SOUTH EAST
LOCAL LEARNING &
EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

2014

LLEN Functions in a New Age

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Executive Summary

Increasingly, community and social services are expected to do 'More with Less'. When it comes to vulnerable young people and ensuring seamless access and provision of appropriate services and support structures recent papers, inquiries and reports recommend the implementation of an Area Based Governance model to identify local issues and develop local solutions, rather than a state wide approach. This report investigates the current functions of LLEN (Local Learning and Employment Network) and how they may actively support the implementation of such a model.

Consultation

Through consultation involving surveys, focus groups and individual interviews with South East LLEN stakeholders, it was identified that LLEN provide nine broad functions. In the box below, these are ranked in order of value and relevance to the individual and the organisation they represented. The average response to the nine LLEN functions was between 3.18 and 3.46 out of a possible four (4.0).

1. Facilitate local research and data analysis for the region
2. Encourage and foster connectivity between organisations locally
3. Local communication and knowledge source for current information and policy regarding education, parental engagement, industry, research and network opportunities
4. Lead opportunities for community and education change through partnerships and networks
5. Develop and facilitate place based solutions
6. Facilitate evidence based, innovative approaches to challenges specific to the region
7. Drive collective action and innovation in communities both locally and regionally whilst maintaining neutrality
8. Encourage strategic thinking and planning through cross sector partnerships
9. Facilitation of innovative education practices and opportunities

Stakeholder responses to the survey question 'Which broad functions of LLEN would actively support the new Area Based Governance model' indicated all functions would actively support an Area Based Governance model with some functions identified as being more supportive than others. These are ranked in order of importance below

1. Encourage and foster connectivity between organisations locally
2. Facilitate local research and data analysis for the region
2. Local communication and knowledge source for information and policy regarding education, parental engagement, industry, research and network opportunities
2. Lead opportunities for community and education change through partnerships and networks
5. Develop and facilitate place based solutions
6. Encourage strategic thinking and planning through cross sector partnerships
7. Facilitate evidence based, innovative approaches to challenges specific to the region
7. Facilitation of innovative education practices and opportunities
9. Drive collective action and innovation in communities both locally and regionally whilst maintaining neutrality

Interestingly, even the lowest ranked LLEN function thought to actively support an Area Based Governance model was supported by 54% of respondents and the highest rated LLEN function was supported by 85% of respondents.

Stakeholders expressed frustration regarding the limited and fragmented information about Area Based Governance and were therefore not always able to provide an informed response to some of the survey questions. This was evidenced by comments such as "*Don't have adequate understanding of ABG to respond".*

Unique Function of LLEN

Survey respondents were asked to provide examples of valuable and unique functions and three main themes emerged:

- Local Information
- Neutrality
- Connectedness

Local Information

LLEN provide local data collection and analysis, information sharing and local research to fill gaps in data sets or provide local context to state or national data. This was ranked as the most valued function of LLEN. Stakeholder comments regarding the value of the Environmental Scan, specific local research papers and a willingness to share knowledge, experiences and expertise were consistent across all respondents.

Neutrality

The neutrality of the LLEN is regarded as unique. LLEN do not have an ulterior motive and not conflicted due to alliances or competition for funding. This was described by stakeholders as unbiased, honest broker and neutral.

Connectedness

The connectedness of LLEN, having current local knowledge including, specific detail of services and initiatives in operation and , where the gaps are, was indicated in a variety of responses and included comments regarding the provision of opportunities to meet, a linking catalyst and a knowledgeable conduit.

No other organisation, or set of organisations can offer the neutrality and connectedness of LLEN at a local level, add to that the knowledge of the local area, including; demographics, data, critical issues, provider insight and expertise and the benefits of LLEN are immeasurable and irreplaceable.

These three attributes of LLEN are key elements and enablers, when it comes to the success the LLEN has had over the past 14 years. It is these attributes which enable the LLEN to provide the range of functions discussed in the consultation, all of which will actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Current functions and attributes of LLEN actively support, and in most cases deliver on, the guiding principles of an Area Based Governance model, as well as actively supporting and delivering on the identified critical success factors required to implement an Area Based Governance model.

Introduction

Background

As part of the 2014 Enhanced LLEN contract with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), the South East Local Learning and Employment Network (SELLEN) was required to undertake consultation with its stakeholders in relation to how functions of LLEN can support Area Based Governance[1].

Currently, LLENs represent possibly the most complete model of social partnerships that respond to and address local needs operating in Australia. An example of this is the School Business Community Partnership Broker program which endeavoured to create '*LLEN like*' organisations across the country. The real benefit and promise of the LLEN model lies in its capacity to overcome central government 'rigidities' and to provide evidence based, local solutions to local issues.

The SELLEN appreciates the significant challenges involved in setting up new models and structures and proactively supports the process of developing and implementing Area Based Governance; anticipating this valuable system improvement will achieve successful partnership based service delivery that is evidence based, client focused, flexible, sustainable and, above all, focused on improved outcomes for young people and our communities. It is also recognised that the good work, learnings and collaborative partnerships developed over the 14 years in which SELLEN has operated are not lost, but that they remain as foundations and are built upon and strengthened.

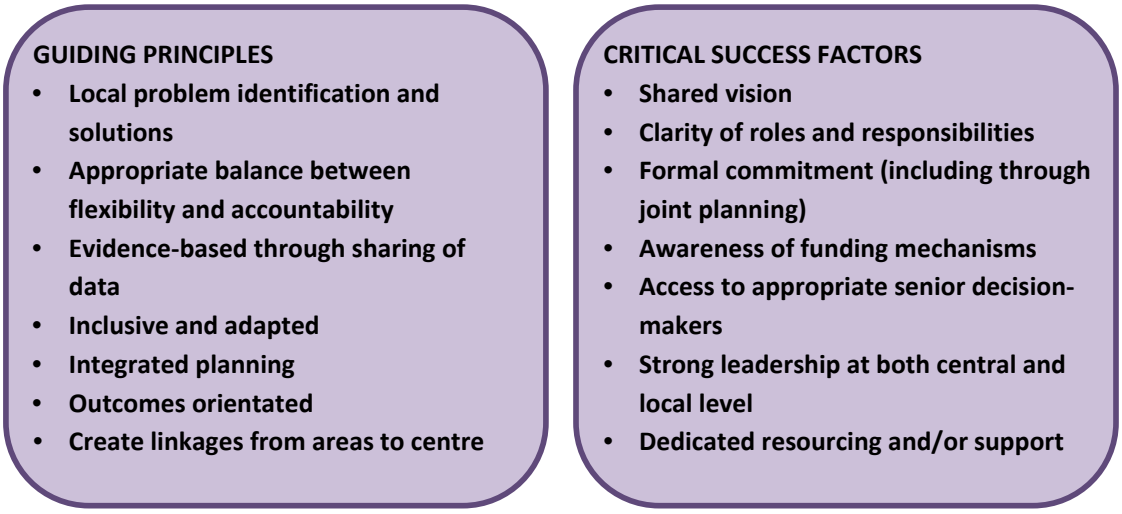
Area Based Governance

Under the auspice of Victoria's Vulnerable Children Strategy, the Victorian Government is pursuing the design and establishment of an Area Based Governance model, initially targeting vulnerable children and at-risk young people and their families. Seventeen (17) area-based social service governing boards will be created (aligned with the new DHS regional structure), drawing together senior regional officials from key social policy agencies from State, Commonwealth and local government. The focus of the area based governing bodies is intended to be on coordinated planning and collaboration rather than direct management of service delivery. In early stages of design and architecture the following guiding principles and critical success factors have been identified.

