

This report was researched and written by Fiona Waugh (Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network-BGK LLEN).

Published June 2014



3.1.1	Student respondents.....	41
3.1.2	Awards impact on personal confidence.....	43
3.1.3	Awards impact on recognition.....	44
3.1.4	Personal announcement of Award nomination or win.....	5..4
3.1.5	Internal school awards.....	47
3.1.6	Benefit and use of Award on resume.....	47.....
3.1.7	Influence of Award on schooling influence and perception.....	48
3.1.8	Influence of Award on future pathways planning and decisions.....	48
3.1.9	Awareness of the Applied Learning Awards.....	49
3.1.10	Award application and nomination process.....	49
3.1.11	Use of independent judges.....	51
3.1.12	Award Ceremony assessment.....	52
3.1.13	Recommendations for improvements to the Applied Learning Awards.....	53
3.1.14	Value of Applied Learning Awards.....	54
3.2	Educator Assessment of the Applied Learning Awards.....	54
3.2.1	School and education provider respondents.....	56
3.2.2	Teacher and trainer respondents.....	57
3.2.3	Coordinator and support person respondents.....	57
3.2.4	Awards impact on professional confidence.....	57
3.2.5	Influence of Awards on applied learning provision and methodology.....	58
3.2.6	Announcement of Award win.....	60
3.2.7	Internal school awards.....	62
3.2.8	Awareness of the Applied Learning Awards.....	62
3.2.9	Award application and nomination process.....	64
3.2.10	Use of independent judges.....	66
3.2.11	Award Ceremony assessment.....	66
3.2.12	Recommendations for improvements to the Applied Learning Awards.....	67
3.2.13	Value of Applied Learning Awards.....	68
3.3	Employer Assessment of the Applied Learning Awards.....	69
3.3.1	Employer respondents.....	70
3.3.2	Awards impact on future award applications.....	71
3.3.3	Impact on being nominated for or winning an Award.....	71
3.3.4	Influence of the Award on further involvement with local students and schools.....	72
3.3.5	Announcement of Award win.....	72
3.3.6	Independent judging process.....	74

3.3.7	Award Ceremony assessment.....	74
3.3.8	Recommendations for improvements to the Applied Learning Awards.....	74
3.4	Sponsor Assessment of the Applied Learning Awards.....	75
3.4.1	Sponsor respondents.....	76
3.4.2	Awareness of the Awards and sponsorship opportunity.....	76
3.4.3	Reason for sponsorship contribution.....	76.....
3.4.4	Benefits of sponsorship.....	77
3.4.5	Return on investment through sponsorship.....	78
3.4.6	Sponsorship marketing and promotion.....	78
3.4.7	Sponsorship management and support.....	79
3.4.8	Use of independent judges.....	79
3.4.9	Award Ceremony assessment.....	79
3.4.10	Recommendations for improvements to Applied Learning Awards and/or sponsorship process.....	80
3.5	Judges' Assessment of the Applied Learning Awards.....	81
3.5.1	Judging respondents.....	82
3.5.2	Reason for volunteering.....	82
3.5.3	Sector involvement in judging.....	83
3.5.4	Judging management and process.....	84
3.5.5	Awards Ceremony assessment.....	85
3.5.6	Outcomes and benefits of the Applied Learning Awards.....	85
3.6	Considerations and Recommendations for the Applied Learning Awards.....	85
3.6.1	Recommendations from survey and consultation participants.....	86
3.6.2	Recommendations identified during the report development.....	88
4.	Case Studies Young People, Secondary Schools and Educators.....	89
4.1	Case Studies: Young People.....	89
4.2	Case Studies: Secondary Schools and Educators.....	91
5.	Public and Social Policy Linkages.....	98
5.1	National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions.....	98
5.2	Youth Attainment and Transitions Programs.....	99
5.3	Supporting Business School Connections.....	100
5.4	Federal and State Attainments.....	100
5.5	Recognition of Teacher Excellence.....	101
6.	Awards Transference and Scalability.....	102
7.	Project Implementation Model, Guide and Recommendations.....	103
7.1	Establish 'Awards Working Group' Partnership.....	103

7.2	Identify Awards Purpose and Mission.....	103
7.3	Identify Award Categories.....	104
7.4	Conduct Financial Budgeting and Project Planning.....	104
7.5	Source Independent Judges.....	106
7.6	Develop Resources (marketing, forms, sponsorship and event).....	106
7.7	Market and Promote the Awards.....	108
7.8	Source sponsorship.....	108
7.9	Administer Nominations and Applications.....	109
7.10	Plan and Conduct the Awards Ceremony Event.....	109
7.11	Prepare a Media and Promotions Plan.....	110
7.12	Conduct Evaluation and Research.....	111
8.	Conclusion.....	112
9.	Bibliography.....	113
	Appendix 1: Sponsors (2009-2013).....	114
	Appendix 2: Award Ceremony Photos.....	116

List of graphs:

Graph 1: Award category and year (students).....	42
Graph 2: Nomination or win year (students).....	42
Graph 3: Year level when nominated (students).....	43
Graph 4: Nominee confidence in award applications (students)	
Graph 5: Winner confidence in other award applications (students).....	44
Graph 6: Nomination announcement (students).....	45
Graph 7: Award win announcement recipients (students).....	45
Graph 8: Method of advising nomination (students).....	46
Graph 9: Method of advising Award win (students).....	46
Graph 10: Awareness of Applied Learning Awards (students).....	49
Graph 11: Nomination process assessment (students).....	50
Graph 12: Ease or difficulty of nomination questions (students).....	50
Graph 13: Satisfaction with the Awards Ceremony (students).....	52
Graph 14: Award nomination category and year (schools).....	56
Graph 15: Award win announcement (schools).....	60
Graph 16: Award win announcement (teachers/trainers).....	61
Graph 17: Award win notification methods (schools).....	61
Graph 18: Awareness of the Applied Learning Awards (schools).....	63
Graph 19: Awareness of the Applied Learning Awards (teachers / trainers).....	63
Graph 20: Awareness of the Applied Learning Awards (coordinators).....	64
Graph 21: Award nomination or win and year (employers).....	71
Graph 22: Award win notification (employers).....	73
Graph 23: Award win notification methods (employers).....	73

Graph 24: Sponsorship year and category (sponsors).....76  
Graph 25: Reasons for sponsorship (sponsors).....77  
Graph 26: Return on investment (sponsors).....78  
Graph 27: Satisfaction for sponsorship promotion (sponsors).....79  
Graph 28: Reasons for volunteering (judges).....83

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Bayside Glen Eira Kingston (BGK) region 'Applied Learning Awards' recognise students, teachers / trainers, coordinators, employers, secondary schools and education providers that have positively contributed to applied learning in our region. The Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network (BGKLEN) and Youth Connect facilitate these Awards annually.

The Applied Learning Awards (the Awards) were established in 2009 to provide a forum for celebrating and validating applied learning achievements of students, educators and employers within the local community. It was recognised that while academic achievement was celebrated via a number of forums and mechanisms, applied learning was generally not as widely celebrated and a community forum for celebration of this was desirable.

Since establishing the Applied Learning Awards five years ago, a total of 440 individuals and organisations have been nominated for or won an award, with this total comprised of 184 award winners and 256 nominees

Nominations are judged by independent panels of experts relevant to the Award categories being adjudicated. Sponsorship for the event and individual awards is sourced from local community organisations and businesses, as well as through contributions (financial and kind) made by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect. An annual gala Awards Ceremony is held in October of each year at which winners are announced from amongst the field of nominees. Over previous years around 460 people have attended the Award Ceremonies.

The objectives of the Awards are to: increase community awareness of applied learning; improve the perception and validity of this type of learning; and, provide a forum to celebrate all those who excel in and contribute to quality applied learning.

## Research Methodology

The initial purpose of this research was to conduct a thorough project evaluation and provide the Awards coordinators (BGK LLEN and Youth Connect) with an opportunity to assess a maturing program / initiative, enable genuine stakeholder feedback and consultation, make any necessary adjustments to the Applied Learning Awards model, result in the development of a formal Research Report, and lead to the development of Case Studies.

However, as the research took shape it became evident that this review needed to be expanded to also examine the Applied Learning Awards within the context of relevant literature and that of government and public policies.

This research paper also reviews the Applied Learning Awards through a stakeholder and participant lens, and has sourced direct feedback from students, educators, employers, sponsors and judges.

This paper was developed using a qualitative and quantitative approach, drawing upon a range of primary and secondary sources during late 2012, 2013 and 2014. As a formative investigation this paper aims to evaluate and analyse the Applied Learning Awards in an effort to strengthen and sustain its ongoing delivery, assess the capacity for transference and scalability of this awards model, and impart instructional information to communities seeking to initiate their own awards program.

A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to conduct this research and included use of surveys, focus groups, phone interviews and a literature review. All stakeholders who were nominated for or won an Award, sponsored the Awards or formed part of the independent judging panel between 2009 and 2013 were asked to participate in an anonymous online survey. A total of 113 individuals responded to the disseminated surveys

Further feedback was provided through consultations and follow up interviews with key stakeholder groups in 2014. A focus group comprised of eight school principals and senior educators was held and call interviews with nine young people who had responded to the online survey were also conducted

## Applied Learning Programs

Applied learning assists senior secondary students to develop skills required for employment, further education and training as well as participation in the community. In Victoria, students can participate in a number of applied learning programs as part of their senior schooling including the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) programs or School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs).

Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) describes courses that are usually undertaken at a TAFE Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or secondary school. A wide variety of industries offering including hospitality, engineering, community services and music to name but a few is available to students completing VCE and is a core component of a VCAL program. Students undertaking VETiS are usually required to participate in a structured industry work placement, which allows them to apply their knowledge and skills in a 'real life' workplace.

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs) allow students over 15 years of age to work as paid part time apprentices or trainees while still at school. SBATs enable young people to gain a vocational qualification and paid workplace experience while also completing their school studies. SBATs are an increasingly popular applied learning option for VCAL or VCE students in Years 11 and 12, and is also available to Year 10 students also. SBATs prepare students for the world of work and assist employers to attract young employees into their business and industry.

The Applied Learning Awards recognise students who have achieved successes in VETiS or SBAT applied learning areas, as well as the educators, employers and supporters that have enabled this type of learning.

## Applied Learning Context

While traditional academic education provision is the curriculum cornerstone in the majority of secondary schools, increasingly many are recognising that a broad range of learning options is important to engage and retain a new generation of learners. This shifting pedagogy paradigm has led to greater opportunities for students to engage in applied learning programs such as VETiS and SBAT programs and was also part of the rationale behind the development of the VCAL. Delivered alongside school delivered applied or academic curriculum offerings, providing students with a chance to 'learn outside the classroom' is often seen as a successful mechanism for engaging students and better preparing them for 'a life beyond school'

In a research paper exploring school retention Lamb et. al. state that “for school programs to engage learners, they need to be challenging, stimulating, involve opportunities for sharing learning tasks, are satisfying as learning experiences, and have clear and demonstrable benefits beyond school. They also note that vocational (or applied) learning programs “represent the most significant reform to the senior secondary curriculum and are of wider relevance for they contribute to a greater perception of relevance and stronger motivation from students”(2004, p.154)

The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development identified a range of strategies aimed at increasing school completion in its 2008 ‘Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion’(Report Rice p.17 -23). A number of schoolwide strategies identified in this report explicitly or implicitly attest to the value of applied learning provision as a means of contributing to improvements in student engagement and completion

VCAL, VETiS and SBAT applied learning programs are a very successful way in which schools can harness the power of their community and business partners to achieve an ideal challenging, stimulating and satisfying learning environment

## Applied Learning Awards History

The Applied Learning Awards were established in 2009 by the BGCN and Youth Connect both of whom are committed to the value, importance and growth of applied learning across the Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston region. The Awards were initiated because both the BGCN and Youth Connect were concerned that, at the time, there was little recognition and celebration of those persons and organisations who demonstrate outstanding applied learning contributions or success.

During 2008 and 2009, the BGCN and Youth Connect established an ‘Awards Working Group’ comprised of representatives from secondary schools, industry and training providers collaborated to plan the initial Awards and lead to the development of an Awards template that could be used in future years. In 2010 the ‘Awards Working Group’ was disbanded and, since then, the annual planning has been conducted by BGCN and Youth Connect (excepting the independent Judging Panels adjudication).

## Awards Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of the Awards are to:

- x increase community awareness of applied learning
- x improve the perception and validity of this type of learning
- x provide a forum to celebrate all those who excel in and contribute to quality applied learning
- x stimulate community participation in applied learning, particularly those in business and industry sectors
- x stimulate school and education provider recognition in applied learning achievements and outcomes
- x build confidence in nominees so that they apply for recognition from other sources (e.g. government awards, industry awards, education/training provider awards)
- x seek media attention and interest in the Awards and promote applied learning within the wider community.

## Awards Categories

Between 2009 and 2013 awards have been granted across four overarching categories: students; schools and education providers; teachers and trainers; coordinators and support persons; and, employers. Within most of these overarching categories, subcategories exist.

Within the wider 'Student Awards' category VCAL, VETiS and SBAT Awards are provided to applied learning students. In 2012 a new Award, the 'Applied Learning Student of the Year Award', was established to recognise the student who, above all others, demonstrates outstanding commitment to both applied learning and their wider community. Since 2009, 76 students have won a VETiS Award, 26 students have won a SBAT award, 19 students have won a VCAL Award and two students have won the 'Student of the Year Award'.

Within the wider 'Education Provider Awards' category VETiS delivery, VETiS Access, VCAL, Community VCAL and School Awards are provided to those schools and education providers (such as TAFE, Learn Local or community organisations) that have positively contributed to applied learning in the region. Since 2009, 28 schools or education providers have won an Award.

In 2011, it was identified that there was a need to formally recognise the contributions made by teachers and trainers and a new category of awards for these learning professionals was created. Within the wider 'Teachers / Trainers Awards' category two outstanding VETiS and VCAL Teacher / Trainer Awards are presented to those who have positively contributed to the applied learning of students in the region. Since 2009, six teachers or trainers have won an Award.

In 2013, a new Award was launched for those personnel who coordinate or support applied learning in their school or organisation. The Applied Learning Coordination and Support Person Award is offered in recognition of the critical role that such staff play in ensuring that programs offered to students are of a high standard and take account of the considerable administration, management and innovation that coordinators undertake in ensuring programs meet student and industry pathway needs. The Award has been named the 'Jenny Mark Memorial Award for Applied Learning Coordination and Support' in honour of Jenny Marks, a local applied learning leader and expert, who passed away in 2013. In addition to being a local leader, Jenny also played a critical role in assisting the BGCEN and Youth Connect to develop the Applied Learning Awards in 2009.

Within the wider 'Employer Awards' category SBAT, Structured Workplace Learning, Business Partnership and Group Training Organisation Awards are provided to those businesses that have positively contributed to the applied learning of students in the region. Since 2009, 26 employers have won an Award.

## Nomination and Award Totals

Between 2009 and 2013, a total of 440 individuals and organisations have been nominated for or won an Award. This total of 440 is comprised of 184 Award winners and 256 nominees. Students account for 269 Award participants, made up of 146 nominees and 123 winners. Schools and education providers account for 55 Award participants, made up of 27 nominees and 28 winners. Teachers and trainers account for 18 Award participants, made up of 12 nominees and six winners. Coordinators account for seven Award participants, made up of six nominees and one winner. Employers account for 92 Award participants, made up of 57 nominees and 26 winners.

Between 2009 and 2013, 340 nominations have been received for student, school and education provider, teacher and trainer and coordinator Awards from a range of education sectors. Government school nominations have accounted for 53 per cent of all nominations over this period, 25 per cent from the Catholic school sector, eight per cent from the Independent school sector, eight per cent from the community education sector and the remaining six per cent from the TAFE sector.

Between 2009 and 2013, 202 nominations have been received for student VETiS and SBAT awards across fourteen different industry areas. The top five highest industry areas, as rated by the number of nominations in each area were: 'Hospitality and Tourism'; 'Performing Arts'; 'Building and Construction'; 'Creative and Visual Arts'; and, 'Information Technology'.

More detailed lists of Award nominees and winners, including per education sector and industry areas breakdowns, are presented graphically with the wider report.

## Independent Judging

The Awards are judged by an independent group of autonomous representatives from a range of sectors and organisations, that reflect the expertise and knowledge and required to evaluate Award nominations. Since 2009 representatives have been drawn from: Australian Industry Group, Bayside City Council; Catholic Education Office, Chisholm TAFE, City of Kingston, Complex Training Academy, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Dullam Senior Secondary College, Oakwood School, Outer Eastern LLEN; Prahran Community Learning Centre, South East LLEN; and, the Victorian Applied Learning Association (VALA).

Over time, the number of judges has enlarged in response to a growing number of nominations received each year. In 2013, there were a total of nine judges who were broken into three separate groups assessing different Award category areas. The work undertaken by judges includes reviewing the nominations prior to the adjudication meeting, attending the judging panel meeting and selecting winners, contacting referees if required, and selecting the 'Applied Learning Student of the Year', 'Champion School / Education Provider of the Year' and 'Champion Employer of the Year'.

A conservative estimate as to the number of volunteer hours given by judges, the five years of the Applied Learning Awards is 252 hours. Or put another way, the volunteer judges have collectively worked for just over six and a half weeks during the years the Awards have been offered.

## Sponsorship

In addition to the financial contributions made by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect, sponsorship of the Awards is also sought from local businesses, community organisations and individuals. Between 2009 and 2013, sponsorship has been broken into 'Event Sponsorship' across bronze (\$550), silver (\$1,100), gold (\$2,200) and platinum (\$3,300) values. In addition, sponsors can also sponsor an individual Award at \$110 per award.

Since 2012, the Highett Community Bank (Bendigo Bank) has been the Major Sponsor of the Awards and contributed a generous \$10,000 per annum. In addition, Highett Community Bank (Bendigo Bank) has also sponsored the 'Applied Learning Student of the Year Award' since this Award was launched in 2012.

Between 2009 and 2013 a total of 41 different businesses, organisations and individuals have sponsored the event and/or individual Awards. Many of these sponsors have provided sponsorship in multiple years and a full list of sponsors is provided within the report.

## Awards Ceremony

The Awards Ceremony is held annually, in October. All nominees are invited to attend, as well as parents, carers, colleagues, family members, Sponsors, judging panel members, key community stakeholders and Members of Parliament are also invited.

The event is a very professional one that includes Award winner presentations, nomination certificate presentations and presentations from some sponsors. A guest speaker also presents to the audience which, in the past, have included the Hon. Martin Dixon (Minister for Education, Victoria), Members of Parliament, academics, Paralympian athlete (Don Elgin) and television and theatre actor (Eddie Perfect). Present guests are offered drinks on arrival, canapés and a short intermission with further refreshments available.

Between the years 2009 and 2013 close to 1,500 people have attended the Awards Ceremony. Over that period the numbers of attendees have increased annually; reflecting an annual rise in the numbers of Award nominations submitted as well as escalating levels of interest and support from the education, training, business and community organisation sectors.

In 2013 a 'VIP Event' was held an hour prior to the actual Awards Ceremony which enabled networking between sponsors, Members of Parliament, local Principals, community CEOs, BGK LLEN and Youth Connection Board Members, local employers and senior government department representatives.

## Similar Applied Learning Awards Programs

Within the Bayside Glen Eira and Kingston region there is no other applied learning awards program. Individual schools or training organisations may recognise the successes of enrolled students taking applied learning programs however there is no region-wide awards program.

A number of state and federal government applied learning awards programs accept nominations from students, schools and education providers, teachers and trainers, and employers. Some of these award programs offer a number of categories and accept nominations from all of the above stakeholders. It is recommended to nominees that they consider also applying for other external awards and utilise relevant content they have prepared as part of their Applied Learning Awards nomination. A list of awards available within Victoria and Australia is contained within the report.

## Student assessment of the Applied Learning Awards

Two-hundred and sixty-nine (269) students were nominated for or won an Applied Learning Award over the period 2009 to 2013. Sixty-two (62) of these responded to this survey, equating to a survey response rate of 23 per cent. Sixty-six per cent of student respondents were nominated in the VETiS category, 27 per cent in VCAL and 7 per cent in SBAT. Fifty-eight per cent of respondents won an Award and 42 per cent were nominated but did not win an Award.

Student respondents identified that being nominated for or winning an Award has had a positive impact on young peoples' level of confidence in their own skills and abilities; an impact that may also extend beyond their period of secondary schooling and also influence their decision to apply for other awards. Indeed, nearly all respondents indicated that the achievement and validation generated by the Awards increased their personal confidence and the majority also felt that it contributed to them feeling more confident about applying for other awards in the future.

Feedback provided by student respondents evidenced the positive impact that being recognised for applied learning efforts is not only valuable to the student but also to their parents. It further evidenced that the Awards is another forum by which all students, regardless of whether they have been acknowledged before, can receive public recognition and celebration. Indeed, student respondents indicated that while the majority of their schools acknowledged academic achievement through internal school awards just under half advised that their school did not internally award students for applied learning success.

The announcement of an Award nomination or win was of great importance to students, with this achievement generally shared with family, friends, teachers and employers. The method of advising others about a nomination or Award win was generally via word of mouth and then platforms such as text message and Facebook to a lesser extent. Generally students were pleased to receive congratulatory responses post their announcement, and in some cases it also generated wider discussions about applied learning and acknowledgement of school support.

Student respondents acknowledged the professional value in incorporating details about their Award nomination or win in their resume, with nearly all respondents indicating that they had already included it in their resume or planned to do so. However, as some indicated that they had not it may be useful to remind students that their nomination or win is something that could prove useful in their resume or future applications.

The vast majority of student respondents indicated that being nominated for or winning an Award has had a positive impact on their perception of schooling in areas such as motivation, confidence, content with choice of applied learning program, recognition and pleasure that applied learning was receiving the same attention as that given to academic learning success.

Nearly 80 per cent of all student respondents felt that participation in the Applied Learning Awards has, or will have, an impact on their future pathways in related areas such as ongoing school engagement and completion, personal confidence and confidence in applying for further education or employment.

Overwhelmingly, students were (and are) made aware of Applied Learning Awards by their teachers and trainers. This feedback evidenced the importance of ensuring that school and education provider staff are kept abreast of the Awards annually, understand the application process and have clear advice and tacce assistance during the Awards nomination period.

The vast majority of student respondents found the nomination process an easy one, although some needed assistance from teachers to better understand it or ensure they were following the process correctly. Similarly, the vast majority indicated that completion of the nomination form was quite manageable although it was clear that a small percentage of student respondents needed some assistance to prepare for and complete their form. As part of the Awards nomination form students were asked to think about the reasons for choosing their applied learning program, benefits gained from it and any challenges they may have had to overcome during their applied learning studies and training; with almost all respondents indicating that it was useful to go through this assessment and self-evaluation process.

Student respondents regarded the use of an independent judging panel to be an unbiased, fair and appropriate approach to assessing student nominations. However, some respondents did suggest that this approach could be enhanced through the inclusion of other evaluation processes that less relied on written applications and allowed for judge's to review tangible student work and/or conduct brief interviews with applicants.

The vast majority of student respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Awards Ceremony. Where students commented and indicated dissatisfaction it was largely related to the amount of speeches given during the event; something that is somewhat unavoidable due the sheer number of Awards to be given out at the event. Of those student respondents that commented on guest speakers, all were very impressed by the calibre of ones used in recent years; in particular Eddie Perfect and Don El

When asked for feedback and recommendations as to how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future, the vast majority of student respondents advised that they were happy with the Awards as they are. However, some did provide some suggestions for improvement which largely centred around: maintaining the elegance of the Awards Ceremony; showing school projects as part of the nomination process; including guest speakers who did not follow their post school pathway but have since found success; using less speakers at the Awards Ceremony; and, increasing advertising of the Awards to students earlier in the school year. As one student respondent said "I can't think of anything to necessarily improve on, however keep it going! It's such an amazing opportunity for students, and even sponsors, just to help connect the community more"

Finally, student respondents were asked "Do you feel that the Applied Learning Awards are valuable?" a question that resulted in a range of generous and positive responses that, when considered, attest to the importance and continuance of the Applied Learning Awards into the future. As one student says, "I think it is a fantastic thing to do. Encouraging students for their hard work and results significantly influences their view on study in a positive way. It's certainly something valued by students, their families and their schools".

## Educator assessment of the Applied Learning Awards

Three separate and individual surveys were provided to 'schools and education providers', 'teachers and trainers' and 'coordinators and support persons'. While each survey differed slightly many questions were consistent across each of the three surveys and, in light of the fact all were completed by 'educators', for the purpose of this report their responses have been examined collectively. In addition, focus group consultations comprised of eight school principals and senior educators was held in May 2014.

A total of 15 different schools and education providers have submitted 45 nominations and have taken part in the awards since inception. Ten of these schools and education providers responded to the survey and participated in the focus group consultation resulting in a high 67 per cent response rate.

Twelve teachers or trainers were nominated for or won an Award and, as one was nominated in two different years, eleven teachers or trainers have taken part in the Awards since VCAL and VETiS educator awards were introduced in 2011. Five of these teachers and trainers responded to the survey, resulting in a 45 per cent survey response rate. No teachers or trainers participated in the focus group.

Seven persons were nominated for or won the 'Jenny Marks Memorial Award for Coordination and Support Award'; an Award offered for the first time in 2013. Five of these individuals responded to the survey and participated in the focus group consultation resulting in a high 71 per cent response rate.

Overall, the vast majority of respondents, representing their school or organisation, recognise and acknowledge that participation in the Applied Learning Awards has increased their professional confidence and willingness to apply for not only future Applied Learning Awards but also ones offered by external education and training

bodies. By contrast to those representing organisations, teachers, trainers and coordinators expressed mixed views as to whether or not participation in the Applied Learning Awards has increased their confidence and willingness to apply for other awards in the future.

Overall, the vast majority of school and education provider representatives, teachers and trainers and coordinators found that the professional and practice reflection that was required as part of the Awards nomination process to be something that was personally beneficial. Some also found that the self-reflection approach used in the Awards nomination process to be somewhat lacking and could be enhanced by the inclusion of additional feedback from colleagues and students.

In reviewing the ways in which Applied Learning Award wins are internally and externally announced it is apparent that the Awards are seen by educators as an honour, a validation of outstanding success and something to be proudly shared with internal and external stakeholders, the school community and with personal networks.

All respondent schools and education providers advised that they do recognise the applied learning success of their students through mechanisms such as formal internal award presentations. Whilst this differs from the earlier feedback provided by students, wherein respondent students suggested that only half of their schools offer applied learning awards, the disparity between responses may be accounted for by the fact that respondent students attend a much wider range of schools than just those schools that took part in the surveying.

It is apparent that educators receive information about the Applied Learning Awards from a wide variety of sources (particularly communiqués from the BGK LLEN, Youth Connect and their own colleagues) and it is important that these key face-to-face, online and social media mechanisms continue to be used as a means of marketing and raising awareness of the Awards.

The vast majority of schools, education providers, teachers, trainers and coordinators found the nomination process (whereby the applicant writes the entire application) to be an 'easy' one, however some did identify some difficulty with the process. Of those that found the nomination process 'difficult', some commented on the challenges associated with having to self-nominate and write about oneself and/or the time investment required to complete the nomination form. Some respondents suggested that nominations should come from other colleagues whereas others identified it as a necessity as peers/colleagues may not know or understand their role. In addition, a suggestion was also made to introduce a new Award category for 'team teaching' to reflect that often cross-discipline teachers work collaboratively to deliver training and learning to students.

Educators regarded the use of an independent judging panel to be an unbiased, fair and appropriate approach to assessing nominations. However some respondents suggested that, instead of just relying on a written application, the nomination and judging process should also allow for inclusion of consultation with colleagues, additional information, supporting letters and/or interviews with applicants.

The vast majority of schools, education providers, teachers, trainers and coordination and support persons were very satisfied with the Awards ceremony and many felt that it continues to improve from year to year. No dissatisfaction was noted; however some suggestions and recommendations for enhancements were provided. Of those educator respondents that provided feedback regarding guest speakers, most of the comments complimented the choice of Eddie Perfect as the 2013 guest speaker, and the involvement of the Minister for Education (Mr Dixon) that same year.

