

Tourism Training Partnership (TTP)

Case study summary

Description	<p>Tourism Training Partnership (TTP) was established in Queensland in 2010 with an aim to help young people make a successful transition from school into further education and/or employment in industries including: i) commercial cookery, ii) wine and beverages, iii) hospitality, and iv) tourism. This partnership focuses on connecting schools to the industry, thus being a liaison between industry, schools and the partnership organisations. It also serves the wider community such as connecting with a wide range of industries including higher education and promoting the industry to the local communities which young people live in and engage with. Its purpose is to widen young people's opportunities and inform them about diverse pathways in terms of training, education and employment associated with the industry.</p>
Governance	<p>The partnership was initiated and sponsored by the Queensland State Government as part of the initiative of increasing industry-school engagement. The partnership work is governed under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the partnership (i.e., TTP) and participating schools, setting up a formal relationship.</p>
Operation	<p>Its key partners include participating schools, industry peak bodies, industry enterprises, and local communities. Opportunities provided through the partnership included school-based traineeships or apprenticeships and industry work placements. The partnership work also involves contributing to the direction of the programs to best suit the industry and future employment and extending to rural and regional membership.</p>
Engagement with young people/ workplaces/ educational institutions	<p>For young people, the partnership has delivered a range of learning experiences with industry-supported activities that assist young people make informed career choices and open pathways to employment. Students have also provided with industry experience (e.g., industry site visits, talks from professionals, career guide) while still at school, providing them with the tools and knowledge to make informed decisions about post-school training, education and employment. For example, upskilling young people for an immediate career or sustaining another long-term plan (e.g., e.g., barista certificates, the Responsible Services of Alcohol – RSA). They also reach out to the Indigenous community whose students were not getting the service.</p> <p>For teachers, the partnership has engaged them in industry relevant training and professional development to upskill teachers to keep up with industry trend and maintain industry currency. This includes professional development conferences, industry site visits to gain insights into the reality of the industry.</p>

	<p>For schools, the partnership facilitates and build partnerships between schools and industry, allowing participating schools to provide industry-relevant learning and experience opportunities for their students. Such industry participation assists schools in school-based traineeships or apprenticeships.</p> <p>For industry, the partnership has engaged with schools to develop school-based learning and engagement activities tailored to key industry skills and workforce priorities. That is, keeping up to date industry trends and insights about the industry (e.g., chef shortage) to focus and promote identified skill sets.</p>
Continuity outcomes	<p>The partnership's continuity is premised on several factors, including leadership commitment, engagement from different stakeholders and partners and funding. Particularly, engagement from schools coming down from the leadership team (i.e., the principal) is critical to build trust in the partnership in collaboratively achieving the intended outcomes for students. Securing parental engagement is challenging yet important as research indicates the significant influence of parents on young people's decision making about post-school pathways. Additionally, as this partnership is government-funded agency, continuing funding is brought to the forefront in this partnership should it strive for continuity outcomes. Word of mouth was also held to be important for its continuity.</p>

Tentative findings

<i>Using five premises to evaluate the formation and ongoing development of the social partnership</i>	
Factors supporting	<p>Shared values, purposes and goals, and intended outcomes</p> <p>Shared ownership and decision-making and relations with partners</p> <p>Partnership governance and leadership</p> <p>Trust and trustworthiness</p> <p>Capacity building for partnership work</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Resources (i.e., continuing funding)</p> <p>Engagement from school leadership and parents</p>
Limitation	<p>Conflicting agendas: "So it's not that industry is imposing everything on what they want. If you don't listen to schools and schools will just back off."</p> <p>Societal sentiment about the image/standing of the industry and the occupations it serves</p>
<i>Post-school pathways – informing and engaging</i>	
Context	A government-funded agency
Aim	help young people make a successful transition from school into further education and/or employment in industries including: i) commercial cookery, ii) wine and beverages, iii) hospitality, and iv) tourism
Informing	informed talks and events, information evenings, career expos, sharing lived experiences, resources about career guide and pathways, professional development for teachers

Engaging	School-based traineeships or apprenticeships, work placements, industry site visits – e.g., cooking competition, work experience program at Australia zoo,
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Context for the social partnership

The Tourism Training Partnership (TTP) was established in Queensland in 2010 with an aim to help young people make a successful transition from school into further education and/or employment. To achieve its aim, TTP connects with schools, industry partners, students and their families to promote opportunities offered through diverse pathways in terms of training, education and employment associated with the industry. Its purpose is to widen young people's opportunities and perspectives about their future in the areas of i) commercial cookery, ii) wine and beverages, iii) hospitality, and iv) tourism.