These guiding principles and critical success factors formed the basis for conducting one-on-one interviews, focus group questions and responses on how LLEN functions can actively support the effective development and successful implementation of an Area Based Governance model.

[1] For the purposes of this paper, the terms Area Based Governance, Local Area Partnerships, Local Area Network and Area Partnerships are interchangeable.

Figure 1: Guiding Principles and Critical Success Factors



Source: Presentation to the VCOSS - YACVic Building the Scaffold Forum, 23 October 2013

Interview questions were structured to investigate how functions of LLEN can support the Guiding Principles and Critical Success Factors of the Area Based Governance model.

Consultation Purpose

To ensure effective implementation and a smooth transition to a new way of providing services to vulnerable youth, the Minister for Education, the Honourable Martin Dixon, has requested that LLEN undertake consultative research as part of their DEECD (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development) contract requirements for 2014.

2014 LLEN contractual requirement *:* "*Consult widely with LLEN members and partners to review and provide consolidated feedback from the LLEN area on how the current functions of LLENs can support* ***area based governance*** *to be established by the Victorian government in 2014*[2]*"*.

Minister Dixon's commitment: *"We want to hear from the LLENs and from everyone who is involved with them in their local communities because I want to ensure we are providing the best service possible, and that it is responsive to local needs*[3]*".*

The aim of this consultation is to identify the functions, currently performed by LLEN, which would be of benefit to the implementation of an Area Based Governance model and provide feedback about this to DEECD.

It is important to note that views and recommendations on the design of any Area Based Governance structure are **not** within the scope of this consultation.

[2] Extract from the Deed of Variation between SELLEN and DEECD, 2014
[3] Extract from the Deed of Variation between SELLEN and DEECD, 2014

Consultation Method

This paper has been prepared using the collection of qualitative information from a range of people, representing a range of stakeholder types. The qualitative data has been collected using a combination of focus groups, surveys and individual interviews.

A range of LLEN members were brought together to identify the major functions of the LLEN, in order to develop the consultation method and process. This group was predominantly made up of Board members, with input from other members with significant knowledge of and history with SELLEN.

About the Stakeholders

SELLEN currently has approximately 250 active member organisations together with over 1,000 partnering organisations, including businesses, individual members and stakeholders.

In order to create a manageable consultation process, a range of organisations and individuals were identified as prospective survey respondents. These respondents were selected to reflect the range of cultures, communities and organisations which SELLEN regularly engage and partner with. Identified stakeholders represented organisations which included:

- Local Government
- State Government
- Federal Government
- Government Schools
- Catholic Schools
- Independent Schools
- Registered Training Organisations
- Group Training Organisations
- TAFEs
- Universities
- Community Services providing services to youth
- Community Services providing services to parents and families
- Community Services providing services to the Indigenous community
- Community Services providing services to CALD communities
- Business and Industry
- Employers
- Local community members representing specific demographics and community cohorts

As part of the survey, organisations were asked to categorise themselves as being:

- Community Services Providers
- Business and Industry Employers
- Community Services Providers
- Education and Training Providers
- Local, State or Federal Government
- Other

Focus Group

A focus group comprising representation across the region identified the range of functions and actions currently undertaken by SELLEN. Actions and functions originally identified as

- Conducting local data analysis
- Collection, publication and analysis of local data through the Environmental Scan
- Conducting local research where there is not sufficient local evidence, eg Students with a Disability in the South East; and Maori and Pasifika Youth in the South East research papers

These three similar functions or actions were merged into one broad function descriptor for the sake of the survey and reworded as:

- Facilitate local research and data analysis for the region

This process was undertaken for many of the identified actions and functions of LLEN, resulting in the nine broad statements. Where attributes of LLEN were identified, rather than functions, they were added to relevant functions as further descriptors.

These nine broad, function descriptors as follows:

- Develop and facilitate place based solutions
- Lead opportunities for community and education change through partnerships and networks
- Encourage and foster connectivity between organisations locally
- Facilitate local research and data analysis for the region
- Facilitate evidence based, innovative approaches to challenges specific to the region
- Drive collective action and innovation in communities both locally and regionally whilst maintaining neutrality
- Facilitation of innovative education practices and opportunities
- Local communication and knowledge source for information and policy regarding education, parental engagement, industry, research and network opportunities
- Encourage strategic thinking and planning through cross sector partnerships

A survey was developed to investigate the importance of these nine functions and their benefits to the implementation of an Area Based Governance model.

The value and relevance of each function was rated on a sliding scale and allocated a numerical value based on the selected response.

Table 1: Rating Scale for the Importance and Relevance of LLEN Functions

Rating Scale	Value
Vital and unique to the region	4
Needed and Relevant	3
Useful	2
Not needed or relevant to the region	1
No Opinion	-

This sliding scale was utilised when asked about the importance of functions to the region and an organisation. Examples were requested for at least one function, and how it had assisted the respondent or their organisation to achieve their goals.

When asked if a function would actively support an Area Based Governance model, respondents were initially asked to respond either ‘yes’ or ‘no’. If they responded ‘yes’ they were then asked to provide reasons or examples.

Stakeholders were initially contacted via email, informing them of the basis for the survey and a brief introduction to the philosophy of Area Based Governance and the benefits of its implementation (based on current, available information).

Survey respondents were asked to nominate for a one on one interview if they would like to further investigate the data gathered by the survey.

Five respondents were interviewed. Each interview took between 30 and 60 minutes and focused on the relationship of the functions of LLEN and the guiding Principles and Critical Success Factors of an Area Based Governance model, whilst drilling down into the broad functions of LLEN to look at some of the specific examples.

Stakeholder Interviews

A total of fifteen individuals nominated to be interviewed further to completing the survey.

Five individuals were interviewed representing Government Schools, Community Health and Youth service providers, RTO/GTO, CALD youth service providers and business and industry sectors.

Survey Results

Survey respondents were asked to identify the type of organisation they represented from 5 pre-identified types or 'other'; they could select multiple answers.

Table 2: Breakdown of Respondent Organisations by Percentage

Type of Organisation Represented	Percentage of responses
Education or Training Provider	58%
Local, State or Federal Government	30%
Business and Industry	19%
Community Service Provider	13%
Family Support Service	6%
Other	3%

Source: SELLEN 'Functions of LLEN' survey, 2014

The respondents represented a good cross section of the organisation types in the region which SELLEN currently engage with. Due to the nature of LLEN work, the majority of respondents had linkages with an education or training provider.

