

~~WORLD INITIATIVE ON LIFELONG LEARNING~~

LIFELONG LEARNING

**AUSTRALIA'S GLOBAL CHALLENGE,
AUSTRALIA'S GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY**

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Australia is embracing Lifelong Learning. In the first years of the 17th Century, Jan Comenius wrote:

'Just as the whole world is a school for the whole of the human race, from the beginning of time until the very end, so the whole of a person's life is a school for every one of us, from the cradle to the grave. It is no longer enough to say with Seneca: 'No age is too late to begin learning.' We must say: 'Every age is destined for learning, nor is a person given other goals in learning than in life itself.'

So just what is it signing up to?

What is Lifelong Learning?

Open and Distance Learning Techniques for the delivery of new courses?

Leisure Education for Adults?

University/Industry Links for supporting employment development?

The empowerment of workers in Industry Learning Organisations?

A strategy for making people employable and employed?

A way of giving people self-esteem and learning skills?

A Community working together for the good of all its citizens?

A Cradle to Grave seamless learning process?

A new approach to Adult and Continuing Education for the workplace?

A philosophy and set of methodologies for developing the human potential in everyone?

Plato started it. His ideas of '*Dia Viou Paedaeia*' - the obligation of all citizens to educate themselves so that they can better contribute to the community- were written more than 3000 years ago. This theme has returned throughout history in different parts of the world. Kuan Tzu's famous maxim '*When planning for a year - sow corn, when planning for a decade - plant trees, when planning for a lifetime - train and educate men*' was written in the 3rd Century BC and Jan Comenius's view is almost 400 years old now.

But what is Lifelong Learning?. To some it is no more than adult education, particularly in the leisure and liberal arts, but sometimes as a second chance opportunity for people whose intellectual development occurred later in life. In others it is heavily professional development oriented, centred around industry and universities, and round ways of improving organisational and personal performance. In yet others it is the application of open and distance learning tools and techniques to supplement traditional infrastructures. But the all-encompassing view expressed in the last of the list above is increasingly coming into favour.

Three Models of Lifelong Learning

Not surprisingly in today's world, most Lifelong Learning models have an employment-oriented approach and, except in Japan, most focus heavily on partnerships, predominantly those between Industry and Universities. In the Northern European, North American and Australian perception a connection is made to the role of schools in developing values and attitudes towards learning. However, in Japan and the Pacific Rim countries there is a strong community element initiated by Government through festivals, fairs, national programmes and the construction of purpose-built Lifelong Learning centres. The Industry and Community models are normally kept separate from each other.

'Lifelong Learning' Models

1. The Industry-oriented Central/South European Approach
Job and employment oriented
Promotes Continuing Education for all
Driven by University-Industry Partnerships
Adult level
Training, not learning, focus
2. The Japanese and Pacific Rim Approach
Two Models - kept quite separate
a) Job and skills driven - Initiated by Companies in Companies
Has a Training and a Learning Focus
Companies as Learning Organisations
b) Community Driven - Initiated by Government and Communities
Lifelong Learning Community Centres
Mainly For Adults but also non-school Youth Programmes
3. The Northern Europe and North American Approach
Relies heavily on Partnerships
Includes Open Universities, Distance and Open Learning
Recognises Importance of School Education
Empowerment of People in Industry through Learning

In general, Lifelong Learning is seen to be continuing professional development for employment at adult level. Most are still in the sphere of training and teaching. Current models are therefore neither lifelong nor learning. Further, they exclude large numbers of people.

The Lifelong Model of Learning

Another model is becoming more and more important in Lifelong Learning. This is **the whole-person, whole-organisation, whole-nation, whole-society approach** favoured by UNESCO, OECD, the European Round Table of Industrialists, the World Initiative on Lifelong Learning and many of the newly industrialised countries of the Pacific Rim.

The Integrated 'Learning for a Lifetime' Approach

Cradle to Grave (Lifelong)

Focus on Development of Human Potential through Learning

Applies holistically within and between all sectors of the community - whole-of-life vision

Multiple partnerships for mutual advantage

Creates Personal, Organisational, National, International Values and Attitudes

In this **the engine of change is the development of human potential at all ages**, education is seen as a holistic process and its focus is on the satisfaction of the needs of every learner.

It is lifelong - from cradle to grave, from 0-90, from birth to earth, from maternity to eternity, from hatch to despatch.

It is learning - it focuses on giving learners the tools by which they can learn according to their own learning styles and needs and ownership of their own learning

It is for all - it excludes no-one and pro-actively creates the conditions in which learning develops creativity, confidence and enjoyment at each stage of life.

The OECD Ministerial Meetings in January 1996, in whose conclusions Australia took a lead role, identified three rationales for Lifelong Learning. These were:

