

Wyndham City: A tale of steady progress towards a sustainable learning community

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The purpose of this paper is to explore the development of a learning community/city approach within Wyndham City, Victoria, Australia. The journey commences with a discussion of the demographic and economic context in which Wyndham has established its Learning Community Strategies. The development of Wyndham's Learning Community is placed in the context of a history of other learning community/city approaches within greater Melbourne, Australia and internationally. This history includes learning community and learning city frameworks such as the Australian Learning Community Framework and UNESCO's Key Features of Learning Cities, which have influenced Wyndham's Learning Community Strategies. Further, an in-depth examination of the journey of Wyndham City Council in developing successive Learning Community Strategies identifies critical incidents that have led to steady progress towards a sustainable learning community. Also, the development and evaluation of the Wyndham Learning Community are examined, including some vignettes of successful case studies. In conclusion, the implications for adult education and theory, including avoiding the use of the label 'learning city' as a marketing tool rather than a 'social process of participation and negotiation' is examined with pointers given for further research.

Keywords: *learning city, learning community, learning partnerships, lifelong learning, community development, Wyndham City Council*

Introduction

Stakeholders credited the Wyndham Learning Community Strategy 2014-2017 as key to building the foundations for strong partnerships and collaborations on which to promote lifelong and life-wide learning across Wyndham's increasingly diverse community (O'Connor, Wong, Scrase, 2018).

In order to understand the context in which Wyndham has developed its Learning Community Strategies it is useful to provide a brief Snapshot of Wyndham City. The City of Wyndham is located on the western edge of Melbourne, Victoria, between Metropolitan Melbourne and Geelong. Wyndham covers an area of 542km² and features 27.4km of coastline bordering Port Phillip Bay to the east and has some of the richest basalt soils on the continent (Wyndham City Council (WCC), 2016).

For some time, Wyndham has experienced very rapid growth. Wyndham is the 3rd fastest growing municipality in Australia – by volume and by rate of growth. Around 13 babies are born to Wyndham mothers each day. It is predicted that in 2040 Wyndham's population will have almost doubled.

Wyndham's population (288,212 in 2020), is dominated by millennials and younger generations: 58% of residents are 35 years or younger. The Wyndham Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is the largest in all of greater Melbourne. Almost half of all Wyndham residents were born overseas from 162 different countries; 53% of Wyndham residents speak a language other than English. More than half of Wyndham households are families with children. Together with the cities of Casey and Hume, Wyndham has the largest average household size in all of Greater Melbourne.

Transport is a key challenge with 70% of employed residents leaving Wyndham every morning to go to work. Such high numbers commuting out of Wyndham place great stress on public transport and traffic congestion and are in stark contrast to the 20-minute neighbourhood concept where people can 'live, work and play' (Victorian State Government, 2020). This also compounds issues of time spent with

family, on recreation, education and sport, and associated health issues. More than 1 in 10 young people in Wyndham are neither working nor studying. Wyndham experiences lower levels of tertiary attainment than greater Melbourne and a higher unemployment rate. However, housing in Wyndham is 15% more affordable than greater Melbourne (WCC, 2016).

It was against this backdrop that successive Learning Community Strategies have been developed, the latest adopted by Council on 5 February 2019. Through this succession of Strategies, a strong foundation for the creation of a community of lifelong learners in Wyndham has been created.

The Learning Community Strategy (LCS) 2018-2023 identifies the drivers facilitating lifelong and life-wide learning in Wyndham. Wyndham City Council's (WCC) multiple direct roles in relation to this Strategy include advocacy; facilitation of partnerships, collaborations and relationships to deliver lifelong learning opportunities; implementing new models of service development; and initiating new responses to existing and emerging needs; and the delivery of programs and services for social, economic, environmental and the healthy wellbeing of the community. (WCC, 2018, p.15).

These ideas build upon a knowledge base of practical, action-oriented lifelong learning strategies that have taken place in Australia and internationally (Brimbank City Council, 2010, 2018; Hume City Council, 2007, 2010; Kearns, 2005; Longworth, 2006; Mitchell, 2006; National Institute of Lifelong Learning, 2016; City of Melton, 2015).

