

INNOVATING FOR GLOBAL EXCELLENCE

Australia's
education
opportunity

BY DAVID ALBURY, TOM BERESFORD, KEREN CAPLE & AMELIA PETERSON





The AISNSW Institute was established in October 2015 to provide advice to the Association of Independent Schools of NSW around strategies to assist Independent schools to continue delivering high quality schooling outcomes, taking into account the rapidly changing social, political, economic, demographic and technological environment in which schools operate.

The Institute's role includes the identification and consideration of the challenges facing the Independent schools sector, commissioning and accessing research, undertaking data analysis, consulting with people and organisations with a particular interest in school education, and actively engaging with influential forward thinkers.



The Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales (AISNSW) is the peak body representing not-for-profit Independent schools in New South Wales and provides a wide range of services, advice and support to schools of differing types, sizes, religious affiliations and educational philosophies.

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Innovation Unit is a not-for-profit social enterprise supporting governments, organisations and communities to co-design, develop and implement at scale innovative solutions to pressing social, educational and health issues: solutions which deliver significantly better outcomes, often for significantly lower costs. It draws on the expertise of its practitioners, designers and researchers in Australia, the U.K., the U.S. and globally to work in partnership with clients from the public, private, and third sectors.

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FOREWORD

Innovating for Global Excellence is intended to prompt important conversations about challenging and supporting our high potential learners, and to inspire the nation to imagine new possibilities as educators strive to transform current practice and innovate for Australia's future.

Young people are our next generation of social change agents, job creators and creative thinkers capable of positioning Australia more competitively in the global economy. All learners need an education that equips them with the knowledge and attributes to thrive in an ever-changing world. Meeting these needs requires agile systems, flexible support structures and new partnerships.

Schools recognise the need to transform learning to unleash potential which will also reverse the trend of declining performance in Australia's top students. AISNSW is committed to supporting all schools to lay the foundations for next generation learning that will ensure Australia is at the leading edge of educational excellence.

Schools are full of vibrant and capable young learners, and leaders who are ready to embrace this innovation imperative. Navigation of the journey requires strategic and robust innovation that draws on the collective expertise of the Australian community as a whole. AISNSW is responding to this opportunity by forging new partnerships between schools and business in order to work strategically to shape and adjust learning that will equip young people to embrace their future with confidence.