When asked for feedback and recommendations as to how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future, the vast majority of respondents advised that they were happy with the Awards as they are. However, some did provide some suggestions for improvement which largely centred around including attendance of the Minister for Education in the future; involving guest speakers of the calibre of Eddie Perfect in the future; making the nomination process more selective and involving nominations from others rather than via self-nomination; simplifying the nomination process for schools; eliminating the interval during the Ceremony involving past winners in the subsequent year; providing educators with the brief summary of nominees and winners used by the MC when announcing the winners; and, consider use of a smaller venue. As one respondent said "It is a wonderful opportunity for students, schools and everyone connected with applied learning to gain recognition in a public forum".

Finally, educator respondents were asked "Do you feel that the Applied Learning Awards are valuable?" a question that resulted in a range of positive responses that, when considered, attest to the importance and continuance of the Applied Learning Awards to the future. As one respondent said "I am still very honoured to be the recipient of the award and am grateful to the ALA for awarding it to me. It is a great mark on my teaching career that I and my family are very proud of. SO THANK YOU VERY MUCH!"

## Employer assessment of the Applied Learning Awards

Ninety-two employers were nominated for or won an Applied Learning Award over the period 2009 to 2013 however as twelve of these were nominated in multiple years a total of 80 different employers have taken part in the Awards since inception. Nine of these employers responded to this survey, resulting in a small 11 per cent survey response rate.

All employer respondents indicated that the Applied Learning Awards was the first time they had been recognised and publicly acknowledged for the work they do in supporting students undertaking applied learning programs. Just under half of all respondents advised that being nominated for or winning an Award would influence their future decision to apply for these or similar awards, although as none provided comments about this it is unclear as to why the remaining respondents would not consider awards applications in the future.

Overall, employers that were nominated for or won Awards were very flattered and humbled by being recognised for their support of local students. Whilst no employer respondent indicated this specifically the fact that none had ever received recognition for this type of activity previously evidences the value and importance of acknowledging the generous commitment employers show to supporting the applied learning of students in our community. As one respondent said "We were surprised, extremely grateful and honoured".

All respondent employers, whether they were Award nominees or winners, indicated a desire to continue supporting students to develop and gain applied learning skills and experience. Indeed some also saw provision of student support and experience as a corporate responsibility that they will continue to take on. One respondent said that, "We felt very honoured to win an award. We believe in supporting young people and encouraging them to enter our industry, and that was great public recognition for it".

Employers advised a number of their stakeholders that they had won an Award, however all were ones directly related to their business; that is, management, staff and customers. Employers have tended to use 'word of mouth' and 'public display of plaque' as the most popular method of announcing their Award win, however

utilisation of platforms and mechanisms such as 'newsletter', 'website' and 'Facebook' were also used by some. One respondent also noted that family and friends were very interested to hear about our win"

Employers regarded the use of an independent judging panel to be a fair and appropriate approach to assessing nominations. However, one respondent noted that the process could be enhanced through judges visiting workplaces as part of the decision making. As one respondent commented, "It is great that it is independent and particularly important that it is judged by people from 'industry'"

All employer respondents were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the Applied Learning Awards Ceremony. No dissatisfaction was noted; however one respondent advised providing organisations with more time to network could enhance the event. One respondent said that "It was a very prestigious night and we really enjoyed it. We really liked seeing the smile on the students as they won awards". All feedback regarding the use of guest speakers was very positive, and many commented specifically on the most recent 2013 guest speaker Eddie Perfect.

When asked for feedback and recommendations on how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future only one recommendation related to increasing opportunities for networking at the Awards Ceremony night, was provided. The remaining comments were insteads of praise and thanks. As one employer respondent said, "The Awards are very well organised and I want to thank for being nominated".

## Sponsor assessment of the Applied Learning Awards

Forty-one businesses, organisations and individuals have sponsored the Applied Learning Awards over the period 2009 to 2013, with many of these sponsoring over multiple years. Twelve of these sponsors responded to this survey, resulting in a 29 per cent survey response rate.

Sponsor respondents indicated that they were predominately made aware of the Applied Learning Awards, and the sponsorship opportunity it presents, through the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect.

Overall, sponsors are largely driven to support the Applied Learning Awards because of genuine commitment to the provision of applied learning to students in the community. An interest in sponsorship for organisational promotional purposes is considered a much lesser reason for supporting the Awards.

Direct organisational benefits derived from Applied Learning Awards sponsorship was something that was not noted by some sponsors and very noticeable to others. Indeed, three quarters of respondent sponsors believed that their sponsorship did have a positive effect for their business predominately in the areas of gaining new customers, promotion of their organisation, contributing to internal organisation awareness of applied learning, and an opportunity to network with potential stakeholders and clients. As one sponsor noted, "Actually during the event we gained a new customer".

Almost all respondents also felt that sponsorship of the Awards did represent a sound return on investment with one noting that "although it is a little early to detail the economic benefit, the community benefit is clear to us"

Overall, respondent sponsors were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the way in which their sponsorship of the Applied Learning Awards was promoted. Two respondents suggested that promotion, not only of them but

also of the initiative, could be enhanced through increased media coverage and a chance to present individual awards at the Awards Ceremony.

All respondent sponsors were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the sponsorship processes and arrangements in the areas of liaison, payment and marketing.

All respondent sponsors were in support of the independent and unbiased judging process utilised to Award evaluate nominations. One sponsor noted that the judging approach "Seems an appropriate process as long as it is entirely independent and those with vested interests aren't part of the process"

All sponsor respondents, that attended the Applied Learning Awards Ceremony were pleased and impressed with the event. Two respondents also provided suggestions that may enhance the event including elimination of the interval period, the inclusion of "fun segments" between formal presentations and choosing youth speakers that can clearly demonstrate the benefit of applied learning As one sponsor said of the event, it "Very well organised and coordinated, impressive event" All feedback regarding the use of guest speakers was also positive, and many commented specifically on the most recent 2013 guest speaker Eddie Perfect. As one sponsor said, "Eddie was great. Well done whoever thought of him and got him on board. Louisa and Danny were very well prepared and professional I thought"

When asked for feedback and recommendations as to how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future all respondent sponsors were very positive about the Awards and the sponsorship opportunities and arrangements. Three respondents, who provided feedback in 2012, also provided suggestions for improvement One, which related to the inclusion of a sponsor networking cocktail event (as a means of connecting with like minded community members and potential clients) was introduced, on the basis of this feedback, in 2013. The second, which related to anonymous sponsorship acknowledgement when providing the award in that anonymous sponsor's selected category, was actioned as part of the Award Ceremony presentation in 2013.

As one respondent said "The whole process was very professional and I felt connected to the process at all times".

## Judges' assessment of the Applied Learning Awards

Thirteen individuals representing a range of areas, have volunteered their time as independent judges the period 2009 to 2013 Five of these judges responded to this survey, resulting in a 38 per cent survey response rate.

The volunteer judges who assess, adjudicate award winners willingly give of their time, expertise and skills to ensure that the Applied Learning Awards are unbiased and independent. When asked why they choose to offer this support and advice, respondent judges indicated that "support applied learning in the community" "because the Applied Learning Awards are important" and "to support student growth and development" were amongst the most prominent reasons for them doing so.

When reflecting on the varied composition of the current Judging Panel respondents believed each representative sector were equally valuable, important and should remain part of the Judging Panel into the future. One respondent noted that "I think the variety of sectors on the panel well represents the type of nominations received, and this means the judging can be thorough and representative. I feel that as a group we are able to make good decisions during the judging".

Overall, respondent judges were very satisfied with the judging management and process ~~utilised~~, all noted that they were satisfied with the various materials and tools presented to them in advance of the formal Judging Panel meeting. Similarly, all were satisfied with the way in which the Judging Panel meeting is coordinated. One respondent noted that, at times, the limited background information provided by some nominees makes their ability to conduct an assessment difficult.

All respondent judges indicated that they were keen to offer their support as a volunteer judge into the future with one saying that being part of the Applied Learning Awards is a highlight of my year as my role is a strategic policy development one which doesn't always allow for direct connection with students and providers, but the Awards definitely do".

All respondent judges, who attended the Applied Learning Awards Ceremony, were satisfied and pleased with the event. All feedback regarding guest speakers was also positive, particularly in relation to the most recent guest speaker Eddie Perfect. Indeed one judge that could not attend the Awards Ceremony commented that "I heard that Eddie Perfect was magnificent".

The comments provided by respondent judges attest to the value and importance of the Applied Learning Awards at both community and individual levels. In reflecting on the outcomes and benefits of the Awards one judge said that "I think the ALAs are a great opportunity to give some kids praise, that otherwise don't often get to have much of the spotlight".

## Considerations and Recommendations for the Applied Learning Awards

Recommendations and considerations for improvements to the Applied Learning Awards ~~was~~ generated through the Author's overall evaluation and through specific information provided ~~by~~ those stakeholders that took part in the surveys and consultations.

Some of these recommendations have ~~already~~ been actioned, due to feedback provided ~~in~~ previous years and changes made ~~to~~ the 2013 Award program, while some require further consideration. Unfortunately, some recommendations are ones that are unlikely to ~~be~~ accommodated ~~due~~ to the current format of the Awards and/or unavoidable logistical issues.

A detailed list of considerations and recommendations is provided within the report; however a brief synopsis of these suggestions covers the following areas:

- x Market the Awards earlier in the school year
- x Specifically target non-government sector schools and market the Awards
- x Remind students that their nomination or win can be a beneficial inclusion on the personal resume
- x Consider the use of alternative application assessment methods such as provision of work, interviews, letters of support and workplace/school visits
- x Maintain a high caliber of guest speakers but also seek out youth presenters that have followed an applied learning pathway and achieved post school success
- x Advise educator nominees about upcoming external ~~awards~~ they may be eligible for or interested in
- x Advise teachers, trainers and coordinators that the ~~self~~ nomination process is a common professional award application method within the education, business and industry sectors

- x Encourage stakeholders to promote the Awards to other educators, a direct approach that could act as an 'informal' nomination from peers
- x Introduction of a 'team teaching award' to reflect that applied learning is often delivered through cross discipline teams and planning
- x Eliminate the refreshment interval during the Awards Ceremony as a means of minimising attendee departure prior the end of the Awards Ceremony
- x Invite school councilors to the Awards Ceremony
- x Create greater recognition of, and for, the volunteer judges
- x Build sustainability into the Applied Learning Awards to assure its local longevity
- x Support other regions to initiate their own Applied Learning (or similar) Awards.

Two specific recommendations provided by stakeholders in 2012 have already been actioned:

- x Hold a cocktail networking event for sponsors, judges, senior educators, government representatives, community leaders and key stakeholders (NB. This suggestion, which was made in 2012, was actioned and trialed as part of the 2013 Awards)
- x Ensure that anonymous sponsorship of an Award is acknowledged so that the audience know that the specific category is valuable and important (NB. This suggestion, which was made in 2012, was actioned as part of the 2013 Awards through acknowledgement of anonymous sponsorship during the formal presentation, on the PowerPoint display and in the event guide).

## Case Studies Young People, Secondary Schools and Educators

An array of Case Studies were drawn from consultations with young people, educators and School Principals. The following individuals and schools are presented as Case Studies within the report.

Young People:

- x Lincoln:2013 Award winner 'VCAL Numeracy Award' (Holmesglen Vocational College student)
- x Ruby:2009 Award nominee - 'Certificate III in Applied Fashion Design and Technology Award' (Sandringham College student)
- x Andrew:2011 Award winner - 'Certificate III in Acting (Screen) Award' (De La Salle College student)
- x Rebecca:2011 Award winner - 'Certificate II in Community Services Award' (Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College student)
- x Frances:2012 Award winner - 'Certificate II in Hospitality Award' (St Leonard's College student)
- x Juwita:2013 Award winner - 'VCAL Personal Development Award' (Parkdale Secondary College student)
- x Andrew:2013 Award winner - 'Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance Award' (Sandringham College student)
- x Aoife: 2012 Award winner - 'Certificate III in Applied Fashion Design and Technology Award' (Sandringham College student)
- x Ellen:2013 Award winner - 'Certificate IV in Justice Award' (Sandringham College student)

Schools and educators:

- x Sandringham College
- x Berendale School
- x Firbank Grammar
- x Westall Secondary College
- x Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College
- x Cheltenham Secondary College.

## Public and Social Policy Linkages

The Applied Learning Awards demonstrate alignment or connectivity with a number of state and federal public policies and programs applicable between the period 2002-2013. Since 2014 some of these policies and programs, predominantly federal ones, have been identified as ones that may be modified or eliminated. However, at the time of this report being prepared, final decisions regarding some of these policies are still under parliamentary review.

The Applied Learning Awards align with some of the practical and systemic goals and outcomes outlined in the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, a federal policy which “aims to increase the educational engagement and attainment of young people and to improve their transition to post school education, training and employment through immediate, concerted action supported by broader long term reform”.

The Applied Learning Awards also align and support the objectives of both the ‘School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program’ and the ‘Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions’ initiative, both of which call for increasing opportunities for young people to engage in broader education provision through a mix of academic and vocational learning pathways, and identify school and business partnerships as one mechanism for achieving this.

The Applied Learning Awards also recognise education and training programs that have the capacity to contribute to increasing education attainment at the local level. In addition, the Awards also provide teachers and trainers with a forum to promote their own professional successes and outcomes, something that is not often recognised within Australia or locally. Indeed, research and policy statements from both the OECD and the Australian Government have identified the need to recognise and reward teachers who are: contributing to excellence student outcomes; contributing to teaching innovation; undertaking professional development; and, receiving positive reviews in meaningful performance evaluation. The Applied Learning Awards is a forum for providing teachers and trainers with a thoroughly and independently assessed Awards recognition opportunity.

## Awards Transference and Scalability

The model that underpins the Applied Learning Awards is one that easily lends itself to both scalability and transference. From a scalability perspective, the Applied Learning Awards demonstrated a capacity to grow to meet identified needs, such as the introduction of new award categories. The underpinning philosophy, partnership approach and adaptable guidelines could easily facilitate expansion of the existing Applied Learning Awards into other regions (thus building a much larger Awards opportunity and system). A key element of the model and approach could be used by organisations and partnership networks in other regions to initiate their own placebased Applied Learning Awards (or similar) program.

## Project Implementation Model, Guide and Recommendations

The BGK Applied Learning Awards development and ongoing delivery has facilitated the development of a guide with process recommendations that could assist other organisations or partnerships to establish their own Applied Learning Awards (or similar) in their region. Within the report a detailed implementation model and guide is provided.

In summary, this guide covers the following aspects:

1. Establish Awards 'Working Group' partnership
2. Identify awards purpose and mission
3. Identify awards categories
4. Conduct financial budgeting and project planning
5. Source independent judges
6. Develop resources (marketing, forms, sponsorship and event)
7. Market and promote the awards
8. Source sponsorship
9. Administer nominations and applications
10. Plan and conduct the awards ceremony event
11. Prepare a media and promotions plan
12. Conduct evaluation and research.

## Conclusion

The Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston's regional Applied Learning Awards has demonstrated success on multiple levels. From the inaugural Awards year in 2009, the Applied Learning Awards has grown in awareness, participation and representation from the community and education sectors.

What this report has highlighted is that there has been significant impact for award recipients (students, schools, teachers, trainers, coordinators and employers), increasing levels of community interest and awareness (through sponsorship, volunteer judging and media), education sector recognition (by becoming an intrinsic part of the school year, leadership support and internal celebrations) and business support (actively engaging students in employment and work experience).

This report has been able to identify the areas of success and opportunities for the Awards (past, present and future) as well as balance a range of incredible narratives from Awards recipients, teachers, employers and school leaders. Sustainability, sharing of good practice and regional growth were also key purposes identified in the early stages of the Awards' development and what this report has been able to also clearly outline is the rationale and importance of holding awards to celebrate achievement in applied learning. In addition, this report has provided guidelines to facilitate replication of such an awards initiative in other regions.

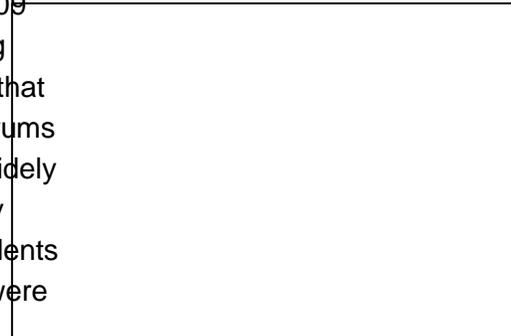
The BGK LLEN and VVOConnect are incredibly proud to have invested significant time, resources and expertise into this region's Applied Learning Awards over the past five years and to have seen such important systemic changes across our region's education providers and community in relation to applied learning. We look forward to the Awards continuing into the future and its continued growth and strengthening.

# 1. Introduction

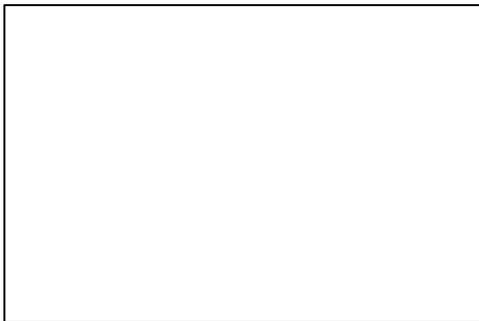
## 1.1 Applied Learning Awards Background

The Bayside Glen Eira Kingston (BGK) region 'Applied Learning Awards' recognise outstanding students teachers/ trainers, coordinators, employers, secondary schools and education providers that have positively contributed to applied learning in our region. The Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network (BGK LLEN) and Youth Connect facilitate these Awards annually.

The Applied Learning Awards (the Awards) were established in 2009 to provide a forum for celebrating and valuing applied learning achievements within the local community. It was recognised that while academic achievement was celebrated via a number of forums and mechanisms, applied learning was generally not as widely celebrated. In addition, despite the significant contribution made by businesses to provide genuine workplace experiences for students and establish partnerships with schools, these contributions were not often formally acknowledged and celebrated regionally.



Since establishing the Applied Learning Awards five years ago, a total of 440 individuals and organisations have been nominated for or won an award. This total of 440 is comprised of 184 award winners and 256 nominees over the five year period under review.



Nominations are judged by independent panels of experts relevant to the Award categories being adjudicated. Sponsorship for the event and individual awards is sourced from local community organisations and businesses, as well as through contributions (financial and in kind) made by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect. An annual gala Awards Ceremony is held in October of each year at which winners are announced from amongst the field of nominees. Over previous years approx. 1460 people have attended the Awards Ceremonies.

The objectives of the Awards are to: increase community awareness of applied learning; improve the perception and validity of this type of learning; and, provide a forum to celebrate all those who excel in and contribute to quality applied learning.

## 1.2 Research Report Purpose and Methodology

The initial purpose of this research was to conduct a thorough project evaluation provide the Awards coordinators (BGK LLEN and Youth Connect) with an opportunity to assess a maturing programme, enable genuine stakeholder feedback and consultation, make any necessary adjustments to the Applied Learning Awards model, lead to the development of a Research Report (useful for funding reports and sponsorship sourcing), and contribute to the development of Case Studies.

However, as the research took shape it became evident that this review needed to be expanded to also examine the Applied Learning Awards with reference to relevant literature and within the context of government and public policies.

This research paper also reviews the Applied Learning Awards through a stakeholder and participant level. As award winner and nominee (students, schools, educators) evaluation has assessed the impact of the Awards on winners and nominees, the nomination process, the Awards Ceremony, and to what extent the Awards are meeting their stated objectives. Sponsors evaluation has assessed the impact the Awards have had for their organisation and stakeholders return on investment, perceptions of the sponsorship process, and, the Awards Ceremony Independent Judging Panel member evaluation has assessed the impact that participation in the Awards adjudication has had for them (and/or their organisations) perception of the judging process, return on their investment, and, the Awards Ceremony.

This paper was developed using a qualitative and quantitative approach, drawing upon a range of primary and secondary sources during late 2012, 2013 and 2014. As a formative investigation, this paper aims to evaluate and analyze the Applied Learning Awards in an effort to strengthen and sustain its ongoing delivery, assess the capacity for transference and scalability of the awards model, and impart instructional information for communities seeking to initiate their own awards program.

### 1.3 Research Design

A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to conduct this research project.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Nominees (across all categories) in years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013</li> <li>x Winners (across all categories) in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013</li> <li>x Sponsors in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013</li> <li>X Judges in 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Survey respondents who self-identify interest in participating in an interview / case study write-up</li> <li>x Survey respondents identified by researcher as potential case study</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Surveys (disseminated via 'Survey Monkey' – for ease of evaluation and collection)</li> <li>x Surveys sent to all past nominees / winners with valid email addresses</li> <li>x Surveys sent to all past sponsors</li> <li>x Surveys sent to all past judges</li> <li>x Surveys can be completed anonymously</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Face-to-face interviews</li> <li>x Telephone interviews</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Structured online survey technique</li> <li>x Specific draft survey questions developed for each category of winner and nominee</li> <li>x Specific draft survey questions developed for sponsors</li> <li>x Specific draft survey questions developed for sponsors</li> <li>x Survey questions entered into 'Survey Monkey'</li> <li>x Surveys disseminated</li> <li>x Returned surveys collated and evaluated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x As per 'quantitative'</li> <li>x Consultation with educators</li> <li>x Telephone / face-to-face interview questions developed which allow for further investigation into results provided through survey</li> <li>x Respondents indicating an interest in a follow-up interview contacted</li> <li>x Case Studies developed where possible</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Research report developed, incorporating survey results, recommendations</li> <li>x Report disseminated, utilised and/or published as required or appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Case Studies</li> </ul>

## 1.4 Limitations

A number of potential limitations emerged when conducting this research and preparing reports:

- x A low response rate from 'employer award' winners and nominees was received, which has affected confidence in results.
- x Between the years 2009-2011 student nominees and award winners were not asked to provide personal email and home addresses, however contact details were sought directly from students from 2012 onwards. Because of this, the greater number of student survey responses were received from those who were part of the Applied Learning Awards in 2012 and 2013 rather than in the three preceding years.
- x While the intent was to conduct a thorough literature review as part of this report the ability to do so was limited by a dearth of research (Australian and international) into vocational based awards models.

## 2. Applied Learning Awards

### 2.1 Applied Learning Programs

Applied learning assists senior secondary students to develop skills required for employment, further education and training as well as participation in the community. In Victoria, students can participate in a number of applied learning programs as part of their senior schooling including the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) programs, School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs).

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) sits alongside the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and is a 'hands on' learning option for students in Years 11 and 12. It offers practical related experience, as well as literacy and numeracy skills and the opportunity to build personal skills that are important for life and work.

Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) describes courses that are usually undertaken at a TAFE Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or secondary school. A wide variety of industries are offered including hospitality, engineering, community services and music to name but a few. Training is available to students completing VCE and is a core component of a VCAL program. Students undertaking VETiS are usually required to participate in a structured industry work placement, which allows them to apply their knowledge and skills in a 'real life' workplace. Typically a student attends their VETiS training one day per week for one or two years. Upon successful completion of the training the student will receive a nationally recognised certificate (e.g. Certificate II in Business Administration, Certificate III in Engineering). The certificate or competencies achieved can then be used as the basis of further training or education.

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs) allow students over 15 years of age to work as paid part time apprentices or trainees while at school. SBATs enable young people to gain a vocational qualification and paid workplace experience while also completing their school studies. SBATs are an increasingly popular applied learning option for VCAL or VCE students in Years 11 and 12, and in some cases available to Year 10 students also. SBATs prepare students for the world of work and assist employers to attract young employees into their business and industry. Students undertaking a SBAT must attend school, participate in vocational training and attend the workplace, and are paid training wage for time spent in the workplace. Upon successful SBAT completion students receive a nationally recognised qualification that can count as part of their senior school certificate (VCE or VCAL) and may contribute to ongoing training or into a part time or full-time apprenticeship or traineeship in that industry area.

The Applied Learning Awards recognise students who have achieved success in VCAL, VETiS or SBAT applied learning areas as well as the educators, employers and supporters that have enabled this type of learning.

### 2.2 Applied Learning Context

While traditional academic education provision is the curriculum cornerstone in the majority of secondary schools, increasingly many are recognising that a broad range of learning options is important to engage and retain a new generation of learners. This shifting pedagogy paradigm has led to greater opportunities for students to engage in applied learning programs such as VET in Schools (VETiS) and School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship (SBAT) programs and was also part of the rationale behind the development of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Delivered alongside school delivered applied or academic curriculum offerings, providing students with a chance to 'learn outside the classroom' is often seen as a successful mechanism for engaging students and better preparing them for a life beyond school.

In a research paper exploring school retention Lamb et. al. state “that school programs to engage learners, they need to be challenging, stimulating, involve opportunities for sharing learning tasks, are satisfying as learning experiences, and have clear and demonstrable benefits beyond school. They also note that vocational (or applied) learning programs such as VCAL, VETiS and SBAT present the most significant reform to the senior secondary curriculum and ... are of wider relevance for they contribute to a greater perception of relevance and stronger motivation from students” (2004, p.154)

The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development identified a range of strategies aimed at increasing school completion in its 2008 ‘Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion (Report & Rice, 2008, p.7 - 23). A number of schoolwide strategies identified in this report explicitly or implicitly attest to the value of applied learning provision as a means of contributing to improvements in student engagement and completion including:

- x “broad curriculum provision in the senior years” providing a curriculum that is broad, diverse and flexible that can accommodate a wide range of student interests and skill levels is important
- x “offering quality Vocational Education and Training (VET) options” offering VET programs tends to increase school attendance and completion and lead to improved labour market outcomes
- x “programs that are challenging and stimulating” such programs should, amongst other things, provide opportunities for students to engage in authentic tasks that have meaning in the world outside of school
- x “pathways planning and quality careers guidance and counselling” provision of Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) planning which assists students to identify future education, training and employment goals and may contribute to the identification of an appropriate or relevant VET or SBA program
- x “cross sectoral initiatives” are those involving partnerships with other agencies and sharing resources, with partnerships being a core feature of any successful SBA program.

VCAL, VETiS and SBAT applied learning programs are a very successful way in which schools can harness the power of their community and business partners to achieve the ideal learning environment described by Lamb et. al above. Applied learning, as part of an integrated education and curriculum program, can provide students with challenging, stimulating and satisfying experiences that have demonstrable benefits beyond the classroom.

### 2.3 Applied Learning Awards History

The Applied Learning Awards were established by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect in 2009, both of whom are committed to the value, importance and growth of applied learning across the Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston region. The Awards were initiated because both the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect were concerned that, at the time, there was little recognition and celebration of those persons and organisations who demonstrate outstanding applied learning contributions or success.

During 2008 and 2009, the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect established an ‘Awards Working Group’ comprised of representatives from Australian Industry Group, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Holmesglen TAFE, MEGT and Sandringham College collaborated to plan the Awards. A broad representation of this Working Group was sought in order to ensure that the inaugural Applied Learning Awards would suitably recognise the appropriate categories of nominees, and lead into the development of professional Awards Ceremony. It was anticipated that this partnership of representatives would play a significant role in assisting the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect to develop an

Awards template that could be used in future years. The partnership of members generously gave of their time to share knowledge and expertise with the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect which in turn led to the development of the program branding, guidelines, nomination content, marketing materials, judging panel planning, sponsorship planning and event design.

In 2010 the 'Awards Working Group' was disbanded and since then the annual planning has been conducted by BGK LLEN and Youth Connect staff (excepting the independent Judging Panel). However, both organisations have independent stakeholders and roles with which to confer and collaborate when any significant changes have been made to the Applied Learning Awards

## 2.4 Awards Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of the Awards are to:

- x increase community awareness of applied learning
- x improve the perception and validity of this type of learning;
- x provide a forum to celebrate all those who excel in and contribute to quality applied learning
- x stimulate community participation in applied learning, particularly those in business and industry sectors
- x stimulate school and education provider recognition in applied learning achievements and outcomes
- x build confidence in nominees so that they apply for recognition from other sources (e.g. government awards, industry awards, education/training provider awards), and,
- x seek media attention and interest in the Awards and promote applied learning within the wider community.

## 2.5 Awards Categories

Between 2009 and 2013 awards have been granted across four overarching categories: students; schools and education providers; teachers / trainers; coordinators and support persons; and, employers. Within most of these overarching categories, sub-categories exist.