Learning From Literature And Practice

Learning Community/Learning City Developments in Australia

The Learning City was defined geographically in the 1970s when the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) invited seven cities around the world (including Adelaide in Australia) to become part of 'Educating Cities'. (Jordan, Longworth, Osborne, 2014, p.275). More recently, Australia's history of learning community/ learning city developments are well documented in the literature, with a flurry of activity from about 1998 onwards. (Kearns, 2005, Longworth, 2006, Longworth and Osborne, 2010, Galbally & Wong, 2008). Learning community initiatives included 10 Victorian Learning Towns projects

funded in 2000 by the Victorian State Government and 10 learning communities across Australia funded in 2001 by the former Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) (Global Learning Services, 2001, Henderson, Castles, McGrath & Brown, 2000, Wheeler & Wong, 2006). Once the funding ran out the momentum was not sustained for many of these communities (Kearns, 2015).

Nevertheless, lessons were learnt and documented. An Australian Learning Community Framework (ALCF) was developed (Wheeler & Wong, 2013), and good-practice case studies from Hume Global Learning Village (HGLV), and Gwydir Learning Region (GLR) were published (Wheeler, Wong, Farrell & Wong, 2013,). The ALCF was updated in 2014 to align with the UNESCO Key Features of Learning Cities (UNESCO UIL, 2013), and the introduction of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLCs) in Beijing in 2013. A case study on the City of Melton was added (Wheeler, Wong & Blunden, 2014, 2014a). Melton became the first Australian city to join UNESCO's GNLC and was one of 12 award winning case studies (Valdes-Cotera, Longworth, Lunardon, Wang, Jo, Crowe, 2015) which informed the Guidelines of Building Learning Cities (UNESCO UIL, 2015, 2015a).

Australian good practice examples were also featured in a number of international publications and on PASCAL International Exchanges (PIE) (Kearns, 2013, 2014, Longworth, 2006, Plumb, Leverman & McGray, 2007).

Wyndham's Learning Journey

The City of Wyndham commenced a journey to develop its own learning community strategies in 2006. A process of action learning developed a collaborative learning community vision and strategies for Wyndham. Figure 1 maps this process.

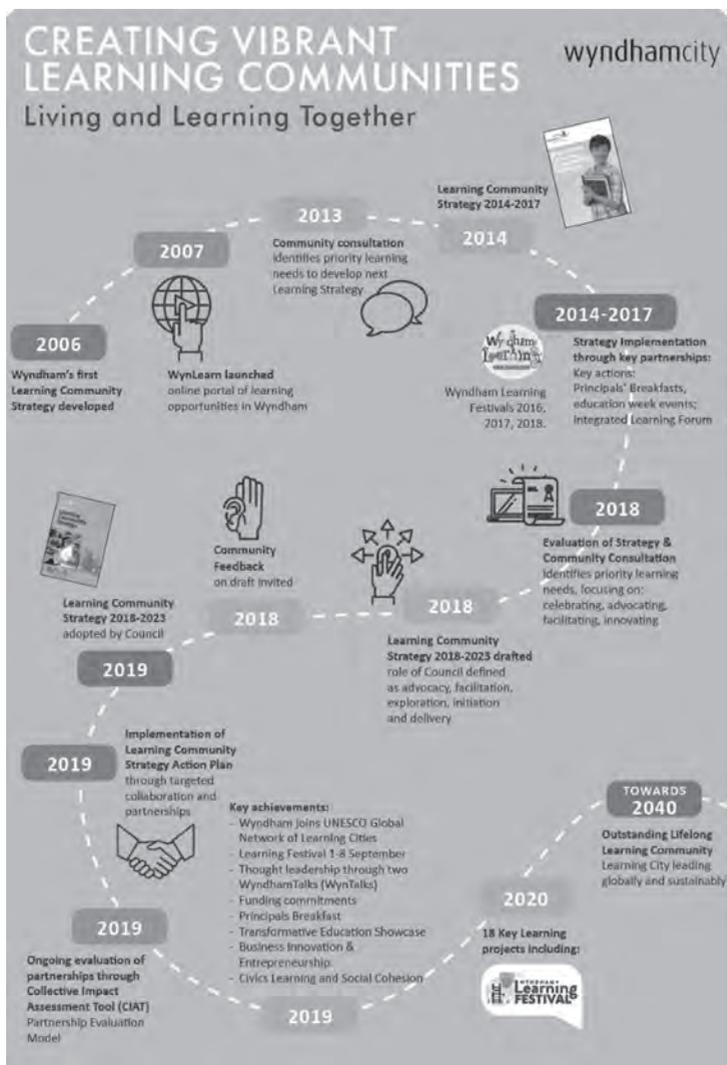


Figure 1: Wyndham's Learning Journey

Source: Wyndham City Council Infographic, written by Tabbagh, designed by Wyndham City Council Communications and Marketing unit. First published by PASCAL International Observatory (2020). Adapted from Neylon, 2017, p.10.