The strength of the partnership is framed around the 5P strategy. The strategy provides “the direction for all gateways. So there's some consistency across all the different gateway programs” (Advisory board member). The 5Ps include partnerships, pathways, participation, promotions, and professional development and incorporate the following sentiment

- Partnerships – to facilitate cross-sectoral engagement between Gateway schools and Industry Partners to promote opportunities for students.
- Pathways – to identify pathways for Gateway school students looking to transition from high school to further education and employment.
- Participation – to foster student and staff interest and engagement.
- Promotion – to regularly communicate and promote the progress, opportunities for engagement and key outcomes of the project.
- Professional Development – to build capacity of teaching staff to draw relevance and industry currency in everyday teaching. (adapted from <https://gateway2health.com.au/about-gateway/>)

Initially established as a network for teachers' professional development, it grew to a network of schools developing programs for students that recognised the need to incorporate industry connections, partnerships, pathways, career advice and schools. The focus of the partnership is on connecting schools to the industry, creating an industry, schools and organisations triad. It also serves the wider community such as connecting with a wide range of industries including higher education and promoting the industry to the local communities which young people live in and engage with.

The partnership was instigated and sponsored by the Queensland State Government as part of the initiative of increasing industry-school engagement. Their work is governed under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the partnership (i.e., TTP) and participating schools, setting up a formal relationship. The program is highly regarded by the educational systems including “Education Queensland, the Cath Ed [Catholic Education] Edmund Rice, the Independent people who sit on our panel [who] recommend the schools get involved” (RTO partner). Furthermore, “the school education bodies are very proactive in encouraging their schools to belong and then once the schools belong, then that particular network becomes very strong as well” (RTO partner). Therefore, each partner in the triad plays a role in sustaining the strength and success of the network to reflect the goals of the 5P framework.

Key partners include participating schools (n=69), industry peak bodies, industry enterprises, and local communities. Building relations also involves encouraging participation and developing processes that are inclusive and respectful (Billett et al., 2007). The far reach and flexibility of the partnership is evident in that there is an “industry partners list, but ... it changes every single day depending on what the school needs” (TTP manager). Opportunities provided through the partnership include school-based traineeships or apprenticeships and industry work placements. The partnership work also involves contributing to the direction of the programs to best suit the industry and future employment and extending to rural and regional membership.

A strength of the partnership is the ability to evolve to respond to industry needs and student interests while also maximising the impact of the funding available. For example, one of the purpose-built training facilities established in 2010 now serves a different clientele as a result to being “too expensive for schools to maintain ... and little interest from the students” (TTP manager). Projects are now decentralised, adapted to meet local needs, more varied to engage a range of students, and include industry partners ranging from a local butcher to a celebrity chef to large corporations. The TTP managers are recognised as playing a crucial role on the success of the partnership because “they are the ones that actually drive it” (School representative). TTP acts as “a middleman to connect with industry and schools” (TTP manager). They reach out to industry and industry peak bodies (e.g., the Queensland Hotels Association, the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, tourism events Queensland) and connect the key players who might not otherwise know how to engage.

The partnership

The benefits and outcomes delivered by the partnership are varied and far-reaching. Young people, teachers, schools and industry partners enjoy reciprocal benefits. For young people, the partnership has delivered a range of learning experiences with industry-supported activities that assist young people to make informed career choices and open pathways to employment. Students are also provided with industry experience (e.g., industry site visits, talks from professionals, career guide) while still at school, providing them with the tools and knowledge to make informed decisions about post-school training, education and employment. For example, upskilling young people for an immediate career or sustaining another long-term plan (e.g., barista certificates, the Responsible Services of Alcohol – RSA).

You want to become a doctor and a lawyer and you're gonna go to university ... You're going to probably work at the local coffee shop or restaurant ... But there's a big chunk of inspirational presenters that I've seen that have gone off to become a lawyer. But within 10 years circle back again, like in the legal team within a hotel or some sort of hospitality organisation. (Project manager)

This training opens opportunities for employment for those who decide to take a tertiary pathway post-school. Similarly, working in industries such as tourism provides some students with background or insider knowledge and experience that informs later choices through tertiary qualifications.

Partners agree that connecting with students and raising their awareness of diverse pathways should be happening at an early stage (i.e. Year 10). Conversations that challenge the deficit discourse around non-tertiary career pathways should be countered, at school and industry level, with informed commentary and promotion of positive outcomes for career pathways. The value of diverse pathways is reflected in how it is discussed, promoted and reported.