### 2.5.1 Students (VETiS, VCAL and SBATs)

Within the wider 'Student Awards' category VCAL, VETiS and SBATs are provided to applied learning students. In 2012 a new Award, the 'Applied Learning Student of the Year Award', was established to recognise the student who, above all others, demonstrates outstanding commitment to both applied learning and their wider community. The student Awards are:

#### VETiS Certificate Awards

A range of outstanding student Applied Learning Awards are presented to students who have shown success in range of Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) Certificate awards. The Awards presented are determined by nominations submitted. Certificates are awarded in accordance with the Certificate or industry area represented in the nomination. e.g. a 'Hospitality Award' for a student undertaking Certificate II in Hospitality. Usually only one Award is given per certificate area each year.

Between 2009 and 2013, 30 students have won a VETiS Award.

#### SBAT Certificate Awards

A range of outstanding student Applied Learning Awards are presented to students who have shown success in School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT). The Awards presented are determined by nominations submitted. Certificates are awarded in accordance with the SBAT industry represented in the nomination (e.g. an 'Automotive SBAT Award' for a student undertaking an SBAT in the automotive industry). There is usually only one Award given per SBAT industry area each year.

Between 2009 and 2013, 26 students have won a SBAT Award.

## VCAL Awards

One outstanding VCAL Award is presented in each of the following four VCAL strand categories:

x	Personal Development Stream VCAL Student
x	Literacy Stream VCAL Student
x	Numeracy Stream VCAL Student
x	Work Related Skills Stream VCAL Student

Between 2009 and 2013, 19 students won a VCAL Award.

### Applied Learning Student of the Year Award

Inaugurated in 2012, this award is given to a student who is an outstanding applied learner and who also demonstrates outstanding community participation and leadership. The Applied Learning Student of the Year Award winner receives a significant financial scholarship provided by Hight Community Bank. The \$1500 scholarship is to be used to fund/support further education, training or employment. Nominations cannot be made for this award. Instead, the winner is selected by the Judging Panel once all VETiS, SBAT and VCAL nominations have been considered.

Since 2012, two students have won this award.

### 2.5.2 Education Providers (Schools and Organisations)

Within the wider 'Education Provider Awards' category VETiS delivery, VETiS Access, VCAL, VCAL Community VCAL and Champion School Awards are provided to those schools and education providers (e.g. TAFE, Learn Local or community organisations) that have positively contributed to applied learning in the region. There is usually only one award given per category area each year. The education provider awards are:

VETiS Delivery Award	VETiS Delivery Awards are for those schools providing internal VETiS programs to their students and/or to students from other schools.
Champion School Award	Nominations cannot be submitted for this award, it is awarded by the Judging Panel after assessing all nominees.

Between 2009 and 2013, 55 schools or education providers have been nominated for an award with 28 of these receiving an award.

### 2.5.3 Teachers/Trainers (VETiS and VCAL) and Applied Learning Coordinators

In 2011, it was identified that there was a need to formally recognise the contributions made by teachers and trainers and a new category of awards for these learning professionals was created. Within the wider 'Teachers / Trainers Awards' category two outstanding VETiS and VCAL Teacher / Trainer Awards are presented to those who have positively contributed to the applied learning of students in the Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston region. There is usually only one award given per category area each year. The Teacher / Trainer Awards are:

VETiS Teacher / Trainer Award	The VETiS Teacher / Trainer Award is for those educators delivering VET training to students.
-------------------------------	---

Between 2011 and 2018 teachers or trainers have been nominated for award with six of these receiving an Award.

#### 2.5.4 Coordinators and Support Persons

In 2013, a new Award was launched for those personnel who coordinate or support applied learning in their school or organisation. The Applied Learning Coordination and Support Person Award is offered in recognition of the critical role that such staff play in ensuring that programs offered to students are of a high quality and standard. This Award also recognises the considerable administration, management and innovation that coordination and support persons undertake in ensuring students receive access to programs that meet student and industry pathway needs.

The Award has been named the 'Jenny Marks Memorial Award for Applied Learning Coordination and Support' in honour of Jenny Marks, a local applied learning leader and expert, who passed away in 2013. In addition to being a local leader, Jenny also played a critical role in assisting the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect to develop the Applied Learning Awards in 2009.

Jenny Marks Memorial Award for Applied Learning Coordination and Support Award	The Applied Learning Coordination and Support Person Award is for those supporting applied learning programs in schools or organisations (VET Coordinators, VCAL Coordinators, Careers Coordinators, Administrative Support Staff).
--	---

In 2013, seven coordinators were nominated for award with one person receiving this Award.

#### 2.5.5 Employers

Within the wider 'Employer Awards' category SBAT, Structured Workplace Learning, Business Partnership and Group Training Organisation Awards are provided to those businesses that have positively contributed to applied learning in the region. There is usually only one award given per category each year. The employer Awards are:

Employer Awards	Four employer awards are available: x School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship (SBAT) Employer x Structured Workplace Learning Employer x Business School Partnership x Group Training Organisation
-----------------	--

Between 2009 and 2019 192 employers have been nominated for award with 26 of these receiving an Award.

### 2.6 Nomination and Award Totals

Between 2009 and 2013 a total of 440 individuals and organisations have been nominated for or won an Award. This total of 440 is comprised of 184 award winners and 256 nominees. A more detailed breakdown of nominees and Award winners per category and per year is outlined below.

VETiS winners	9	14	15	20	18	76
SBAT winners	8	5	5	5	3	26
Winners Total	21	23	24	29	26	123
Total (per year)	51	37	45	64	72	269
VETiS winners	4	3	3	2	1	13
Total (per year)	13	11	12	9	10	55
Total (per year)			6	6	6	18
Coordination Winner					1	1
Winners Total					1	1
Nominees Total					6	6
Total (per year)					7	7
SWL winners	1	4	1	1	1	8
Awards given	33	37	37	39	38	184
Totals	96	67	79	90	108	440
Change (per cent)		-30.2%	17.9%	13.9%	20.0%	12.5%

Table1: Nominations and Award per category (2009–2013)

## 2.7 Education Sector Nomination Totals

Between 2009 and 2013, 340 nominations have been received for student, school and education provider, teacher and trainer and coordinator Awards from a range of education sectors. Government school nominations accounted for 53 per cent of all nominations over this period, 25 per cent from the Catholic school sector, eight per cent from the Independent school sector, eight per cent from the community education sector and the remaining six per cent from the TAFE sector. These figures do not include employed nominations as these can come from a range of sources including employer nomination. A more detailed breakdown of nominations per education sector is outlined below:

Government	25	21	20	27	40	133
Catholic	14	15	15	18	11	73
Independent	8	0	4	8	5	25
TAFE	4	1	0	7	8	20
						16
Total (per year)	51	37	45	63	71	267
Government						
Catholic						
Independent						
TAFE						
Total (per year)	12	10	11	8	9	50
Government						
Catholic						
Independent						
Total (per year)			6	6	6	18
Government					5	5
Catholic					1	1
					1	1
Total (per year)					7	7
Government	31	28	31	35	54	179
	49%	60%	51%	46%	58%	53%
Catholic	17	18	16	21	13	85

	27%	38%	26%	28%	14%	25%
Independent	9	0	4	8	5	26
	14%	0%	7%	11%	5%	8%
Community Education Providers	1	0	10	5	11	27
	2%	0%	16%	7%	12%	8%
TAFE	5	1	0	7	9	22
	8%	2%	0%	9%	10%	6%
						1
Totals	63	47	61	76	93	340
Totals (per cent)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table2: Education sector nomination totals (2009-2013)

Over half of all nominations come from, and within, the government sector. Nominations from the Catholic education sector follow and account for around a quarter of all. Nominations from the independent, community education, TAFE and RTO sectors account for the remainder. In reviewing this, it would appear that more work can be done in terms of influencing non-Government sectors to increase their levels of, and contribution to, nominations.

## 2.8 Student Industry Category Nomination Totals

Between 2009 and 2012, 202 nominations have been received for student VETiS and SBAT awards across fourteen different industry areas. Within each of these industry category areas the industry specific vocational qualifications within each are noted.

Over this period, 41 student nominations for Awards within the 'Hospitality and Tourism' category accounted for largest number of nominations and for 20.3 per cent of all nominations received. This was followed by 36 nominations in the 'Performing Arts' category and accounting for 17.8 per cent of all received. Twenty nominations in the 'Building and Construction' category were received and accounted for 9.9 per cent of all received. Twenty nominations in the 'Creative and Visual Arts' category were also received and accounted for 9.9 per cent of all received. Seventeen nominations were received in the 'Information Technology' category and accounted for 8.4 per cent of all received. Thirteen nominations in the 'Community and Health' category were received and accounted for 6.4 per cent of all received.

The remaining industry category areas of 'horticulture and environment', 'automotive', 'personal services', 'recreation', 'business', 'engineering and electrotechnology', 'animal science' and 'transport and logistics' are also noted in the table below.

It is interesting to note the proportion of nominations largely correlate with the level of student enrolments in each of these areas across the Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston Region. 2012 secondary student industry enrolment data presented in the most recent [BGK LLEN Regional School](#) shows that the three highest enrolment areas were in 'hospitality and tourism', followed by 'entertainment (creative, performing)' and then 'building and construction'; rates that align with the three highest student award nomination category areas.

Differences are noted when comparing some of the remaining 2012 student industry enrolments against Applied Learning Award nomination category areas. The fourth highest number of student enrolments in 2012 was in 'recreation' which was the fourth lowest award nomination area. The fifth highest number of student enrolments in 2012 was in 'community services and health' which closely resembled the level of nominations where it

came in at six out of fourteen industry award areas. The sixth highest number of student enrolments in 2012 was in the area of 'wholesale retail and personal services' which differed from the level of nominations in this area where it was rated as nine out of fourteen award category areas. The seventh highest number of student enrolments in 2012 was in the area of 'information technology' which differed from its fifth highest rating as an award nomination category area.

A detailed breakdown of student nominations per the fourteen different industry category areas is outlined in the table below.

Hospitality	25	
Hospitality (Kitchen Operations)	10	
Tourism	4	
Events and Tourism	2	
Total (2009–2013)	41	20.3%
Media Arts and Production	11	
Technical Production (Music)	9	
Dance	8	
Acting	6	
Music Industry (Performance)	2	
Total (2009–2013)	36	17.8%
Building and Construction	16	
Plumbing	2	
Carpentry	1	
Furnishing	1	
Total (2009–2013)	20	9.9%
Fashion Design Technology	9	
Creative Arts	6	
Visual Arts	5	
Total (2009–2013)	20	9.9%
Information Technology	3	
Digital Media	5	
Multimedia	5	
Information Technology (Games Creation)	3	
Printing and Graphic Arts	1	
Total (2009–2013)	17	8.4%
Community Services	6	
Justice	2	
Children's Services	2	
Allied Health Assistance	1	

Health and Community Services	1	
Volunteering	1	
Total (2009– 2013)	13	6.4%
<b>Horticulture</b>		
Horticulture	7	
Floristry	2	
Natural Environment	1	
Total (2009– 2013)	10	5.0%
<b>Automotive</b>		
Automotive	9	
Total (2009– 2013)	9	4.5%
<b>Personal Services</b>		
Personal Services	5	
Make-Up Services	2	
Beauty	1	
Hairdressing	1	
Total (2009– 2013)	9	4.5%
<b>Sport and Recreation</b>		
Sport and Recreation	6	
Community Recreation	1	
Outdoor Recreation	1	
Total (2009– 2013)	8	4.0%
<b>Business Administration</b>		
Business Administration	6	
Total (2009– 2013)	6	3.0%
<b>Engineering</b>		
Engineering	5	
Electrotechnology	1	
Total (2009– 2013)	6	3.0%
<b>Animal Studies</b>		
Animal Studies	2	
Equine Studies	2	
Veterinary Nursing	1	
Total (2009– 2013)	5	2.5%
<b>Transport and Logistics</b>		
Transport and Logistics	2	
Total (2009– 2013)	2	1.0%

Table3: Student industry category nominations (2009–2013)

## 2.9 Independent Judging

The Awards are judged by an independent group of autonomous representatives from a range of organisations and sectors that reflect the expertise and knowledge and required to evaluate nominations. Since 2009 representatives have been drawn from the following organisations:

- x Australian Industry Group
- x Bayside City Council (Local Government youth development)

- x Catholic Education Office
- x Chisholm TAFE
- x City of Kingston (Local Government economic development)
- x Complex Training Academy
- x Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)
- x Hallam Senior Secondary College
- x Oakwood School
- x Outer Eastern Local Learning and Employment Network (OELLEN) Prahran Community Learning Centre
- x South East Local Learning and Employment Network (SELLEN)
- x Victorian Applied Learning Association (VALA).

Over time the number of judges has enlarged in response to a growing number of nominations received each year. In 2013, there were a total of nine judges who were broken into three separate groups assessing different Award category areas.

The work undertaken by judges includes reviewing the nominations provided to them prior to the adjudication meeting, attending the judging panel meeting where winners are selected, in some cases contacting referees to further assess a nomination and/or choose between two potential winners. In addition, after reviewing all nominations the judges are then charged with selecting the 'Applied Learning Student of the Year', 'Champion School / Education provider of the Year' and 'Champion Employer of the Year'.

A conservative estimate as to the number of volunteer hours given by judges over the five years of the Applied Learning Awards is 252 hours. Or put another way, the volunteer judges have collectively worked for just over six and a half weeks over the five years the Awards have been held. This amount is based on the following approximate contributions made by judges each year:

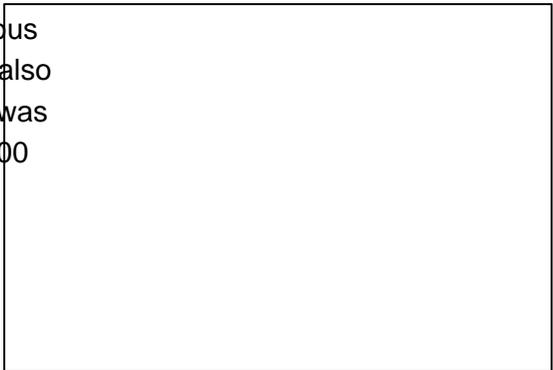
2009	6	12	30	42
2010	6	12	30	42
2011	6	12	30	42
2012	9	18	45	63
2013	9	18	45	63

## 2.10 Sponsorship

In addition to the financial contributions made by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect, sponsorship is also sought from local businesses, community organisations and individuals. Sponsorship largely contributes to the manufacturing of plaques for winners, purchase of \$100 vouchers for student winners, and hosting the Awards Ceremony at a reception/events centre with approx. 3000 attendees each year.

Between 2009 and 2013 sponsorship has been broken into 'Event Sponsorship' across bronze (\$550), silver (\$1,100) gold (\$2,200) and platinum (\$3,300) values. In addition, sponsors can also sponsor an 'Individual Award' at \$110 per award.

Since 2012, the Highett Community Bank (Bendigo Bank) has been the Major Sponsor of the Awards and contributed a generous \$10,000 per annum. In addition, Highett Community Bank has also sponsored the 'Student of the Year Award' since this Award was launched in 2012, providing the student winner with \$1,500 scholarship each year. In 2014, Highett Community Bank will be the Major Sponsor and reward the 'Student of the Year'.



'Event Sponsors' are acknowledged as Sponsors of the event. The Platinum Sponsor is acknowledged as a sponsor provided with an opportunity to make a short presentation during the event.

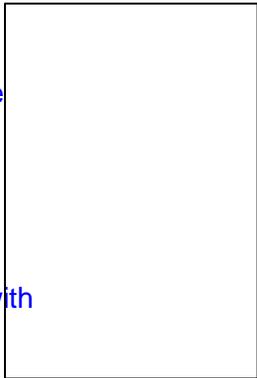
Between 2009 and 2013 a total of 41 different businesses, organisations and individuals have sponsored the event and/or individual Awards. Many of these sponsors have provided sponsorship in multiple years.

A full list of sponsors over the five year period is provided in [Appendix 1](#)

## 2.11 Awards Ceremony

The Awards Ceremony is held in October each year. All nominees are invited to attend, as well as parents and carers in the case of students, colleagues in the case of schools and businesses and colleagues or family members in the case of teachers and trainers. Sponsors, judging panel members, key community stakeholders and Members of Parliament are also invited.

The event is a very professional and polished one that includes Award winner presentations, nomination certificate presentations and presentations from some sponsors. A guest speaker also presents to the audience. In the past have included the Hon. Martin Dixon (Minister for Education, Victoria), Members of Parliament, applied learning academics, Australian Apprentice of the Year winner, Paralympian athlete (Don Elgin) and a well-known television and theatre actor (Eddie Perfect). Guests are offered drinks on arrival, canapés and a short intermission with further refreshments available.



Both the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect ensure that the event is a very prestigious one, and one that shows applied learning recognition and celebration to be just regarded as academic education awards ceremonies. It is the belief of both organisations that applied learning and academic education should be treated as equally important, and the Awards Ceremony reflects this.

Between the years 2009 and 2011 close to 1,500 people have attended the Awards Ceremony. Over that period the numbers of attendees have increased, reflecting an annual rise in the numbers of Award nominations submitted as well as escalating levels of interest and support from the education, training, business and community organisation sectors.

In 2013 a 'VIP Event' was held an hour prior to the actual Awards Ceremony event which enabled networking between sponsors, Members of Parliament, local Principals, community CEOs, BGK LLEN and Youth Connect Board Members, local employers and senior government department representatives. This VIP event was attended by just over 100 persons. While the event was very successful, in 2014 will be offering this event a

few months prior to the Ceremonies as a way of launching the 2014 Awards by launching this Research Report providing networking opportunities.

## 2.12 Similar Applied Learning Awards Programs

Within the Bayside Glen Eira and Kingston region there is no other applied awards program. Individual schools or training organisations may recognise the successes of enrolled students undertaking applied learning programs however there is no regionwide awards program.

A number of state and federal government applied learning awards programs accept nominations from students, schools and education providers, teachers and trainers, and employers. Some of these award programs offer a number of categories and accept nominations from all of the above stakeholders. Some award programs specifically focus on one stakeholder group.

The following list of awards programs resemble, or extend upon the VET Applied Learning Awards. Note that the list below provides examples of awards available within Victoria and Australia, but the list should not be regarded as an exhaustive one.

### 2.12.1 Student awards and prizes

VCAL Achievement Awards	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)	Outstanding achievement of young people who undertook VCAL in the given year.	<a href="http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au">www.vcaa.vic.edu.au</a>
Victorian School based Apprentice of the Year	Dep't of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)	Available for SBAT students in a given year and winner represent Victoria in the Australian Training Awards.	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au">www.education.vic.gov.au</a>
Australian Training Awards– Australian School Based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year	Dep't of Innovation, Industry, Climate Change, Research and Tertiary Education	Available for all Australian SBAT students in a given year.	<a href="http://www.innovation.gov.au">www.innovation.gov.au</a>

### 2.12.2 School and Education Provider Awards and Prizes

Victorian Education Excellence Awards	Dep't of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)	A variety of awards are provided to educators, including some related to applied learning areas.	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au">www.education.vic.gov.au</a>
Australian Training Awards– School Pathways to VET Awards	Dep't of Innovation, Industry, Climate Change, Research and Tertiary Education	Recognises schools, Registered Training Organisations, industry bodies, employers that have collaboratively delivered (an) excellent VET program to secondary school students	<a href="http://www.innovation.gov.au">www.innovation.gov.au</a>

### 2.12.3 Teacher and trainer awards and prizes

Victorian Teacher / Trainer of the Year	Dep't of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)	Available for teacher / trainer employed by a RTO in the given year.	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au">www.education.vic.gov.au</a>
Victorian Education Excellence Awards	Dep't of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)	A variety of awards are provided to educators, including some related to applied learning areas.	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au">www.education.vic.gov.au</a>
Australian Training Awards– VET Teacher / Trainer of the Year Award	Dep't of Innovation, Industry, Climate Change, Research and Tertiary Education	Presented to a VET teacher/trainer who has demonstrated excellence and innovation in the delivery of nationally recognised training to students at a training organisation or in partnership with a registered training organisation.	<a href="http://www.innovation.gov.au">www.innovation.gov.au</a>

#### 2.12.4 Employer and business awards and prizes

Australian Training Awards– Small Employer of the Year Award	Dep't of Innovation, Industry, Climate Change, Research and Tertiary Education	Presented to a small enterprise which has achieved excellence in the provision of nationally recognised training to its employees	<a href="http://www.innovation.gov.au">www.innovation.gov.au</a>
Australian Training Awards– Large Employer of the Year Award	Dep't of Innovation, Industry, Climate Change, Research and Tertiary Education	Presented to a large enterprise which has achieved excellence in the provision of nationally recognised training to its employees	<a href="http://www.innovation.gov.au">www.innovation.gov.au</a>

### 3. Stakeholder Benefits and Outcomes

Key Applied Learning Award stakeholders were surveyed in 2012, 2013 and 2014 to gather their views about the Awards. All stakeholders who were nominated for or won an Award, sponsored the Awards or formed part of the independent judging panel between 2009 and 2014 were contacted via letter or email, asking them to respond to an anonymous online survey. A total of 116 individuals responded to the disseminated surveys.

Further feedback was provided through consultations and follow-up interviews with key stakeholder groups. A focus group comprised of eight school principals and senior educators was held in May 2014. During 2014, follow-up phone call interviews were also held with nine young people who had responded to the online survey and indicated they would be happy to participate in an informal phone discussion.

Due to their generally static nature, it was relatively easy to contact the majority of past school and education providers, teachers and trainers, employers and sponsors. However, it was difficult to contact past students as, in the years 2009–2012, personal student contact details (e.g. email or home address) had not been sought. Students' contact details were not sought as part of the Awards nomination process in light of their age and to ensure that personal details were protected. To mitigate the fact that limited personal details of past students were held, contact with this cohort for the purpose of this research report was sought via liaison with schools and reviewing the Youth Connect database. Through this approach, some past students were contacted, although less than had we collected student contact details as part of the nomination process. In 2013 we captured email addresses and phone numbers of students as part of the nomination process. Please note, while some of the young people who responded are no longer students (having left school) for the purpose of this report all young people who responded are referred to as 'students'.

Those students or individuals (including representatives from schools or organisations) that were nominees or winners were asked to provide background information (year of nomination, Award category and success); identify impacts that the Award had had on them or their organisation (in terms of confidence, public recognition, notifications to contacts, method of notification, usefulness on resume, influence of Award on applied learning understanding, influence on pathways planning, academic awards awareness, advantages/disadvantages of these Awards); share their views about nomination processes (in terms of Awards marketing, ease or difficulty of application, benefits of articulating applied learning development or innovation, independent judging approach); views about the Awards Ceremony, and recommendations for how the Awards could be enhanced in the future.

Sponsors were asked to identify what type of sponsorship they provided, what year/s they provided sponsorship; the way in which they became aware of the Awards and reason for sponsorship; resulting organisational benefits; return on investment; satisfaction with the promotional activities; satisfaction with the sponsorship process; satisfaction with the Awards Ceremony; views regarding the independent judging; and suggestions for ways in which the Awards (and sponsorship) could be enhanced in the future.

Judges were asked to: identify the sector they represent and year/s they have volunteered as a judge; provide feedback about the judging process (rationale for volunteering, hours contributed, rate sectoral involvement, satisfaction with the judging pack and guidelines, satisfaction with the evaluation process and judging meeting); and, views about the Awards Ceremony and community benefits of the program.

The following analysis reviews the survey results per each stakeholder category.

### 3.1 Student Assessment of the Applied Learning Awards

Two hundred and sixty nine (269) students were nominated for or won an Applied Learning Award over the period 2009 to 2013. Sixty two (62) of these responded to this survey, equating to a response rate of 23 per cent. Sixty six per cent of student respondents were nominated in the TSE category, 27 per cent in VCAL and 7 per cent in SBAT. Fifty eight per cent of respondents won an Award and 42 per cent were nominated but did not win an Award

Student respondents identified that being nominated for or winning an Award has a positive impact on these young peoples' level of confidence in their own skills and abilities. This impact that may also extend beyond their period of secondary schooling and may also influence their decision to apply for other awards. Indeed, nearly all respondents indicated that the achievement and validation generated by the Awards increased their personal confidence and the majority also felt that it contributed to them feeling more confident about applying for other awards in the future.

Feedback provided by student respondents evidenced the positive impact that being recognised for applied learning efforts is not only valuable to the student but also to their parents. It further evidenced that the Awards is another forum by which all students, regardless of whether they have been acknowledged before, can receive public recognition and celebration. Indeed, student respondents indicated that while the majority of their schools acknowledged academic achievement through internal school awards just under half indicated that their school did not internally award students for applied learning success.

The announcement of an Award nomination or win was of great importance to students, with this achievement generally shared with family, friends, teachers and employers. The method of advising others about a nomination or Award win was generally via word of mouth and then platforms such as text message and Facebook to a lesser extent. Generally students were pleased to receive congratulatory responses to their announcement, and in some cases it also generated discussion about applied learning and acknowledgement of school progress.

Student respondents acknowledged the professional value in incorporating details about their Award nomination or win in their resume, with nearly all respondents indicating that they had already included it in their resume or planned to do so. However, as some have noted it may be useful to remind students that their nomination or win is something that could prove useful in their resume for future applications.

The vast majority of student respondents indicated that being nominated for or winning an Award had a positive impact on their perception of schooling in terms of areas such as motivation, confidence, content with choice of applied learning program, recognition and pleasure that applied learning was receiving the same attention as that given to academic learning success.

Nearly 80 per cent of all student respondents felt that participation in the Applied Learning Awards has or would have an impact on their future pathways or pathways planning in related areas such as ongoing school engagement and completion, personal confidence and confidence in applying for further education or employment.

Overwhelmingly, students were (and are) made aware of the Applied Learning Awards by their teachers and trainers. This feedback evidenced the importance of ensuring that school and education provider staff are kept abreast of the Awards annually, understand the application process and have clear advice and access to assistance during the Awards nomination period.

The vast majority of student respondents found the nomination process an easy one, although some needed assistance from teachers to better understand it or ensure they were following the process correctly. Similarly, the vast majority indicated that completion of the nomination form was quite manageable although it was clear that a small percentage of student respondents needed some assistance to prepare for and complete their form. As part of the Awards nomination form students were asked to think about the reasons for choosing their applied learning program, benefits gained from it and any challenges they may have had to overcome during their applied learning studies and training; with almost all respondents indicating that it was useful to go through this assessment and self-evaluation process.

Student respondents regarded the use of an independent judging panel to be an unbiased, fair and appropriate approach to assessing student nominations. However, some respondents did suggest that this approach could be enhanced through the inclusion of other evaluation processes that less relied on written applications and allowed for judges to review tangible student work and/or conduct brief interviews with applicants.

The vast majority of student respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Awards Ceremony. Where students commented and indicated dissatisfaction it was largely related to the amount of speeches given during the event; something that is somewhat unavoidable due to the sheer number of Awards given out at the event. Of those student respondents that commented on guest speakers, all were very impressed by the caliber of ones used in most recent years; in particular Eddie Perfect and Don Elgin.

When asked for feedback and recommendations as to how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future, the vast majority of student respondents advised that they were happy with the Awards as they are. However, some did provide some suggestions for improvement which largely centred around: maintaining the elegance of the Awards Ceremony; showing school projects as part of the nomination process; including guest speakers who did not follow their post-school pathway but have since found success; using less speakers at the Awards Ceremony; and, increasing advertising of the Awards to students earlier in the school year. As one student respondent said, "I can't think of anything to necessarily improve on, however keep it going! It's such an amazing opportunity for students, and even sponsors, just to help connect the community more."

Finally, student respondents were asked "Do you feel that the Applied Learning Awards are valuable?" a question that resulted in a range of generous and positive responses that, when considered, attest to the importance and continuance of the Applied Learning Awards into the future. As one student said, "Yes, I think it is a fantastic thing to do. Encouraging students for their hard work and results significantly influences their view on study in a positive way. It's certainly something valued by students, their families and their schools".