Critical incidents identified in Figure 1 are:

- the launch of the first Learning Community Strategy (LCS) in 2006, and an online learning portal (Wynlearn) in 2007 which highlighted learning opportunities across the municipality.
- the introduction of a stronger community engagement process in 2013 that led to a second LCS (2014-2017) which brought together the community's learning priorities, the education theory and the WCC's desire to improve social equity, and create a sustainable vision for the future of Wyndham.
- Council resources behind its commitment to lifelong learning through the appointment of a Coordinator Learning Community to oversee the implementation of the Strategy.
- a strong partnership approach to deliver the learning outcomes identified in the Strategy, and the development of an evaluation approach that measures the strength and outcomes of these partnerships.
- an evolving and strengthening governance structure that resulted in a dedicated Learning City Portfolio Committee (LCPC) that now aligned with other Council Committees. The head of this committee was elected mayor 2019-2020, demonstrating strong support for lifelong learning from the leadership of the city.
- a celebration of lifelong learning in the city through an annual Learning Festival.
- close involvement of the LCPC in the development of the current LCS 2018-2023, with a working group formed from Committee members to guide, advise and inform the Strategy.
- role clarification of Council in LCS 2018-2023 as one of advocacy; facilitation; exploration; initiation and delivery.
- Wyndham City Council being accepted as a member of UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities. The idea is to use membership as a motivational tool to promote lifelong learning in the community.
- further commitment by Council through the appointment of a Learning Community Officer recognising the breadth and depth of the Action Plan.

In the 14 years since Wyndham initiated its learning community strategy, planners have built on what has come before, consulted with adult learning experts, and the citizens of Wyndham to adapt its strategies and actions for a local context. It is no surprise that items highlighted above are also key elements of the Australian Learning Community Framework and UNESCO's Key Features of Learning Cities. A more detailed comparison of the elements of the UNESCO framework with WCLS 2018-2023 is contained in Table One. Wyndham City Council recognised and supported the roll-out of Wyndham's Learning Community Strategy in alignment with the policies of Adult Learning Australia (ALA), the ALCF, UNESCO's Key Features of Learning Cities, and the United Nations Sustainability Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 3, 4, 5 and 11 (WCC 2018, pp.12-13). The Council supported the attendance of the Coordinator Community Learning at two international conferences including UNESCO's Third International Conference on Learning Cities held in Cork in 2017. The Wyndham Learning Festival is modelled on Cork's (Ireland) renowned Learning Festival. The city is also positioning its citizens to understand and respond to emerging economic and social change demonstrated by the Wyndham Smart Cities department's award for its Smart City Strategy 2019-2024 (WCC, 2019).

Table One: Comparison of Learning City Frameworks to Wyndham as a Learning City

UNESCO Key Features of Learning Cities (UNESCO UIL, 2013)		Wyndham City Council (WCC) and Learning City Portfolio Committee (LCPC)	Related Plans and Strategies
Foundations	Strong political will and commitment	In 2018 LCPC was established as one of 12 Portfolio Committees to focus attention on key priority areas for Council. The current Mayor is also the Learning City Portfolio Holder	Learning Community Strategy 2018-2023 (LCS2018-2023) Evaluation of the Wyndham LCS 2014-2017
	Governance and participation of all stakeholders	Governance model links Wyndham City Council and key departments (e.g. Libraries and Community Learning) to community and other stakeholder representatives. The inclusion of a LCPC structure highlights the importance of the LCS 2018-2023.	LCS 2018-2023 Section 3.2 Governance Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with key stakeholders LCS 2018-2023 Section 5.2.3 Facilitating Partnerships and Collaboration.
	Mobilisation and utilisation of resources	WCC has the Wyndham 2040 Vision (Community Plan) and the City Plan 2017-2023 and LCS 2018-2023 aligns with these.	LCS 2018-2023 Section 6 Measuring Success and Section 7 Promoting the Wyndham LCS 2018-2023. It is seen as critical to success to 'mobilise all types of learning' and reach all people in the Wyndham community.
Building Blocks	Inclusive learning in the education system (Universal Education in Australia)	WCC Social and Economic Inclusion unit	LCS 2018-2023 Section 4 Learning across life. A focus on life stages, that is Early Years, School Years, Youth, Adults and Seniors. Also, People and Diversity 'providing rich intercultural opportunities to support new ways of learning, earning and living together.' LCS 2018-2023 action 7: Inclusion and Equity in Learning for All
	Re-vitalised learning in family and communities	The LCS 2018-2023 aligns with Wyndham's Family Friendly Charter principles.	See above LCS 2018-2023 Section 4 Learning across life. Particular emphasis is given to 4.3 learning places and 4.4 Ready for the Future