Dr Geoff Newcombe

Executive Director
AISNSW



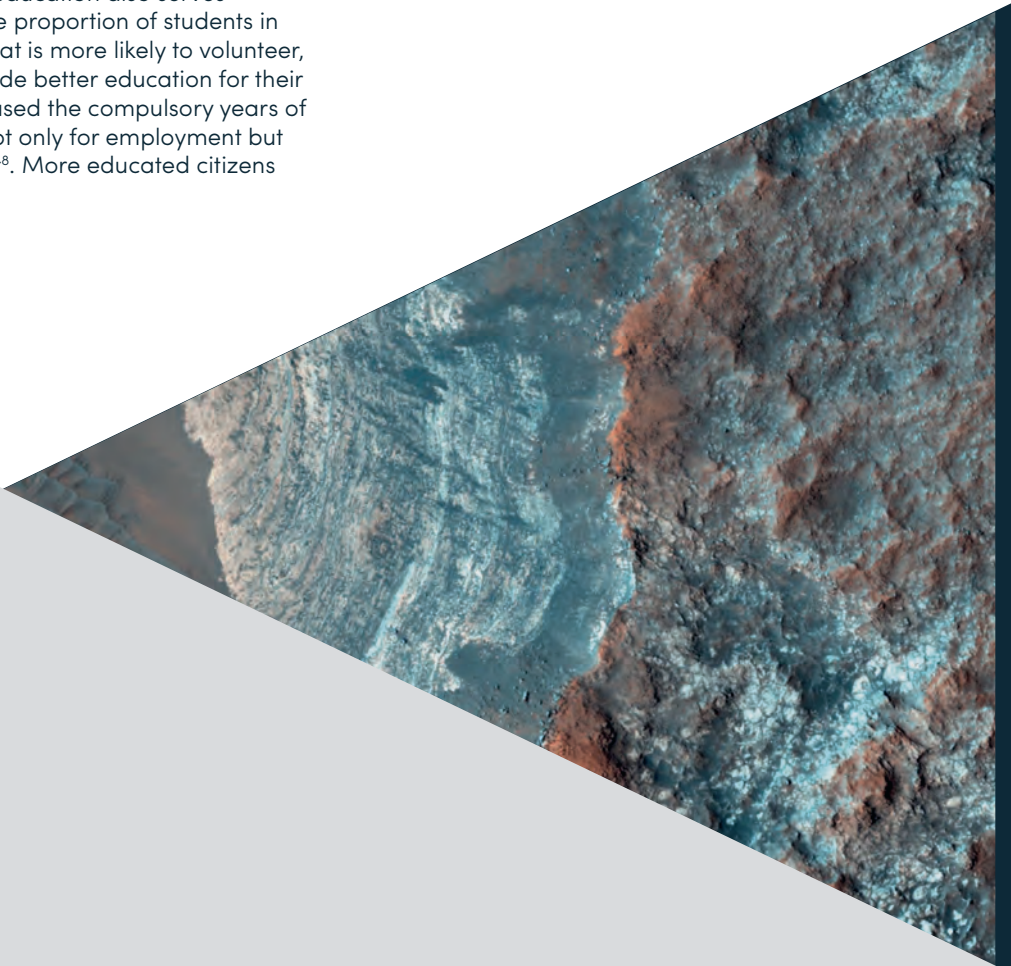
THE POWER OF EDUCATION

Education is key to economic and social progress. Australia, like all advanced economies, is threatened by the prospect of slowing growth with rising income inequality and flat-lining or even declining median incomes¹. How we educate our young people has never been more important. Investment in human capital has been shown to generate three times the rate of return in terms of economic growth as physical investments². Better educated people are more productive, more able to make use of new technologies, and drive long-run economic growth³. In an increasingly technological age, education will be the key determinant of competitiveness, societal wellbeing and sustainability.

The trajectory of the United States provides a story that Australia would do well to heed. In *The Race Between Education and Technology*, Harvard economists Lawrence Katz and Claudia Goldin outline how the 20th century became not only the 'human capital century' but also the 'American century'. The United States, as the first nation to invest in expanded high school education and then higher education, led all other countries on economic growth and individual prosperity. Then, towards the end of the century, educational progress in the U.S. stagnated. Growing socioeconomic disparities, the high price of university, and public under-investment in education led to a decline in college entry and completion, as well as in high-level achievement in schools. While technological change accelerated, educational improvement did not, and the U.S. has now suffered more than many other countries from the impacts of globalisation and technological change, with a hollowed out labour market and stagnant middle class⁴. Even while economic growth stumbles on, youth unemployment is a major problem⁵. Consequently, a recent report from the Center for American Progress concluded, "a focus on children's achievement is warranted when thinking about the economic development of our nation"⁶.

Schools are of course intended to do more than secure economic prosperity, and improving the quality of education also serves broader societal purposes. Increasing the proportion of students in higher education creates a population that is more likely to volunteer, have higher levels of tolerance and provide better education for their children⁷. Likewise, when countries increased the compulsory years of education, later studies found benefits not only for employment but also for political interest and involvement⁸. More educated citizens make better citizens.

"...what business analysts now recognise is that the 'war for talent' is really the 'war to develop talent'."





But education that equips people to take on straightforward societal roles may not be sufficient to prepare the citizens of the future. Already, Australian citizens are showing signs of being disaffected with traditional politics⁹, overwhelmed by the challenges of climate change¹⁰, and ill-prepared for later stages of their lives when state provision of healthcare and pension benefits may decline¹¹. Schools cannot possibly equip all students to deal with these challenges. Rather, the prosperous future of societies will rely on exceptional leaders.

Both business and civil society are desperate for these exceptional leaders. But what business analysts now recognise is that the 'war for talent' is really the 'war to *develop* talent'¹². Research¹³ has established that young people are *not* born with talent: extraordinary capabilities are nurtured by extraordinary environments. This means everyone has potential, and a nation with the right education system can optimise that potential and massively upgrade the skill level of its citizenry – and nations such as Korea, Japan and Singapore have done this over the past decade¹⁴. It is time for advanced economies to demonstrate that they can do the same with higher-level skills.