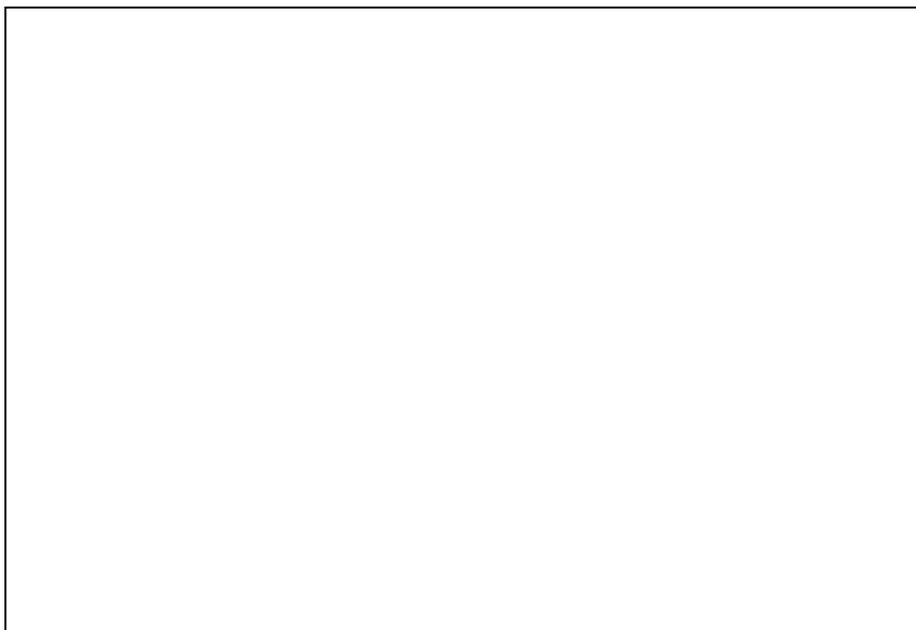
### 3.1.1 Student respondents

Two-hundred and sixty-nine (269) students were nominated for or won an Applied Learning Award over the period 2009 to 2013, and 60 of these responded to this survey. This response rate means that approx. 23 per cent of all young people who had been nominated for or won an Award previously contributed to this research study. This rate is somewhat lower than preferred, largely due to the fact that we did not have direct personal contact details for all past students. Instead we relied on schools forwarding letters to past students, general marketing via our organisational communiqués and internal organisational databases to contact those young people who had been part of the Applied Learning Awards in past years.

Not surprisingly the number of respondents was higher amongst those that had taken part in the Awards in the most recent years. This is likely due to an increased memory of the Awards thus willingness to take part in a review, and that contact details are also likely to be more static than those who took part in the Awards

earlier years. Of those young people that took part in the survey, 37 per cent (23) were 2013 ALA nominees or winners, 21 per cent (13) were 2012 participants, 21 per cent (13) were 2011 participants, 13 per cent (8) were 2010 participants and 8 per cent (5) were 2009 participants.

Of those 62 survey respondents, 66 per cent (41) were nominated in the VET in Schools category, 27 per cent (17) in VCA and 7 per cent (6) in SBAT. Comparison between Award categories and the year student Award participation across respondents is shown in the graph below:



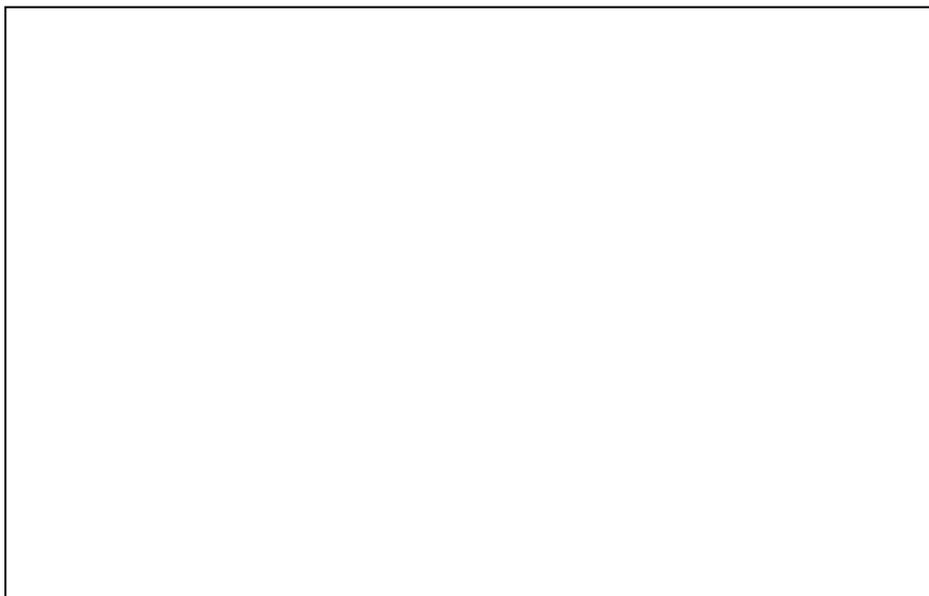
Graph1: Award category and year (students)

Of the total survey respondents, 58 per cent (36) won an Award and the remaining 42 per cent (26) were nominated but did not win an Award. A comparison of winners and nominees against the year they participated in the Applied Learning Awards is shown in the graph below:



Graph2: Nomination or win year (students)

Of the total survey respondents, 45 per cent (28) were in Year 12 when nominated for an Award, 50 per cent were in Year 11 (31) and the remaining 5 per cent (3) in Year 10. A comparison of the students' school year level when nominated against the year they participated in the Applied Learning Awards is shown in the graph below.



Graph3: Year level when nominated (students)

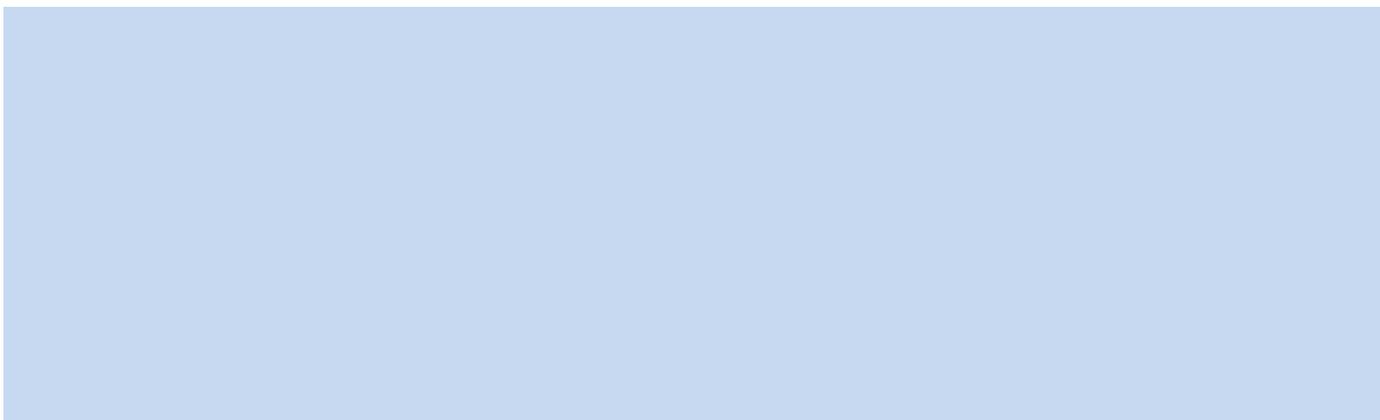
### 3.1.2 Awards impact on personal confidence

When asked “did being nominated for or winning an Applied Learning Award increase confidence in your own skills and abilities” the vast majority of student respondents indicated ‘yes’. In fact, 100 per cent of those that won an Award and 80 per cent who were nominated (but didn't win an Award) indicated that the achievement and validation generated by the Awards increased their confidence.

Four students who were nominated also provided comments including those below



Eight students who won an Award also provided comments including those below



When asked “did being nominated for an Applied Learning Award make you more confident about applying for other awards in the future”, 30 per cent of those nominated for an Award indicated ‘yes’ 16 per cent indicated

'no' and almost half (48 per cent) of respondents said that they were 'unsure'. When the same question was asked of those who won an Award almost three quarters (74 per cent) indicated 'yes', 3 per cent said 'no' and 23 per cent said 'unsure'.



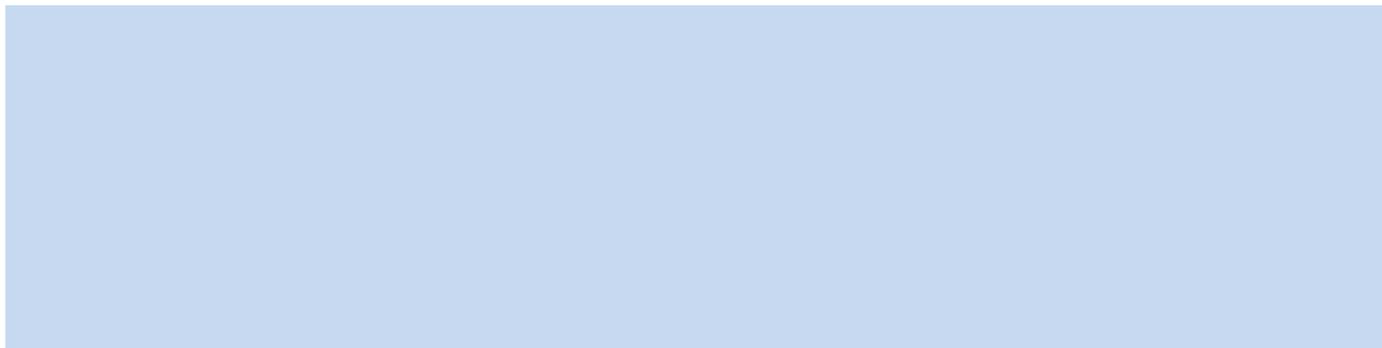
Graph 4: Nominee confidence in award application (students)      Graph 5: Winner confidence in other award application (students)

The quantitative and qualitative responses to these questions indicate that being nominated for or winning an Applied Learning Award has a positive impact on a student's level of confidence in their own skills and abilities, an impact that may also extend beyond their period of secondary schooling and may also influence their decision to apply for other awards.

### 3.1.3 Awards impact on recognition

When asked 'how did you feel about being recognised for your applied learning success' almost all Award winners and nominees indicated that they were either 'happy' or 'very happy' to have been acknowledged. Of those who were nominated for an Award, 68 per cent were 'very happy', 28 per cent were 'happy' and four per cent were 'undecided'. Of those who won an Award, 69 per cent were 'very happy' and 13 per cent were 'happy' to have been recognised.

Two nominees and three Award winners also provided comments:



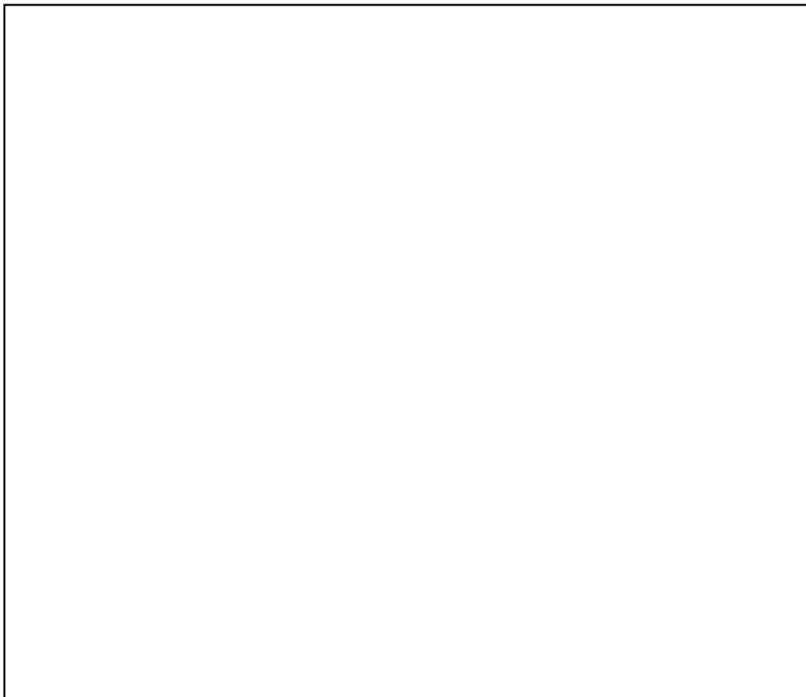
Feedback provided by student respondents evidence the positive impact that being recognised for applied learning efforts is not only valuable to the student but also to parents. It further evidences that the Awards is a forum by which all students, regardless of whether they have been acknowledged previously, potentially receive public recognition and celebration.

### 3.1.4 Personal announcement of Award nomination or win

Students advised a range of persons that they had been nominated for or won an Award, with immediate family, friends, extended family and teachers/trainers being the most popular. To a lesser degree, students also informed their school principal, work placement employer, casual employer and members of their sport / community clubs. The levels of notification are noted in the two graphs below



Graph6: Nomination announcement recipients (students)



Graph7: Award win announcement recipients (students)

The method of advising others about nomination or Award win was generally through traditional word of mouth manner or via text message. Facebook and email were utilised to a lesser degree and no respondents indicated that Twitter was used as a platform of announcing their nomination or win.

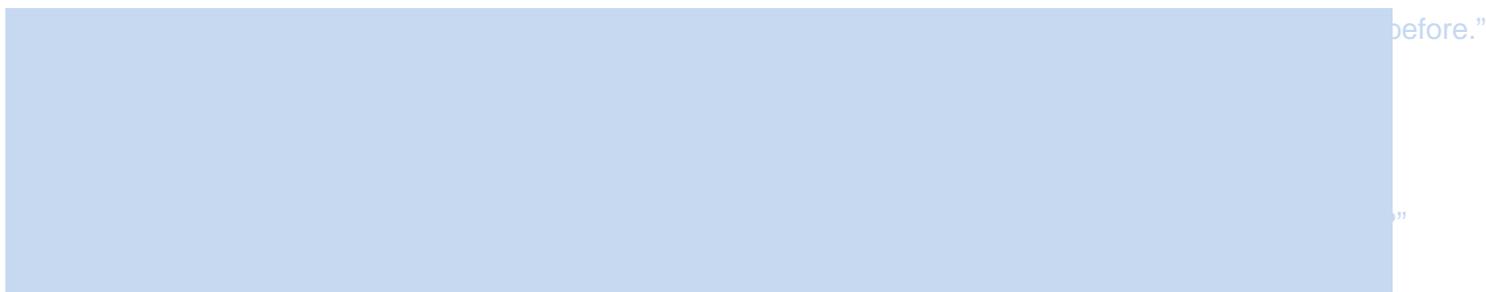


Graph 8: Method of advising nomination (students)



Graph 9: Method of advising Award win (students)

A range of comments were received by students when they announced their nomination to others. Not surprisingly, the majority of comments were congratulatory but some also recognised the student's school and wanted to know more about the Applied Learning Awards program. Eighteen respondents noted comments they had received, with a selection of these provided below:



A range of comments were also received by students that won an Award. Not surprisingly, the majority of comments were congratulatory but some also recognised that the student win was positive for the student's school and that the Award increased knowledge about applied learning more generally. A number of students

also identified that their win was the first award they had received during their school career. Thirtythree respondents noted comments they had received with a selection of these provided below:



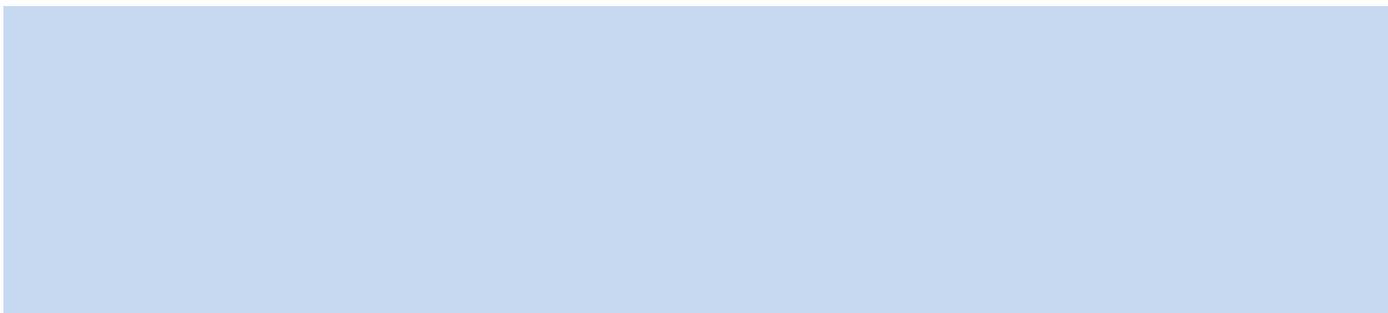
### 3.1.5 Internal school awards

When asked whether or not their schools offered applied learning awards and/or academic awards, student responses showed a disparity between the type of awards offered in their home schools. Eighty per cent of student respondents indicated that academic awards were given at their school, whereas only 8 per cent of respondents' schools gave out awards for applied learning.

### 3.1.6 Benefit and use of Award on resume

When asked "Have you / do you intend to include information about your Applied Learning Award nomination on your resume?" the vast majority of student respondents indicated 'yes'. Of all those that either won or were nominated for an Award, 92 per cent said that they would include information on their resume whereas the remaining eight per cent said they would not.

Eight respondents provided comments regarding why and how they would use award information on their resume, with a selection of these provided below:

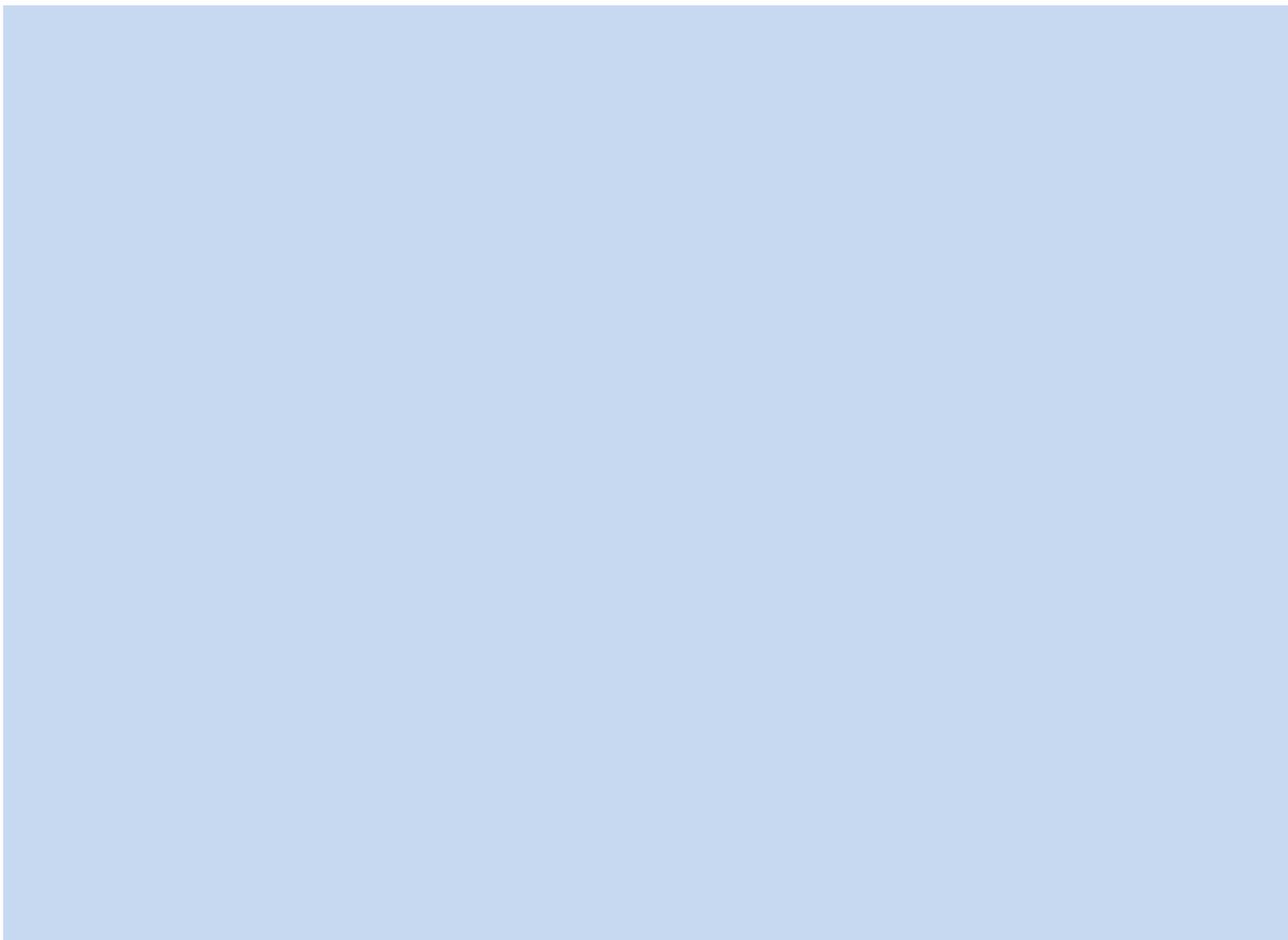


These survey responses suggest that students see professional value in incorporating details about their Award nomination or win in their resume.

### 3.1.7 Influence of Award on schooling influence and perception

When asked the open-ended question “Did being nominated for an Applied Learning Award make you feel differently about your schooling?” a total of 43 respondents, or 69 per cent of all respondents, provided feedback.

It can be estimated that 28 per cent of respondents did not feel that participation in the Applied Learning Awards has or would have an impact on how they felt about their schooling. However, the remaining respondents indicated that it has and would influence their schooling perception, with respondents giving a variety of responses. These can be largely categorized into ones related to motivation, confidence, content with choice of applied learning program, recognition and pleasure that applied learning was receiving the same attention as academic learning. Some of these comments included:

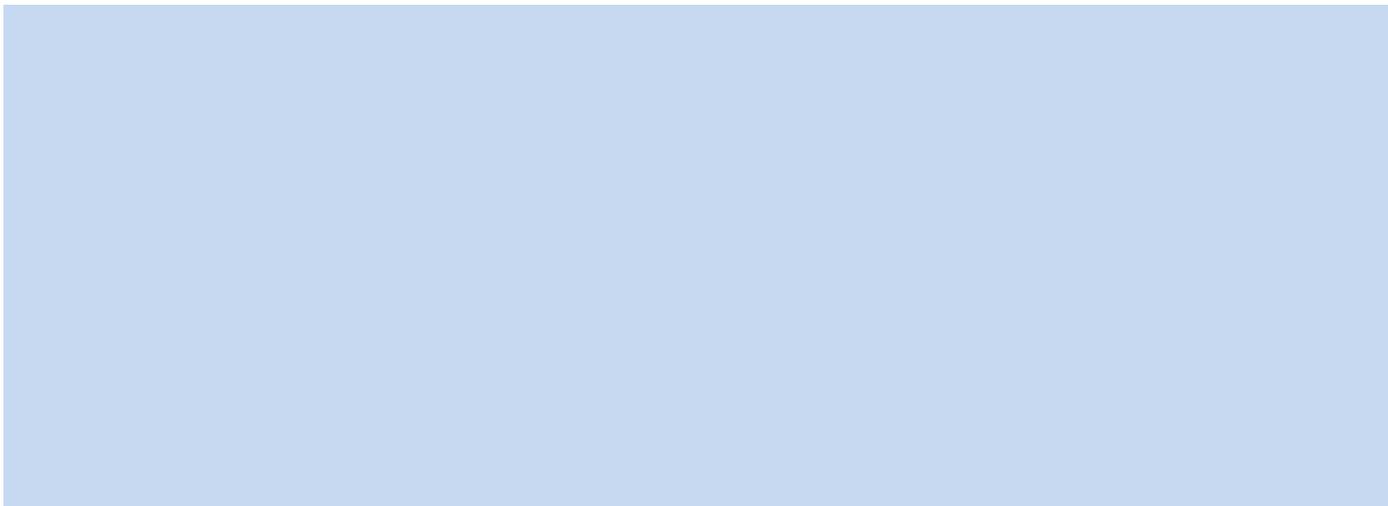


### 3.1.8 Influence of Award on future pathways planning and decisions

When asked the open-ended question “Did being nominated for an Applied Learning Award influence any decisions you have made about your future pathways?” a total of 42 respondents, or 68 per cent of all respondents, provided feedback.

It can be estimated that 19 per cent of respondents did not feel that participation in the Applied Learning Awards has or would have an impact on their future pathways or pathways planning. However, the remaining respondents indicated that it has and would influence their pathways. These can be largely categorized into ones

related to ongoing school engagement and completion, personal confidence and confidence in applying for further education or employment. Some of these comments included:



### 3.1.9 Awareness of the Applied Learning Awards

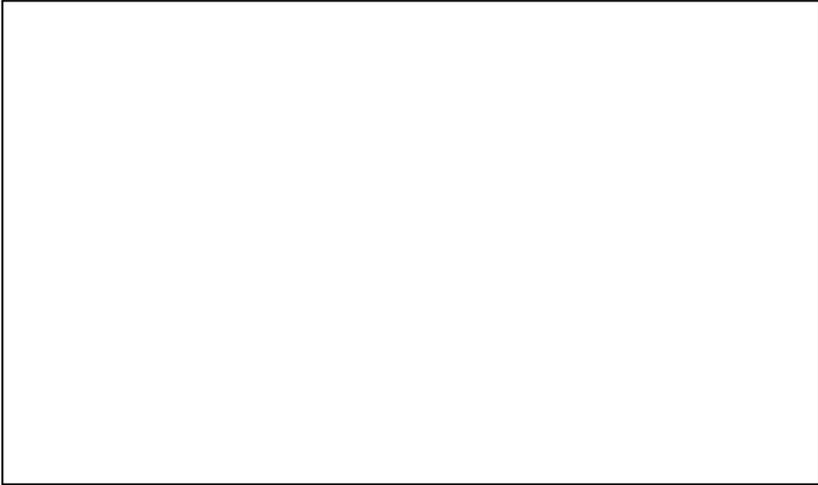
Overwhelmingly, students were made aware of the Applied Learning Awards by their teachers and trainers. Indeed, 95 per cent (59) of student respondents indicated that teachers and trainers advised them of the Awards, followed by Youth Connect at eight per cent (5), the BGK LLEN at six per cent (4) and a friend at two per cent (1). The response to this question evidences the importance of ensuring that school and education provider staff are kept abreast of the Awards, understand the application process and have clear advice and access to assistance during the Awards nomination period.



Graph10: Awareness of Applied Learning Awards (students)

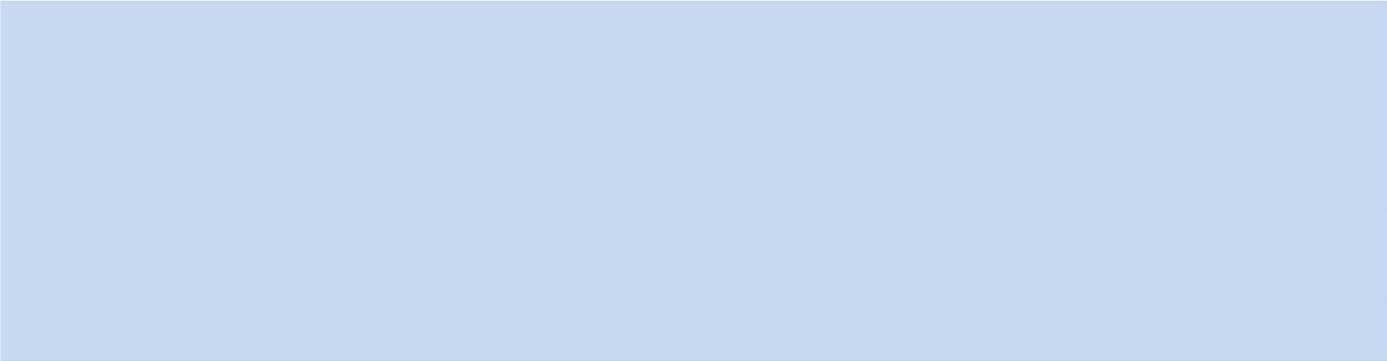
### 3.1.10 Award application and nomination process

The vast majority of students found the nomination process (whereby the student nominated by a teacher with the nomination then passed on to the student to complete) an easy, with 92 per cent (57) indicating that it was either 'easy' or 'very easy'. Of the remaining respondents, five per cent (3) were 'unsure' and three per cent (2) found it 'difficult'. While respondents could also select the option of 'very difficult' no respondents chose so.