Enriching Personal Lives

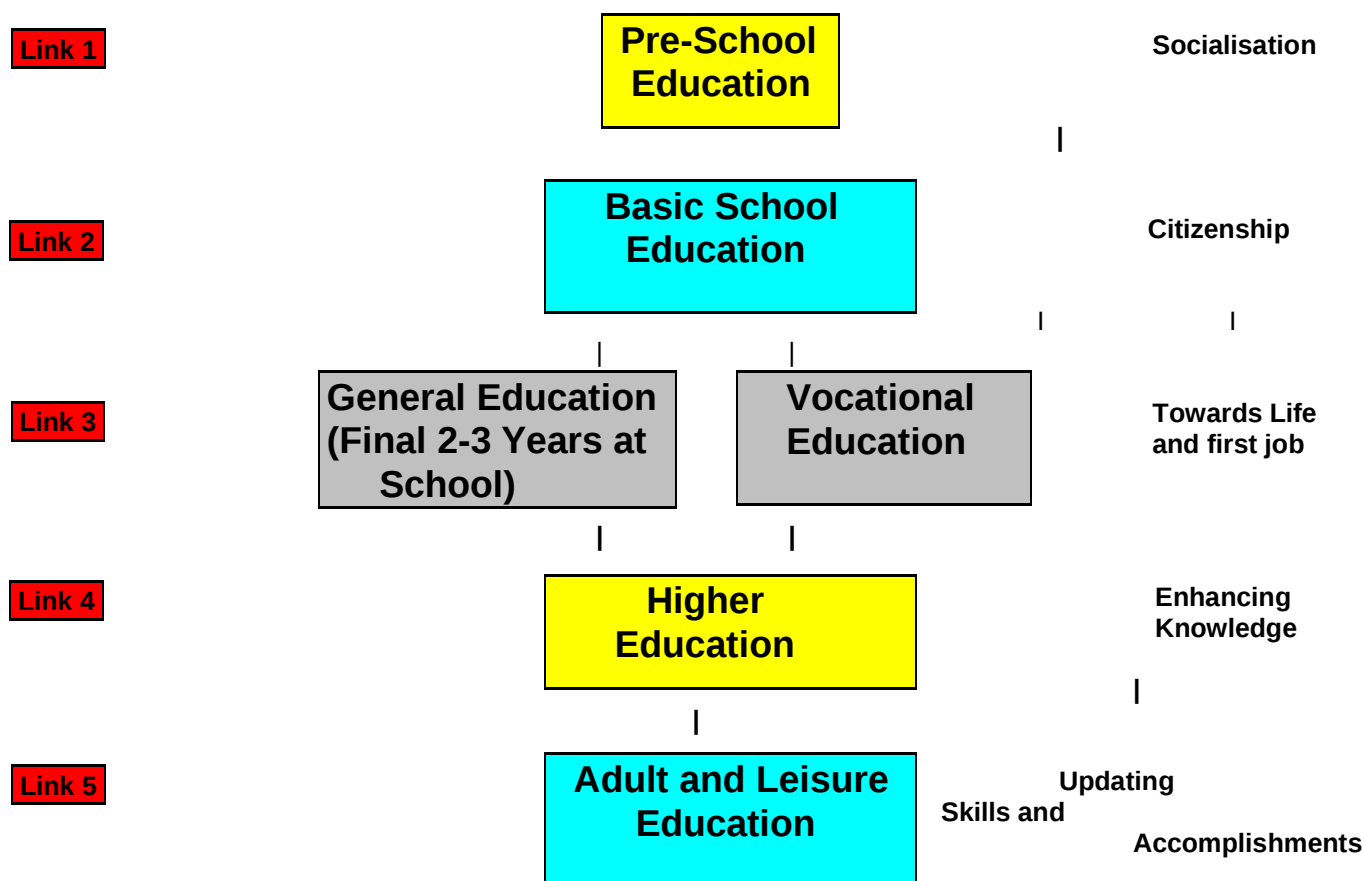
Fostering Economic Growth

Maintaining Social Cohesion

These may be seen as interdependent as they emphasise the social and personal as well as the economic.

Lifelong Learning as a Seamless System

Support for this view comes from Industry. The European Round Table of Industrialists recently published a book entitled - 'Towards the Learning Society'. In it, life is described as 'a Learning Chain' in which each stage is linked to the next in a seamless vertical progression.



(Education for Europeans - European Round Table of Industrialists)

The **holistic seamlessness** of this diagram contrasts sharply with present practice in the world of leaving each sector of education to work out its own curricula, its own rationales and its own methodologies and structures. In the current system, the individual becomes enveloped in several educational systems which occasionally talk to each other but which use different languages and operate different learning cultures. This must change.

Most parts of Australia are rapidly advancing from an industrial age into the age of knowledge, in which the **emphasis is on skills and knowledge** rather than information, and on **personal learning capability** and initiative more than imposed solutions. This list of skills is as relevant to the new Australians as it is to people in every continent of the world. It engenders both employability and employment. Without them, individuals are disabled, not just mentally and in their ability to find work, but also in their capacity to fulfil their own human potential.

Skills for a Lifelong Learning Age

Learning to learn	➤ Knowing one's learning style, ➤ Being open to new learning techniques and new knowledge ➤ Wanting to learn with self-confidence
Applying new knowledge into practice	• Seeing the connection between theory and practice, • Transferring knowledge into action
Questioning and reasoning	✓ Being continuously aware of changes ✓ Continually wanting to improve procedures and processes ✓ Never being satisfied with the status quo
Managing oneself and others	❖ Setting realistic personal targets ❖ Recognising the gap between the current and the target and understanding how to fill it ❖ Continuously developing personal skills
Managing information	□ Collecting, storing, analysing and combining information □ Using information technology
Communication skills	▪ Expressing oneself clearly orally and verbally in formal and informal situations ▪ Persuading others ▪ Listening to others
Team work	➤ Sharing information and knowledge, ➤ Receiving information and knowledge ➤ Participating in goal-setting ➤ Achieving common goals
Problem solving skills	• Creativity and innovation
Adaptability and flexibility	✓ Facing change with confidence ✓ Adapting to the new situations and tasks ✓ Being ready to change personal direction
Lifelong Learning	▪ Continuously upgrading personal skills and competence ▪ Cherishing the habit of learning

Industry has taken the lead in Lifelong Learning. It has had to in order to survive and to meet the challenge of globalisation. For example, most car manufacturing companies have great experience in empowering workforces through learning. For example the Learning Principles shown below are written large on every plant wall in Rover.

Rover Learning Principles

1. Learning is the most natural human instinct
2. Creativity, involvement and contribution are fuelled by learning and development
3. Everyone has two jobs - the job and improving the job
4. People own what they have created
5. People need work and enjoy it if they are valued
6. Creativity and ingenuity are grossly underrated
7. Management does not have all the answers

Empowerment means teamwork and decision-making. Most enlightened manufacturing companies now delegate much of the decision-making to those actually doing the work. They have become '**Learning Organisations**'. This has great implications for learning. For people to make effective decisions based on a wide variety of informational inputs, other high order skills, such as **information-handling, problem-solving and thinking** become important. They need to develop the **habit of learning** and confidence in their own creativity.

Good Learning organisations create a number of projects to assist in this. These range from personal development courses to on-the-job training techniques, from computer-based learning programmes to frequent team seminars. They make a sum of money available to every employee each year to take education outside of the company, irrespective of the subject. They encourage and pay for employees to take first or further degrees through Open Universities or TAFE colleges. In this way all their employees are developing the precious habit of learning.