Twenty-five percent of respondents identified as more than one organisation type. For example a community service provider that is also a major employer in the region or a community service provider that is also a registered training organisation

Table 3: Relationship between Respondent and SELLEN

Relationship to SELLEN	Percentage of Responses
Current or previous user of LLEN resources (people, publications or knowledge)	37%
Member of the LLEN as an individual or organisation	27%
Current or previous partner of a LLEN initiative	19%
Current or previous board member	12%
Other	4%

Source: SELLEN 'Functions of LLEN' survey, 2014

More than 95% of respondents declared a current or previous relationship with SELLEN either as a partner, board member or consumer/customer/client of LLEN resources. This demonstrates that respondents have a practical understanding of the functions undertaken by SELLEN and their value and relevance to the local community.

Importance and Relevance of LLEN Functions

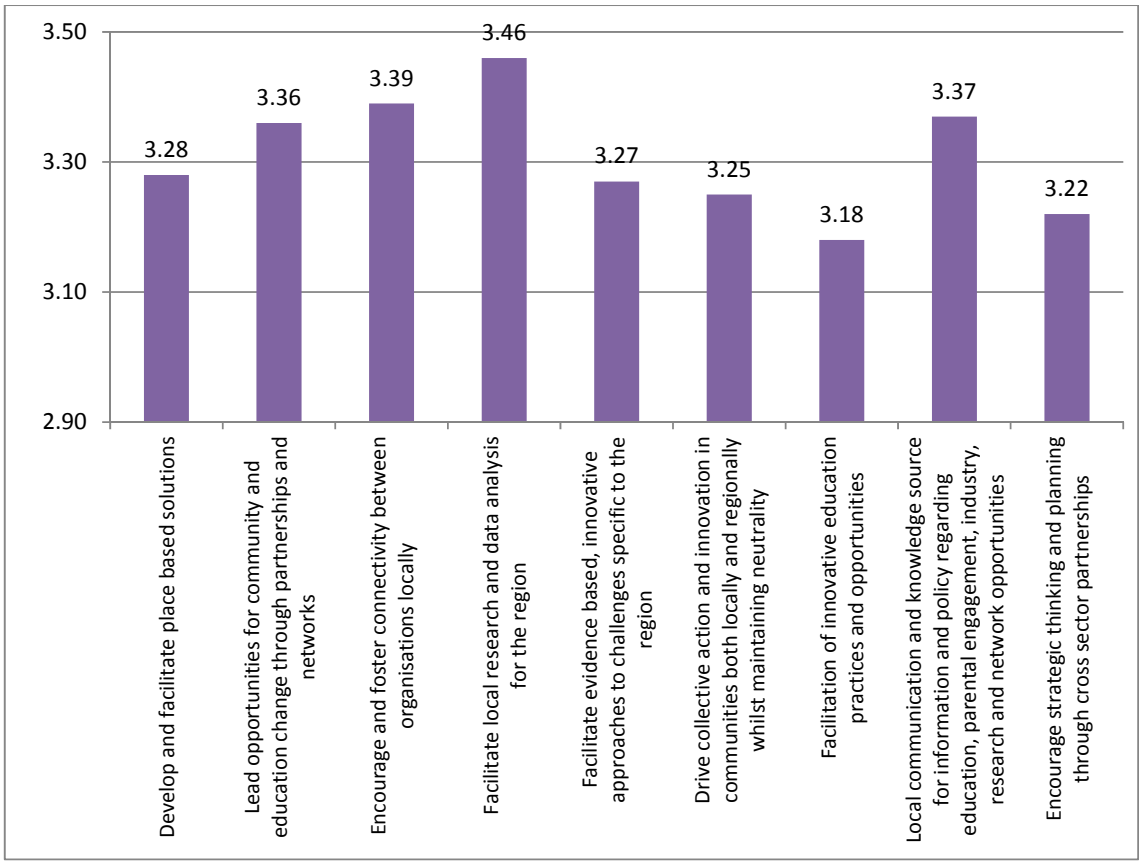
Of the nine identified functions currently undertaken by SELLEN, survey respondents were asked to -

'Rate the value and relevance of each function to their work and organisation that enables them to better achieve their objectives and goals.'

To illustrate how survey data was collated - a function rated by every respondent as being 'Vital and unique to the region' would yield an average rating of four (4.0).

Of the nine functions, the average response varied between 3.18 and 3.46, out of a maximum of 4.0, demonstrating the high value placed on the role and function of SELLEN by stakeholders.

Figure 2: Importance of LLEN Functions to the Region – Rating averages from all responses



Source: SELLEN 'Functions of LLEN' survey, 2014

Of the nine identified functions, all rated between the two categories of 'Vital and Unique to the Region' and 'Needed and Relevant'. The variation between the highest rating function and the lowest rating function was only 6.75% demonstrating that all broad functions of LLEN were considered of high importance and benefit to the region.

The functions identified by respondents (overall), in relation to their value and relevance to the individual and the organisation they represented, in order of highest to lowest ratings, were:

1. Facilitate local research and data analysis for the region
2. Encourage and foster connectivity between organisations locally
3. Local communication and knowledge source for information and policy regarding education, parental engagement, industry, research and network opportunities
4. Lead opportunities for community and education change through partnerships and networks
5. Develop and facilitate place based solutions
6. Facilitate evidence based, innovative approaches to challenges specific to the region
7. Drive collective action and innovation in communities both locally and regionally whilst maintaining neutrality
8. Encourage strategic thinking and planning through cross sector partnerships
9. Facilitation of innovative education practices and opportunities

Interestingly, when these responses are broken down into the type of organisation that the respondent represented, the results vary slightly and highlight a number of extra functions as being highly valued and relevant.

Table 4: LLEN Function Rankings by Respondent Type

LLEN Function	Type of Organisation Represented by the Respondent						
	Overall	Community Services	Business and Industry	Family Service Providers	Education and Training	Government	Other*
Develop and facilitate place based solutions	5	9	8	3	5	5	1
Lead opportunities for community and education change through partnerships and networks	4	1	3	5	3	2	4
Encourage and foster connectivity between organisations locally	2	1	2	1	1	9	4
Facilitate local research and data analysis for the region	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
Facilitate evidence based, innovative approaches to challenges specific to the region	6	4	6	5	7	6	1
Drive collective action and innovation in communities both locally and regionally whilst maintaining neutrality	7	4	3	5	6	6	4
Facilitation of innovative education practices and opportunities	9	8	9	5	8	8	4
Local communication and knowledge source for information and policy regarding education, parental engagement, industry, research and network opportunities	3	7	3	3	4	2	4
Encourage strategic thinking and planning through cross sector partnerships	8	4	6	5	9	1	4

Source: SELLEN 'Functions of LLEN' survey, 2014

* **Note** 'other' represents a relatively small sample size.