UNESCO Key Features of Learning Cities (UNESCO UIL, 2013)	Wyndham City Council (WCC) and Learning City Portfolio Committee (LCPC)	Related Plans and Strategies	
			– New Skills and New Ways of Learning
	Effective learning for and in the workplace	The LCPC and The Employment, Education and Training Portfolio Committee; Smart City and Future Focussed Economy Portfolio Committees	LCS 2018-2023 Section 4.4 Ready for the Future – New Skills and New Ways of Learning
	Extended use of modern learning technologies	WCC and the LCPC is encouraging local, national and international connection, for example, through membership of the UNESCO GNLC, presentation at international conferences and hosting international conferences.	LCS 2018-2023 Section 5.2.4 Innovative Learning, for example, Wyn Talks, Community Hackathons The Coordinator Learning Community works with the Manager Smart Cities Office to develop and showcase video based and other resources to celebrate and promote learning in Wyndham. (see Section 7)
	Enhanced quality and excellence in learning	WCC and the LCPC promotes and advocates for equity and quality in service provision through LCS Actions (for example, "I Love Kinder" and "Schools4Wyndham" campaigns; Education Roundtable; Principal's Breakfast)	LCS 2018-2023 Section 6 Measuring Success. For example, the Collective Impact Assessment Tool (CIAT) measures and evaluates the strengths of partnership in contributing to the achievement of the aims of the LCS. Wyndham Liveability and Wellbeing Indicators for Earning and Learning.
	A vibrant culture of learning throughout life	Support of LCS Actions through WCC units (for example, Libraries, Youth Resource Centre, Communications) and LCPC	LCS 2018-2023 Section 5.2.1 Celebrating living and learning in Wyndham. The running of an annual Learning Festival is a classic example.
Benefits	Individual empowerment and social cohesion	WCC and LCPC supporting LCS Actions; Social and Economic Inclusion unit working across business, community and government to provide local people with better connections to work and community life (for	LCS 2018-2023 Section 5.1 Underlying Principles, for example, ensuring equity and inclusion and leveraging success and promoting lifelong and life-wide learning. Section 5.2 Key Actions are designed to mobilise learning for all by

UNESCO Key Features of Learning Cities (UNESCO UIL, 2013)		Wyndham City Council (WCC) and Learning City Portfolio Committee (LCPC)	Related Plans and Strategies
		example the Community Mentoring program)	celebrating, advocating, facilitating and innovating. Other examples are Section 5.2.3 Action 9: Aboriginal culture driving new ways to learn; Action 18: Civics Learning and Social Cohesion.
	Economic development and cultural prosperity	WCC through its Wyndham 2040 and City Plan and LCPC through LCS support economic development and cultural prosperity (for example by facilitating partnerships and collaboration across sectors and innovating learning and fostering new entrepreneurial spirit).	LCS 2018-2023. Underlying Principles and Key Actions. An example is Section 5.3.2 Action 10: Developing Leaders in Local Communities and Action 11: Alumni as Leadership Mentors. Also, Section 4.4 Ready for the Future – New Skills and New Ways of Learning

Source: Wheeler and Tabbagh 2020, adapted from Wheeler et al (2014), Table 16 Australian Learning Community Framework critical success factor checklist p.39

Drivers of Economic and Social Change

There are a myriad of drivers of global economic and social change such as rapid growth in information and communications technology, globalization, climate change, and changes in the world of work. For example, automation, artificial intelligence (in particular robotics), and other new technologies are developing at an unprecedented rate, and this is significantly impacting industry and jobs, tasks and the skills required. In addition, issues such as growing inequality; a growing number of displaced persons because of conflict; climate and health crises all impact on people in communities (UNESCO, 2018). A learning community approach such as that adopted by Wyndham can contribute practical action-orientated programs to a whole of community approach.