Such developments in Industry have major implications for education outside industry. They ask interesting questions about the relevance and quality of education in schools, colleges and universities. They have profound meaning for the training of teachers and the provision of adult education. They challenge the Professional Associations and the Trades Unions to participate. They emphasise the necessity of working together, of integrating the different sectors in our society into a combined Lifelong Learning assault on ignorance and exclusion, of educating to make people **employable as well as employed**.

Learning Audits in a Learning Society - Finding out what people want to learn

In 1996, the European Lifelong Learning Initiative carried out a European project to audit the learning requirements of all the workforce in industry locations of between 70 and 100 employees. It was not a training needs analysis. It took into account a wide range of learning requirements **from the point of view of every individual working there** and included leisure, life, family, community, as well as continuing professional and personal development requirements for work. The company would not be expected to satisfy all these requirements, though the responsible company with a commitment to the maintenance of learning habits in its workforce would wish to discuss them with a range of providers in the locality.

The questionnaire asked questions about past experiences, present requirements and future needs. It canvassed opinion as well as fact, and it invited participants to self-assess their own capabilities and dreams of the future. Many of the people interviewed had never before been asked to articulate their personal opinions and learning requirements. The results were interesting, uncovering **a vast reservoir of unsatisfied learning needs** in people from all strata of society. When asked, people volunteer information. How many have been asked?

Learning Audits Topics and Content

Your Past Experiences
of Learning

Experience
Qualifications
Financial Support
Opinions on its relevance
ALL Education - in and out of
the company
Community

Your present requirements
for Learning

Self-Assessments
Job Opinions
Personal Ambitions
Why should I learn?
How can I learn?
What is there to learn?
Opinions on Learning
Who should pay?

Your future needs
for Learning

Expectations
Future World and Life?
Future Learning Needs
Who is responsible for your
learning?
Family Needs
Need for Qualifications?
Learning Counsellors?
Leisure and work learning
What subjects?
Personal Potential?

A Learner's Charter

The results of the learning audits, as one might expect, uncovered an enormous latent demand and desire for more learning, previously unexpressed. They also laid bare the inadequacies of past and present learning provision as being remote, uninteresting and more oriented to the needs and curriculum of teacher and examination system than the needs and demands of the learner. Most people interviewed had little faith in any improvement in this situation. There is a need for a '**Learner's Charter**' to take into account the rights of everyone to develop his or her own mental potential. The following is one model proposed by the European Lifelong Learning Initiative.

ELLI Principles of Learning

- 1. All citizens of the world can learn and develop their human potential**
- 2. All citizens of the world should have access to Learning**
- 3. The learner is the customer and the customer has first priority**
- 4. Guidance and support should be available to help the learner**
- 5. All Learning styles should be recognised and catered for**
- 6. All learning - formal and informal - can be validated in a way appropriate to the learner**
- 7. Collaborative, positive support for learning should accept no barriers**
- 8. Modern aids should be creatively applied to support the learner**
- 9. Leadership and opportunity should be available for all learning requirements, levels and ages**
- 10. Learning should be supported throughout life**

Learners come in all shapes, sizes, backgrounds, capacities, interests and ambitions. They have different preferred learning styles, different motivations and different amounts of time available for learning. **In Lifelong Learning, the focus for learning must be directed towards the needs of each individual learner** as in principle 3 above. The 'throw it at them and hope some of it sticks' approach is gone in modern industrial training - and yet there are large pockets of the formal education systems where it still applies and where the learner has little ownership of his/her own learning.

Modern education technology, used properly and effectively, now makes this more than ever possible and offers the additional advantage of reaching large numbers of people.

The Learner's charter also gives rise to a universal **definition of Lifelong Learning** focusing on the individual's need for support and encouragement.

LIFELONG LEARNING is

The development of human potential through

a **continuously supportive** process

which **stimulates and empowers** individuals

to **acquire**

all the **knowledge, values, skills and understanding** they
will require **throughout their lifetimes**

and to **apply** them

with **confidence, creativity and enjoyment**

in **all roles, circumstances and environments**

In this, Lifelong Learning introduces several new ideas and becomes distinct from the education and training paradigm. Among them:

Concepts of empowerment

Concepts of Learner Focus

Concepts of Learning as Enjoyment

Concepts of Learning for everyone

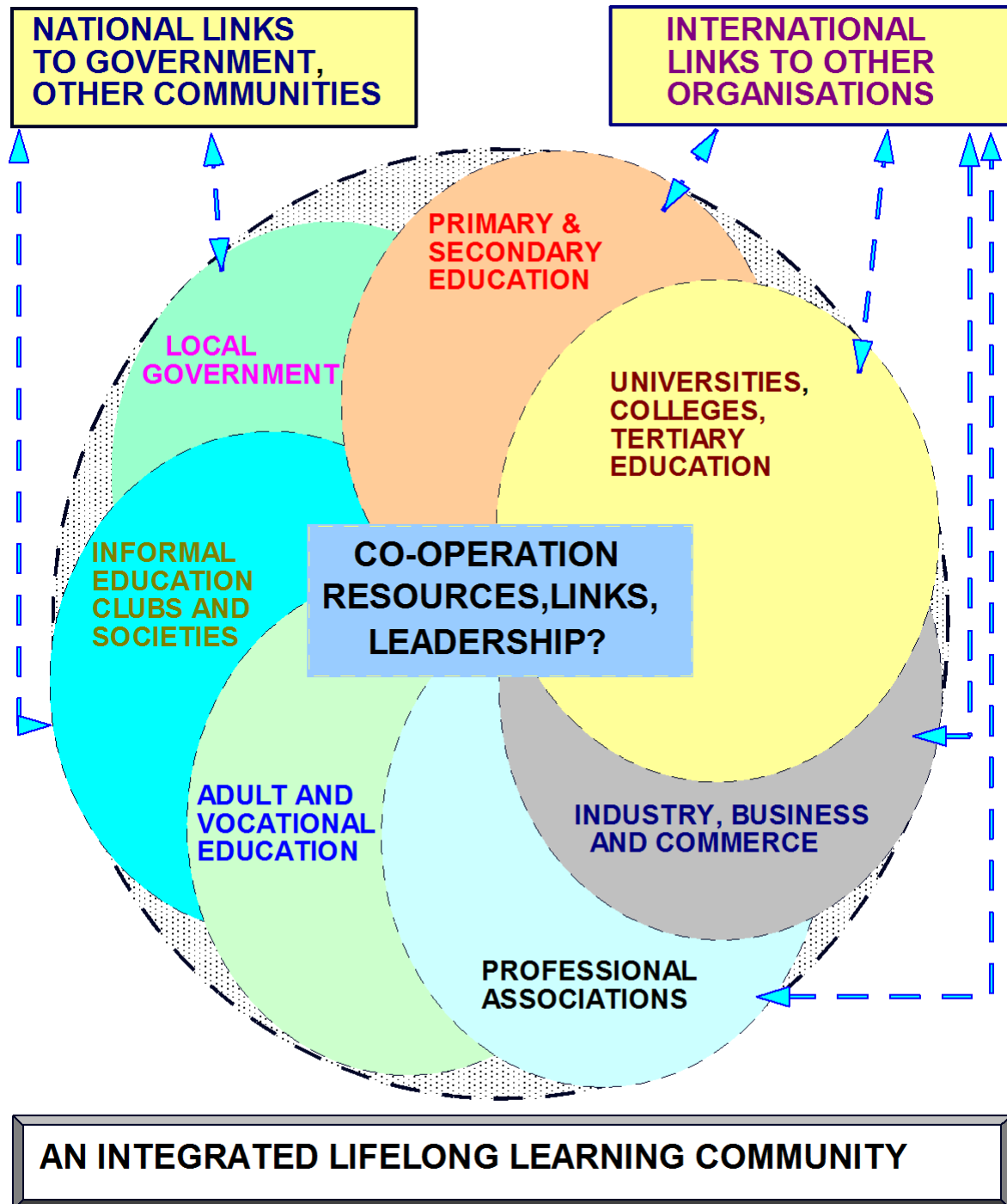
Concepts of Creativity

Concepts that Learning and Education is about the Development of Human Potential

A World of Learning Communities

Lifelong Learning is the central unifying factor in Australia's progress to a Learning Society. However the creation of a **workable infrastructure within which each sector can communicate effectively with other sectors** is an important aspect of that progress.

This introduces the concept of the '**Learning Community**' - a city, town or region which provides and promotes learning opportunities for its citizens wherever, whenever and however they need them. A Community is an amalgamation of sectoral interests from Business and Industry - Schools, Higher and Further Education, Special Interest Groups, Professional Associations and Local Government structures. A Learning Community would endeavour to encourage a sharing of the knowledge, the resources, the talents and the expertise of all its citizens for the benefit of all its institutions. In this way it would become a dynamic Lifelong Learning entity.



Characteristics of Learning Communities

A Learning Community is not static or introspective. It imports and exports knowledge and understanding through those organisations which maintain national and international marketing and communications links. It encourages all its citizens to communicate with people from other Learning Communities nationally and internationally. Electronic networks make this a relatively easy operation. Citizens moving from one community to another would easily fit into the Lifelong Learning culture of the new Learning Community. In the UK, Liverpool, Southampton, Edinburgh, Sheffield and Glasgow have declared themselves as Cities of Learning. Gothenburg, Edmonton, Adelaide and others have been members of a world-wide group of Educating Cities for several years. **But what is a City (or a Community) of Learning?. How does it differ from other cities?** Perhaps the following might throw some light on this.

A Learning Community

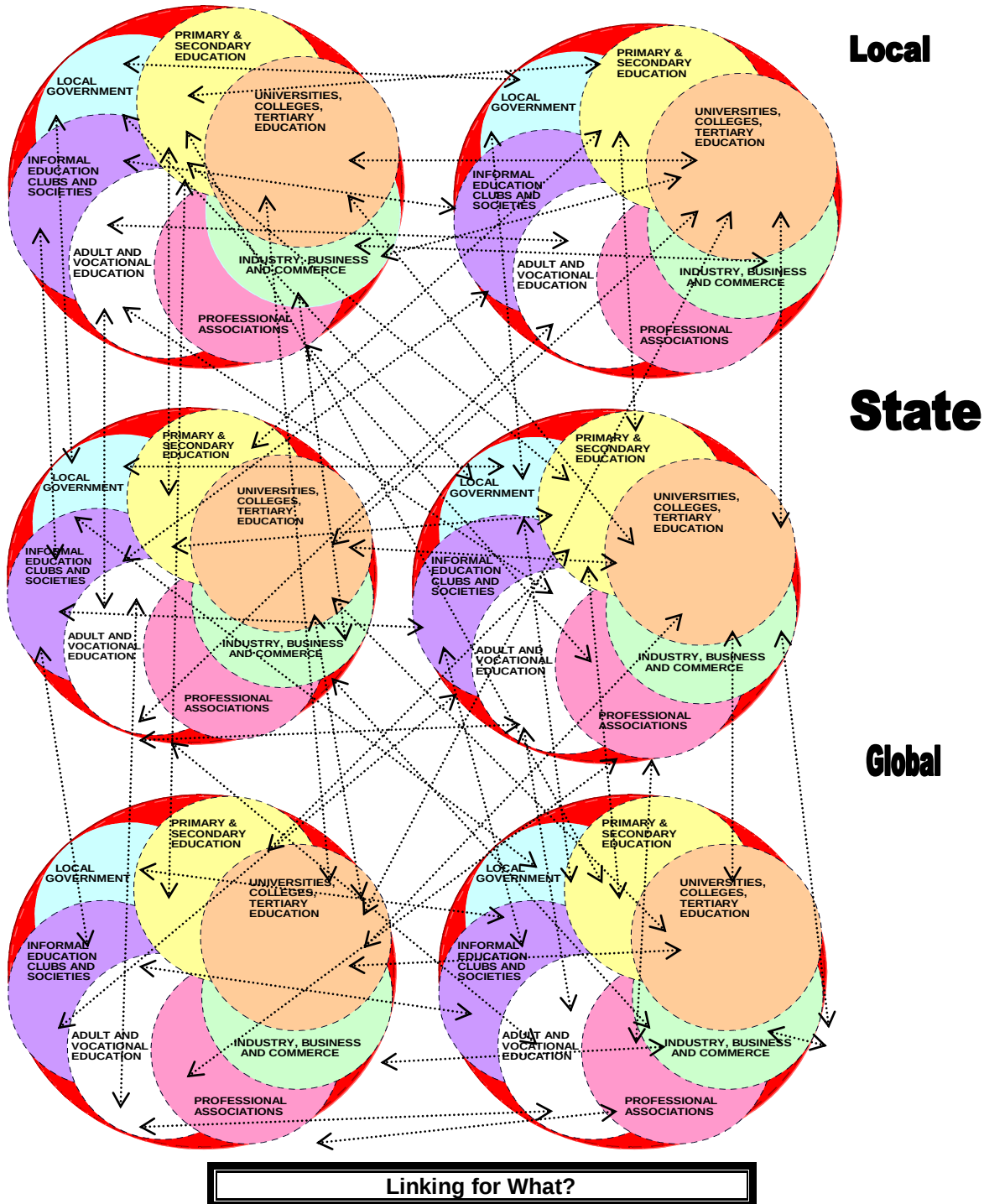
ie a village, a town, a city, a region or any geographical entity implementing a strategy for improving the development of Lifelong Learning among all its citizens