The choice therefore is whether nations will invest to ensure that they have home-grown sources of talent. Currently, an increasing proportion of top roles end up in the hands of a shrinking global elite, whose children often attend international schools abroad and are channelled directly through to top universities and professional degree programs¹⁵. For the majority of young people to compete, they will need a comparable education that prepares them not just to pass tests but to operate and excel in a complex, multicultural and results-oriented world.

The question facing Australia if it wishes to remain globally competitive is: are we providing a relevant education for the young people who will shape our future?

AUSTRALIA IN AN EDUCATIONAL DECLINE

Amid the education debates that make the pages of Australian newspapers – budget cuts, teacher shortages, and ATAR scores and rankings – the most important long-term issue receives relatively little attention: Australia’s slow decline in educational standards.

Although Australia performs above average for developed countries within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), its performance in international assessment programs (PISA) has declined significantly over the past decade. It is falling behind regional neighbours, and being leapfrogged by countries focused not on ‘stopping the slide’¹⁶ but racing ahead. Poland has been steadily improving since 2000 and is now ahead of Australia in mathematics, while Ireland has successfully reversed its own downward trend and now outperforms Australia in reading.

“...it is not enough to be above average if high potential students are falling behind. The future of Australia as an advanced economy and a globally admired society relies on having a generation of young leaders prepared to take on the considerable approaching challenges of economic and societal change.”

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) seeks to measure how well young adults at age 15 are prepared to use their knowledge and skills in maths, literacy and problem solving to meet real-life challenges. PISA tests how well students are able to apply what they learn at school, and is globally recognised as the most rigorous assessment of skill levels across advanced economies.¹⁷



Analyses of PISA (and Australia's own National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy - NAPLAN) by leading researchers¹⁸ suggest that Australia's challenge is not just to reduce the tail in educational performance. Australia's declining achievement has been fuelled by *both* a persistent number of students achieving at lower levels, *and* a fall in the number of students achieving at higher levels.

Analysis of PISA 2012 findings¹⁹ shows that Australia has real cause for concern, particularly for its top performers²⁰. Across Australia, almost all jurisdictions showed a significant decline in their mathematical literacy performance between PISA 2003 and PISA 2012. Most jurisdictions saw a significant increase in the proportion of low performers and a significant decrease in the proportion of top performers between PISA 2003 and PISA 2012. In reading literacy, Australia's mean performance declined significantly from PISA 2000 to PISA 2012, and there was a significant decline in the proportion of Australian students performing at the top levels.

Policy makers around Australia are asking themselves: with increasing investment in school education, why is this the case?

Some have suggested that Australian education might be being held back by its multicultural composition and high proportion of migrant students. Analysis of PISA 2012²¹ suggests the converse.

- In PISA 2012, Australian-born students' average English literacy score was significantly lower than the average first-generation migrant students' score, and not significantly different from foreign-born students.
- In mathematical literacy, around one-fifth of first-generation students were top performers, a similar proportion to foreign-born students (17%) and a higher proportion than Australian-born students (13%).

This high performance among first generation students is encouraging in light of trends showing the increasing cultural diversity of the Australian workforce²². It also makes clear, however, that Australia's

own education system needs to improve if Australian-born students are going to keep up. Australia's national measures confirm these trends, providing additional evidence that educational performance has declined²³.

The Council of Australian Governments recognises that education and training are critical to increasing the productivity of individual workers and the economy²⁴ and has set a goal for Australian students to excel by international standards²⁵. Australia should be proud of being labelled a 'High Quality-High Equity' education system, scoring above the OECD average in each of the categories of quality and equity. But it is not enough to be above average if high potential students are falling behind. The future of Australia as an advanced economy and a globally admired society relies on having a generation of young leaders prepared to take on the considerable approaching challenges of economic and societal change.



“The coming of age
of a modern context
[is] shaped by digitisation,
connectivity, mobility of talent,
knowledge and capital; and
disruption of traditional models”

*Australia’s
Innovation Imperative,
Business Council of
Australia²⁸*



BUILDING A PATH TO THE NEW FUTURE

Promoting high performance is more important than ever as the world of work changes. If education cannot keep up with technological change, Australia will join the other nations struggling with skill mismatches – where employers have jobs they cannot fill, while workers with outdated credentials cannot find jobs²⁶. A collaboration led by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Australian government recently released the report, *Tomorrow's Digitally Enabled Workforce*²⁷, setting out the trends shaping the future of work in Australia. They identified several 'megatrends' that are already taking shape, including the automation of basic tasks in the workforce; higher skill requirements for entry level jobs; the increasing need for individuals to create their own jobs; and a continuing shift towards a services-focused economy, placing greater importance on social skills and emotional intelligence.