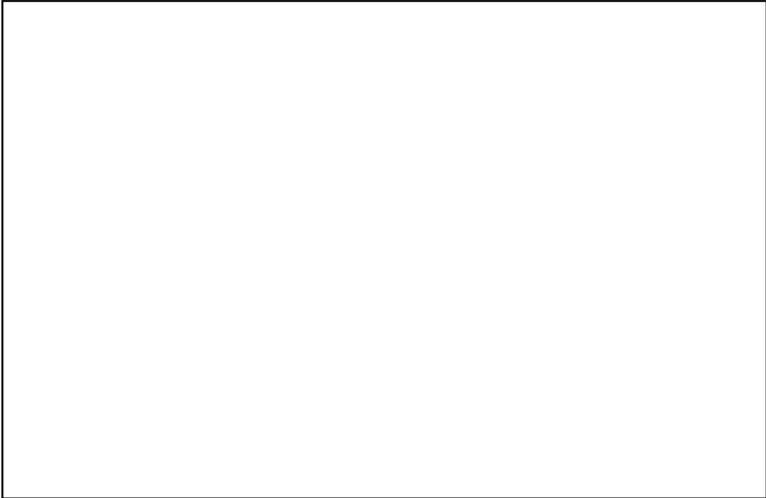


Graph11: Nomination process assessment (students)

Nine respondents also provided further comments and information about their experience with the nomination process:



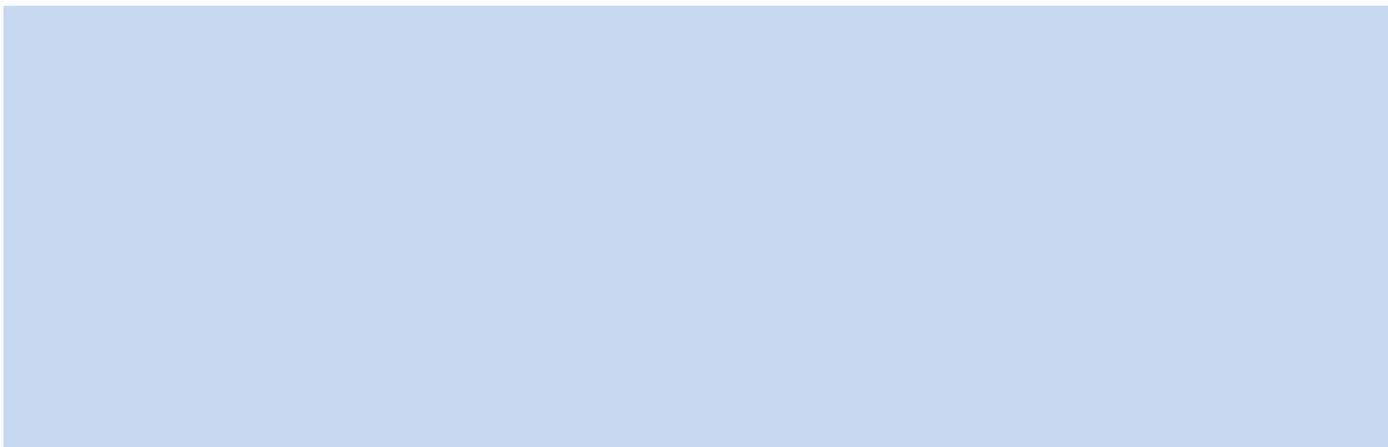
A similar response was noted when students were asked “How easy or difficult did you find the questions on the nomination form to fill out?”, in that the vast majority indicated that completion of the form was quite manageable. Fifty-eight per cent (36) of student respondents advised it was ‘easy’, 21 per cent (13) indicated ‘okay’, 16 per cent (10) indicated that it was ‘easy, as long as someone helped me to fill it out’ and the remaining five per cent (3) were ‘unsure’. While respondents could also select the options of ‘hard’ or ‘hard, even if someone helped me to fill it out’ no respondents did so.



Graph12: Ease or difficulty of nomination question (students)

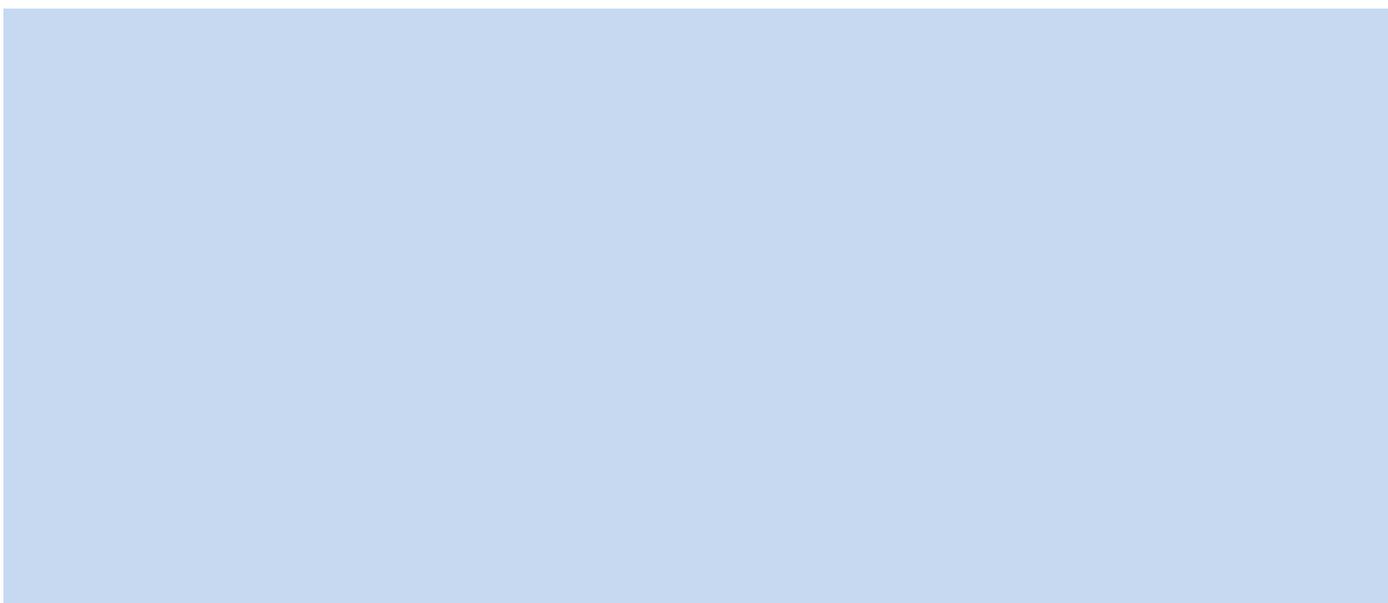
As part of the survey, student respondents were asked to consider the array of questions that made up the Awards nomination form. As part of the Awards nomination form students were asked to think about the reasons for choosing their applied learning program, benefits gained from it and any challenges they may have had to overcome during their applied learning studies and training. In the survey, respondents were asked whether they “found it useful to think and write about these topics?”. Despite the complexity of some of these nomination form questions, 90 per cent (57) of survey respondents indicated that ‘yes’ it was useful to consider these factors with the remaining eight per cent (5) advising that it was not useful.

Eleven respondents provided further comments and information regarding the topics that form part of the nomination form questions:



### 3.1.11 Use of independent judges

In an open-ended question, student respondents were asked for their opinion regarding the use of an independent judging panel of applied learning experts (e.g. government, TAFE, industry) as part of the Awards selection process. Forty respondents (or 65 per cent of all respondents) commented on the judging approach utilised, with all feedback favourable and appreciative in nature. A selection of comments included:



A few student respondents also suggested that instead of just relying on a written application, the nomination and judging process should also allow for inclusion of tangible applied learning work and phone conversation with each applicant



thing,  
utes to

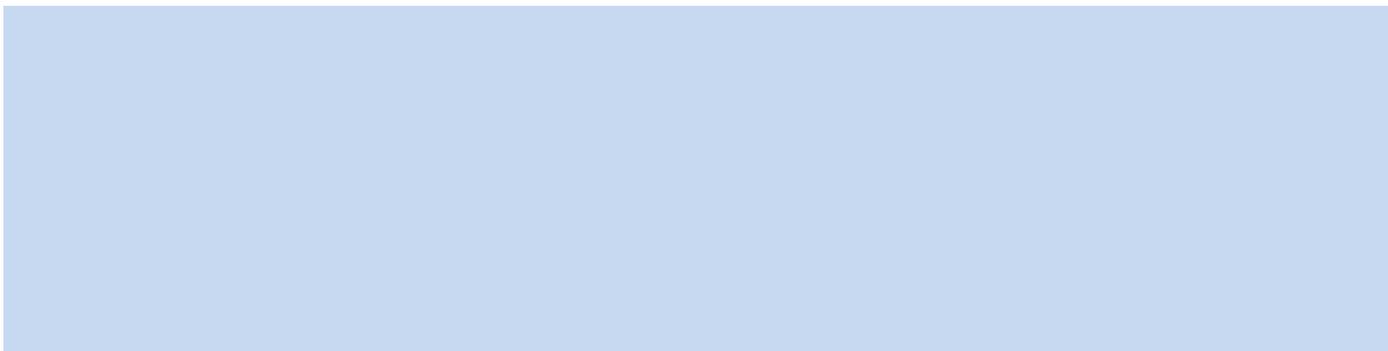
### 3.1.12 Award Ceremony assessment

The vast majority of student respondents were pleased with the Awards Ceremony, with 63 per cent (39) 'very satisfied' and 26 per cent (16) 'satisfied' with the Awards Ceremony. Of the remainder, seven per cent (6) did not comment as they 'did not attend the ceremony', two per cent (1) 'undecided' and two per cent (1) 'very unsatisfied'. While respondents could also select the option of 'unsatisfied' no respondents did so.



Graph 13: Satisfaction with the Awards Ceremony (students)

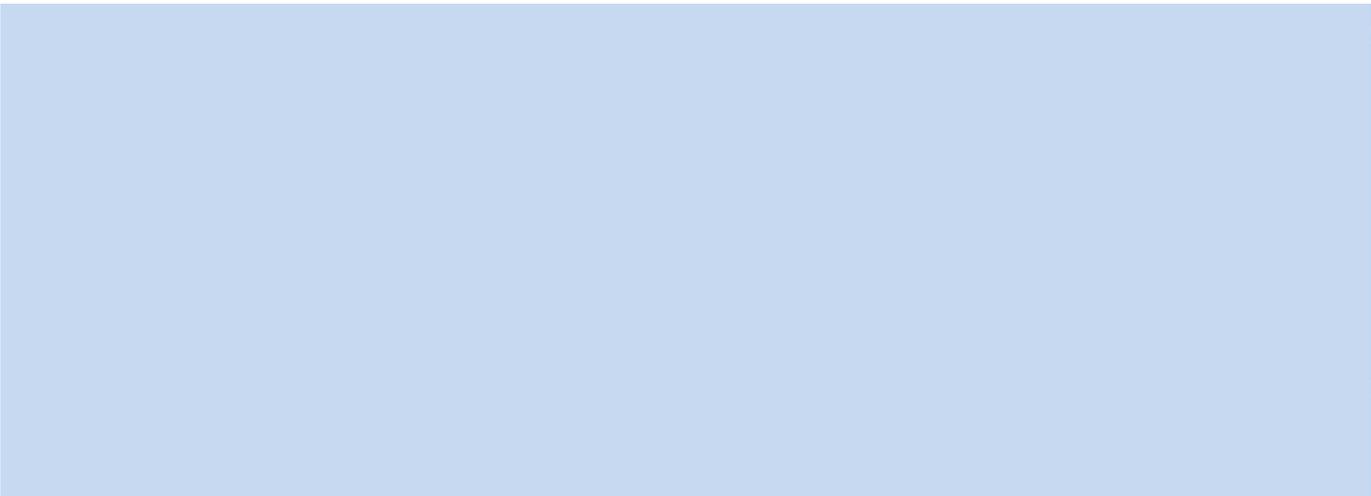
Ten respondents provided further comments regarding their perception of the Awards Ceremony, some which indicate why some respondents were undecided or unsatisfied with the event:



ne  
where

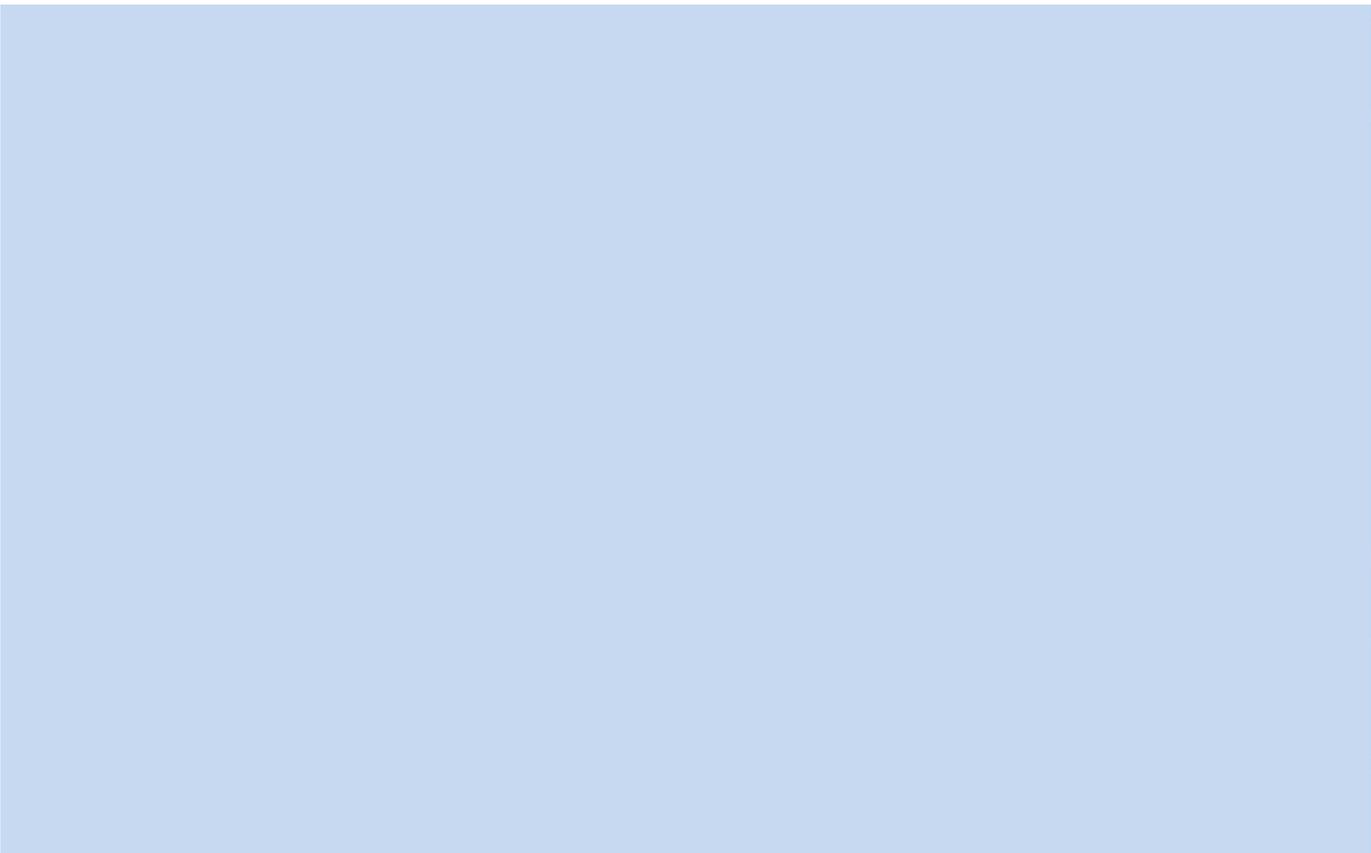
Twelve student respondents provided feedback to the open-ended question "Do you have any comments about the guest speakers at the Awards Ceremony?" Notably, comments were made about the most recent guest speakers and all feedback provided attested to the value of utilizing guest speakers as part of the Awards. Actor

and comedian Eddie Perfect was guest speaker in 2013 and amputee paralympian Don Elgin was guest speaker in 2012.



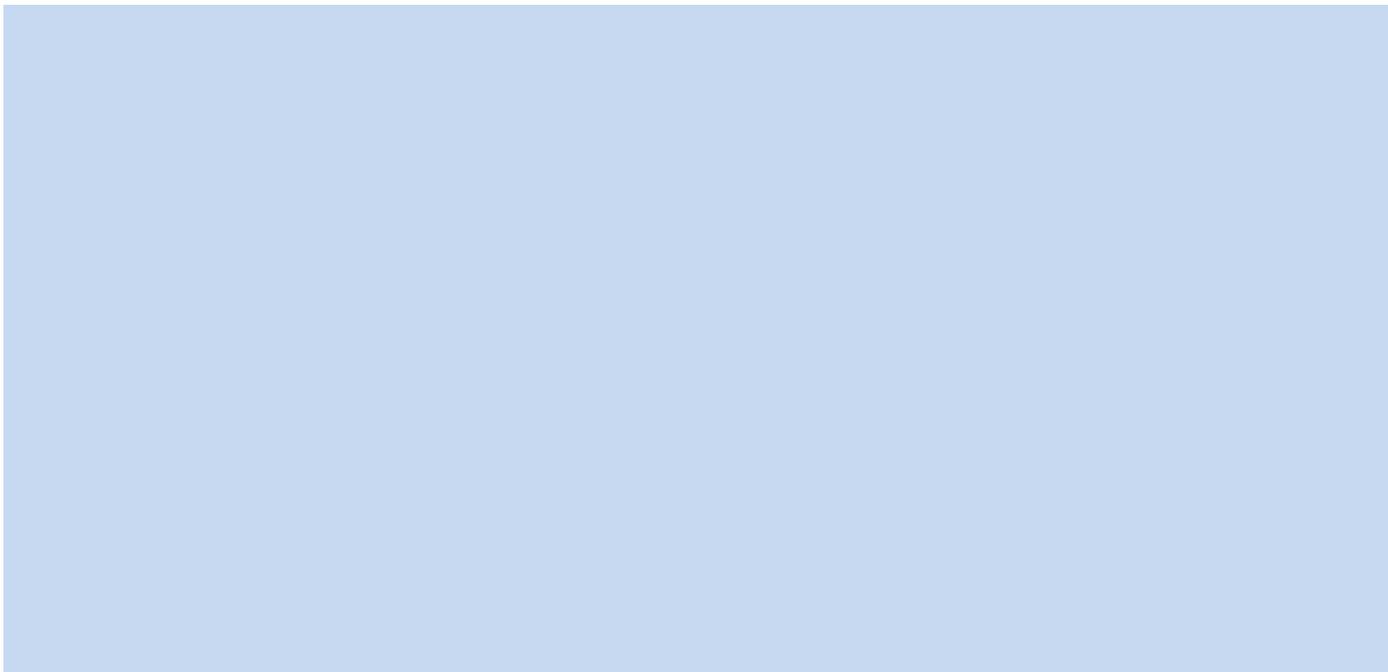
### 3.1.13 Recommendations for improvements to the Applied Learning Awards

Thirty-two respondents (52 per cent) provided feedback and recommendations for how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future. While the vast majority of respondents advised that they were happy with the Awards as they are, some also provided suggestions and ideas for improvement. While a large number of comments were provided these can be largely categorized as relating to: maintaining the elegance of the Awards Ceremony; showing school projects as part of the nomination process; including guest speakers who did not follow their postschool pathway but have since found success; using less speakers at the Awards Ceremony; and increasing advertising of the Awards to students earlier in the school year.



### 3.1.14 Value of Applied Learning Awards

The final question asked of respondents was “Do you feel that the Applied Learning Awards are valuable?”. This open-ended question generated comments from 23 respondents (67 per cent) which were overwhelmingly positive and attested to the importance of the continuation of this communitywide approach to publicly acknowledging and validating student success in applied learning. Comments and feedback from respondents included:



## 3.2 Educator Assessment of the Applied Learning Awards

Three separate and individual surveys were provided to ‘schools and education providers’, ‘teachers and trainers’ and ‘coordinators and support persons’. While each survey differed slightly many questions were consistent across each of the three surveys and, in light of the fact all were completed by ‘educators’ for the purpose of this report their responses have been examined collectively. In addition, a focus group consultation comprised of eight school principals and senior educators was held in May 2014.

A total of 15 different schools and education providers who have submitted 45 nominations have taken part in the awards since inception. Ten of these schools and education providers responded to the survey and participated in the focus group consultation, resulting in a high 67 per cent response rate.

Twelve teachers or trainers were nominated for or won an Award, as one was nominated in two different years eleven teachers or trainers have taken part in the Awards since VCAL and VETiS educator awards were introduced in 2011. Five of these teachers and trainers responded to the survey, resulting in a 45 per cent survey response rate. No teachers or trainers participated in the focus group.

Seven persons were nominated for or won the ‘Jenny Marks’ Memorial Award for Coordination and Support Award; an Award offered for the first time in 2013. Five of these individuals responded to the survey and participated in the focus group consultation, resulting in a high 71 per cent response rate.

Overall, the vast majority of respondents representing their school or organisation recognise and acknowledge that participation in the Applied Learning Awards has increased their professional confidence and willingness to

apply for not only future Applied Learning Awards but also ones offered by external education and training bodies also. By contrast to those representing organisations, teachers, trainers and coordinators provided views as to whether or not participation in the Applied Learning Awards has increased their confidence and willingness to apply for other awards in the future.

Overall, the vast majority of school and education provider representatives, teachers and trainers and coordinators found that the professional and practice reflection that was required as part of the Awards nomination process to be something that was personally beneficial. Some also found that the self-reflection approach used in the Awards nomination process to be somewhat lacking and could be enhanced by the inclusion of additional feedback from colleagues and students.

In reviewing the ways in which Applied Learning Award wins are internally and externally announced it is apparent that the Awards are seen by educators as an honour, a validation of outstanding success and something to be proudly shared with internal and external stakeholders, the school community and with personal networks.

All respondent schools and education providers advised that they do recognise the applied learning success of their students through mechanisms such as formal internal award presentations. Whilst this differs from the earlier feedback provided by students, wherein respondent students suggested that only half of their schools offer applied learning awards, the disparity between responses may be accounted for the fact that respondent students attend a much wider range of schools than just those schools that took part in the surveying.

It is apparent that educators receive information about the Applied Learning Awards from a wide variety of sources (particularly communiqués from the BGK LLEN, Youth Connect and their own colleagues) and it is important that these key face-to-face, online and social media mechanisms continue to be used as a means of marketing and raising awareness of the Awards.

The vast majority of schools, education providers, teachers, trainers and coordinators found the nomination process (whereby the applicant writes the entire application) to be a easy one, however some did identify some difficulty with the process. Of those that found the nomination process 'difficult', the commented on the challenges associated with having to self-nominate and write about oneself and/or the time investment required to complete the nomination form. Some respondents suggested that nominations should come from other colleagues whereas others identified it as a necessity as peers/colleagues may not know or understand their role. In addition, a suggestion was also made to introduce a new Award category for 'team teaching' to reflect that often cross-discipline teachers work collaboratively to deliver training and learning to students.

Educators regarded the use of an independent judging panel to be an unbiased, fair and appropriate approach to assessing nominations. However some respondents suggested that, instead of just relying on a written application, the nomination and judging process should also allow for inclusion of consultation with colleagues, additional information, supporting letters and/or interviews with applicants.

The vast majority of schools, education providers, teachers, trainers and coordination and support persons were 'very satisfied with the Awards Ceremony and many felt that it continues to improve from year to year. No dissatisfaction was noted, however some suggestions and recommendations for enhancements were provided. Of those educator respondents that provided feedback regarding guest speakers, of the comments complimented the choice of Eddie Perfect as the 2013 guest speaker, and the involvement of the Minister for Education (Mr Dixon) that same year.

When asked for feedback and recommendations as to how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future, the vast majority of respondents advised that they were happy with the Awards as they were. However, some did provide some suggestions for improvement which largely centred around including attendance of the Minister for Education in the future; involving guest speakers of the caliber of Eddie Perfect in the future; making the nomination process more selective and involving nominations from others rather than via self-nomination; simplifying the nomination process for students; eliminating the interval during the Ceremony involving past winners in the subsequent year; providing educators with the brief summary of nominees and winners used by the MC when announcing the winners; and, consider use of a smaller venue. As one respondent said "It is a wonderful opportunity for students, schools and everyone connected with applied learning to gain recognition in a public forum".

Finally, educator respondents were asked "Do you feel that the Applied Learning Awards are valuable?" a question that resulted in a range of generous and positive responses that, when considered, attest to the importance and continuance of the Applied Learning Awards into the future. As one respondent said "I am still very honoured to be the recipient of the award and am grateful to the ALA for awarding it to me. It is a great mark on my teaching career that I and my family are very proud of. SO THANK YOU VERY MUCH!"

### 3.2.1 School and education provider respondents

Forty-five (45) schools or education providers were nominated for or won an Applied Learning Award over the period 2009 to 2013, however some of these were nominated for or won an award in multiple years. A total of 15 different schools and education providers have been nominated for or won an Award since inception. Ten of these schools and education providers responded to this survey, resulting in a high 67 per cent survey response rate.

Of the ten respondents, and given that schools and education providers can apply for awards in two different category areas, 70 per cent (7) indicated that they had nominated for a 'VCAL provision' award and 60 per cent (6) for a 'VETS provision' award.

School and education provider award winners accounted for 80 per cent (8) of all respondents, with the remaining 20 per cent (2) of respondents being ones that have nominated for an Award but did not win.



Graph 14: Award nomination category and year (schools)

### 3.2.2 Teacher and trainer respondents

Twelve teachers or trainers (12) were nominated for or won an Applied Learning Award over the period 2009 to 2013, with one of those nominated in two different years. Thus, a total of eleven different teachers or trainers have taken part in the awards since nominations for VCAL and VETiS educator awards were introduced in 2011. Five of these teachers and trainers responded to this survey, resulting in a 45 per cent survey response rate.

All of those who participated in the survey all were VETiS educators, with no survey responses from VCAL teachers or trainers. Of those that did respond, all except one respondent won an Applied Learning Award.

### 3.2.3 Coordinator and support person respondents

Seven persons (7) were nominated for or won the 'Jenny Marks' Memorial Award for Coordination and Support Award'; an Award offered for the first time in 2013. Four of these individuals responded to this survey, resulting in a high 71 per cent survey response rate.

### 3.2.4 Awards impact on professional confidence

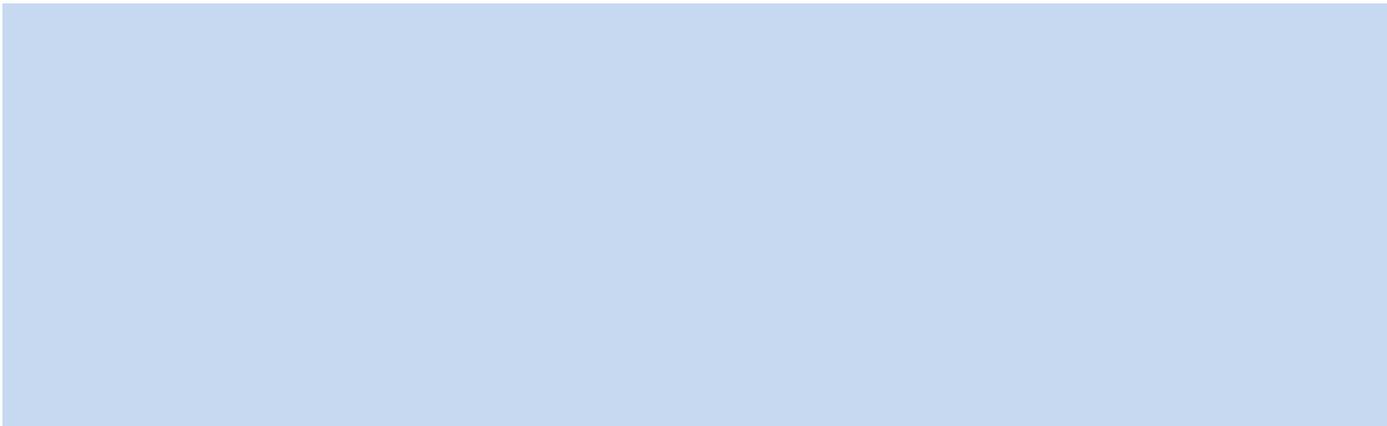
A number of questions were asked of educators regarding their application for awards and whether involvement in the Applied Learning Awards has increased their confidence and likelihood of taking these and external awards in the future.