Wyndham is a diverse and young community. The Wyndham LCS 2018-2023 with a theme of lifelong learning is the guiding principle driving social, economic, environmental and cultural life. The Strategy identified youth unemployment, education attainment levels, and the need for more local jobs as key challenges. The Strategy contains a

pragmatic Action Plan, which is implemented in collaboration with key stakeholders, and designed to provide opportunities to build skills for adaptation and resilience for the future. For example, themes include Aboriginal Culture driving new ways to learn; Developing Leaders in the Local Communities; Creative Learning Program; Community 'Hackathons' (changemakers collaborate with volunteers to solve issues to the benefit of the community); Entrepreneurship in Business; Civics Learning and Social Cohesion.

Evaluation And Results

The process of collaboration and community engagement is very important in the development and evaluation of this learning community. The current and previous Learning Community Strategies were created through a process of listening to what the community valued in the previous Strategy and during the process, identifying learning priorities for the future of Wyndham.

An evaluation of the Wyndham LCS 2014-2017 took place in early 2018. The aim was to assess how effective that Strategy had been in creating and facilitating learning partnerships; engaging the community in learning and delivering learning outcomes that position Wyndham for the future (O'Connor et al 2018, p.13). After extensive consultation with stakeholders and analysis of the available data, a major finding was that the Strategy had acted as a catalyst for facilitating the implementation of a number of learning initiatives, as well as to support and extend existing learning initiatives within the community.

There were many recommendations from the evaluation that are being implemented in the current strategy (Wyndham LCS 2018-2023), including the implementation of a five-year term; the funding of another learning officer to support the growing action plan; leveraging the success of the Learning Festival into promotion of other lifelong learning initiatives; keeping the concept of Life Stages – Early Years, School Years, Young Adults, Adults and Seniors, as a mechanism for focussing actions of the Strategy; further developments of local leaders and the joining of UNESCO's GNLC (WCC, 2018).

It was noted that in previous Strategies accurate and complete participation data for some Actions that involved wide scale mobilisation, for example, the Learning Festival, were not easy to

collect. The effective measurement of outcomes for collaborative partnership approaches were also noted as a challenge for other learning communities (Cavaye et al, 2013, Wheeler et al, 2013). The effort to place value on the strength and outcomes of partnerships within communities and localities to build social capital is worthwhile. Parker (2019) reflects that internationally it is now more contemporary to see the learning city as a living system within a sustainable framework where learning activities are valued for more than financial returns and how such activities contribute to economic development. A key recommendation of the evaluation of Wyndham LCS 2014-2017 was to strengthen baseline data to enable more thorough pre- and post-Strategy comparisons of the impact of the Strategy on Wyndham community in the future.

The Collective Impact Assessment Tool (CIAT) (City of Melton, 2017), a tool for measuring and evaluating the strength of partnerships in contributing to the achievement of collaborative projects, was applied successfully to the evaluation of the Wyndham LCS 2014-2017 to assess the collective impact of partnerships across the Life Stages. CIAT generates consistent numerical data about subjective findings and provides baseline data and is illustrated in Fig Two.

Once set up the online Tool took partners through a series of questions about the collective impact of the partnership for key elements of the Wyndham LCS 2014-2017. In particular learning objectives were established for collective action projects in five key areas: Learning for Everyone; Early Years; School Years; Young Adults, and Adults and Seniors. The results are calculated using a weighted average method.

The resulting CIAT graph (Figure Two) plots partnership strength (horizontal axis) against outcome and sustainability measures achieved (vertical axis).

The graph is divided into three sections:

- Low Impact
- Moderate Impact
- High Impact

Strong partnerships and the achievement of their project outcomes is an indicator of solid conditions for learning between partners. Moderate

impact indicates that the project outcomes are having an impact and that partnerships are developing. The conditions for learning are sound. However, the outcomes have not reached the stage where they are sustainable. Further work would improve the engagement of partners (City of Melton, 2017a).