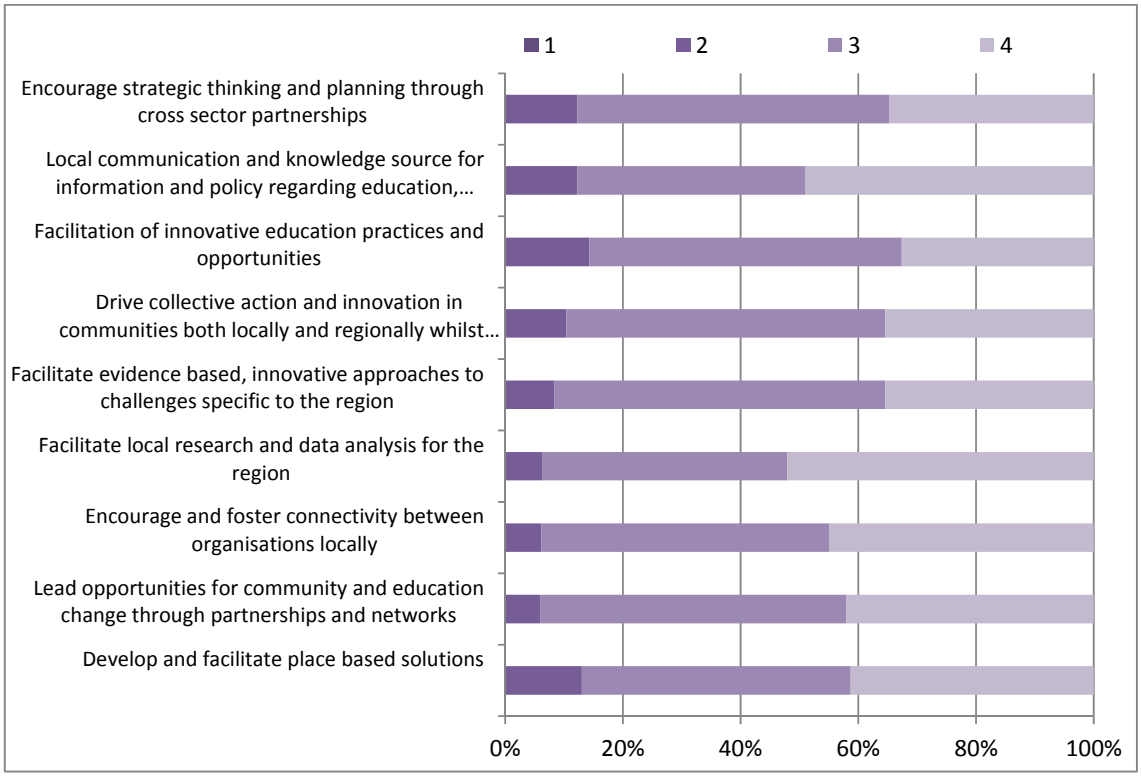
The various levels of government in the region rated the ability of LLEN to '*encourage strategic thinking and planning through cross sector partnerships*' and their ability to act as a '*local communication and knowledge source for information and policy regarding education, parental engagement, industry, research and network opportunities*' as being extremely important and relevant. These two functions did not rate as high in the survey for respondents representing other types of organisations.

Most organisational groupings reflected the overall responses, ranking the following functions among their top four:

- Lead opportunities for community and education change through partnerships and networks
- Encourage and foster connectivity between organisations locally
- Facilitate local research and data analysis for the region
- Local communication and knowledge source for information and policy regarding education, parental engagement, industry, research and network opportunities

That being said, all LLEN functions rated highly, in fact, 90% of all responses, for each of the LLEN functions classified the function as either '*vital and unique to the region*', or '*needed and relevant*', the remaining 10% of ratings stated that the function was '*useful*'.

Figure 3: Percentage of Each Response for Each Broad Function



Source: SELLEN 'Functions of LLEN' survey, 2014

Respondents were also asked to provide an example of how one of the functions had supported the work of their organisation.

There was a wide range of examples provided, that have been categorised into six areas.

Local, evidence based research, data collection and analysis, specifically the benefits of the annual Environmental Scan

- ✓ *Local research and data analysis - Environmental Scan highly useful and valuable piece of work.*
- ✓ *The research SELLEN does is also very useful, the agency is very important to the region, as most agencies would not have the time or knowledge to undertake the analysis we need of*

employment and education options in the region, and this analysis and the partnership work SELLEN builds drawing on this analysis is critical to develop innovative and locally appropriate employment and education strategies.

- ✓ *Development of a current environmental scan for the region, covering demographic, education and employment. Openly sharing this data is very helpful.*
- ✓ *Pacific Islander paper was amazing, and guided the development of programs locally.*
- ✓ *SELLEN's Environmental Scan has provided crucial and unique local-area data and evidence of needs required to inform my workplan; SELLEN's proactive research into and creative response to local issues enhances my work by enabling better and more targeted actions than would be possible without their involvement.*
- ✓ *The recent Disability in Schools research has changed the way I do things. (Education and Training provider)*
- ✓ *"If the data does not exist, they do the research themselves". (Government Department)*
- ✓ *"Their knowledge of the region reduces duplication". (Community Services Organisation)*

Information and advice sharing

- ✓ *Distribution of information to stakeholders and partnering on initiatives to assist young people with disability.*
- ✓ *The local knowledge provided by the LLEN has been invaluable in attracting funding from the Department of Education to support a number of projects focussing on young people.*
- ✓ *"They usually know the answer, but if they don't, they know who will".*

Connectivity with business, education and community services

- ✓ *The LLENs support and ability to connect with education and training providers as well as community based organisations has been incredibly useful in connecting and disseminating information about my work across a broad spectrum of organisations that support vulnerable young people.*
- ✓ *Brokerage - the connections made with other organisations is soooo useful.*
- ✓ *The opportunity for me to tap into SELLEN's established relationships with education and community service providers is a much-needed and valued resource.*
- ✓ *Encourage and foster connectivity between organisations locally: Organising events where we can meet other Indigenous organisations from the area.*
- ✓ *"They connected us with people and programs from within my own organisation". (Community Services Organisation)*

Brokering and development of innovative partnerships

- ✓ *The research SELLEN does is also very useful, the agency is very important to the region, as most agencies would not have the time or knowledge to undertake the analysis we need of employment and education options in the region, and this analysis and the partnership work SELLEN builds drawing on this analysis is critical to develop innovative and locally appropriate employment and education strategies.*
- ✓ *Brokering cross-sector partnerships, particularly in the education domain and TAFE sector.*
- ✓ *They identified a huge service gap and developed a partnership that addressed the gap in a very innovative way.*
- ✓ *Parental Engagement program with the Good News Postcards (a partnership).*
- ✓ *Facilitated the development of a youth focused futures program in a special needs school.*
- ✓ *Through the LLENs partnerships with schools, community service providers and state government they were able to facilitate the development, piloting and further delivery of the program. The support in development, delivery and evaluation stages was invaluable.*

- ✓ *SELLEN have successfully worked together with the Pasifika community leaders, youth services and organisations within the region to develop a pilot Pasifika youth re-engagement program at a local TAFE.*
- ✓ *"SELLEN developed partnerships to address specific needs of asylum seekers". (Community Services Organisation)*

The development of opportunities for young people

- ✓ *SELLEN improving education, training and employment outcomes for 'at' risk' Pasifika young people. SELLEN has a strong working relationship with Pasifika community leaders and continually support them towards increasing access to much needed youth support services and resources.*
- ✓ *SELLEN have successfully worked together with the Pasifika community leaders, youth services and organisations within the region to develop a pilot Pasifika youth re-engagement program at a local TAFE.*
- ✓ *The support the the LLEN provides to local education providers is invaluable. If we had to coordinate our VET program without the LLEN to oversee the many members, I think the whole program would be jeopardised. The support provided when looking for Work placement for VCAL students is also very valuable to schools. The Trade Expos and other 'Taster Days' provide our students with opportunities to speak with peolpe in various trades and industries.*
- ✓ *"SELLEN developed partnerships to address specific needs of asylum seekers". (Community Services Organisation)*
- ✓ "The events, forums, expos etc that the LLEN coordinate and drive, provide so many opportunities for young people to be exposed to what assistance and opportunities are around them". *(Government Department)*

The provision of professional development and capacity building opportunities within the region

- ✓ *The work on developing a deeper understanding of the 'place' of Pasifika people in our community and their assimilation locally has direct relevance to our work at the College. One of many examples.*
- ✓ *The LLEN has been a vital contact for me in relation to guidance, advice and leadership in regard to the shaping and provision of my projects that have a youth focus.*

During the interview process further examples were provided, particularly in regards to local research, connectedness, knowledge and the development of opportunities for young people. Quotes obtained during these interviews have been included above and attributed to the type of organisation that provided the example.