In other countries, this shift is already happening. In the first decade of this century, in the U.S. alone close to five million new jobs were created which involve 'complex interactions' – work that is hard to define and goes beyond routine or transactional work. All other areas of the labour market *lost* jobs²⁹.

In this context, many scenarios for the future of work in advanced economies are bleak³⁰. Liberal market economies are finding that not all models of growth convert into increased living standards for the median

voter³¹. The U.S. is seeing a decline in labour *supply*, and participation rates of women aged 25–34 has fallen back to that of the early 1990s³². This is suggesting that, where they can, adults are staying out of the workforce: they are not seeing job opportunities that match their skills or qualifications, or that pay well enough to support childcare or improved lifestyles. This is not just bad for equality, but detrimental to real growth. New jobs need to be created and innovated for these workers to return and contribute to their national economies.

The situation faced by the U.S. is not inevitable. Those nations which have long foreseen a reliance on knowledge workers, such as Singapore and Finland, have worked hard to upgrade their education systems and focus efforts towards developing young people's higher order skills. These countries are focussed on sustaining their societies by creating new industries and productive value. As they recognise, the considerable innovation necessary to create this new world of work requires leaders with superlative dispositions and skills. For Australia to *thrive* and continue to raise living standards, three things will be required: having something the rest of the world wants (in a services-driven economy); increasing participation in economic activity; and improving productivity (creating new value). This means new types of work, as well as new ways of working that people can engage in over longer life spans, and combine with care-giving roles³³.

WHAT KIND OF SKILLS?

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Analyses of the changing world of work are increasingly clear that “raising worker skill” should be “a national priority”³⁴. It is important to clarify what “skill” means. In the past, educational attainment has been used as a proxy for skill. But the relationship between school completion and economic growth is actually quite weak; rather, it is actual cognitive skills that have been linked to economic growth³⁵.

This distinction is important because it highlights that pushing students through weak school systems for the sake of a certificate is a poor investment; only education which genuinely challenges all students translates into the heightened applied skills that increase productivity. Moreover, additional analyses in the U.S. find that in that economy a key determinant of earnings is now *social* skills. Top earners are those who combine high social skills with high-level cognitive ability³⁶.

In the focus on skill, it is important not to ignore the continued requirements for knowledge. In coming years, office and administrative work is set to shrink rapidly; management, computer and mathematical, and business and financial work will grow³⁷. The Business Council of Australia rightly advocates the importance of greater mastery of STEM fields³⁸, but other fields will also see changing and challenging knowledge demands. Even the most exclusive jobs in fields such as law and medicine are set to change, but the knowledge requirements will remain considerable if we want to keep humans – and humane ethics – in the driving seat³⁹. The preparation to become a top professional will become even more challenging: as increased data availability and analytics alters the way professionals and managers operate, these individuals will need to combine deep knowledge of their fields with the skill to work flexibly in new kinds of workplaces.

The CSIRO report concludes that young people will need to be prepared for learning throughout their lives, both in their workplaces and in periods of “targeted learning” as the demand for high levels of skills increases. David Bollier, who has studied alternative economic and work arrangements for over a decade, concludes that the future of work will require both deep expertise in a non-automatable area, and the skill to communicate the value of what you are doing: “Because work will become more modularised, workers will need to be specialised in certain skills—while still being able to communicate with the rest of a team.”⁴⁰

School systems today generally tend towards neither of these important areas of deep specialisation or communication and social skills. Instead, most schooling is geared towards broad, subject-specific learning, with rare opportunity to work collaboratively on real tasks. High performing students themselves know that something is wrong: best-selling author Nikhil Goyal wrote his book *One Size Does Not Fit All* (2013) aged just 17, frustrated by the experience at his elite New York school. Professor William Deresiewicz wrote the book *Excellent Sheep* (2014) about conversations with his students at Yale. They are the ‘sheep’ of the title, driven to succeed at whatever is set in front of them, but not provided with structures to encourage risk taking or explore new avenues. The result is that for every rare Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, there are thousands of students who transition into service industries and will become the corporate downsizers of the future; real job creators and social entrepreneurs are too few and far between.