When asked "Has your school / organisation previously won an award for applied learning provision previously (not an Applied Learning Award)?" 70 per cent (4) of school and organisational respondents said 'no', 30 per cent (3) said 'yes' and the remaining 30 per cent (3) said they were 'unsure'. Pleasingly, all respondents advised that winning an Applied Learning Award has made their school or organisation more confident to apply for other external awards. Although two respondents didn't respond to the question "Is your school / organisation likely to apply for an Applied Learning Award in the future?" of those that did, 75 per cent (6) said that they would, 12.5 per cent (1) said they would not and 12.5 per cent (1) said that they were 'unsure'.

When asked "Have you been nominated for or won an award for applied learning teaching / training previously (not a BGK Applied Learning Award)?" 70 per cent of teacher / trainer respondents said they had not and the remaining 30 per cent said that they had applied for external awards. When those teachers and trainers were nominated for or won an Applied Learning Award, they were asked whether they would now "feel more confident about applying for other awards?" 50 per cent (5) of respondents indicated that it does increase their confidence, 30 per cent (3) said that it has not and the remaining 20 per cent (2) advised that they were 'unsure'. One respondent did say that taking part in the Awards nomination process has meant "I don't fear these applications any more, but rather enjoy them!"

When asked "Have you been nominated for or won an award for applied learning coordination previously (not a BGK Applied Learning Award)?" 80 per cent (4) of coordinators and support persons advised that they had not whilst one person (20 per cent) indicated they had been nominated in this area previously. When those coordinators and support persons who were nominated for or won an Applied Learning Award were asked whether they would now feel more confident about applying for other awards, 50 per cent (3) of respondents indicated that they were 'unsure', 20 per cent (1) said it does not increase their confidence and 20 per cent (1) said that it has increased their confidence and likelihood of applying for future awards in this field. One respondent did say that participating in the Applied Learning Awards has "increased my confidence to apply for a Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV) award"

When those educators that were recipient of Awards were asked the open-ended question “How do you feel about winning an Applied Learning Award?”, the responses were naturally very positive and grateful in nature. Some of the comments included:

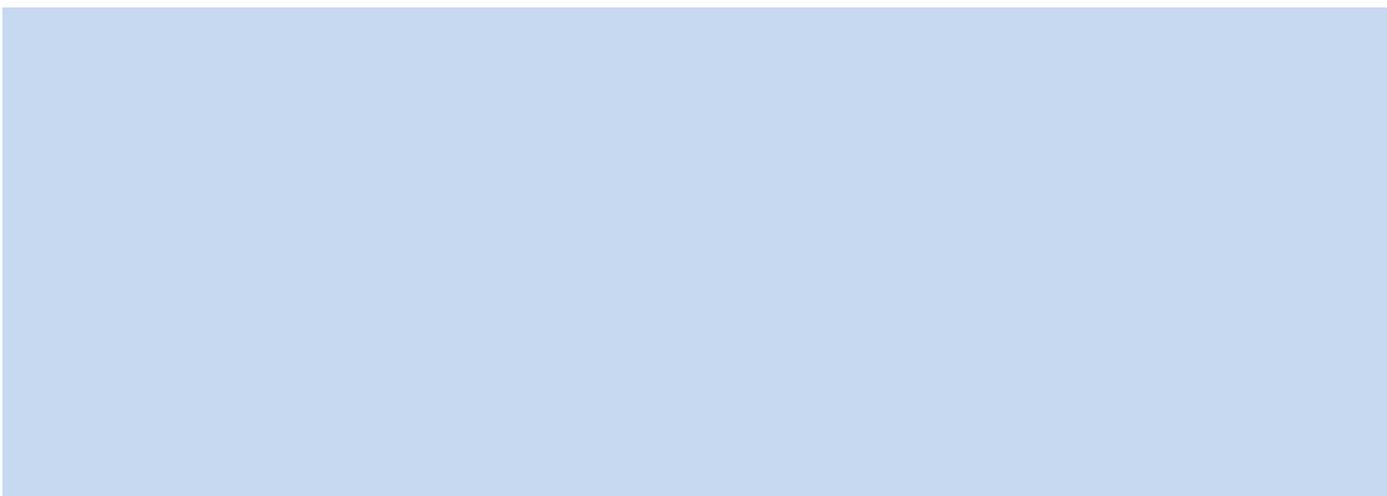


Overall, the vast majority of respondents representing their school or organisation recognise and acknowledge that participation in the Applied Learning Awards has increased their professional confidence and willingness to apply for not only future Applied Learning Awards but also ones offered via external education and training bodies also. By contrast to those representing schools and education providers, teachers, trainers and coordinators expressed mixed views as to whether or not participation in the Applied Learning Awards has increased their confidence and willingness to apply for other awards in the future.

### 3.2.5 Influence of Awards on applied learning provision and methodology

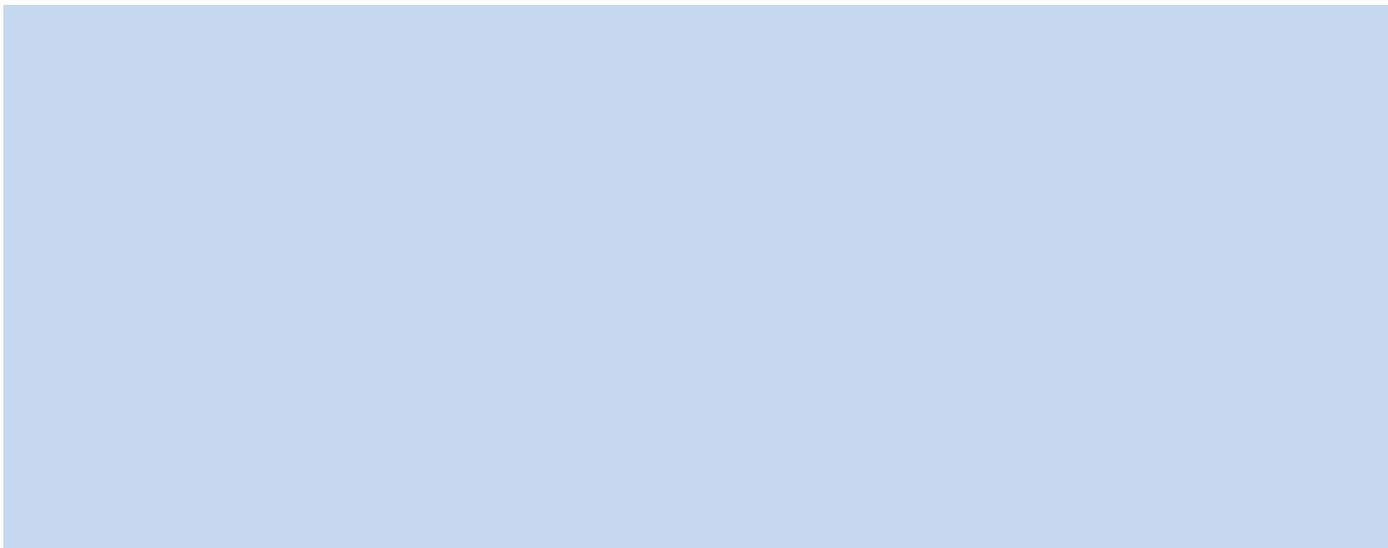
A number of questions were asked of educators regarding the impact that participation in the Awards has had on provision of applied learning in their school or organisation as well as the impact it has had on their own teaching and management approaches.

When schools and organisations that had won an Award were asked the open-ended question “Did winning the Applied Learning Award influence any decisions regarding applied learning provision in your school / organisation?” half of all survey respondents provided comments. Those that participated in the consultation also provided feedback. The majority of feedback indicated that winning an Award validates the applied learning offerings and provision in their school or organisation and that sharing information about their award within the school community raises the profile of this type of learning. Some of these comments included:



As part of the survey, representatives from schools and organisations (whether they were nominees or winners) were asked to consider the array of questions that comprise the Awards nomination form. As part of the Awards nomination form applicants were asked to consider the applied learning offerings provided to their student, the way in which these offerings are promoted, the community and industry partnerships that have been developed and how their applied learning offerings are meeting the needs of students, industry and the community. In the survey, respondents were asked whether they “found it useful to think and write about these topics?” with 80 per cent (8) saying that ‘yes’ it was and the remaining 20 per cent (2) saying that it was ‘not’. One education provider further elucidated on this in saying “It was an interesting process to capture the partnerships SkillsPlus works with. It highlighted the growth in our team at Youth Education and how fortunate we are in terms of the opportunities staff have to work with industry and organisations across numerous LLENs”

As part of the survey, teachers and trainers (regardless of whether they were nominees or winners) were asked to consider the array of questions that comprise the Awards nomination form. As part of the Awards nomination form applicants are asked to consider ways in which they incorporate innovation in their teaching/training practice, student achievement under their instruction/support, their student engagement methods, their commitment to the VET / VCAL field and ways in which they build community and industry links. In the survey, respondents were asked whether they “found it useful to think and write about these topics?” with 70 per cent (7) of these teachers and trainers answering this question. Of those that did respond, 71 per cent (5) did find the professional evaluation questions that formed part of the nomination form valuable and the remaining 29 per cent (2) were ‘unsure’. Some of these respondents provided additional comments, which indicated that not only is the self evaluation useful but that the Awards could be enhanced through feedback provided by fellow colleagues and students as part of the nomination process. Comments included:



As part of the survey, coordinators and support persons (regardless of whether they were nominees or winners) were asked to consider the array of questions that comprise the Awards nomination form. As part of the Awards nomination form applicants are asked to consider ways in which they incorporate innovation in their programs, the way they lead and support staff and the wider school community, the way they incorporate student engagement methods, their commitment to the VET / VCAL field and the ways in which they build community and industry links. In the survey, respondents were asked whether they “found it useful to think and write about these topics?” with 60 per cent (3) of these coordinators and support persons answering this question. Of those that did respond, 67 per cent (2) did find the professional evaluation questions that formed part of the

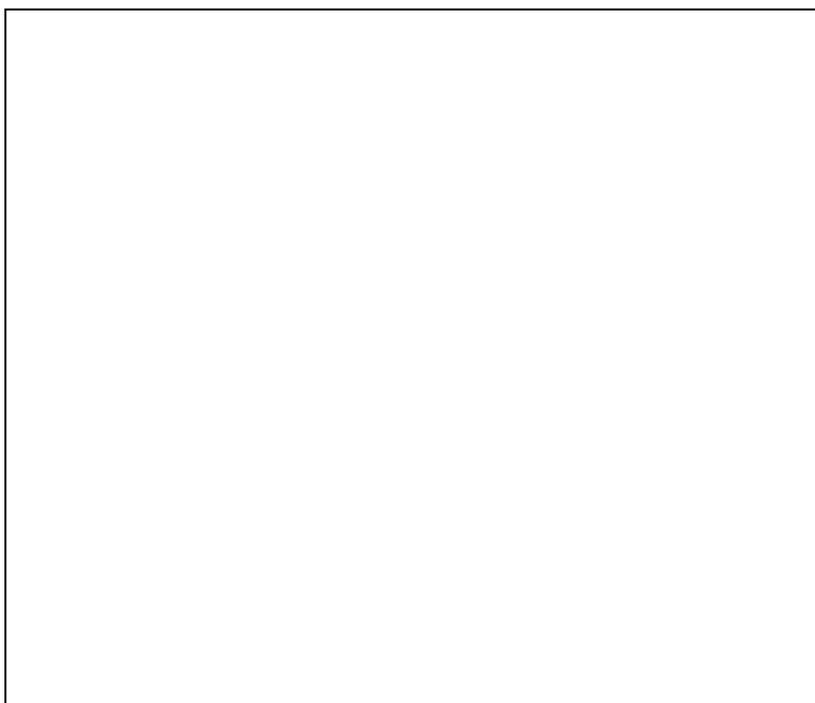
nomination form valuable and the remaining 30 per cent(1) was 'unsure'. No respondents provided additional feedback and comments.

Overall, the vast majority of school and education provider representatives, teachers and trainers and coordinators and support persons found that the professional and practice reflection that was required as part of the Awards nomination process to be something that was personally beneficial. Some also found that the self-reflection approach used in the Awards nomination process to be somewhat lacking and could be enhanced by the inclusion of additional feedback from colleagues and students.

### 3.2.6 Announcement of Award win

A number of survey questions were asked of educators regarding stakeholders that they communicated their nomination or Award win to, the methods by which they imparted this information and the feedback they received from colleagues and stakeholders.

Schools and education providers, teachers and trainers and coordinators advised a range of individuals and bodies that they had won an Award. Schools and education providers that won Awards advised their internal community (staff, management team, studies and parents) in the first instance, followed by school council, education departments (or similar) and other schools to a lesser degree. Teachers, trainers and the coordinator that won Awards advised their personal networks (family, friends) and then their colleagues and management team to a lesser degree. The levels of stakeholder notification are noted in the two graphs below



Graph15: Award win announcement(schools)



Graph16: Award win announcement (teachers/trainer s)

A wide variety of methods of announcing a win are generally utilised by schools and education providers that had won an Award; with the two most popular methods being 'word of mouth' and newsletter, followed by platforms such as website, intranet and media release to lesser extents. Teachers, trainers and coordinators that had won Awards utilised fewer notification methods with 'word of mouth' being the main approach followed closely by use of the school newsletter and intranet. The Award win notification methods and levels of use, as utilised by schools and education providers, is noted in the graphs below



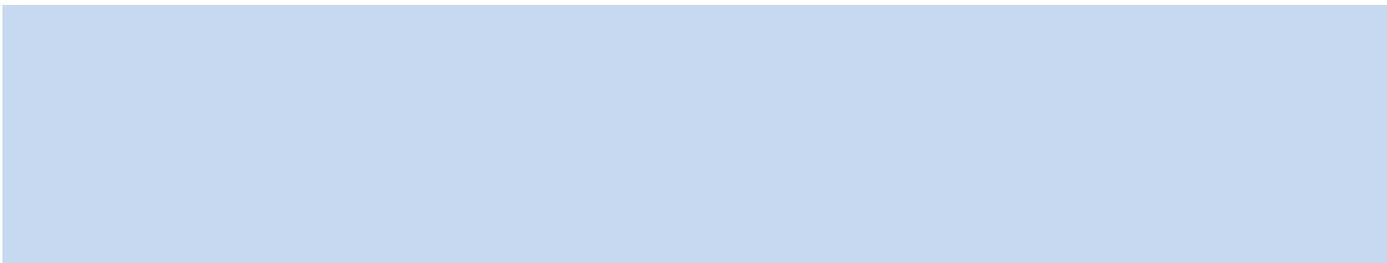
Graph17: Award win notification methods (schools)

A range of comments were received by schools, education providers, teachers, trainers and coordinators when they announced their Award winners to others. Not surprisingly, the majority of comments were congratulatory and acknowledged the good pathways development work the school or organisation does in supporting their students. Some feedback received by these winners are noted below:



tudents

A formal plaque is bestowed to winners of school, education provider, teacher, trainer and coordinator Applied Learning Awards. One hundred percent of all respondents across each of these areas advised that their Award/s is publicly displayed in their organisation. Some winners of individual Awards noted that their plaque is displayed in their office or workspace. Some respondents also provided comments about their Award /plaque public placement



xt step is

In reviewing the ways in which Applied Learning Award wins are internally and externally displayed it is apparent that the Awards are seen by educators as an honour, a validation of outstanding success and something to be proudly shared with internal and external stakeholders, the school community and with personal networks.

### 3.2.7 Internal school awards

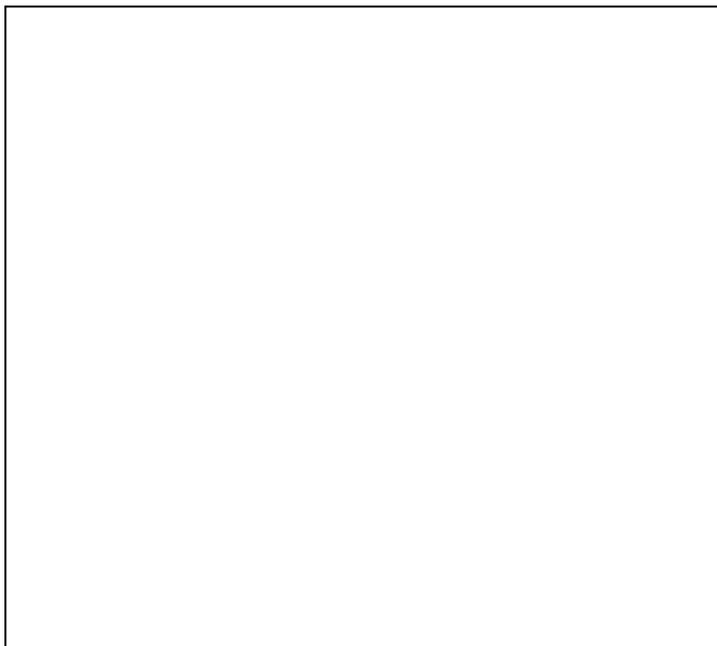
When schools and education providers were asked whether their “school gives out awards for students who excel in applied learning?” one hundred per cent of all respondents said that they did. One school respondent did express some difficulty in offering internal applied learning awards to students “As a lot of different providers need to be contacted to find out the top students, some enthusiastically reply, some you never hear from and it takes a lot of time to collate”

Response from schools regarding the provision of internal applied learning awards differs with the response provided by student respondents when asked the same question, wherein these respondents said only 50 per cent of their schools offered internal applied learning awards. However the respondent students attend a much wider range of schools than those schools and education providers that responded to the survey and/or participation in the focus group which may account for the disparity.

### 3.2.8 Awareness of the Applied Learning Awards

Schools and education providers were made aware of the Applied Learning Awards via a number of methods and platforms. The two highest rating awareness raising tool was the BGK News, noted by 70 per cent (seven) of respondents, followed closely by Youth Connect communications at 60 per cent. Information about the

Applied Learning Awards from colleagues followed at 50 per cent(5), BGK LLEN meeting/s at 40 per cent(4), BGK LLEN website at 30 per cent(3), network meeting/s at 30 per cent(3) and a Youth Connect meeting at 20 per cent (2).



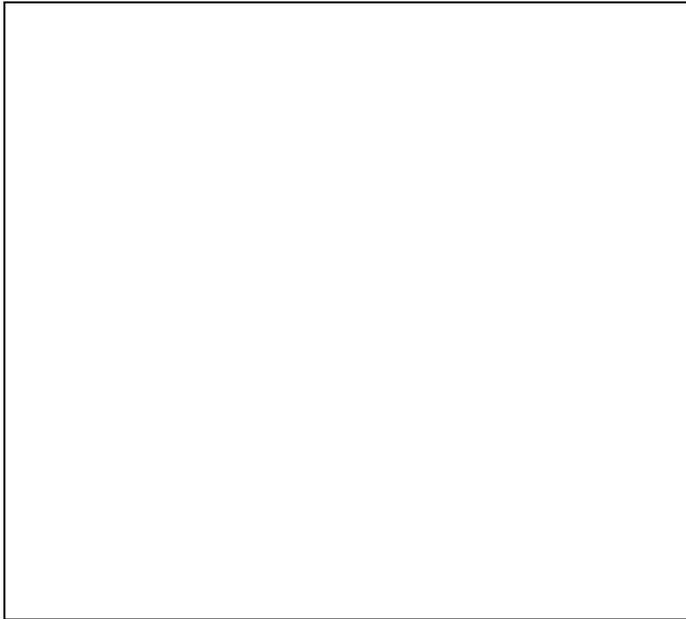
Graph18: Awareness of the Applied Learning Awards (schools)

The ways in which teachers and trainers were made aware of the Applied Learning Awards was marginally different to that of the school and education providers. Overwhelmingly, the highest rating awareness raising tool for teachers and trainers was through their own colleagues at 80 per cent(8). Youth Connect communications followed at 50 per cent(5), then BGK LLEN News at 40 per cent(4), the BGK LLEN website at 20 per cent(2), YouthConnect meeting at 10 per cent(1) and finally network meeting/s at 10 per cent (1). No respondents nominated a BGK LLEN meeting or the Youth Connect website as awareness raising tools.



Graph19: Awareness of the Applied Learning Awards (teachers / trainers)

The ways in which coordinators and support persons were made aware of the Applied Learning Awards also differed from their educator peers. The highest rating awareness raising tool for coordinators was via Youth Connect communications at 80 per cent(4). BGK LLEN News followed at 60 per cent(3), colleagues also at 60 per cent(3), a Youth Connect meeting at 40 per cent(2), BGK LLEN website at 20 per cent(1) and finally network meeting at 20 per cent(1). No coordinator respondents nominated a BGK LLEN meeting or the Youth Connect website as awareness raising tools.



Graph20: Awareness of the Applied Learning Awards (coordinators)

It is apparent that educators receive information from a wide variety of sources and it is important that these key face-to-face, online and social media mechanisms continue to be used as a means of marketing the Awards.

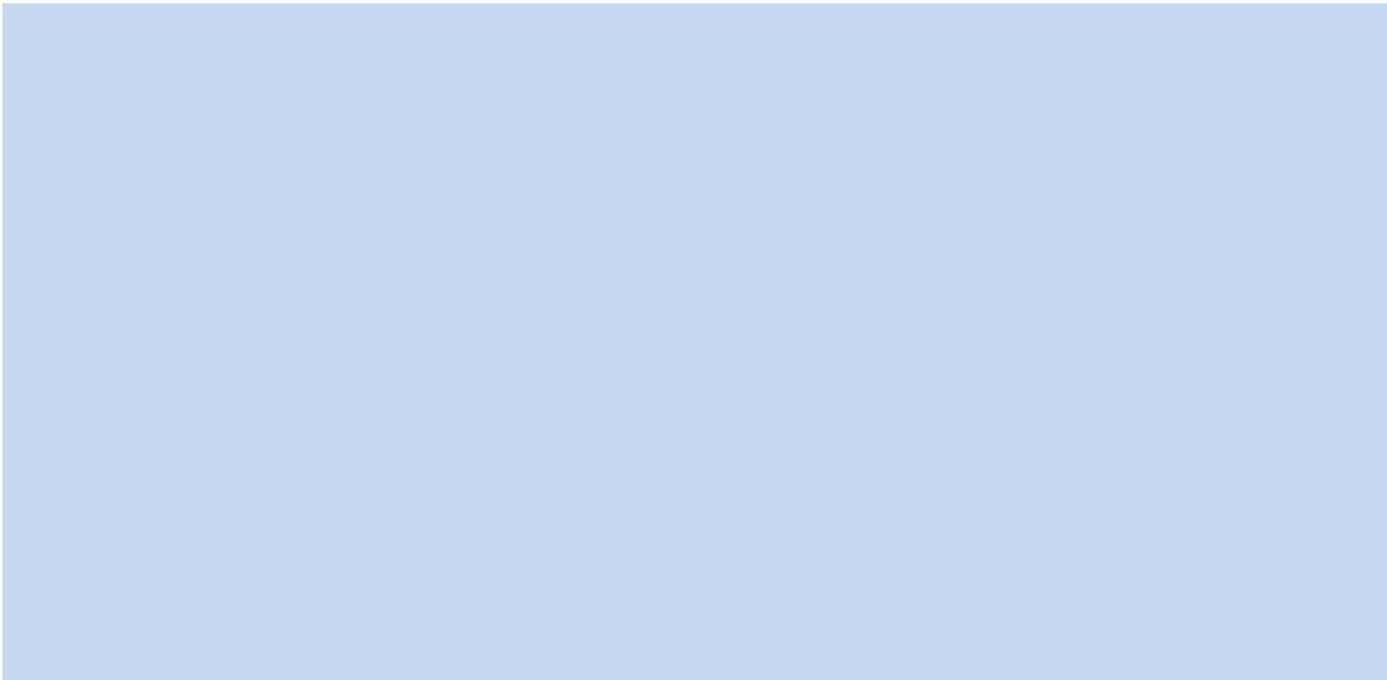
### 3.2.9 Award application and nomination process

A number of questions were asked of educators regarding the Award application and nomination process. All types of educators were asked regarding the ease (or otherwise) of the process. Teachers, trainers and coordinators were specifically asked to comment on the method of self-nomination that is currently built into the Awards application model.

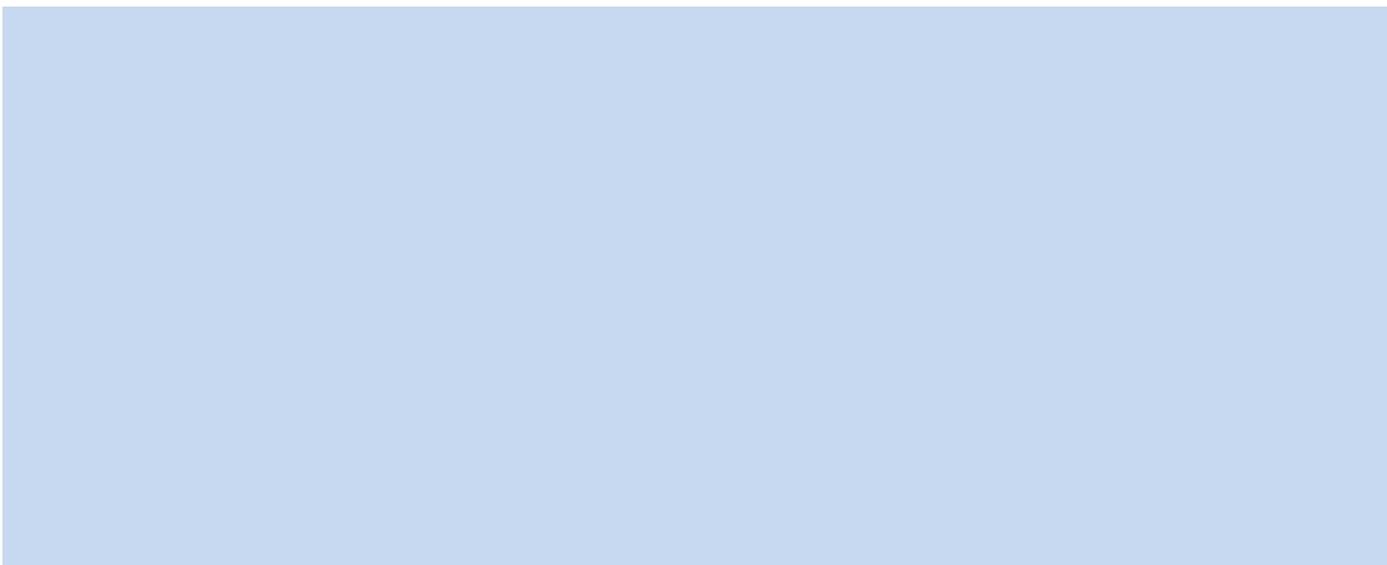
The vast majority of schools, education providers, teachers, trainers and coordinators found the nomination process (whereby the applicant writes the entire application) to be an 'easy' one, however some did identify difficulty with the process. Ninety per cent(9) of schools and education providers found the nomination process to be an 'easy' or 'very easy', with only 10 per cent(1) finding the process 'difficult'. Sixty per cent(6) of teachers and trainers found the nomination process to be 'easy' or 'very easy', with 30 per cent(3) finding it 'difficult' and the remaining 10 per cent(1) 'unsure'. Sixty per cent(3) of coordinators and support persons found the nomination process to be 'easy' or 'very easy', with 20 per cent(1) finding it 'difficult' and 20 per cent(1) 'unsure'.