Learning Communities focus on the development of the human potential of all their citizens by:

1. Co-operation and Resources	Committing all sectors of the Community to cooperate creatively in making learning available for all citizens, and ensuring the optimum use of resources, including human resources
2. Organisational Responsibility	Organising all departments and services, not just education, to prepare and implement plans to introduce Lifelong Learning in the community
3. Motivation, Audits and Infrastructure	Motivating all citizens to develop their potential by innovative learning initiatives, by auditing the demand and by establishing seamless infrastructures to satisfy it throughout life
4. Mentors, Guides and PLPs	Managing personal learning plans and mentoring programmes for all its citizens
5. Universal Information Services	Updating all its citizens frequently through easily accessible and attractive information and counselling services
6. Networks	Networking citizens of all ages, creeds and races to the world by encouraging innovative personal and electronic links
7. Improving the Environment	Involving all its citizens in the preservation and improvement of their environment through innovative programmes
8. Transforming Perceptions	Teaching its citizens to anticipate change and to meet the future with confidence, capability and adaptability
9. Increasing Wealth and Employment	Initiating and implementing sustainable strategies to develop wealth-creation and employment in the community
10. Empowering Leadership	Energising innovative programmes to develop learning leadership skills in people from all sectors of the community
11. Significance of Learning and Family Life	Stimulating the frequent celebration of learning as a creative, rewarding and fun activity and encouraging active involvement by whole families

One can foresee the day when **all cities, towns and regions of the world are Learning Communities, each with their own cultural identity but interacting with each other and with other communities in other countries**, helping to solve common educational, environmental and economic problems. The technology of the information revolution now makes that possible.

Using New Technologies for Networking Learning Communities



1. Business to business for wealth creation
2. School to school to teacher training for collaborative learning, accessing and creating databases, language learning, research into learning, teacher updating, expert contact etc etc
3. University to University to Industry for joint research, joint curriculum development, student exchange, Continuing Education, Professional development, Contact with Experts, joint database dev't etc etc
4. Third age to Third age for social communication etc etc in the later years
5. Hospital to Hospital for medical comparison, exchange of ideas and practice etc etc
6. Local Government to Local Government to Adult Education to museums for collaborative learning projects, twinning activities, language learning, leadership development etc etc
7. Professional Associations to members in all communities etc
8. Vocational Education to Adult for open and distance education development and training etc.
9. Individual to Individual, Community to Community, organisation to organisation for everything under the sun. Schools/Industry links, Inter-community mentoring, volunteer services etc etc,
10. Developed to developing world links for understanding, assistance, research and growth.

Schools - Key organisations in the new World

Schools are a key element in the Lifelong Learning Community. In theory, they teach the skills and knowledge and foster the values and attitudes which potentially enrich the world's future. In practice they are the fall guys of the inflexibility in the system. **Such is the pervasive influence of the information society on all aspects of life that traditional schooling is inherently unable to maintain contact with the pace of change.** Schools are given neither the physical nor the mental updating resources available to the media, to industry and to other sectors of the community. **Schools urgently need the help, knowledge, expertise and resource, including human resource, which lies, presently untapped, in the rest of the community.**

One example of how to obtain that help is schools-industry 'twinning', in which a close two-way relationship is established between a school and a company. The following describes some of the mutually beneficial projects which resulted from a twinning experiment between IBM and Woodberry Down School in London in the late 1970s. Regrettably, both locations no longer exist, but the width and depth of mutually beneficial activities are indicators of a quality interaction.

Staff and student visits to IBM to study curriculum areas - eg commerce students to administration departments; maths and business studies to computing department. One week work experience in these departments.

Reciprocal visits to the school by staff of IBM to give lessons on business and computing. IBM staff invited to contribute to debates on curriculum

Social events - each organisation entertains the staff of the other - usually accompanied by a short talk on a topic of mutual interest and snacks

A trust fund established for voluntary contributions from staff of both organisations for new careers centre and children to Welsh study centre

Cultural development - workshop for children given by IBM-sponsored Covent Garden Opera company at the school - children's opera visits.

Scrap computer/typewriter parts and obsolete paper donation to the school

Contacts established in Spain to assist in Spanish exchange scheme

School staff attended IBM management and personal development courses

IBM staff organised interviewing scheme for older pupils at the school

Woodberry Down children joined the IBM sail training programmes;

Termly debates, attended by the joint staffs, alternately at each location.

IBM staff contributed to English, Maths and Science lessons and assisted with sports - high level players of tennis, cricket, soccer and rugby

'Understanding Education' sessions at IBM by Head and Senior staff

Joint seminar for government ministers on industry/education partnerships

Frequent exhibitions of childrens' work at the IBM location

Collage commissioned for display in the central foyer of the IBM location

These highlight how sectors within the community can work for each other in the context of a mutual need for information, knowledge, understanding, new skills and shared resources.