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

The future of work in advanced economies could take many forms. Low skilled workers – and the governments who support them – will be reliant on the choices of corporate leaders to innovate where possible in the direction of job growth. As management Professor Jerry Davis has observed, “Corporations...are job creators only as a last resort...what is good for shareholders may not be good for employment.”⁴¹ Additionally, sociologists of work observe that companies now routinely look beyond their borders for their top executives: only the most highly educated, globally competent workers are deemed fit to lead.⁴² Nations which cannot produce these workers amongst their own young will see their business sectors take a hit, and their ability to protect national over corporate multinational interests threatened.

A second major trend in advanced societies is a massive shift towards a freelance economy. The proportion of freelancers is projected to reach almost half within the decade, and analysts are observing the growth of ‘talent platforms’ to solve the skills mismatches of the future.⁴³ This trend has mixed prospects for economic and societal wellbeing. McKinsey project that such platforms could allow over 500 million people to find work in the next decade:⁴⁴ but only if young people are prepared with the acumen to be self-starting. Others may need more support. As the CEO of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has stated, “We need to get in place the right settings so that the innovation and creativity of Australian people can be unleashed to tap into the opportunities that arise. The overarching principle that needs to guide our reform efforts should be one of flexibility, giving our people and institutions the agility to shape and adjust to global circumstances.”⁴⁵

The new world of work poses both opportunities and challenges. Success in the future will be less determined by the geographic location and resources of a country, and more by the capabilities of its people, particularly their ability to generate new value from connectivity and technology.



OUR INNOVATION IMPERATIVE

Creating the conditions for new forms of value creation is particularly vital in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

The extraction and processing of resources will continue to be a significant part of the Australian economy and of its exports. But volatility in commodity prices and in growth rates of emerging markets, alongside the substitution of even skilled labour by technology in and beyond the resources industries, requires, as both governing and opposition parties recognise, diversification of the Australian economy.


As China, India, Indonesia and other Asian economies develop and move even more into knowledge, creative and service industries, so Australia will need to innovate to maintain and increase its global competitiveness. Australia ranks 22nd in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness rankings, below neighbours like New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Malaysia. Hence the importance of building the capability and infrastructure to support innovation, to create the products, services, industries and jobs of the future.

This necessity for innovation is not confined to the economy. Climate change and environmental conservation, counter-terrorism and border security, persistent inequalities in life outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other groups, ballooning health expenditure, all require innovative responses, and individuals and communities that have the capability to design and implement these solutions.

As Prime Minister Turnbull said, shortly after being elected Liberal leader, "The Australia of the future has to be a nation that is agile, that is innovative, that is creative."⁴⁶ Ed Husic, Labor's parliamentary secretary agrees, stating "The national mission now is to become more innovative, to grow the economy, to generate more jobs."⁴⁷

The recently launched National Innovation and Science Agenda creates a policy framework and initiatives to build capability and infrastructure: tax breaks for businesses that take risks and innovate; co-investing with the private sector to commercialise promising ideas; incentivising universities to partner with industry for research; promoting coding and computing in schools; and attracting entrepreneurial and research talent from overseas. It is making government into an exemplar through becoming more innovative in how it delivers services, making data openly available, and enabling start-ups and innovative small business more easily to sell technology services to government.

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“Advanced western economies can no longer assume that their educated young people will enter a world where their skills are sought out and embraced.”

Several of these themes are echoed in the Labor Party’s policy statements with some additions of their own including regional innovation hubs and giving graduates an “honours year” to develop their business ideas.

These efforts are responding to the recognition that Australia has fallen behind in global competitiveness due to its weakness in innovation, and meet a call from the business sector to create “innovation systems”.⁴⁸ But no amount of flex in regulation can create innovation out of nothing. Likewise, providing opportunities may not be enough if young Australians have not developed the disposition for innovation and continue to show high levels of risk-aversion⁴⁹.

Both government and the opposition acknowledge a role for schools in building the required capabilities. While coding, computing and STEM are important, innovation is about more than technology. CSIRO concludes that Australia will see increasing demand for an entrepreneurial labour force, and therefore needs to develop “innovation education” – education that is oriented towards finding and solving real-world problems.⁵⁰ It is this kind of education which will give young Australians the edge. Since 2010, China has been the world’s largest provider of higher education. It has long since surpassed the United States in its number of young people graduating with science, math, engineering, and technology degrees. Advanced western economies can no longer assume that their educated young people will enter a world where their skills are sought out and embraced. Schools need to do much more to support students to develop the very highest levels of skills.