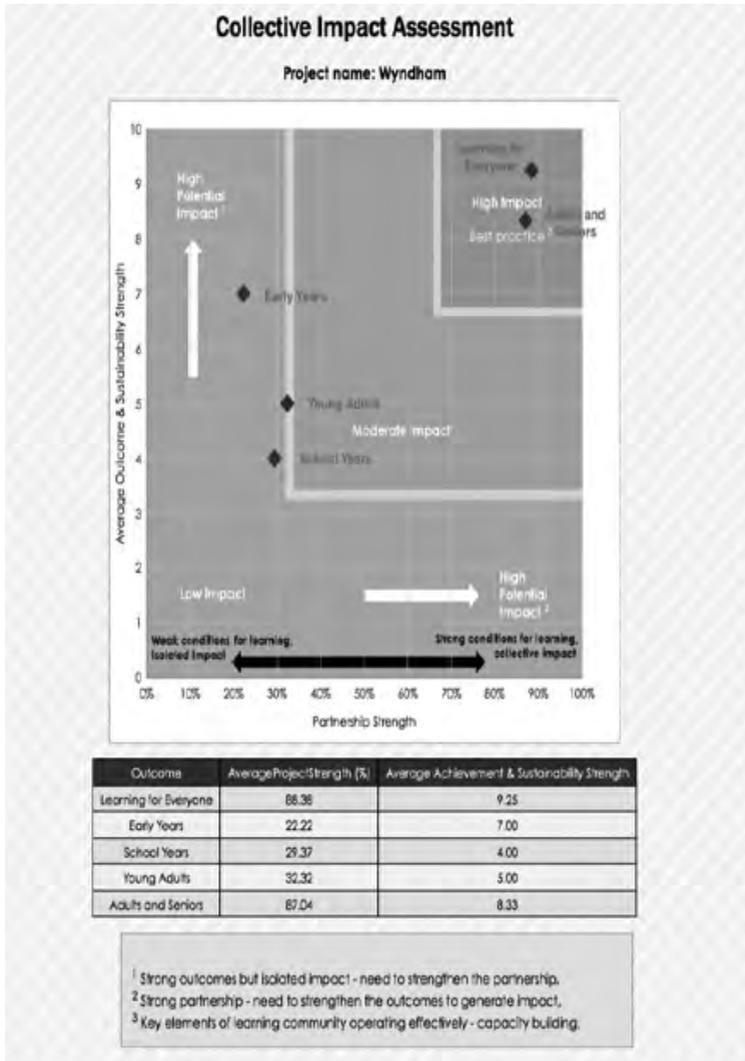


Figure 2: Collective Impact Assessment Graph
Source: O'Connor, B., Wong, S., Scrase, S., 2018, p.33.

CIAT was able to quickly identify strong partnerships, for example, in the Adults and Seniors area, and those that needed strengthening, for example, the School Years. Subsequently, CIAT was adopted as the preferred baseline tool for measuring and evaluating the 'strength of the partnerships in contributing to the achievement of the aims of the Learning Community Strategy 2018-2019' (WCC 2018, p. 35).

To improve the collection of quantitative baseline data, the Coordinator Learning Community will work with the Manager Smart Cities Office to identify cost effective digital solutions for the collection of data and promotion of learning activities (WCC 2018, p. 37).

Boshier (2018) says that the scope of a learning city depends upon the combined effect of at least three variables. First, the nature of what is learnt. Second, the duration of learning activities from short festivals to sustained activities. Third, the extent of learner participation. The following vignettes illustrate four examples of the scope and breadth of learning activities in Wyndham. Vignette A outlines the Wyndham Learning Festival. Vignette B describes a Science, Technology, Mathematics and Engineering (STEM) awareness competition for young people. Vignette C building on Welcome to Country in Kindergartens and Vignette D, a local photographer giving back to community.

Vignette A: The Wyndham Learning Festival

The result of a partnership between Wyndham Community & Education Centre and the Wyndham City Council, the Wyndham Learning Festival is now in its 5th year. The Festival is held from 1-8 September, coinciding with Australia's Adult Learners Week, and provides a showcase, recognition and celebration of learning across Wyndham. Upwards of 5000 people attend around 180 Festival events each year.