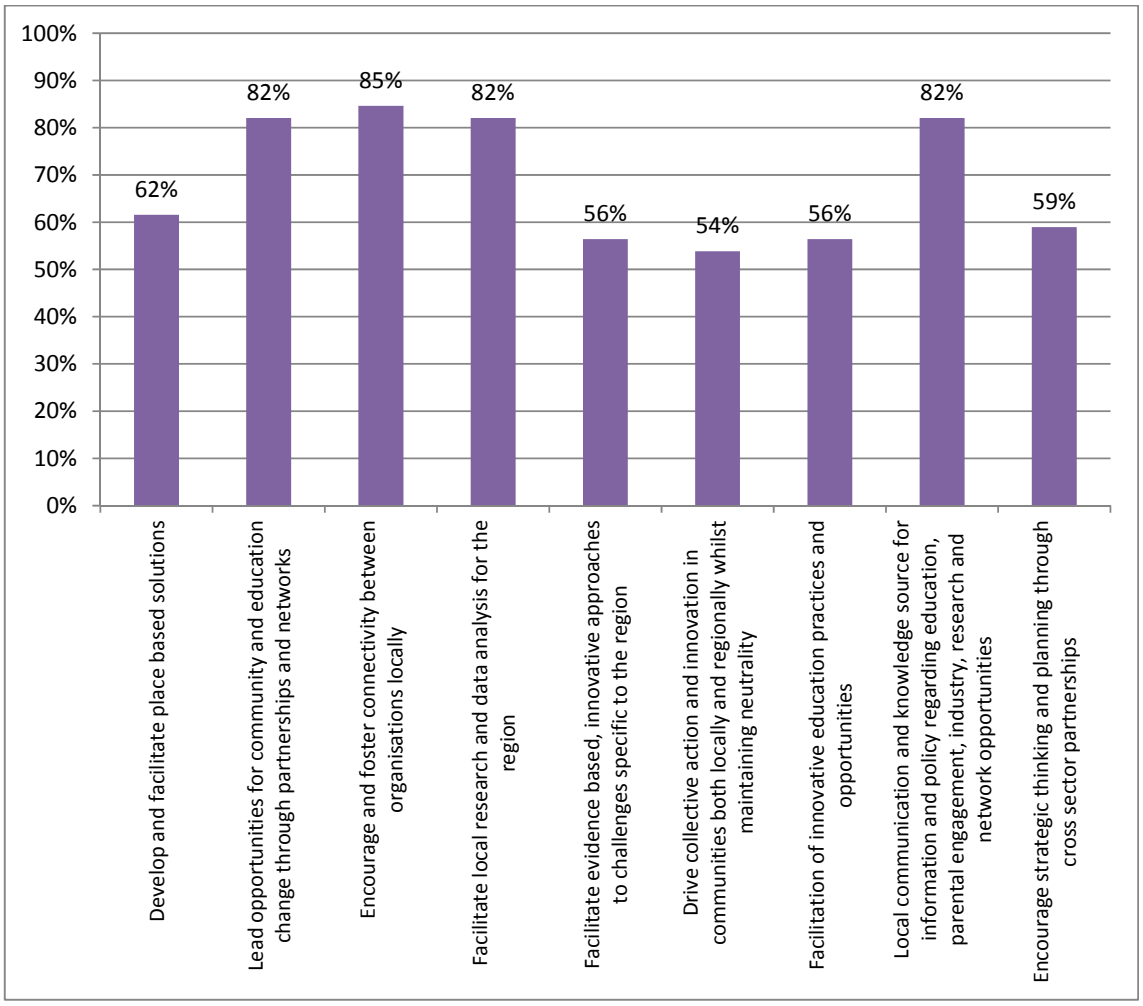
LLEN Functions Actively Supporting Area Based Governance

Survey respondents were asked to identify which current functions of LLEN they thought would actively support the new Area Based Governance model.

Of the nine functions, respondents could select as many as they wanted and were then asked to provide an example of how the function may support the model. It is worth noting, that at the time of the survey, not a huge amount of information was publically available regarding the Area Based Governance model, with approximately 35% of respondents commenting that they did not know enough about the proposed model to comment.

The figure below demonstrates, of the 65% of respondents that answered this question, what percentage thought each function would actively support the Area Based Governance model.

Figure 4: What LLEN Functions will Actively Support an Area Based Governance Model



Source: SELLEN 'Functions of LLEN' survey, 2014

Responses to the question 'Which broad functions of LLEN would actively support the new Area Based Governance model' suggest that respondents believe all functions would actively support an Area Based Governance model, however, some functions would actively support the model more than others.

The nine functions of LLEN, ranked from those most likely to actively support an Area Based Governance model, to those least likely are (please note some functions were ranked equally):

1. Encourage and foster connectivity between organisations locally
2. Facilitate local research and data analysis for the region
2. Local communication and knowledge source for information and policy regarding education, parental engagement, industry, research and network opportunities
2. Lead opportunities for community and education change through partnerships and networks
5. Develop and facilitate place based solutions
6. Encourage strategic thinking and planning through cross sector partnerships
7. Facilitate evidence based, innovative approaches to challenges specific to the region
7. Facilitation of innovative education practices and opportunities
9. Drive collective action and innovation in communities both locally and regionally whilst maintaining neutrality

Of all the responses to each part of this question, between 54% and 85% stated that each broad function would be of active benefit to an Area Based Governance model.

If a respondent stated that the function would support the Area Based Governance Model, they were asked to provide examples to support the claim.