AN AGILE AND RESPONSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education systems are slowly coming to grips with the demands of a new world of work. But to respond, education systems themselves require a capacity for creativity and innovation. In Australia, however, just when it is most needed, education is one of the sectors falling behind in innovation⁵¹. Too often traditional schooling models remain unchanged and increasingly out-dated.

In other countries, meanwhile, educational innovation is now gathering pace. In China⁵², Hong Kong⁵³, and Singapore⁵⁴, developing the creativity and character to have ideas and see them through has been made central to the curriculum⁵⁵. In the U.S., long-standing charter school legislation is finally bearing fruit in the form of school networks which major in rigorous project-based learning, where students take on real-world problems and are challenged to produce products to adult standards⁵⁶. New independent school networks are flourishing with an offer which stretches into personalised, deep learning and real-world experiences for all students⁵⁷. Other similar programs and curriculum frameworks have matured⁵⁸, responding to parent and school-led demands for learning designs which look beyond national standards and narrow specifications restricted to traditional subjects.

High potential learners without access to these models are stuck in a system that is proving too slow to adapt to their particular needs and to the changing times. The consequence is a failure to stretch, deepen and accelerate the learning and skills development required for them to become the leaders of the next generation.

Educational innovation cannot be left to a handful of future-oriented schools. Education systems and sectors need the structural capacity to innovate⁵⁹ – to purposely and continuously explore, test and scale new ideas, new practices, and new ways of working.

Current examples of education innovations are often constrained to the fringes of systems. Examples from around the world are curated by organisations such as InnoveEdu,⁶⁰ the WISE Awards⁶¹ and the Center for Education Innovations⁶², but many education systems show few signs of drawing on these examples or seeking to adapt and extend them. While some teachers and school leaders are making active and continuous efforts to innovate their practice, they often find their systems are all too rigid, unsupportive or even sometimes actively hostile⁶³. It is well known that teachers make the crucial difference to the quality of learning that happens in schools⁶⁴. But if teachers are to transform their practice to ensure learners are reaching their highest potential, they need an agile system to support them. In particular, to open up a full range of learning contexts to students, processes need to support connections between schools, the wider community, and industry.

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SYSTEMATIC AND SECTOR-WIDE INNOVATION

To realise the potential of all students, education systems must change what they do, creating new kinds of tasks, new ways of working, and new space for students to excel.

That means two things: the first is becoming more *systematically* innovative. Continuous improvement requires a constant supply of new ideas and solutions. Policies, accountability structures and professional practice should, by design, support and incentivise a continuous pipeline of education innovations. For instance, the United Arab Emirates Star Rating system⁶⁵ is an example of how efforts to raise the quality of public services through a set of measures, including government excellence awards and service labs, can instil continuous striving for public service innovation.

The second is recognising that procedural innovation capacity alone is not enough. To ensure that innovation is deep, sustained and really impacting on student learning, innovation must be related to broader structures and agents. This sector and system-wide innovation is necessary to ensure that discrete innovations become the norm, and professionals are equipped with a general flexibility and receptiveness in the face of change.⁶⁶

A system designed to be agile and responsive to change recognises the wide set of interconnections in play within education. A key example is in assessment: discrete innovations in practice and pedagogy can only meet their potential if supported by corresponding changes in assessment models, and a reframing of how the public conceptualises success and achievement measures. The need for new approaches to assessment is recognised globally. UNESCO, for example, established the 'Learning Metrics Task Force' (LMTF) to support nations to track, along with aims such as literacy and numeracy, the extent to which students are developing to be 'Citizens of the World' and engaging in social and emotional learning⁶⁷. Jurisdictions from Argentina to Ontario are engaged in the current phase of LMTF to develop new methods of assessment to meet these more expansive learning domains.

A LICENSE TO INNOVATE AND COLLABORATE, AT SCALE

Such structural shifts need to be accompanied by a corresponding cultural shift. For the most creative teachers and school leaders to achieve their potential impact, they need a license to innovate on behalf of their sector and system. Design processes engaging communities of schools should increasingly replace rigid, centralised and short-term reform initiatives, creating the potential for more meaningful and lasting transformation.