The Lifelong Learning School in an Australian Society

Using the resources of the Learning Community is but one aspect of the school aiming to provide relevance for the 21st Century. There are many more. **The following is offered as a basis for discussion and as a new dynamic for consideration by school teachers and administrators**

1. Strategy for Development	Stimulates progress through a written organisation Strategy, available to all, for developing the full human potential of each student and member of staff
2. Curriculum	Opens up Opportunities for children to manage change throughout their lives through a curriculum based on the enhancement of personal skills and lifelong values
3. High Standards	Helps to maintain a culture of quality and respect for high standards in everything it does through continuous improvement programmes for staff and students
4. Outreach to Community	Creates new resources for the school by harnessing the skills, talents and knowledge of governors, parents and everyone in the community to create new learning opportunities and to implement school strategies
5. Optimisation of Opportunities	Optimises the development Lifelong Learning attitudes in all its children and staff by involving them in the use of personal learning plans, guides and mentors
6. Learning through Networks	Links staff and children to the world through networks to enhance collaborative learning opportunities and promote a sense of tolerance, justice and understanding of different races, creeds and cultures
7. Technology Focus	Taps the motivational power of modern information and communications technologies for teaching across all disciplines
8. Involvement of the Family	Involves the family in the life of the school through increased home-school cooperation
9. Motivation	Motivates people to celebrate learning frequently as a desirable, permanent and enjoyable habit
10. Extra-curricular Activities	Enhances self-esteem, confidence, creativity and the cultural vision of staff and children through a wide range of extra-curricular activities

While schools would claim to be, and mostly are, caring communities developing the talents and skills of their pupils, too many fail **to release the knowledge, talents and energy of people in the Community** to help achieve fully the objectives outlined above. All schools should appoint a leader to identify and mobilise this enormous new resource.

Universities too have an important part to play both in the Learning Community and in their wider national and international roles. Conceptually they have all the advantages to take a leadership role. They lie at the hub of local life in all sectors of activity. They are natural places to initiate, develop and maintain lifelong learning programmes within their geographical area while also maintaining links with national and international projects and activities. Since Lifelong Learning is one of the most powerful philosophies of our time, its influence in opening up new opportunities and new horizons, empowering people and expanding ideas, concepts and actions makes it a prime target for research. The University which does not want to be a part of that scene is indeed an ivory tower, fossilised, full of its own intellectual self-importance - and irrelevant.

But Higher Education often has problems of its own. It needs to seek alternative sources of finance in order to fulfil its new role and take leadership of the lifelong learning movement at a community level. Such a role can enhance both the quality of education and increase access to it. There is no doubt about the challenge and the opportunity of leadership. What may be in some doubt is the extent of the university's willingness to change, its ability to manage, its vision to discern, its open-ness to discover, its dynamism to act and its humility to share. It poses radical questions about the definition, role, function in society, responsibilities and accountability of higher learning. Australian Universities have taken a world lead in embracing lifelong learning in their internal structures. But there is a long way to go to pick up the gauntlet of leadership in the community and to use their power and their reputation to move into the twenty-first century as truly universal organisations. Whatever their decision, they will have to address these issues created by the shift to Lifelong Learning.

New ideas on accreditation, qualifications and standards - examinations as non-failure oriented learning opportunities to measure individual progress

A vastly increasing number of maturer students from wider backgrounds

Increasing reliance on Continuing Education and joint teaching and research partnerships with industry as a source of finance

A new emphasis on quality and continuous improvement programmes for staff and in teaching, research and administration

A more innovative approach to the use of education technology, networks and open/distance learning in teaching and research.

Strategies to provide leadership to Learning Community in which it resides

New opportunities for research into how people learn and learner focus

Greater internationalisation of research activities through networks etc

More efficient internal administration and use of human resource

Strategies to turn the university into a learning organisation

New entry qualifications to widen range of students and new approaches to teaching to allow for this

More effective decision-making and promotional and marketing programmes

Reaching out into the community to teach and learn.

In ELLI's 'Action Agenda for Lifelong Learning for the 21st century', it is remarked that 'universities should treat the whole community as comprising past, present or future students'. How that would open up new perceptions of the purpose of the university. Instead of an institution for educating an elite of highly intelligent undergraduates and researchers, it becomes a universal university, open to all irrespective of background, of qualification, of age, of subject. To create the sort of society in which learning is natural and pervasive, that is the way the traditional university must go. It would demand wise leadership.

The Learning Organisation movement started in Industry. Many companies, for example the Rover Group, regard themselves as Learning, as well as manufacturing, organisations. But the concept need not be confined to Industry. The following describes ten characteristics to identify the true Learning Organisation and may assist understanding in SMEs, educational organisations, Professional Associations and Government offices. Many may seem quite radical - but they describe how the twenty-first century will affect working and non-working life in ways not yet appreciated by many.

Ten Indicators of a Learning Organisation

1. A Learning Organisation can be a company, a professional association, a University, a school, a city, a nation or any group of people, large or small, with a need and a desire to improve performance through learning.
2. A Learning Organisation invests in its own future through the Education and training of all its people
3. A Learning Organisation creates opportunities for, and encourages, all its people in all its functions to fulfil their human potential
 - as employees, members, professionals or students of the organisation
 - as ambassadors of the organisation to its customers, clients, audiences and suppliers
 - as citizens of the wider society in which the organisation exists
 - as human beings with the need to realise their own capabilities
4. A Learning Organisation shares its vision of tomorrow with its people and stimulates them to challenge it, to change it and to contribute to it
5. A Learning Organisation integrates work and learning and inspires all its people to seek quality, excellence and continuous improvement in both
6. A Learning Organisation mobilises all its human talent by putting the emphasis on 'Learning' and planning its Education and Training activities accordingly
7. A Learning Organisation empowers ALL its people to broaden their horizons. in harmony with their own preferred learning styles
8. A Learning organisation applies up to date open and distance delivery technologies appropriately to create broader and more varied learning opportunities
9. A Learning Organisation responds proactively to the wider needs of the environment and the society in which it operates, and encourages its people to do likewise
10. A Learning Organisation learns and relearns constantly in order to remain innovative, inventive, invigorating and in business.