Of those that found the nomination process 'difficult', some commented on the difficulty associated with having to nominate and write about oneself and/or the time investment required to complete the nomination form. One respondent also noted that nominating themselves was necessary as others may not know or understand their

role. Consultation participants also suggested that a new Award for 'team teaching' should be considered given that many teachers work collaboratively (particularly in VCAL) and this might encourage more teachers to enter nominations. Some comments regarding the nomination process included:

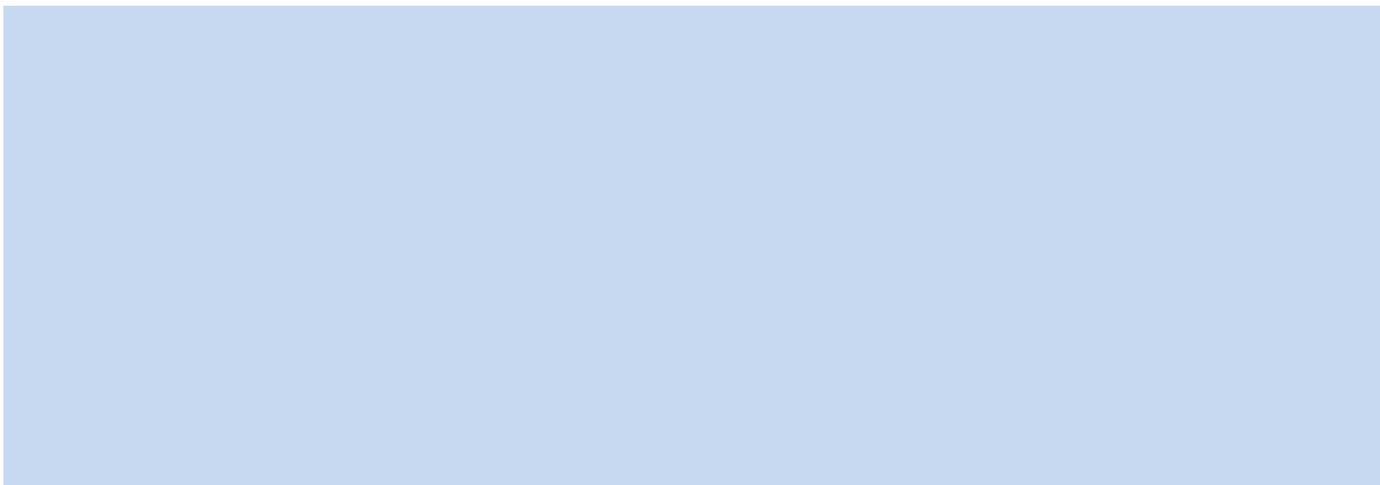


When asked "Do you think that the self-nomination process for teachers and trainers is an effective way to identify potential award recipients?" respondents were overwhelmingly clear that this approach was not desirable. Only 11 per cent (1) respondent indicated that this self-nomination approach was desirable. 83 per cent (3) were 'unsure' and the remaining 5 per cent (5) were not in support of this approach. On the other hand, 80 per cent (4) coordinators and support persons were in support of self-nomination and the remaining 20 per cent (1) was not. Comments regarding this matter included:

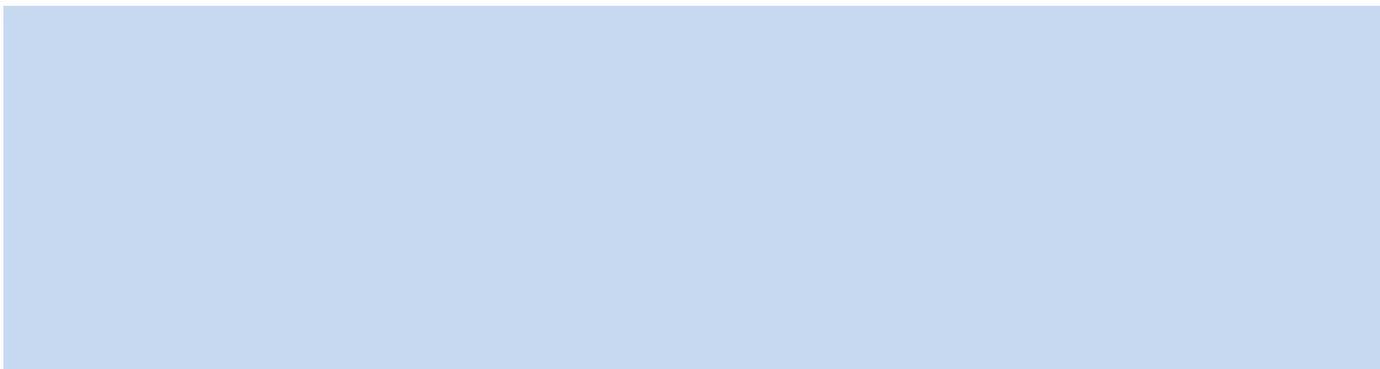


### 3.2.10 Use of independent judges

In an open-ended question, educators were asked for their opinion regarding the use of an independent judging panel of applied learning experts (e.g. government, TAFE, Industry) as part of the Awards selection process. Twenty respondents across the three educator related surveys (one per cent of all respondents) commented on the judging approach utilised, with all feedback favourable and appreciative. A selection of comments included:



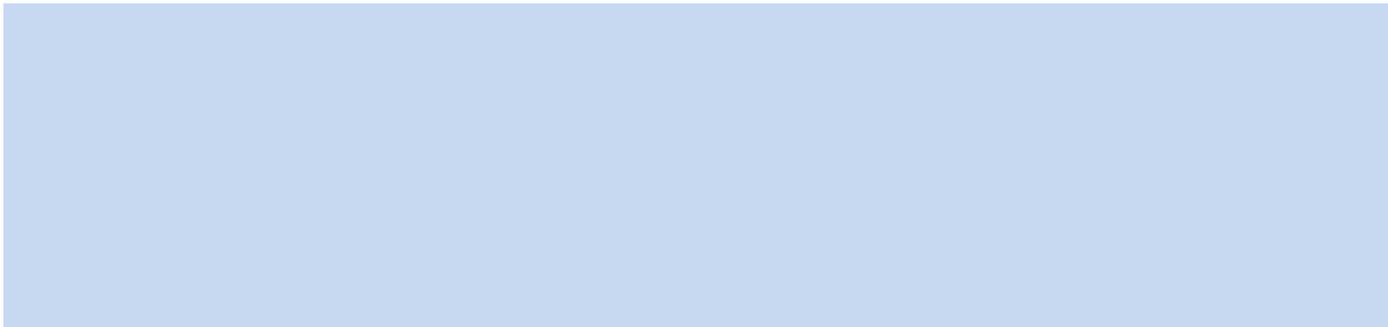
A few educator respondents also suggested that, instead of just relying on a written application, the nomination and judging process should also allow for inclusion of consultation with colleagues, provision of additional information and supporting letters and/or interviews for Award applicants.



### 3.2.11 Award Ceremony assessment

The vast majority of schools, education providers, teachers, trainers and coordination and support persons were very pleased with the Awards Ceremony. One hundred per cent (10) of schools and education providers were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the Awards Ceremony. Eighty nine per cent (9) of teachers and trainers were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with one respondent (1 per cent) not able to respond to this question because he or she did not attend the Ceremony. One hundred per cent (10) of coordinators and support persons were 'very satisfied' with the event. Positive comments regarding the Awards Ceremony included the following:





my

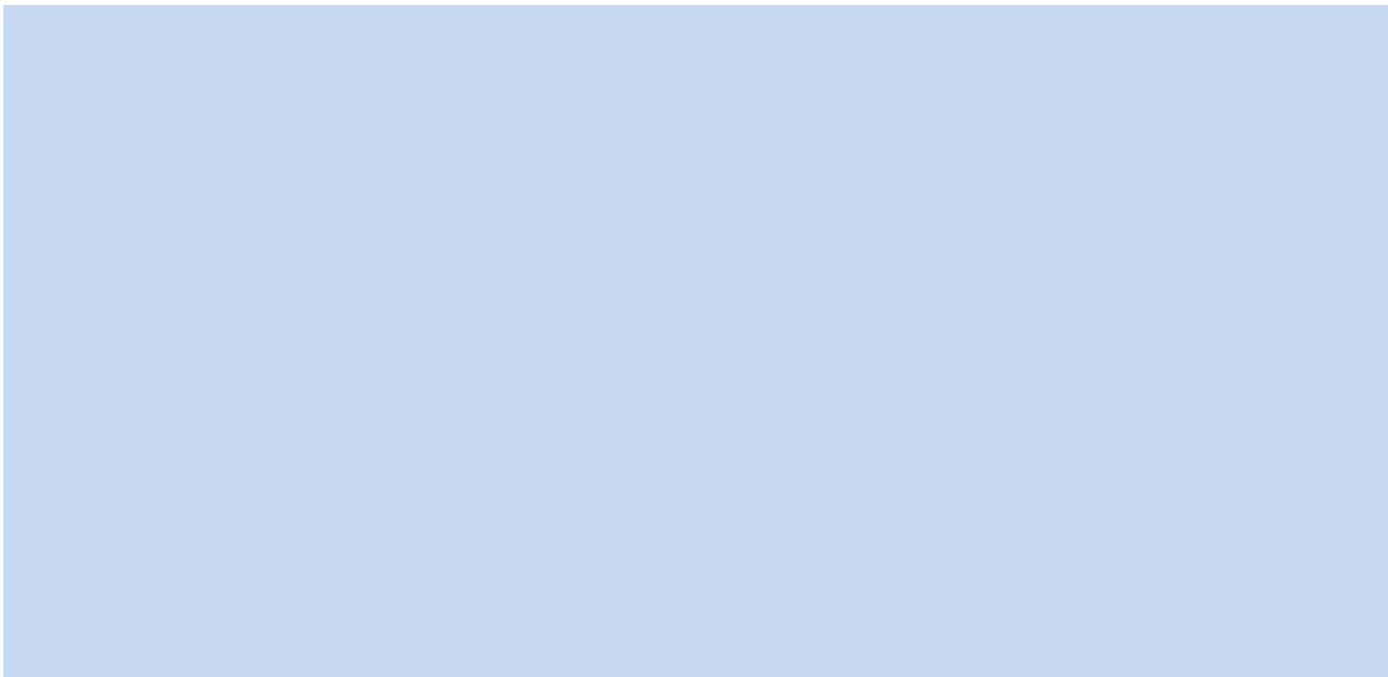
Some feedback regarding the Awards Ceremony also identified some issues and provided recommendations for future improvement:



is

y).”

Nine educators (36 per cent) provided feedback to the open-ended question “Do you have any comments about the guest speakers at the Awards Ceremony?” Notably, most of the comments made were regarding Eddie Perfect, the 2013 guest speaker, and the involvement of the Minister for Education (Mr Dixon) that same year. Feedback included:



at

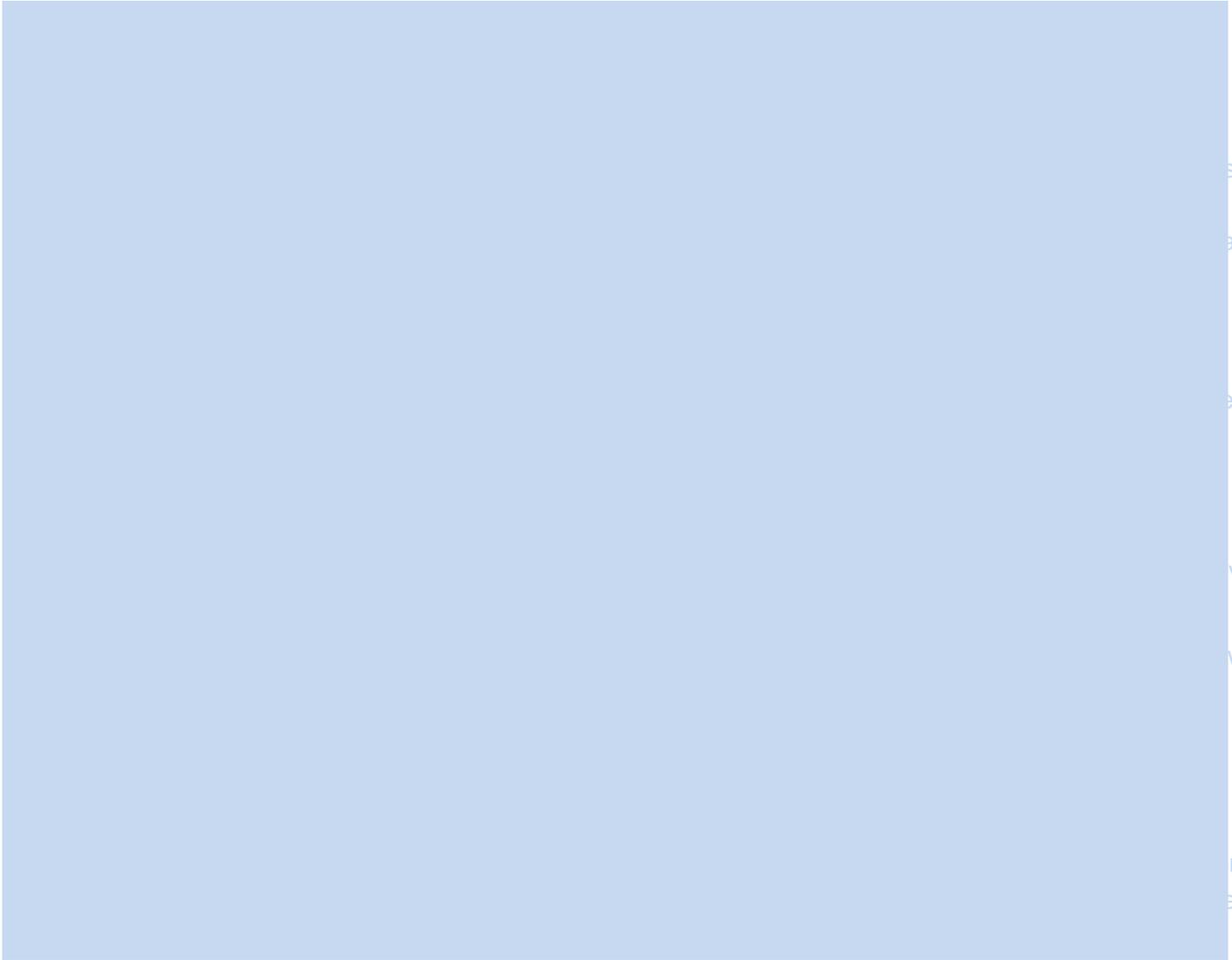
with

but still

### 3.2.12 Recommendations for improvements to the Applied Learning Awards

Fourteen educator respondents (56 per cent) provided feedback and recommendations for how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future. While the majority of respondents advised that they were happy with the Awards as they are, some also provided suggestions and ideas for improvement. While a large number of comments were provided these can be largely categorized as relating to: including attendance of the

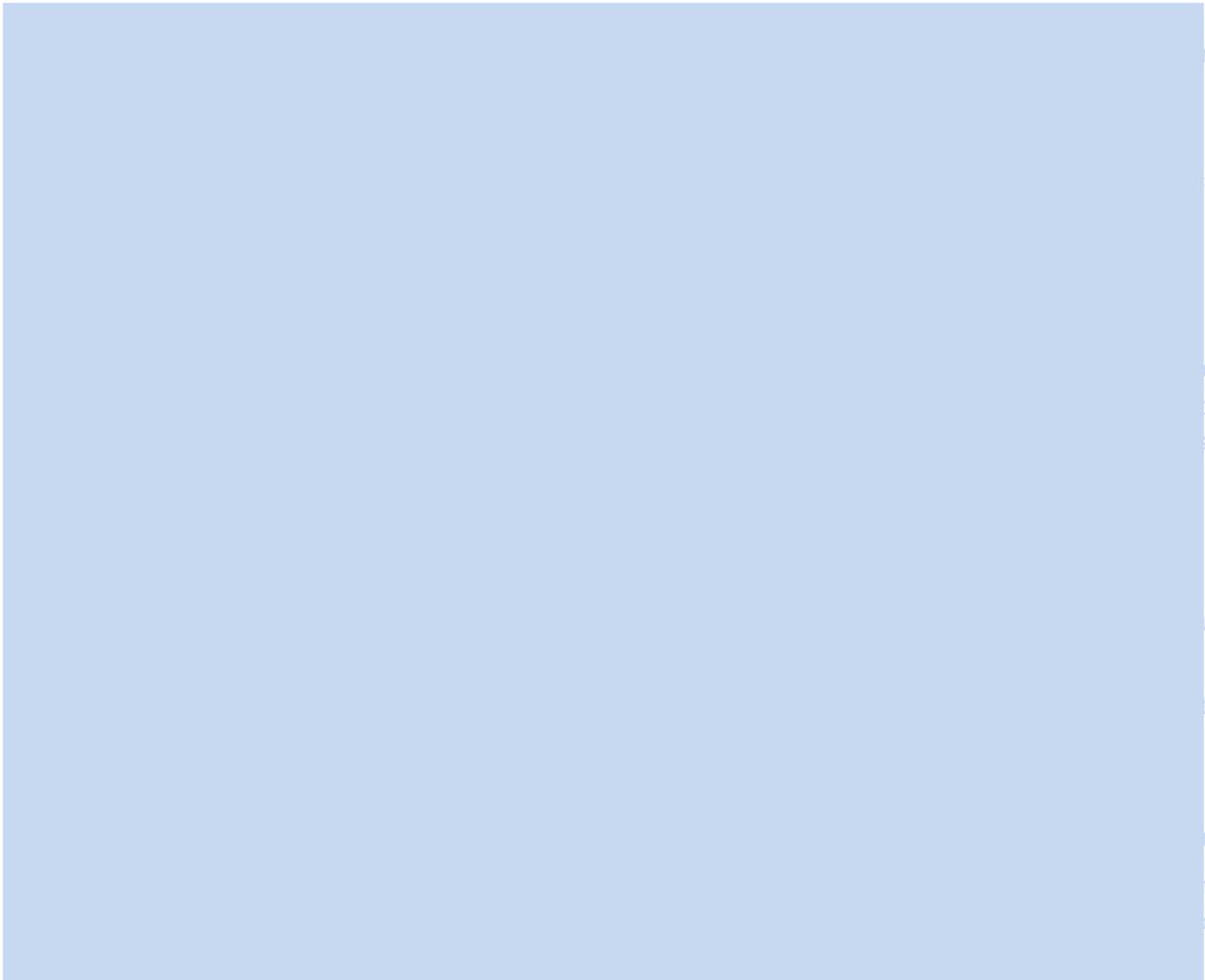
Minister for Education in the future; involving guest speakers of the caliber of Eddie Perfect in the making the nomination process more selective and involving nominations from others rather than via self-nomination; simplifying the nomination process for students; eliminating the interval during the Ceremony involving past winners in the subsequent year Ceremony providing educators with the brief summary of nominees and winners used by the MC when announcing the winners; and, consideration of a smaller venue. Comments and recommendations included:



### 3.2.13 Value of Applied Learning Awards

The final question asked of educator respondents was “Do you feel that the Applied Learning Awards are valuable? This open-ended question generated comments from 11 respondents (44%), across the three different educator surveys, which were overwhelmingly positive and attested to the importance of the continuation of this community-wide approach to publicly acknowledging and validating success in applied learning. Comments and feedback from respondents included:





ried  
re  
lassy  
oyed  
ut this  
dged; for  
s  
unity.  
t is a  
rea.”  
ne  
out the

### 3.3 Employer Assessment of the Applied Learning Awards

Ninety-two employers were nominated for or won an Applied Learning Award over the period 2009 to 2013 however as twelve of these were nominated in multiple years a total of 80 different employers have taken part in the Awards since inception. Nine of these employers responded to this survey, resulting in a small 11 per cent survey response rate.

All employer respondents indicated that the Applied Learning Awards was the first time they had been recognised and publicly acknowledged for the work they do in supporting students undertaking applied learning programs. Just under half of all respondents advised that being nominated for or winning an Award would influence their future decision to apply for these or a similar awards, although as none provided comments about this it is unclear as to why the remaining respondents would not consider awards applications in the future.

Overall, employers that were nominated for or won Awards were very flattered and proud by being recognised for their support of local students. Whilst no employer respondent indicated this specifically the fact that none had ever received recognition for this type of activity previously evidenced the value and importance of

acknowledging the generous commitment employers show to supporting the applied learning of students in our community. As one respondent said, "we were surprised extremely grateful and honoured".

All respondent employers, whether they were Award nominees or winners, indicated a desire to continue supporting students to develop and gain applied learning skills and experience. Indeed some also saw provision of student support and experience as a corporate responsibility that they will take on. One respondent said that, "We felt very honoured to win an award. We believe in supporting young people and encouraging them to enter our industry, and that was great public recognition for it".

Employers advised a number of their stakeholders that they had won an Award, however all were ones directly related to their business; that is, management, staff and customers. Employers have tended to use 'word of mouth' and 'public display of plaque' as the most popular method of announcing their Award win, however utilisation of platforms and mechanisms such as 'newsletter', 'website' and Facebook were also used by some. One respondent also noted that family and friends were very interested to hear about our win"

Employers regarded the use of an independent judging panel to be a fair and appropriate approach to assessing nominations. However, one respondent noted that the process could be enhanced through judges visiting workplaces as part of the decision making. As one respondent commented "it is great that it is independent and particularly important that it is judged by people from 'industry'"

All employer respondents were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the Applied Learning Awards Ceremony. No dissatisfaction was noted, however one respondent advised that providing organisations with more time to network could enhance the event. One respondent said that "It was a very prestigious night and we really enjoyed it. We really liked seeing the smile on the students as they won awards". Feedback regarding the use of guest speakers was very positive, and many commented specifically on the most recent 2013 guest speaker Eddie Perfect.

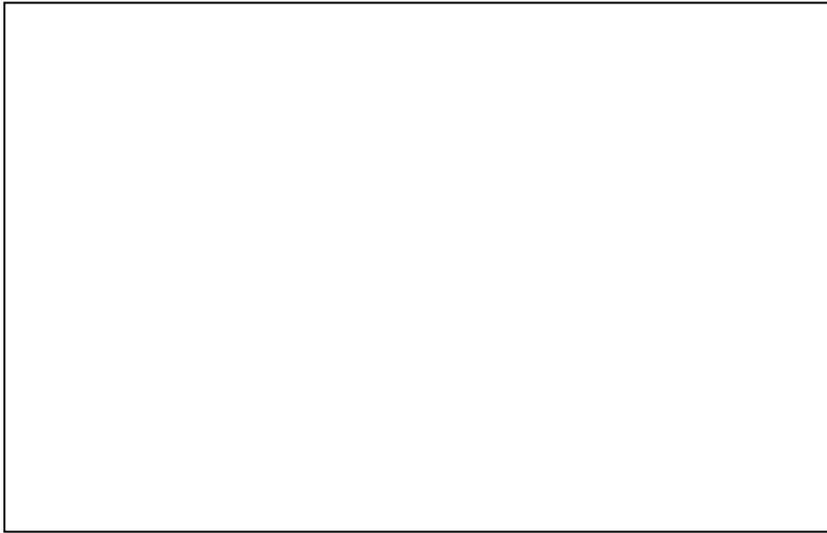
When asked for feedback and recommendations as to how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future only one recommendation related to increasing opportunities for networking at the Awards Ceremony night, was provided. The remaining comments were insteads of praise and thanks. As one employer respondent said "The awards are very well organised and I want to thank for being nominated".

### 3.3.1 Employer respondents

Ninety-two (92) employers were nominated for or won an Applied Learning Award over the period 2009 to 2013, however twelve of these were nominated for or won an Award over multiple years. A total of 80 different employers have taken part in the Awards since inception. Nine of these employers responded to this survey, resulting in a small 11 per cent survey response rate.

Of those that responded, 56 per cent (5) had been nominated for or won an Award in the 'SBAT employer' category, 22 per cent (2) for the 'Group Training Organisation' category, 11 per cent (1) for the 'Work Placement Employer' category and the remaining 11 per cent (1) for the 'School Business Partnership Award' category.

Of those employers that responded to the survey, 56 per cent (5) won an Applied Learning Award and the remaining 44 per cent (4) did not.



Graph21: Award nomination or win and year (employers)

### 3.3.2 Awards impact on future award applications

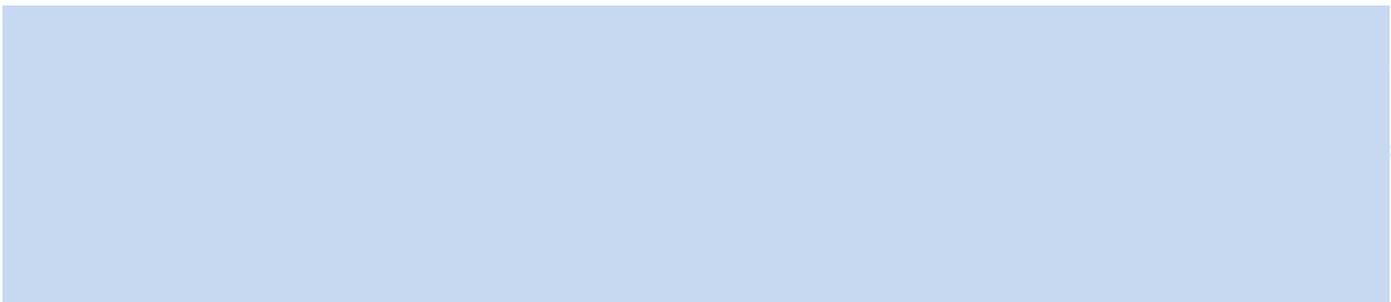
A number of questions were asked of employers regarding their nomination for or win of an Applied Learning Award and whether their involvement has increased their confidence and would thus influence their decision to take part in these and/or external awards in the future.

When asked "Has your business previously won an award for applied learning provision previously (not an Applied Learning Award?)", all respondents said they not previously won any related awards.

When asked "Did being nominated for or winning an Applied Learning Award make your organisation feel more confident about applying for other awards", 45 per cent (4) said that 'yes' they would, 45 per cent (4) said they were 'unsure' and the remaining 10 per cent (1) said 'no'. No additional comments were provided by respondents to elucidate as to why they would apply for future awards or are reticent to do so in the future.

### 3.3.3 Impact on being nominated for or winning an Award

When employers that were nominated for, but did not win, an Award were asked the open ended question "How do you feel about winning an Applied Learning Award?", the responses were very positive and grateful in nature. Some of the comments included:



When employers that won an Applied Learning Award were asked the open ended question "How do you feel about winning an Applied Learning Award?", the responses were very positive, grateful and in some cases indicated a sense of feeling overwhelmed in nature. Some of the comments included:

[Redacted]

to  
enter

Overall, employers that were nominated for or won Awards were very flattered and humbled by being recognised for their support of local students. ~~Was~~ no employer respondent indicated this specifically the fact that none had ever received recognition for this type of activity previously evidenced the value and importance of acknowledging the generous commitment each shows to supporting the applied learning of students in our community.

### 3.3.4 Influence of the Award on further involvement with local students and schools

When employers that were nominated for, but did not win, an Award were asked the ~~open~~ question “Did being nominated for an Applied Learning Award lead your organisation to have / consider greater involvement with local students / schools?” all responses indicated that they want to continue and/or increase their level of involvement. However, one respondent did indicate that they hadn’t been approached by schools as much as they had in previous years. Some of the comments included:

[Redacted]

erendale

When employers that won an Award were asked the ~~open~~ question “Did winning an Applied Learning Award lead your organisation to have / consider greater involvement with local students / schools?” all respondent indicated they wanted to continue offering ~~the~~ job work experience support to students. Indeed some respondents suggested that they see supporting young people to ~~the~~ business responsibility. Some of the comments included:

[Redacted]

award  
rt to  
t in

Respondent employers, whether they were Award nominees or winners, all indicated a desire to continue supporting students to develop and gain applied learning skills and experience. Indeed some also saw provision of student support and experience as a corporate responsibility that they willing take on.

### 3.3.5 Announcement of Award win

A number of questions were asked of employers regarding the stakeholders that they communicated their Award win to, the methods by which they imparted this information and the resulting feedback they received from colleagues and stakeholders.