Examples of how each function could actively support ABG

Encourage and foster connectivity between organisations locally

85% of respondents to this question stated that they believed the function would actively support an Area Based Governance model. When asked for examples to demonstrate the value of the function identified as potentially being of benefit to the implementation and delivery of Area Based Governance models, 82% of respondents to this question were able to provide specific examples of how each function would actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Some of the examples provided were:

- ✓ *The LLEN would be one of the most connected organisations I have encountered. The LLEN is always very generous in connecting appropriate groups together to achieve high levels of synergy*
- ✓ *Linking together specific agencies and organisations together and into local and regional youth networks.*
- ✓ *Bringing business and education groups together.*
- ✓ *Liaisons with local progress associations fostered through the LLEN as one of many.*
- ✓ *They are so well connected in the community, they know who is doing what.*
- ✓ *Provide opportunities for organisations to meet.*
- ✓ *It does provide that crucial linking role between all members of the community.*
- ✓ *I have found it amazing how connected the LLEN is with local educators, employers and other networks. I have observed that these various networks look to the LLEN for leadership and direction regarding youth related matters.*

One-on-one interviews identified that the provision of opportunities to meet like organisations as well as similarly minded individuals gave greater provision for the development of partnerships,

particularly those that crossed sectoral boundaries. Examples of such opportunities included forums, expos, symposiums, networks and focus groups.

It was also commented, that in many cases, the LLEN was the only organisation that provided a range of cross-sectoral opportunities and that even if events were not scheduled, their knowledge of the region and who was doing what, was unmatched. Examples were even provided where the LLEN had connected individuals and programs within the same organisation, where there was an identified mutual benefit.

Facilitate local research and data analysis for the region

82% of respondents to this question stated that they believed the function would actively support an Area Based Governance model. When asked for examples to demonstrate the value of the function identified as potentially being of benefit to the implementation and delivery of Area Based Governance models, 81% of respondents to this question were able to provide specific examples of how each function would actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Some of the examples provided include:

- ✓ *Their environmental scan is the best source data for local information.*
- ✓ *The LLEN's Environmental Scan is considered to be an excellent repository of local data. The scan of often quoted in local funding applications and is considered to be a reference document in its own right.*
- ✓ *The research SELLEN produces on local employment, education situations informs our work.*
- ✓ *Providing information on student destinations and gaps in education for disengaged youth.*
- ✓ *Current and up to date data on region employment growth industries.*
- ✓ *Feedback re growth industries in local area and future employment opportunities relevant to support school career/pathway counselling.*
- ✓ *Needs analysis must take place to establish an awareness of the "lay of the land". This guides resource allocation if available or justifies the allocation of resources that needs to take place.*
- ✓ *We have used and contributed to data, the Pasifka information assisted our staff to be more aware of cultural differences, and the need to be aware of the restrictions they lived under.*
- ✓ *Involvement in a number of research based projects organised by the LLEN, including Pacifika and Disability services.*
- ✓ *Help us to know which schools have a high Indigenous enrolment.*
- ✓ *The SELLEN environmental scan has been invaluable to us for planning purposes and to support program applications.*

During one-on-one interviews, specific references were made to the Environmental Scan and the benefits it provides to community service providers and local governments in their strategic planning processes. Further investigation also identified the willingness of the LLEN to share information on request and commit to local research, where data was lacking, in order to provide an evidence base for local issues.

Several pieces of SELLEN research were referred to during the interview process, as well in survey comments. These included:

- 2014 Environmental Scan -SELLEN http://www.sellen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ResourceVault/EnviroScan/2014_South_East_LLEN_Envrionmental_Scan.pdf

- South East Region – Students with a Disability http://www.sellen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ResourceVault/DisabilityPaper/South_East_Region_Students_with_a_Disability.pdf
- Maori and Pasifika Young People in the South East Region of Melbourne http://www.sellen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ResourceVault/Maori&Pasifika/Maori_Pasifika_Logo.pdf
- Vocational Pathways to University http://sellen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ResourceVault/SELLENReports/Vocational_Pathways_to_University.pdf

Lead opportunities for community and education change through partnerships and networks

82% of respondents to this question stated that they believed the function would actively support an Area Based Governance model. When asked for examples to demonstrate the value of the function identified as potentially being of benefit to the implementation and delivery of Area Based Governance models, 81% of respondents to this question were able to provide specific examples of how each function would actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Some of the examples provided include:

- ✓ *Our clients have benefited from participating in initiatives which are the result of community change created through partnerships.*
- ✓ *I have found it amazing how connected the LLEN is with local educators, employers and other networks. I have observed that these various networks look to the LLEN for leadership and direction regarding youth related matters.*
- ✓ *Disability project at Emerson, then Wallara.*
- ✓ *Special programs for disengaged youth.*
- ✓ *SELLEN were involved with initial discussions regarding establishment of a transition to TAFE program for newly arrived migrant young people to Chisholm.*
- ✓ *Engagement with the Pacifika Forums and research, building rapport, understandings and acceptance across such a diverse community.*
- ✓ *Have educational providers and employers working together.*
- ✓ *Provide opportunities through the creation of forums or communication conduits that will facilitate relevant and positive change.*
- ✓ *Management of monthly VET network meetings/regular briefings to local school leadership teams including Principal class.*

One-on-one interviews investigated this function in depth revealing the drive of LLEN to both lead innovative change as well as seek support from stakeholders to design solutions to specific issues which had been identified.

A range of examples were provided where the LLEN had had been involved in the development and implementation of an innovative program to initiate change. These examples could be broken down into three categories, depending on the process that had been undertaken.

Process One

LLEN identified an issue and developed a solution, then sourced support from partners to trial or pilot the solution.

Examples of this process included the Goodnews Postcard pilot, aimed at increasing positive interactions between schools and parents.

Process Two

Anecdotal evidence suggested an issue existed, the LLEN then established focus groups to better identify the issue and establish some baseline data. The focus group then looked at potential solutions which the LLEN then established partnerships to address.

Examples of this process included issues facing students with a disability in the region and how schools cater for their needs, young people from a Maori and Pasifika background and the establishment of a culturally specific reengagement program.

Process Three

Where an organisation comes to the LLEN with an idea to address an issue, but requires the support of the LLEN to develop a partnership and provide drive to implement the idea locally.

Examples of this process included the ESL in Engineering partnership and the cyber bullying program roll out to Indigenous communities.

These different processes reflect the versatility of the LLEN model in identifying issues and responding to them with the support and input of the local community.

Local communication and knowledge source for information and policy regarding education, parental engagement, industry, research and network opportunities

82% of respondents to this question stated that they believed the function would actively support an Area Based Governance model. When asked for examples to demonstrate the value of the function identified as potentially being of benefit to the implementation and delivery of Area Based Governance models, 69% of respondents to this question were able to provide specific examples of how each function would actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Some of the examples provided include:

- ✓ *Good resource to gain information that is sometimes not readily available elsewhere.*
- ✓ *They are across so many of the issues, sit on so many networks, steering groups, we use their expertise constantly*
- ✓ *The LLEN is a primary source of local intelligence regarding any youth related initiatives. The research and information gathering projects undertaken by the LLEN are used as a valuable resource in developing local solutions to local employment and training challenges.*
- ✓ *We always have important information that will affect our kids early enough to make plans to soften any blows thanks to SELLENs relationship and knowledge sharing.*
- ✓ *SELLEN is frequently my go to agency for information on a whole range of issues, I would define their support as critical, extremely valuable.*
- ✓ *SELLEN has links to a range of educational resources and opportunities due to their links with the broader community.*
- ✓ *Provide workshops for parents about employment and education opportunities.*
- ✓ *Help us to discover who the key stakeholders are in the region who are relevant to our project*
- ✓ *Disseminate information to networks.*
- ✓ *A range of resources on website.*
- ✓ *Communication of current info re pathways for CALD young people.*
- ✓ *Information sharing through on-line network groups, face to face network meetings.*

The LLEN has one objective, that being to make things better for young people. The way in which the LLEN strives to achieve this is through being totally transparent, open to feedback from stakeholders and seeking advice from others when required.