The Festival is a whole of community event that provides opportunities for free learning activities across the City of Wyndham for all ages and interests, promoting lifelong learning for all and welcoming new events, sponsors and participants to reflect this diverse and dynamic learning community.

Learning Festival activities have included cooking, pyrography, photography, craft, hip hop dance, bowling, gardening, painting,

cooking, Lego construction, African drumming, creative writing, knitting, Spanish, ceramics, drawing, gaming, music therapy and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Festival participants have listened to author talks, competed in the Young Scientist of Wyndham competition, enjoyed music from a local High School Chamber group, improved their CVs and interview skills, achieved better sleep, practised their English, joined in the Wyndham Park Party in the Precinct and Pop Up School, talked to the animals at Rhyme Time at the Zoo, heard inspirational stories of refugee survival and learnt about local Aboriginal culture

Festival event providers include clubs, groups, individuals, businesses, schools, early learning centres, community centres, libraries, higher education providers, arts spaces and more. The Festival encourages the community to get out and try new things in both formal and informal learning settings.

See: <https://www.wynlearnfestival.org.au/>

Vignette B: Young Scientist of Wyndham Competition

VJ, a long time Wyndham resident, is on a mission: to encourage young people to love, or at least, get involved in, Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). As a participant in the Wyndham Building Blocks program (a 15-week community program run twice a year through a collaboration between Wyndham City Council and Victoria University Polytechnic), she honed and strengthened her community leadership and participation skills. One of the key objectives of the program is for participants to mobilise and empower others to make positive change within the Wyndham community through tangible actions with demonstrable community benefits.

After graduating from the program, VJ has not only mentored subsequent participants, but she has single-handedly run a Young Scientist of Wyndham competition in 3 consecutive Learning Festivals. The Young Scientist competition encourages young people to solve a community problem – for example, Wyndham’s recycling dilemma, creating wealth out of waste – through the application of

STEM. Each year about 20 competition entrants have submitted their designs, models and ideas and have been judged by a local panel of experts. The results have been impressive – the participants gaining experience in presenting their entries to the judges, their original thinking bringing creative ideas to dilemmas experienced across Wyndham.

<https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/community-support/building-blocks-community-leadership-program/about-building-blocks>

Vignette C: Welcome to Country

Since 2018 all kindergartens in Wyndham have incorporated an Acknowledgement to Country at the start of their day – an Acknowledgement of Country is an act of respect for the continuing connection of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and Custodians to the land on which the early learning service (school, or event) stands.

In 2016, the Victorian Department of Education and Training published **Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 – 2026** which set out a ten-year vision identifying significant actions to be taken to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal peoples in the long term. Marrung’s vision is for Victoria to be a state where the rich and thriving culture, knowledge and experiences of Aboriginal people are celebrated by all Victorians; where our universal service systems are inclusive, responsive and respectful of Aboriginal people at every stage of their educational journey; and where every Aboriginal person achieves their potential, succeeds in life and feels strong in their cultural identity.

Through the implementation of Marrung, Wyndham service providers highlight everyday practices that embed and respect Aboriginal perspectives and cultures. Future teachers of the students are then informed of their current knowledge and understanding of the First Nations peoples to assist in future planning for curriculum design; with an emphasis on continual improvement of inclusive practices for all service providers involved.

In this way, collaborative practices and strengths of the educator teams are combined at each Kindergarten service. Wyndham children **grow up with a deeper knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.**

Children attending Wyndham kindergartens also gain an appreciation for 3 flags – the Australian flag, the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Island flag, and the significance of the design and colours of all three. Whole families are included in this knowledge sharing and custom.

Included in the physical design of some Wyndham kindergartens are traditional indigenous fire pits, 3 flag poles, the incorporation of traditional practices such as Wayappa; bush cooking; aboriginal resources embedded into the curriculum so children can explore and be immersed year-round.

Through a presentation to the Wyndham School Principals (Action 5 and 9), kindergarten staff were able to inspire schools with their award-winning journey and to invite them to create their own **Reconciliation Action Plan for their own school, to contact their local kindergarten for support in this process and to share resources.**

See WCC, 2018, Actions 5 and 9, p.27 & 30 and WCC, 2020, p.6 and Victorian State Government, 2019.