For innovations to spread in this way, collaboration – not competition – needs to be the engine of how teachers and leaders engage across the system. Scaling is not simply a technical sequence from innovation to diffusion. It is a social process achieved through supported peer-learning in professional networks⁶⁸. Facilitators of this process need to be supported, recognised and rewarded just as much as initial innovators.

Through innovation, schools can break out of old dichotomies between knowledge and skills, traditional rigour and entrepreneurial creativity. Diverse commentators in Australia agree that design and entrepreneurship need to become part of the life of schools⁶⁹. The key is that these new skill areas be incorporated with robustness and care, and combined with the teaching of traditional subjects, to avoid becoming no more than a dropout option for academically under-prepared students. If top students are to be the job creators of the future, and not just one more herd of 'excellent sheep', it is crucial that they are given the opportunity to develop enterprise and innovation skills in combination with deep subject knowledge.

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LEARNING TO INNOVATE INTELLIGENTLY

The reality that schools must come to grips with is that their task has changed. While on the one hand education systems still face the challenges of equity – of reducing socioeconomic achievement gaps – they also have to grapple with the fact that getting students entry into a job or higher education is no longer a guarantee of success. Securing a job now does not mean a young person has a career for life; and getting an undergraduate degree, too, no longer guarantees good employment. As the CSIRO analysis identifies, “the question is not whether (or not) jobs will change but how they transition smoothly to new (and better) jobs.”⁷⁰

In Australia, on average it now takes young people 4.7 years to get from leaving school to starting work, compared to one year in

1986⁷¹. Over two-thirds of young people now have completed an undergraduate degree, compared to just over a quarter in 2003. However, despite this higher attainment, 35% of graduates are not in full time work four months after graduating. Overall, 30% of people 15-24 are under-employed. These data suggest that education is not providing the skills that young people really need.

Young Australians frequently make their way through school with the idea that getting their secondary qualifications is their ticket into a good job. They have often not been given the space to experiment, to develop passions and ideas, and, importantly, the persistence and management skills to see those ideas through. Generations of high-performing young people have been under-developed as

innovators or leaders. The Australian Management Capability Index⁷² finds that Australia’s management capabilities are outranked by international competitors. Australian managers score low in the ‘visionary and strategic leadership’ and ‘people leadership’ capabilities that are crucial to job creation and good growth in the future.

Top independent, public and international schools around the world are now focussing explicitly on developing the critical, social and collaboration skills to produce the next generation of leaders. If Australia’s young people are to have a shot at leading the industries, governments and institutions of the future, its schools need to be up there with the most innovative and challenging in the world.



BOLD BEGINNINGS

Australia has already begun the journey to transform its education system so that its young people have the skills, dispositions and knowledge to survive and thrive in the 21st century and to actively participate in building an innovative and entrepreneurial economy and society. The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) funded a cross-State program, Learning Frontiers, to develop teaching and learning practices to deepen student engagement in learning. New Pedagogies for Deep Learning⁷³ in Victoria and Tasmania, Big Picture Education Australia⁷⁴, STEM Innovation Partnerships in Western Australia⁷⁵, AMPLIFY⁷⁶ led by the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia, Schools of the Future in New South Wales, and the Australian arm of Harvard Graduate School of Education Project Zero⁷⁷ are all making significant contributions to the necessary transformation of education and learning.

But perhaps the most extensive program is that sponsored by the Association of Independent Schools New South Wales (AISNSW). With funding from the Students First Support Fund, AISNSW has established ELEVATE, a multi-year initiative which is explicitly focused on identifying and realising high potential in learners. The program brings together Independent, Catholic and government schools in a 'community of practice' to collaborate, utilising disciplined innovation and design methods, to develop robust new teaching practices and real-world learning opportunities to accelerate, deepen and extend students' abilities and achievements in academic areas and beyond. In doing this they are drawing on a specially commissioned global horizon scan of how talent is identified and realised in businesses, community organisations and educational institutions across the world.

ELEVATE's intention is to connect with other relevant programs and initiatives and share information on the practices and opportunities that its participating schools develop across all states and territories so that Australia will have an ever larger pool of high performers with the capabilities and confidence to rival the best in the world, to lead and contribute to innovation in Australian companies, communities and public services, and to enable global competitiveness and excellence.

ENDNOTES

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