Interviews showed that the willingness for the LLEN to share information, knowledge and experience, as well as seeking knowledge when a gap is identified, makes it the go to place for information in what is currently an extremely complex system which is difficult to navigate.

Develop and facilitate place based solutions

62% of respondents to this question stated that they believed the function would actively support an Area Based Governance model. When asked for examples to demonstrate the value of the function identified as potentially being of benefit to the implementation and delivery of Area Based Governance models, 92% of respondents to this question were able to provide specific examples of how each function would actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Some of the examples provided include:

- ✓ *Our clients have benefited from initiatives which explore local employment opportunities.*
- ✓ *I have been tasked to develop and implement local solutions to local employment and training challenges. The LLEN has been an invaluable partner and support in achieving this goal.*
- ✓ *Pre employment program for young migrants.*
- ✓ *Yes, collaborated with other agencies to develop an education focussed program for 'at risk' youth within the region.*
- ✓ *Girls Make it Go - career pathways for girls in light of local skill shortage areas.*
- ✓ *Facilitation of solutions for disengaged Refugee Minors.*
- ✓ *They know the region really well, including its challenges and potential solutions.*
- ✓ *Work between parties to develop and build relationship in mutual interest and need areas.*
- ✓ *We have been involved in the SBaT program, this has enabled supporting disadvantaged young people to work in this industry. This has provided a resource for our organisation, as well as enabled the development of our own staff group to have better relationships with young people.*

Encourage strategic thinking and planning through cross sector partnerships

59% of respondents to this question stated that they believed the function would actively support an Area Based Governance model. When asked for examples to demonstrate the value of the function identified as potentially being of benefit to the implementation and delivery of Area Based Governance models, 78% of respondents to this question were able to provide specific examples of how each function would actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Some of the examples provided include:

- ✓ *Provides information to plan programs for the local community, a good resource for local education's strategic planning.*
- ✓ *Great communication from the LLEN allows members of the group to work strategically to provide a wide range of extra opportunities for our young people.*
- ✓ *Bringing different organisations together and facilitating the partnerships has been the corner stone on LLENS activities.*
- ✓ *Visiting expert on local job shortage areas and realistic pathways and articulation between courses, to inform newly arrived CALD youth pathway decisions.*
- ✓ *Link schools and training /higher education.*

- ✓ *In our case, making CALD young people in education and employment a mainstream issue - we now have opportunities to work with mainstream agencies to address these issues, rather than being left to work alone due to our expertise.*
- ✓ *Partnership programs that address local issues.*
- ✓ *The LLEN is always a welcome member on a very wide range of committees and partnerships. The broad-church vision of the LLEN encourages cross sector innovation.*
- ✓ *SELLEN is very strategic and their participation in local networks.*

Facilitate evidence based, innovative approaches to challenges specific to the region

56% of respondents to this question stated that they believed the function would actively support an Area Based Governance model. When asked for examples to demonstrate the value of the function identified as potentially being of benefit to the implementation and delivery of Area Based Governance models, 73% of respondents to this question were able to provide specific examples of how each function would actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Some of the examples provided include:

- ✓ *Innovative approaches to educating refugee young people about education and employment pathways have been useful for workers who have participated and then provided better information to our clients.*
- ✓ *The LLEN is considered to be an excellent resource for local information which allows local innovation to be funded and implemented with a degree of confidence that the initiatives will be making a difference.*
- ✓ *The environmental scan has led to various targeted initiatives to support specific groups across the region facing significant challenges to engagement in EET e.g. pacific island community, young people with disabilities, CALD young people, unaccompanied refugee minors, etc*
- ✓ *Supported the development and establishment of the United Pasifika Council of Victoria Inc. (UPCOV Inc.).*
- ✓ *Gather evidence and act on needs e.g. Allied Health.*
- ✓ *Assistance to the success of Doveton College.*
- ✓ *Facilitates cross fertilisation of ideas to generate relevant and innovative approaches to meet needs and tackle challenges.*
- ✓ *Regarding supporting young people from multicultural/non English speaking backgrounds.*

Facilitation of innovative education practices and opportunities

56% of respondents to this question stated that they believed the function would actively support an Area Based Governance model. When asked for examples to demonstrate the value of the function identified as potentially being of benefit to the implementation and delivery of Area Based Governance models, 59% of respondents to this question were able to provide specific examples of how each function would actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Some of the examples provided include:

- ✓ *SELLEN has supported very innovative education opportunities which have been of great value to our clients.*
- ✓ *My interaction with the LLEN primarily revolves around the transition from education to employment. The LLEN has been fantastic in supporting innovative projects within this sphere.*
- ✓ *Supports local programs for early school leavers.*
- ✓ *Publish a Practical Learning Guide annually.*
- ✓ *SELLEN has links to a range of educational resources and opportunities due to their links with the broader community.*

- ✓ *Provide workshops and professional development sessions.*
- ✓ *Pre-apprentice course at Chisholm TAFE with Apprenticeship Group Australia (AGA).*
- ✓ *Development of programs for at risk young people which have been accessed by our clients e.g. careers days, girls programs, facilitated workplace learning programs, etc.*
- ✓ *Assist us to bring our program to schools in the region.*

Drive collective action and innovation in communities both locally and regionally whilst maintaining neutrality

54% of respondents to this question stated that they believed the function would actively support an Area Based Governance model. When asked for examples to demonstrate the value of the function identified as potentially being of benefit to the implementation and delivery of Area Based Governance models, 67% of respondents to this question were able to provide specific examples of how each function would actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Some of the examples provided include:

- ✓ *SELLEN has been very active in collective action to support the specific needs of UHMS in our region, which has been of great assistance to our work with this group.*
- ✓ *This is present in every activity SELLEN undertakes, and is critical to the client first partnership model within the region.*
- ✓ *The LLEN is looked to for its capacity to provide local leadership which is unbiased and practical.*
- ✓ *Sellen can act as the central organisation to oversee and effectively allocate or distribute resources without bias.*
- ✓ *Provides information of all available programs for young people, CALD students and any other group.*

Comparing Unique and Valued Responses to Actively Support ABG Responses

By comparing the ranking of each broad LLEN function in the two main questions of the survey, that is, identify which LLEN functions are 'valued and unique' versus those which would 'actively support ABG' there is a clear difference in rankings.

Table 5: Unique and Valued versus Actively Support ABG

LLEN Functions	Valued and Unique	Actively Support ABG
Develop and facilitate place based solutions	5	5
Lead opportunities for community and education change through partnerships and networks	4	2
Encourage and foster connectivity between organisations locally	2	1
Facilitate local research and data analysis for the region	1	2
Facilitate evidence based, innovative approaches to challenges specific to the region	6	7
Drive collective action and innovation in communities both locally and regionally whilst maintaining neutrality	7	9
Facilitation of innovative education practices and opportunities	9	7
Local communication and knowledge source for information and policy regarding education, parental engagement, industry, research and network opportunities	3	2
Encourage strategic thinking and planning through cross sector partnerships	8	6

Source: SELLEN 'Functions of LLEN' survey, 2014

These comparisons demonstrates that respondents were able to differentiate what was valued and unique to the region and their own organisations, to what they considered would actively support the implementation of area based governance models in Victoria.

