAKING THIS ISSUE TO THE COMMUNITY?

The Local Action Group has prepared an engagement plan to guide how it will gather information from the community and stakeholders. In summary, the engagement plan identifies the stakeholders to be consulted, the questions to be answered, and the various ways that this will happen. This information will then be used to help develop the Warrnambool Community Action Plan (CAP).

The community engagement will include a number of phases:

1. In **August** a communications campaign will raise awareness of Warrnambool’s low educational attainment rate and encourage parents, stakeholders across a range of sectors and the broader community to contribute to building a picture of what might support our community to improve these rates.
2. During **August/September** community engagement will be undertaken by the Local Action Group members and their colleagues, with surveys and focus groups conducted across the City.
3. In early **October** the learnings from the engagement process will be compiled and analysed. Those who have been engaged during the process will be provided with information about what was learned, and how the information will be used to develop the CAP.
4. In late **October** a community/stakeholder forum will be held to share the learnings from the engagement process, and commence the identification of possible actions.
5. During **November/December** the Warrnambool community action plan (CAP) will be developed. Key stakeholders will be encouraged to become part of a cross-sectoral partnership to implement the CAP.

For more information contact Katie McKean, Warrnambool Action Group
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