A consistent approach to and the language in the careers [...] I think to me the improvement can be how we can privilege that more and recognise it more because you value what you measure. So we got to measure what we value.” (RTO partner)

Renewed focus and value on alternate career pathways, that allow students to work to their strengths, might also keep some students engaged at this stage of schooling, while transitioning into the workforce. Initiatives also help to address inequity in opportunities for students in rural and remote areas.

Opportunities for rural and remote students are delivered through visits to industry events in major towns or cities, as well as locally organised events. Programs are tailored to include local and cultural connections and help to increase the relevance of the partnerships being offered within local communities (Seddon and Billet, 2004). The TTP partners, for example, reached out to First Nations communities whose students were not getting the service or opportunities available to their counterparts in other areas. The experiences of rural and remote areas have been enhanced by “embracing the advanced technologies of the virtual reality because that can bring the big tourist hotel in Brisbane to Mount Isa” (RTO partner). Similarly, experience and engagement for students as a result of the pandemic have been enhanced by “moving the same experiences to a different mode which was using the electronic versions of everything” (Advisory board member) demonstrating the flexibility of the partnership to respond to sector needs.

Initiatives in rural areas that may have been successful in the past but were put on hold for a range of reasons have been reignited with the support of the partnership and the attraction of additional funding. For example, upgrading the kitchen fit-out in a community bus, and “really reigniting it with chef trainers and a lot of industry personnel to ... really train up all the teachers and the community ... so they can really use it for other the events ” (TTP manager) in the community, making it a profit making venture and showcasing partner programs. Examples like this one illustrate the flexibility of the partnership, the focus on reciprocal benefits for those involved and also the importance of ongoing targeted funding. It highlights the value of ongoing initiatives designed to meet local needs. These types of outcomes are described by the TTP manager as “when the magic happens ... industry and schools automatically come together” and the reciprocity and relevance of the project is obvious.

Further evidence of the partnership’s focus on meeting identified needs has been the increase in school decision making and their involvement in nominating the training programs or event. “Now the school rather than Gateway actually determin[es] what events we will have” (RTO partner). The shift allows a local framing of choices where schools can involve different sectors of the community, including “boundary crossers” (Walker & Nocon, 2007), and those who would not normally have contact with the schools. While an active and purposeful role in decision-making contributes to enhancing school engagement and commitment to the partnership work, the partnership working together as a collective is the key to expanding sector involvement.

Bringing in professionals “to actually give the kids way more perspective about what they can do post school” (RTO partner) is a role played and strengthened through the partnership. For example, the extended reach to connect key personnel from tourism and hospitality enables “young tourism leaders to come and talk to the tourism class and they will bring chefs and to talk to students.” Hearing experiences from the field helps to foster authentic learning for students can be motivating and may also lead to unique opportunities. For example, through the industry partnership, a perhaps once in a lifetime opportunity was created for one aspiring chef from a regional area. Through the partnership, and creative thinking on the part of the school coordinator, a celebrity chef generously donated his time to the winner of a school-based cooking competition.

I reached out to the gateway to help support that, so I knew a celebrity chef was coming to our area to do a three-course luncheon. So they contacted him for me and organized our winning student to spend 2 days with him. (School representative)

Without the collaborative efforts of the partnership, it is highly likely this connection and outcome for the student would not have materialised.

Increasing employment options is more than just immediate skill development. It also encompasses developing a work ethic and self-awareness. The transferable nature of these qualities is noted as a strong outcome for students who engage in this partnership. For example, industry visits to large hotels, usually made possible by funds raised in schools, not only provide employment outcomes but also enhance students' sense of self. Consequently, young female students, on industry visits in the city from rural areas, are able to re-imagine their career goals and pathways and consideration of further studies.

So some of the girls that I've spoken to really thought they weren't good enough. And this proved to them that they were good enough, that they can hold their own with city kids in a five-star hotel. (RTO partner)

For teachers, the partnership has engaged them in industry relevant training and professional development. Opportunities are provided for teachers to engage in conferences, and industry site visits to gain insights into the reality of the industry. Upskilling teachers to keep up with industry trends and maintain industry currency is an important aspect of sustaining the partnership (ACER, 2008) and supporting the achievement of shared goals and intended outcomes for young people.

The partnership facilitates relationships and connection between schools and industry, allowing participating schools to provide industry-relevant learning and experience opportunities for their students. Building relations involves encouraging participation and developing processes that are inclusive and respectful (Billett et al., 2007). Such industry participation assists schools in school-based traineeships or apprenticeships. The individualised attention provided to each school, "not a blanket approach" (School representative) help to strengthen the partnership and the outcomes they can achieve together.