Interview Comments on Guiding Principles

Of the seven Guiding Principles of Area Based Governance, interview responses identified that current LLEN functions met and delivered five of them extremely well, while actively supporting the other two. The five identified were

- Local problem identification and solutions
- Evidence-based through sharing of data
- Inclusive and adapted
- Integrated planning
- Outcomes orientated

Interview Comments on Critical Success Factors

Of the seven Critical Success Factors identified as being required to effectively implement an Area Based Governance model, interview responses identified that current LLEN functions and attributes actively supported and delivered on all of them extremely well. Interviewees were able to identify examples of how LLEN meet each of these critical success factors now.

- **Shared vision** - LLEN openly discuss what they want to achieve, what their areas of focus and strategic direction are, involving the local community providers in this discussion.
- **Clarity of roles and responsibilities** – Terms of References, MOUs and Responsibility Matrixes are often established to for partnerships and networks to ensure clarity on direction, roles and responsibilities.
- **Formal commitment** (including through joint planning) – the use of focus groups and stakeholder feedback is a regular part of what the LLEN does and how they identify areas of need and potential solutions.
- **Awareness of funding mechanisms** – LLEN often connect partnerships they are working on with funding sources, particularly when a pilot program is being developed and implemented.
- **Access to appropriate senior decision-makers** – The LLEN is so well connected; they have access to an amazing number of networks, organisations and people. They treat everyone equally and do not discriminate between organisations.
- **Strong leadership at both central and local level** - With the change in administration over recent years, the LLEN has become a vital link between industry, commerce, community and education.
- D**edicated resourcing and/or support** – In some way, this is what the LLEN is currently funded to do, that is, identify local issues and develop a local response which will provide a local solution, unfortunately, they are not always adequately funded to respond to the large number of issues that we have locally.

Stakeholder Comments

Other comments were encouraged with a variety of responses gathered, each highlighting the vital and unique, role played by SELLEN in the South East region. Some of these responses included:

- ✓ *The SELLEN is an excellent support for VETiS, assisting students at risk, ESL students and for brokering partnerships to enable special programs to run to assist all of these young people. Their workplace program is excellent.*
- ✓ *The LLEN is vital to the region.*
- ✓ *LLEN is a highly regarded and valuable asset to our local educational institutions. They are always working towards outcomes for schools and offering opportunities for students such as Expos, up to date data, teacher seminars and tours, network meetings just to name a few.*
- ✓ *The support the LLEN provides to local education providers is invaluable. If we had to coordinate our VET program without the LLEN to oversee the many members, I think the whole program would be jeopardised. The support provided when looking for Work placement for VCAL students is also very valuable to schools. The Trade Expos and other 'Taster Days' provide our students with opportunities to speak with people in various trades and industries.*
- ✓ *The LLEN has been an integral part in our expansion in the area, providing linkages and data top assist us in establishing our direction and program offerings in the area.*
- ✓ *Please keep as a strategic priority the engagement in education to year 12 of local Indigenous children and support them on a pathway to a lifelong career.*
- ✓ *Relevant & Useful resource which is accessed regularly via Careers Co-ordinators and VCAL Co-ordinators.*
- ✓ *It does provide that crucial linking role between all members of the community.*
- ✓ *SELLEN has been instrumental in strengthening and developing dialogue between the Pasifika community residing in the South East and community and regional agency support services.*
- ✓ *I am a National Disability Coordination officer and my work covers the southern metropolitan region. The LLEN's are vital to my work as they have excellent local knowledge and*

connections, saving my program a great deal of time and enabling me to move forward in local areas.

- ✓ *Their strategic focus streamlines approaches.*
- ✓ *From a School Focused Youth Service perspective, the SELLEN fits a space that no other organisation can fill. The LLEN's expertise is in all of the functions listed in the previous questions and I fail to imagine how any other organisation could carry these out as well or as impartially as they do.*
- ✓ *Strong leadership and proactive approach to locally based issues.*
- ✓ *The LLEN is ideally placed to implement and facilitate Local Area Networks. Their high standing in the local community will ensure that any Local Area Network which the LLEN auspice will be highly successful.*

Neutrality of LLEN

Although not specifically listed as a function and more an attribute, the benefits offered by the neutrality of the LLEN is an area which was highlighted in the survey questions which allowed for a comment. For example:

- ✓ *Neutrality is vital for a back bone organisation to be able to broker conversations and ongoing collaborations.*
- ✓ *The neutrality they demonstrate means they do not annoy others or challenge for funds, they have only the best interest of young people at heart.*
- ✓ *I love the neutrality offered, it is definitely needed.*
- ✓ *Support all education providers regardless of size or stance in the community.*
- ✓ *SELLEN can act as the central organisation to oversee and effectively allocate or distribute resources without bias.*
- ✓ *Does all these very well and without prejudice, it is vital for our region.*
- ✓ *The LLEN is ideally placed to implement and facilitate Local Area Networks. Their high standing in the local community will ensure that any Local Area Network which the LLEN auspice will be highly accessible to all.*
- ✓ *Strong knowledgeable leadership and proactive approach to locally based issues is appreciated by all sectors.*
- ✓ *From a School Focused Youth Service perspective, the SELLEN fits a space that no other organisation can fill. The LLEN's expertise is in all of the functions listed in the previous questions and I fail to imagine how any other organisation could carry these out as well or as impartially as they do.*
- ✓ *SELLEN has been instrumental in strengthening and developing dialogue between the Pasifika community residing in the South East and community and regional agency support services.*
- ✓ *The unbiased approach of the LLEN is vital to the region.*

Conclusion

Survey responses indicate all nine functions of LLEN are considered to be highly valuable and relevant to stakeholders, with all stakeholders able to provide examples of how LLEN functions had benefited their organisation and the work they were engaged in.

Survey responses indicate the majority of respondents considered that all nine broad functions of LLEN would actively support an Area Based Governance model.

Three main themes emerged from stakeholder comments and examples from the survey responses, particularly in relation to how current LLEN functions could actively support an area based governance model. These themes include:

- The connectedness of the LLEN
- The local data analysis, local research and other evidence available through the LLEN
- The unique independence of the LLEN i.e. LLEN do not compete with any providers

It was noted that of these three attributes, no other organisation in the region could replace what the LLEN has to offer.

Other notable feedback includes:

Different organisation types placed a higher value on different functions of the LLEN.

Different organisation types believe different LLEN functions could be of benefit to the implementation of an Area Based Governance model, although all nine broad functions were suggested to be of benefit to an Area Based Governance model.

Current functions and attributes of LLEN reflect the guiding principles of an Area Based Governance model as well as delivering on the critical success factors identified.

More information is required on Area Based Governance and its impact in order to provide an educated response to the question: What LLEN Functions will Actively Support an Area Based Governance Model?

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SOUTH EAST
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