Towards an Australian Learning Society

The concept of a Learning Society is becoming increasingly important in a world which must learn, and learn fast. It is a long-term goal sometimes overlooked by short-termism in policy-making. In Europe, the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT), in collaboration with the Standing Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Principals of European Universities (CRE), suggest the following five characteristics as descriptors of a Learning Society.

Five Characteristics of a Learning Society

A Learning Society would be one in which.....

1. Learning is accepted as a continuing activity throughout life

2. Learners take responsibility for their own progress

3. Assessment confirms progress rather than brands failure

4. Capability, personal and shared values, team-working are recognised equally with the pursuit of knowledge

5. Learning is a partnership between students, parents, teachers, employers and the community, who all work together to improve performance

Five additional ones are suggested by the World Initiative on Lifelong Learning

6. Everyone accepts some responsibility for the learning of others

7. Men, women, the disabled and minority groups have equal access to learning opportunities

8. Learning is seen as creative, rewarding and enjoyable

9. Learning is outward-looking, mind-opening and promotes tolerance, respect and understanding of other cultures, creeds, races and traditions

10. Learning is frequently celebrated individually, in families, in the community and in the wider world.

From the Age of Education and Training to the era of Lifelong Learning

Australia is moving from the age of Education and Training into the new era of Lifelong Learning which will dominate the 21st Century - the Learning Century. In the new millennium Australian Education must make the preparations to welcome the new thinking which it engenders. The key differences are shown in the table below.

	Education and Training	Lifelong Learning	Difference
1.	Teacher rules and decides. Ownership of the need to learn and its content is with the teacher	Learner, as customer, rules. As far as possible ownership of the need to learn and its content is given to individuals	Variety of techniques and tools to be developed to fit in with the individual's needs, demands and learning styles
2.	Compartmentalised according to age	Lifelong in concept and content, providing links vertically and horizontally between age groups	A seamless system providing learning support from cradle to grave, from 0-90
3.	Knowledge and Information based - what to think	Skills and values based - how to think	Empower people to carry out a wide range of activities in all walks of life and work
4.	Based on the needs of the organisation, nation or society	Based on the desires of the individual and the need of organisations and nations to develop potential	Encourage and stimulate people to recognise the power of their own human potential and develop it
5.	Authority decides where, why, when and how	Learner is empowered and mentally enabled to decide where, why, when and how	Alternative learning methods. Learning taking place everywhere - home, school, work, pub, shops etc
6.	Validated to separate failures from successes	Validated to confirm progress and encourage further learning	New non-failure oriented examination and accreditation systems
7.	Re-active - meets identified needs of organisations and some people	Pro-active - encourages the habit of learning in all people	Audit learning needs of the whole community and nation. Learning Counselling.
8.	Each sector of society determines its own needs	Holistic - encourages each sector of the community to cooperate	Combines and uses whole community human resources for the benefit of each part
9.	Educates and trains for employment and short term need	Educates for employability in the long-term	Development of personal skills and competencies
10	Work-based	Life-based	Work and life outside work as part of same human need
11	Inward-looking - to satisfy specified needs	Outward-looking - to open minds, encourage broader horizons and promote understanding of others	People understand other creeds, cultures, races and customs through learning and technology
12	Satisfies the present	Prepares for the future	All people can meet future confidently and creatively
13	Learning as a difficult chore and as received wisdom	Learning as fun, participative and involving, and as perceived wisdom	Frequent celebrations of learning by individuals, in families, in organisations and in communities
14	Education as a financial investment for organisations and nations	Learning as a social, personal and financial investment in and by people for the benefit of nations, organisations, society	By a nation in its citizens, by a business or government organisation in its workforce, by educational organisations in the students' future, by people in their own worth and happiness

The change of paradigm from teaching to learning will demand a radically different approach to the training of teachers. In many parts of Education there is already a demand for the new profession of **Learning Counsellor** and some universities are working on how to define the job description and responsibilities of such a person. Teacher Training Institutions, whether based at Universities or in specialist colleges will increasingly be required to insert relevance to, and participation in, a whole-community approach to teacher education. The following suggests guidelines for the future direction of Teacher Training Organisations.

Ten Guidelines for Transforming Teacher Training Organisations into Lifelong Learning Organisations

A Learning Teacher Development Organisation:

- 1. Creates an annually updated and flexible organisational learning strategy for developing the full human potential of each student and member of staff taking into account individual learning needs.**
- 2. Promotes, through specific courses and programmes, a culture of quality and respect for high standards in everything it does**
- 3. Involves itself fully with the community in which it resides by:**
 - a) creating active partnership projects for students and staff with industry and commerce*
 - b) making a positive contribution to the welfare of the community's people including the aged and disabled*
 - c) actively seeking to use the experience and expertise of people from the community in the learning process of the organisation*
 - d) carrying out learning audits and providing a central focus for leadership among all sectors in the growth of a learning community in the locality*
- 4. Looks outward to the world by:**
 - a) creating collaborative and productive links with teacher training organisations and schools in other countries through the use of networks*
 - b) instilling a sense of tolerance, justice and understanding of different cultures, creeds and languages in all its students and encouraging positive supportive action*
 - c) becoming involved in national and international research into learner-centred methods and technologies and the creation of learning societies*
- 5. Expands Lifelong Learning vision in all its students and staff by**
 - a) developing, cooperatively with all sectors of the community, Lifelong Learning courses, seminars and activities as a part of its curriculum*
 - b) encouraging the use of personal learning plans, counsellors and mentors*
 - c) developing creative, rewarding, enjoyable and productive learning programmes and activities which stimulate a permanent habit of learning in all staff and students*
- 6. Develops strategies to become a true Learning Organisation by reading and implementing the 10 indicators of the Learning Organisation**
- 7. Concentrates on the development of personal and leadership skills, particularly those high order skills which enhance understanding, insight and knowledge**
- 8. Uses modern information and communications technology appropriately particularly in:**
 - a) the effective use of educational and commercial software and multimedia tools*
 - b) the creative use of electronic networks in learning situations*
 - c) the flexible use of distance and open learning tools and techniques*
- 9. Involves itself in the development of local, national and international non-failure oriented validation and accreditation systems and self-assessment strategies**
- 10. Involves the schools in all of these activities and uses them as a strategy for updating in-service teachers and giving Lifelong Learning skills to children**

Our preliminary journey into Australian lifelong learning future is almost over. A profound understanding of the concepts described in this paper is crucial first step. Beyond that there are a host of actions, projects, discussions, policies and strategies to be taken and devised.