Vignette D: Photographer as a Social Entrepreneur

With a commitment to building and enriching his community, Imran, a local Wyndham photographer, has provided free photography workshops over several Learning Festivals. These free workshops serve as a way for Imran to share his love of taking photos, his skills as an accomplished photographer and published author, and his desire to 'give back' to the Wyndham community. During one of his 2019 Wyndham Learning Festival workshops, a participant, who co-incidentally managed a community centre in a neighbouring Council, was so impressed with the workshop she signed up Imran to deliver her centre's photography classes for the next term.

See: <https://www.imranabulkashem.com/about>

Implications for the development of adult education and theory

Plumb, Leverman & McGray (2007) are very critical of learning city developments, especially those that do not focus on an adult education/lifelong learning approach. Plum et al (2007, p.42) argues that in the past some learning city initiatives were too weakly developed and could be easily misappropriated for self-interested purposes such as a marketing label. However, quoting examples such as the HGLV, they note that a 'fully developed concept of the learning city has great promise to inform core theories and practices in the field of adult education' (p. 38). Boshier (2018) identifies that there is 'no one size fits all' learning city and often the model is shaped by the city's location and the political orientation of the country. However, Boshier urges adult educators to become involved, and in this way, they can influence 'smart city' enthusiasts. Borkowska and Osborne (2018, p. 355) recommend that urban communities that desire to be technologically innovative would be well placed, especially in regarding active citizenship, learning opportunities for all and social inclusion if smart city strategies were underpinned by the broader ideas and frameworks of learning cities. The Wyndham Learning Community area and the Wyndham Smart Cities Office collaborate regularly in areas of technical themes included in the LCS 2018-2023 such as jobs of the future, and utilising data and analytics to enhance service development and direct service delivery (Tabbagh & Mowlam, 2020).

Wyndham has been able to build on a theoretical and practical knowledge base of learning communities and learning cities in Australia and internationally. In a recent presentation on Smart Learning Cities, Osborne (2020) reminded the audience of key concepts that underpin Learning City approaches. The idea of the Learning Society is one where education is not a segregated activity for a certain time and place. There is an acceptance of a learning culture; formal, non-formal and informal learning using a lifelong and life-wide approach that encompasses the individual, families, workplaces and communities. The embedding of Indigenous knowledge is highly relevant for Australia, most recently illustrated in a discussion about learning from the fire management knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when caring for bushland. Equity: fair and equitable access to learning which should reflect the population in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, disability, migrant/refugee status, socio-economic class, location. Increasingly

there are Digital Opportunities which enable access to 21st Century skills including emotional and social knowledge. To be sustainable **Regulatory and Policy Frameworks should be supportive, and it would help if there was a National Lifelong Learning Framework.** Vitally, there must be Intersectoral Co-operation, across different sectors such as local government, education (kindergarten to the tertiary sector), community, business and public agencies (libraries, museums, health bodies). These concepts are evident in the Learning Community Strategies developed by Wyndham.

The key message from Wyndham is that the process of collaboration and community engagement is vital. Wyndham's leaders understand the benefits of lifelong and life-wide learning. There is a strong governance model. Through successive Learning Community Strategies, a collaborative approach to implementing the Action Plans and running the annual Learning Festival, Wyndham is building a learning culture. **Wyndham has developed a pragmatic, asset-based approach which has mobilised the learning resources and expertise across different sectors.** While there are no specific regulations about lifelong learning for local governments in Australia, Wyndham links policies on lifelong learning to community strengthening which is a vital area of work for individual empowerment, social cohesion, and economic and cultural prosperity. UNESCO UIL sees the Learning Cities concept as a person-centred, **learning-focussed approach that provides a collaborative, action-oriented framework for working on the diverse challenges related to sustainable development including smart cities.** The journey the City of Wyndham has taken as illustrated in Figure 1 mirrors this approach.

Boshier (2018, p.432) noted areas of further research by Learning Cities. One question was 'what can be done to interest lifelong learning advocates and adult education researchers in conceptual and operational issues related to Learning Cities?' One idea is to document the process. **This paper has illustrated that the City of Wyndham has underpinned their learning community/city approach with adult education principles including learning as a driver for change.** Leaders, advocates, adult education researchers, and most importantly practitioners in the field, must communicate the benefits of this approach to residents which **is vital to maintain and sustain social participation, responsiveness, harmony and prosperity.**

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