For industry, the partnership has engaged with schools to develop school-based learning and engagement activities tailored to key industry skills and workforce priorities. That is, keeping up to date industry trends and insights about the industry (e.g., chef shortage) to focus and promote identified skill sets. While also working to identify and respond to needs within the sector, the partnership also helps to maintain standards and expectations, which also provide recognition of new learning for the student.

We've identified criteria young people have to find their evidence, we get that verified. We then run through industry endorsement and that's through interviews and observation. And the ultimate thing for recognition will be a digital badge. If the demonstration is at applying level and we've got the evidence and the young person can articulate that evidence. (RTO Partner)

The partnership's continuity is premised on several factors including school leadership commitment; engagement from different stakeholders, including parents and industry partners; and ongoing funding. School leadership (i.e., the principal) is a contributing factor in how a school engages and the level of success. School engagement and "believing in the program and in the relationship and the partnership, comes from the principal down" (RTO provider). Strong leadership is seen as critical to build trust in the partnership and in collaboratively achieving the intended outcomes for students.

The role of the school in connecting with parents to communicate the value in pathways besides tertiary study is an important link in sustaining the partnership.

Parental influence on young people's decision making about post-school pathways is significant. However, one of the greatest challenges identified by the TTP stakeholders is connecting with parents. Despite information nights, career expos and direct conversations with the industry (one-on-one or group interviews) the parent-industry connection is difficult to secure.

So that's always a challenge. I don't know how we get the involvement with parents to realize the importance that we play in post school employment. (RTO partner)

However, it is the reciprocity within the partnership helps to sustain the programs and ensures they meet local needs determined by industry reference groups and built "very much around an ecosystem" (Advisory board member). The collaborative nature of the partnerships highlights the value placed on decision making that encompasses mutual sharing of expertise, knowledge, resources and skills (Clerke, 2013) with a shared focus to meet local needs.

So it's not that industry is imposing everything on what they want. If you don't listen to schools and schools will just back off. (Advisory board member)

Additionally, as this partnership is a government-funded initiative promoting outcomes and "making sure that the government actually sees the value in what we're doing to continue to fund it to the level that is needed" (RTO partner) is crucial for sustainability. While word-of-mouth was also held to be important for its continuity, wider promotion and recognition of its contribution to industry and students would be desirable.

Strong leadership that connects industry support to schools was also seen as crucial for the success of the partnership. The importance of relations with all partners and capacities for developing partnership work at all levels was made evident in the number of examples shared. In particular, the strength of the managers of the TTP were highlighted.

Relationships are so important, and that's probably one of the key strengths that [TTP manager] has is getting the generosity of that industry. It wouldn't have happened if you didn't have someone like [that]. (Advisory board member)

Also evident here is the commitment and passion of the people involved in creating the pathways and partnerships. While the exceptional contribution of the TTP team and staff were noted through several partners "because they're the ones that actually drive it" (School representative), a consistent message across the partnership was a sense of ownership and commitment to 'my students, my school, my..., and the care for, the young people they serve.

Scope for improvements for continuity outcomes

While this partnership is well-established with a strong history, in part due to its flexibility, there are possible areas to consider for continuity of outcomes. Ongoing government funding and awareness of the benefits provided, diversified leadership of the program, and continuing to communicate positive messages with parents and the community will be somewhat influential to the future quality and effectiveness of this partnership. Currently, the program attracts government funding so "making sure that the government actually sees the value in what we're doing to continue to fund it to the level that is needed" (Advisory board member) contributes to ongoing uncertainty. There is very strong leadership in terms of project managers, who make connections happen, and who work with a management board and a working party. "They're not the expert in terms of education or even the industry, but they have to an approach that appreciates and looks to understand what both sides are looking for" (Advisory board member). Widening this leadership to share that responsibility

may help with continuity over time and reduce the demands on a single role. Despite concerted efforts, parent groups seem to be the hardest to reach. Widening their perceptions of the outcomes that can be associated with pathways through tourism and hospitality is an area identified, that could be strengthened. Meeting the needs of all stakeholders and ensuring the outcomes are valued by students, parents, schools, the community they serve, and government is essential.

The analysis of this case study confirms the value of partnership programs and the role they play in informing and engaging young people, and their parents about diverse post-school pathways and connecting schools with industry. A strength of this partnership is its flexibility and ability to respond to local needs, as well the wider industry requirements. Building the capacities for partnership work, over time, includes the enactment of reciprocal of benefits for all stakeholders through shared goals and understandings, and upholding high expectations

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