The overall responsibility for success or failure lies at Governmental level in each State. It should be the first to recognise that **the ability to learn will increasingly determine the strength of the economy** - that means that it will be dependent on the extent to which it can create **a highly educated, socially cohesive and individually participative population imbued with the habit of learning throughout life**. At this embryo stage in the development of Lifelong Learning, State Government has a large part to play. The following suggests some actions Government can take to help create a Learning Region and implement a Lifelong Learning Society throughout Australia. It is a preliminary list.

1. Generates a State Task Force or Steering Group to examine how Lifelong Learning can be implemented
2. Organises the development and delivery of courses, seminars and workshops on Lifelong Learning to civil servants and key implementers in national and local government and the professional associations
3. Vitalises the public acceptance of learning as a desirable and pleasurable activity through promotional campaigns such as television advertising, newspaper advertising, billboards, learning tv programmes, film and video, mass distribution of leaflets etc
4. Encourages communities (cities, towns, regions etc) to set themselves up as 'Learning Communities', and develops guidelines on how all citizens can be empowered to Share knowledge, expertise, values, skills and talents for the benefit of the whole Community
5. Restructures the financing of Learning through integrated budgets, the use of electronic tools and techniques for open and distance learning and resource sharing, including human resource
6. Negotiates Green, and eventually White, Papers outlining agreed policy and Action in Lifelong Learning over a relatively long period of time
7. Motivates people to learn through the development of new assessment and accreditation systems which reward learning positively however it has taken place, and which encourage further learning
8. Enlists the help of Industry through discussions with CBI and companies about improving the image of learning among the workforce and strategies for improving Lifelong Learning awareness
9. Nourishes international co-operation and encourages the transfer of ideas, concepts and actions between nations
10. Transforms educational and social systems through strategies and policies which cascade quickly through the normal channels of communication to those who will be responsible for implementing them in the field
11. Promotes Lifelong Learning through proactive national and regional marketing strategies
12. Organises a programme of Learning Festivals which bring learning to the people (as in Japan)
13. Lubricates the development of all types of organisation into 'Learning Organisations' through a system of benchmarks, exemplar practices and reward systems
14. Initiates a 'Learner's Charter' which sets out every citizen's entitlement to learning
15. Commission reports on Lifelong Learning strategies in specific fields eg the use of information and communications technology, new learning methods, personal learning styles, quality in schools etc
16. Influences people into learning through Personal Learning Plans, Guides, Mentoring, the development of Learning Counsellors and Learning Leaders
17. Establishes Lifelong Learning research centres in Universities or other non-partisan public research bodies
18. Stimulates and Supports International efforts to create Lifelong Learning at a Global level

The initial letters indicate that State Government *can* make a difference. Some of these pro-active actions may be outsourced to other organisations. Many do not involve extra resource, rather a rescheduling of existing resources. But, if Lifelong Learning is to take place at all, it will need commitment from the top and **a national action plan with short, medium and long-term strategies**.

Finally - A Couple of Books on Lifelong Learning

This paper has introduced several of the current issues in Lifelong Learning. They, and others, are developed further in:

LEARNING CITIES, LEARNING REGIONS. LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Lifelong Learning and Local Government by Norman Longworth

MAKING LIFELONG LEARNING WORK - LEARNING CITIES FOR A LEARNING CENTURY
by Norman Longworth (ISBN 0 7494 2727 2)

LIFELONG LEARNING IN ACTION (ISBN 978-0-7494-4013-8)

Publisher: Routledge, London

'...this book is so timely. It should be read by everyone who has a thought for the future, because it defines a framework for that future'

John Towers MBE, Former Chief Executive of the Rover Group

I am pleased to recommend this book as essential reading for all Americans. I believe it presents a vision of the future for which we all should strive'

Henry A Spille, Vice President, American College on Education

'Lifelong Learning is extremely readable and timely and presents an abundance of ideas, knowledge and suggestions for learning organisations and the general reader'

Times Educational Supplement

'An excellent book in which the authors define Lifelong Learning and describe its far-reaching implications for every organisation, nation and individual throughout the world'

Times Educational Supplement

'This topical and readable book explains the background to the movement towards lifelong learning and describes its implications for the workplace, the university, the school and the individual'

Chartered Secretary

'Longworth and Davies clarify concepts, ideas and practices relating to the development of individual human potential which will affect the future of all institutions and nations world-wide'

Workers Educational Association Bulletin

'A well-written, ideas-packed and scholarly text on its theme'

Biochemical Education

..an accessible and up to date summary. The book is particularly valuable for two reasons. a) it places lifelong learning in the context of other major world trends in business and industry and b) it provides some challenging insights which make the reader pause for thought'

People Management

...full of ideas, initiatives, suggestions, and programmes to promote learning by individuals, in institutions, organisations and communities'

RSA Journal

'I found this book tremendously stimulating'

Teaching in Higher Education

'Apart from the quality of the arguments and the persuasive line of reasoning, it is also a damn good read!'

Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Sunderland

They are aimed at every member of the public with an open and inquiring mind, every manager interested in the development of a company, every local and national government employee responsible for education, employment or industry, every teacher, lecturer and administrator curious about the development of the human potential in their charge. They will all be immersed in Lifelong Learning during the coming decade. They contain illustrations usable as foils for Lifelong Learning talks and lectures.

This may be essential reading for everyone in your organisation. There will be an abundance of conferences, and millions of words expended, on the subject during the coming years. **These books explain why.** They represent good value for those who wish to have the Lifelong Learning basics and the knowledge to make things happen.