Employers advised a number of their stakeholders that they had won an Award, however all were ones directly related to their business. Employers that won Awards advised their management team in the first instance, followed by staff and then customers. Although respondents could also select 'suppliers' and 'industry associations' as stakeholders they advised their win to, none selected these options. One respondent also commented that "family and friends were very interested to hear about our win" The levels of stakeholder notification are noted in the graph below:



Graph22: Award win notification(employers)

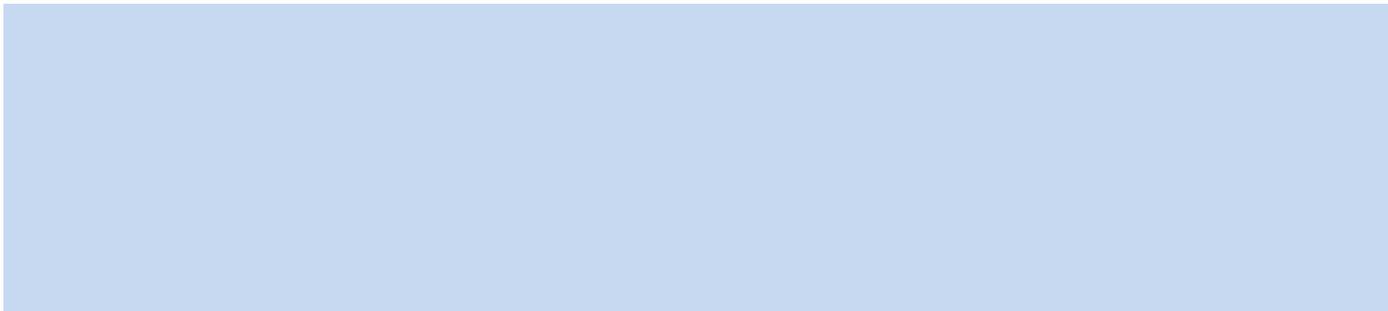
A wide variety of methods of announcing a win were used by employers that had won an Award; with the two most popular methods being 'word of mouth' and 'public display of plaque' followed by platforms such as 'newsletter', 'website' and Facebook to a lesser extent. Although respondents could also select 'intranet', 'media release' and Twitter' none selected these options. One respondent commented that "we are proud to display our plaque in our reception area for all to see" The Award win notification methods and levels of use by employers are noted in the graph below



Graph23: Award win notification methods(employers)

### 3.3.6 Independent judging process

In an open-ended question, employers were asked for their opinion regarding the use of an independent judging panel of applied learning experts (e.g. government, TAFE, Industry) as part of the Awards selection process. Eight employer respondents (or 89 per cent of all respondents) commented on the judging approach utilised, with all feedback favourable and appreciative in nature. One also suggested that the process could be enhanced by judges visiting workplaces as part of the decision making. A selection of comments included:



high

### 3.3.7 Award Ceremony assessment

All employer respondents were very pleased with the Awards Ceremony. Eighty nine per cent (9) of employers were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied', with one respondent (1 per cent) not able to respond to this question because he or she did not attend the Ceremony. One respondent indicated that the event could benefit from providing organisations with more time to network. Comments included the following:



others

Four employers (4 per cent) provided feedback to the open-ended question "Do you have any comments about the guest speakers at the Awards Ceremony?" All feedback was very positive, and many commented specifically on the most recent 2013 guest speaker Eddie Perfect. Feedback from employers included:



### 3.3.8 Recommendations for improvements to the Applied Learning Awards

Five respondents (5 per cent) provided feedback and recommendations for how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future. Only one recommendation for improvement, suggesting networking opportunities for nominees, was provided while the rest of the comments were ones of praise and gratitude. The recommendation and comments included

### 3.4 Sponsor Assessment of the Applied Learning Awards

Forty-one businesses, organisations and individuals have sponsored the Applied Learning Awards over the period 2009 to 2013, with many of these sponsoring over multiple years. Twelve of these sponsors responded to this survey, resulting in a 29 per cent survey response rate.

Sponsor respondents indicated that they were predominately made aware of the Applied Learning Awards through the sponsorship opportunity it presents through the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect.

Overall, sponsors are largely driven to support the Applied Learning Awards because of genuine commitment to the provision of applied learning to students in the community. An interest in sponsorship for organisational promotional purposes is considered a much lesser reason for supporting the Awards.

Direct organisational benefits derived from Applied Learning Awards sponsorship was something not noted by some sponsors and very noticeable to others. Indeed, three quarters of respondent sponsors believe that with sponsorship did have a positive effect for their business predominately in the areas of gaining new customers, promotion of their organisation, contributing to internal organisation awareness of applied learning and an opportunity to network with potential stakeholders and clients. As one sponsor noted, "Actually during the event we gained a new customer".

Almost all respondents also felt that sponsorship of the Awards did represent a sound return on investment with one noting that "although its a little early to detail the economic benefit, the community benefit is clear to us"

Overall, respondent sponsors were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the way in which their sponsorship of the Applied Learning Awards was promoted. Two respondents suggested that promotion, not only of them but also of the initiative could be enhanced through increased media coverage and a chance to present individual awards at the Awards Ceremony.

All respondent sponsors were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the sponsorship processes and arrangements in the areas of liaison, payment and marketing.

All respondent sponsors were in support of the independent and unbiased judging process to Award evaluate nominations. One sponsor noted the judging approach "Seems an appropriate process as long as it is entirely independent and those with vested interests aren't part of the process"

All sponsor respondents, that attended the Applied Learning Awards Ceremony were pleased and impressed with the event. Two respondents also provided suggestions that may enhance the event including elimination of the interval period, the inclusion of "fun segments" between formal presentations and choosing youth speakers that can clearly demonstrate the benefit of applied learning (rather than traditional learning). As one sponsor said of the event, it is "Very well organised and coordinated impressive event" All feedback regarding the use of guest speakers was very positive, and many commented specifically on the most recent 2013 guest speaker Eddie Perfect. As one sponsor said, "Eddie was great. Well done whoever thought of him and got him on board. Louisa and Danny were very well prepared and professional I thought"

When asked for feedback and recommendations as to how the Applied Learning Awards could be improved in the future all respondent sponsors were very positive about the Awards and the sponsorship opportunities and arrangements. Three respondents, who provided feedback in 2012, provided suggestions for improvement. One, which related to the inclusion of a sponsor networking cocktail event as a means of connecting with like minded community members and potential clients was introduced, on the basis of this feedback, in 2013. The second, which related to anonymous sponsorship acknowledgement when providing the award in that anonymous sponsor's selected category was also actioned as part of the Award Ceremony presentation in 2013. As one respondent said "The whole process was very professional and I felt connected to the process at all times".

### 3.4.1 Sponsor respondents

Forty-one (41) businesses, organisations and individuals have sponsored the Applied Learning Awards over the period 2009 to 2013, with many of these sponsoring over multiple years. Twelve (12) of these generous sponsors responded to this survey, resulting in a 29 per cent survey response rate.

Of those that responded some provided sponsorship in different categories, and in multiple areas. Those that sponsored individual Awards accounted for 58 per cent (7) of survey respondents, 42 per cent (5) provided 'silver' level sponsorship, 17 per cent (2) provided 'gold' level sponsorship and the remaining 17 per cent (2) provided 'platinum' level sponsorship.



Graph 24: Sponsorship year and category (sponsors)

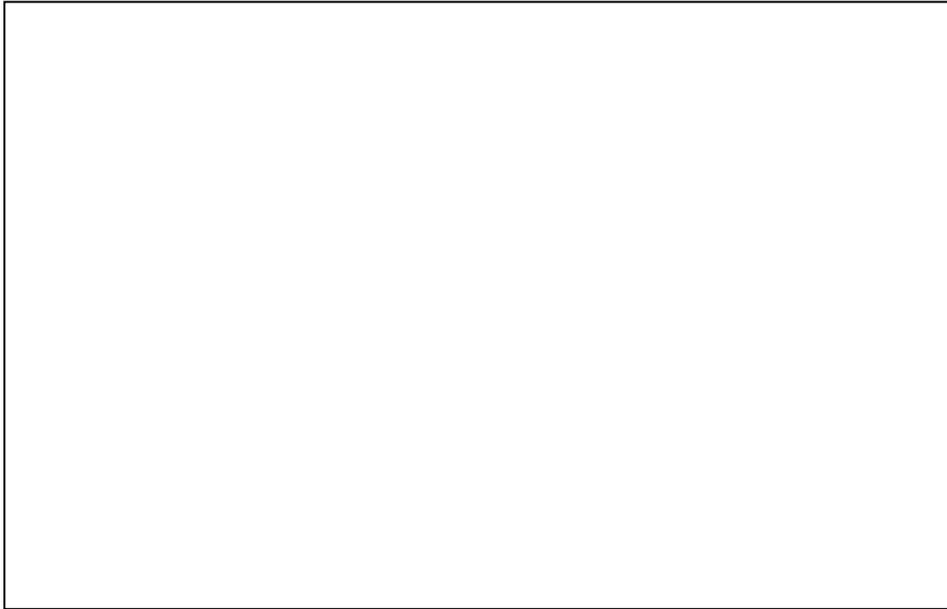
### 3.4.2 Awareness of the Awards and sponsorship opportunity

Sponsor respondents were asked how they were made aware of the Applied Learning Awards and the sponsorship opportunity these Awards present to businesses and organisations. In some cases, respondents were made aware via a number of ways which is reflected in their responses. For the vast majority of respondents, sponsors were made aware via the BGK LLP (82 per cent) and/or Youth Connect (64 per cent), with one respondent (nine per cent) indicating they were made aware via a school connection. In addition, one respondent (nine per cent) has contributed sponsorship as an anonymous individual sponsor over a number of years.

### 3.4.3 Reason for sponsorship contribution

Sponsor respondents were asked why they / their organisation decided to support the Applied Learning Awards through financial sponsorship. Respondents could select from five predetermined options and also indicate any

other reasons that may have influenced their sponsorship rationale. 'Supporting applied learning in the community' rated most highly and was designated by 62 per cent (11) of respondents, immediately followed by 'supporting student growth and development' as selected by 67 per cent (8) of respondents. 'Recognising quality applied learning provision' and 'promote my organisation with Awards stakeholders' were equally valued by seven respondents (5 per cent). Only four (33 per cent) of respondents selected 'it's our corporate social responsibility' as one of the reasons they have sponsored the Applied Learning Awards. Only one respondent provided another reason; 'supporting our community is our reason for being' statement that could be seen as aligning with the 'it's our corporate social responsibility' option.



Graph 25: Reasons for sponsorship (sponsors)

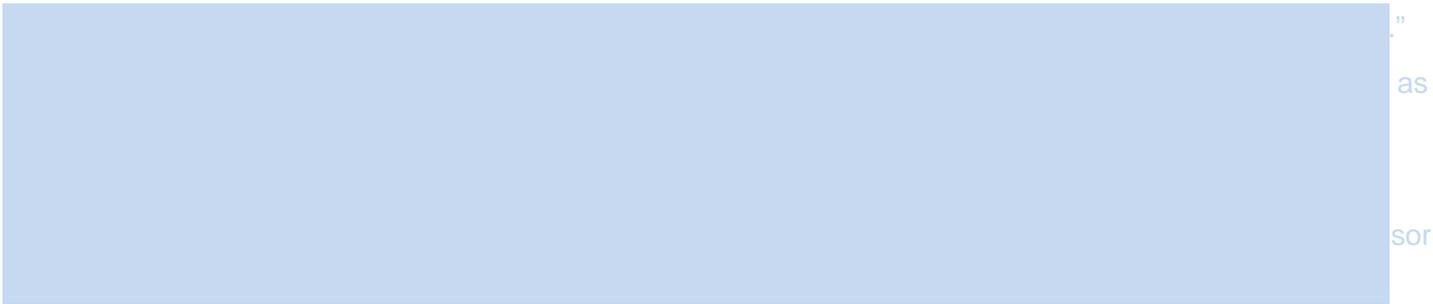
Overall, sponsor respondents were predominately driven to support the Applied Learning Awards because of genuine commitment to the provision of applied learning to students in the community. An interest in sponsorship for organisational promotional purposes is considered a much lesser reason for supporting the Awards.

#### 3.4.4 Benefits of sponsorship

All sponsors responded to the open-ended question 'Did your sponsorship and attendance at the Award Ceremony lead to any organisational benefits (sales generation, extension of networks, promotion)?' Seventy-five per cent (9) of sponsors believed that their sponsorship had delivered benefits and the remaining twenty-five per cent (3) felt that, as yet, they were not sure if their sponsorship had led to any organisational benefits. The benefits identified can be largely categorised as relating to: gaining new customers; promotion of their business and organisation; contributing to internal organisation awareness of applied learning; and, an opportunity to network with potential stakeholders and clients. Some of the comments include



ed our  
wn and



### 3.4.5 Return on investment through sponsorship

Nearly all respondents (90 per cent) felt that sponsorship of the Applied Learning Awards represents good 'return on investment', with the remaining respondents indicating that they were unsure'. One other respondent did not make a 'yes', 'no' or 'unsure' selection because this anonymous sponsor felt the question of return of investment was not really applicable in my case, more a philanthropic contribution, albeit a small one"

Two other respondents elaborated on their view that sponsorship was a return of investment for their organisation in saying that "although it is a little early to detail the economic benefit, the community benefit is clear to us" and "the return was not so much about the business but about the support and recognition for young people in the community"



Graph26: Return on investment(sponsors)

### 3.4.6 Sponsorship marketing and promotion

Overall, respondents sponsors were very pleased with the way in which their sponsorship of the Applied Learning Awards was promoted. When considering how satisfied respondents were with the promotion of their sponsorship, 82 per cent (9) were 'very satisfied' and the remaining 18 per cent were 'satisfied'. Although respondents could also choose from three other selections ('undecided', 'unsatisfied', 'very unsatisfied') none did so.

Two respondents also provided feedback, offering some suggestions for how sponsorship could be increased. One suggested that increased media coverage would increase promotion saying "it would benefit us, as well as the event philosophy, if there was some media coverage". The other respondent suggested that "sponsors were represented very well on the program and slides however it would be enhanced if sponsors could "present the award we sponsor"

One of those respondents also indicated why he/she selected 'satisfied' rather than 'very satisfied' through advising that 'Very satisfied requires saturation coverage which is really not what we want anyway'



Graph27: Satisfaction for sponsorship promotion (sponsors)

#### 3.4.7 Sponsorship management and support

When sponsor respondents were asked ~~rate~~ how satisfied you were with how the sponsorship process was managed (i.e. provision of 'Sponsorship Information Pack', liaison, payment arrangements) ~~83~~ per cent (10) were 'very satisfied' and ~~17~~ per cent (2) were 'satisfied'. No respondents provided ~~any~~ additional commentary on this matter.

#### 3.4.8 Use of independent judges

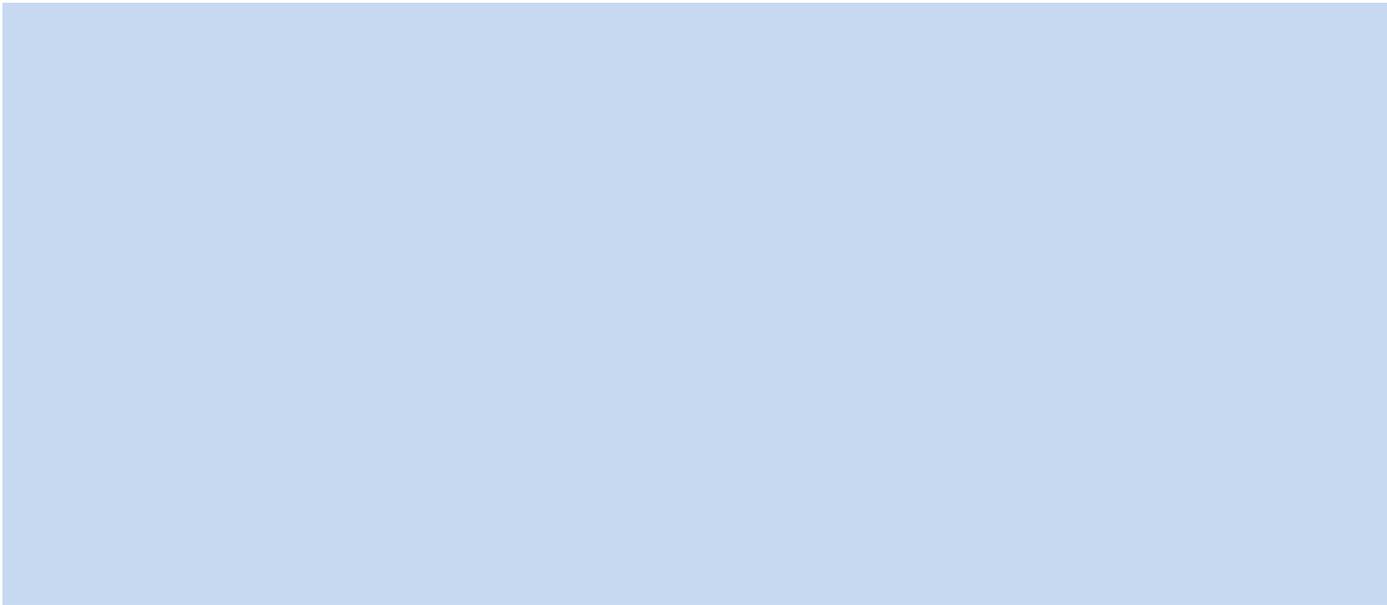
In an ~~opened~~ question, sponsors were asked for their opinion regarding the use of an independent judging panel of applied learning experts (e.g. government, TAFE, Industry) as part of the Awards selection process. Ten sponsor respondents (or 83 per cent of all respondents) commented on the judging approach utilised, with all feedback favorable and/or commenting on the importance of the unbiased approach utilised. One respondent also noted that the judges should receive greater recognition for their involvement and contribution. A selection of comments included:



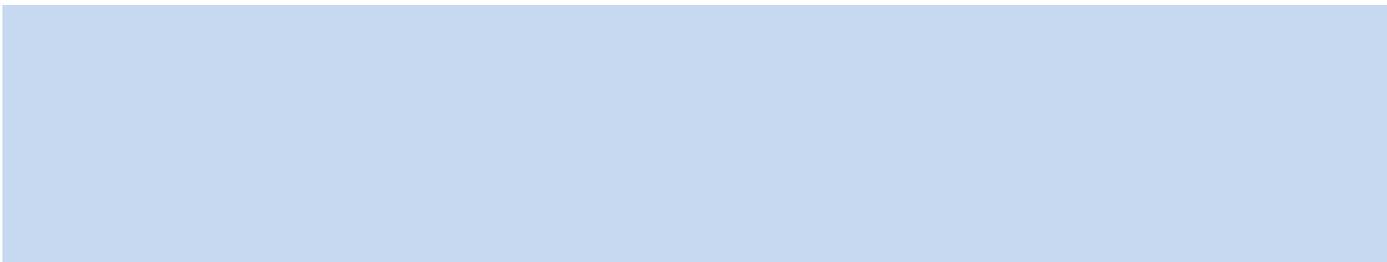
#### 3.4.9 Award Ceremony assessment

Respondent sponsors very pleased with, and impressed by, the Applied Learning Awards Ceremony. Fifty per cent (6) of respondents were 'very satisfied', ~~42~~ per cent (5) were 'satisfied' and one respondent (~~eight~~ per cent) not able to respond to this question because he or she did not attend the Ceremony. ~~Five~~ comments regarding the Ceremony were provided. Two respondents also provided suggestions that may enhance the event including elimination of the interval period, the inclusion of "fun segments" between formal presentations and choosing

youth speakersthat can clearly demonstrate the benefit of applied learning (rather than traditional learning).  
Comments included



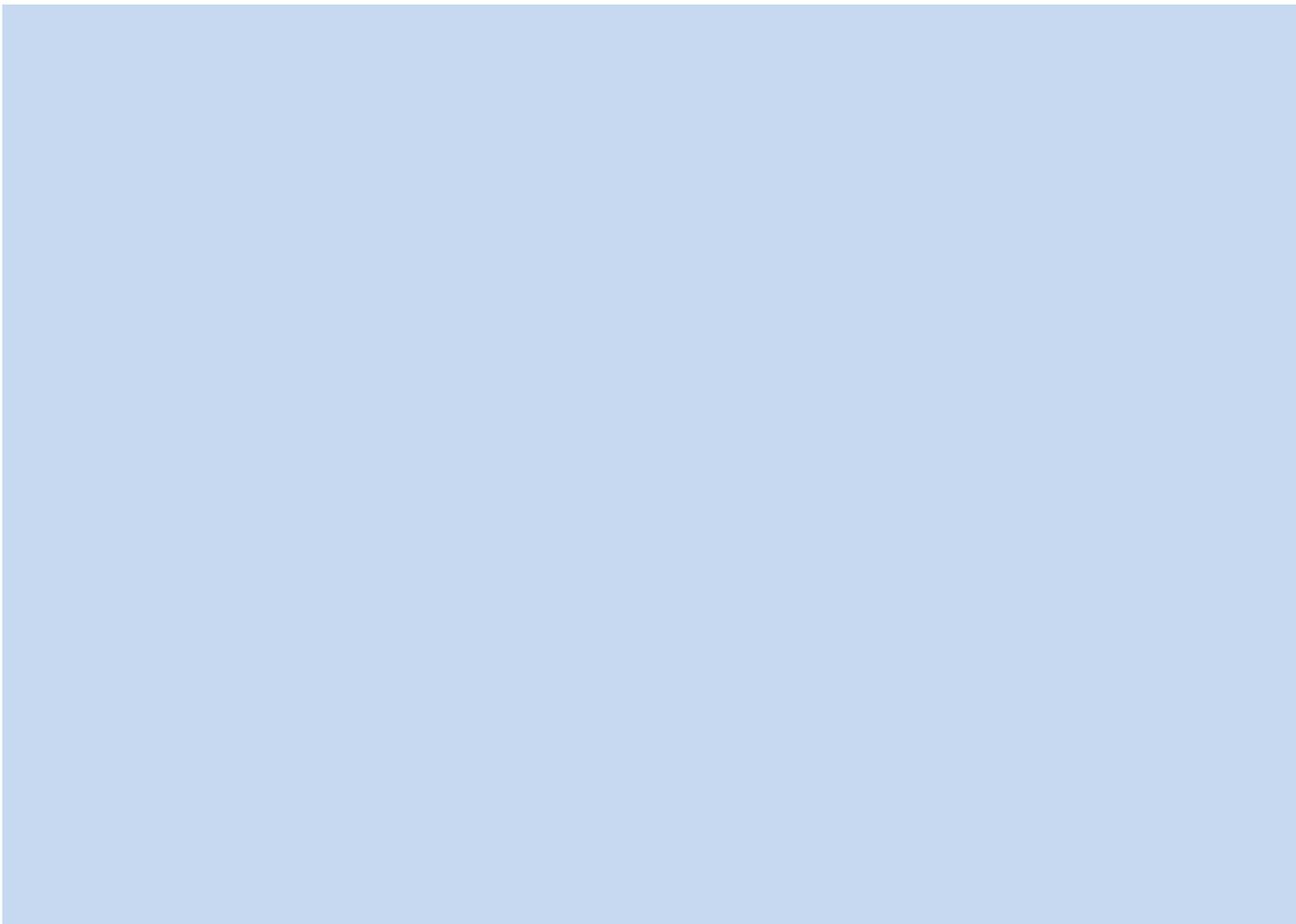
Four sponsors (36 per cent) provided feedback to the open-ended question “Do you have any comments about the guest speakers at the Awards Ceremony?” Notably, most of the comments made were regarding Eddie Perfect, the 2013 guest speaker, and Don Elgin, the 2012 guest speaker. Feedback included:



3.4.10 Recommendations for improvements to Applied Learning Awards and/or sponsorship process  
Seven respondents (52 per cent) provided feedback and recommendations for how the Applied Learning Awards and sponsorship arrangements could be improved in the future. While the vast majority of respondents advised that they were very positive about the Awards and the sponsorship opportunities and arrangements at present, three also provided valuable suggestions and ideas for improvement. These three recommendations for improvement were provided in 2012 and their suggestions for change were acted upon by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect as part of the 2013 Awards planning and development.

One recommendation made by two respondent sponsors in 2012 was the inclusion of a networking opportunity, so that sponsors could liaise with potential clients and customers. This was actioned in 2013 through the introduction of a 'pre-event networking cocktail' held on the same night of the Awards Ceremony but immediately prior to the Ceremony formally commencing. The second type of recommendation was one made by an anonymous sponsor who suggested that it should be made clear that a category was sponsored by an anonymous sponsor so that attendees are aware the category is a valued one and one that was worthy of

sponsorship. In 2013, and in response to this feedback, anonymous sponsors helped categories were formally acknowledged as part of the Awards Ceremony presentations.



### 3.5 Judges' Assessment of the Applied Learning Awards

Thirteen individuals, representing a range of areas, have volunteered their time as independent judges over the period 2009 to 2013. Five of these judges responded to this survey, resulting in a 38 per cent survey response rate.

The volunteer judges that assess, adjudicate and award winners willingly give of their time, expertise and skills to ensure that the Applied Learning Awards are unbiased and independent. When asked why they chose to offer this support and advice, respondent judges indicated that "to support applied learning in the community" "because the Applied Learning Awards are important" and "to support student growth and development" were amongst the most prominent reasons for them doing so.

When reflecting on the varied composition of the current Judging Panel all respondents believed each representative sector were equally valuable, important and should remain part of the Judging Panel into the future. One respondent noted that "I think the variety of sectors on the panel well represents the type of nominations received, and this means the judging can be thorough and representative. I feel that as a group we are able to make good decisions during the judging".

Overall, respondent judges were very satisfied with the judging management and process utilised. Indeed, all noted that they were satisfied with the various materials and tools presented to them in advance of the formal Judging Panel meeting. Similarly, all were satisfied with the way in which the Judging Panel meeting is coordinated. One respondent noted that at times, the limited background information provided by some nominees makes their ability to conduct an assessment difficult.

All respondent judges indicated that they were keen to offer their support as a volunteer judge into the future with one saying that "being part of the Applied Learning Awards is a highlight of my year as my role is a strategic policy development one which doesn't always allow for direct connection with students and providers, but the Awards definitely do".

All respondent judges, who attended the Applied Learning Awards Ceremony, were satisfied and pleased with the event. All feedback regarding guest speakers was also positive, particularly in relation to the most recent guest speaker Eddie Perfect. Indeed one judge that could not attend the Awards Ceremony commented that "I heard that Eddie Perfect was magnificent".

[REDACTED] rds  
[REDACTED] dge said  
[REDACTED] e

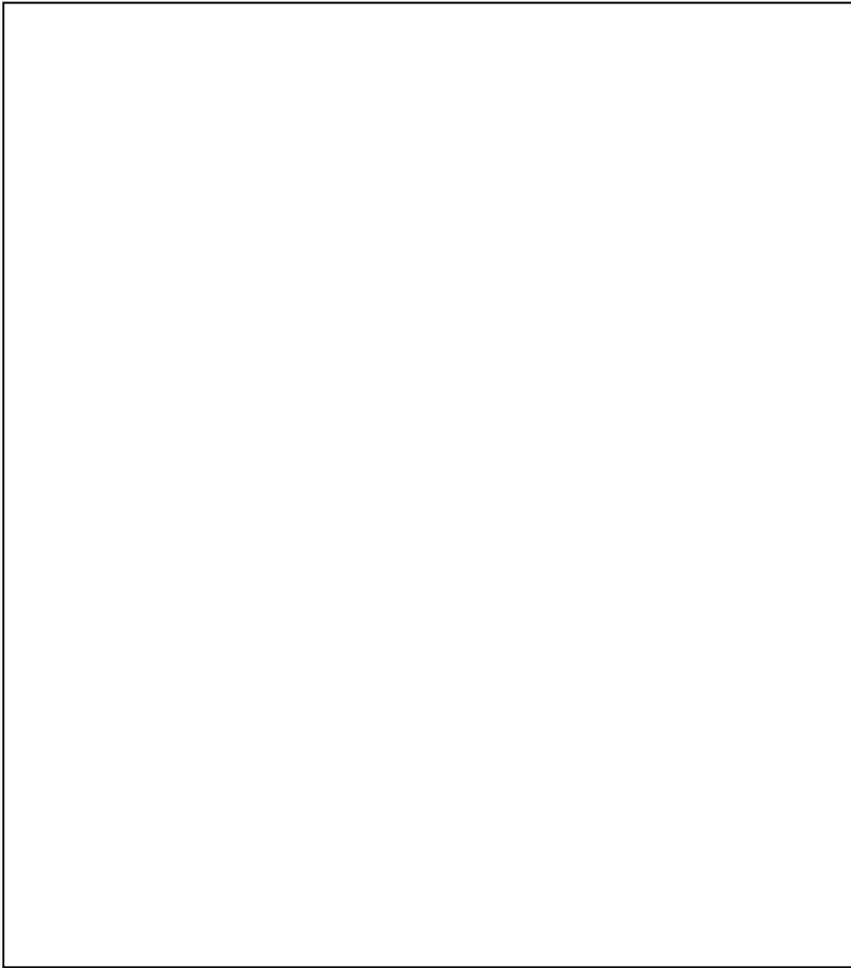
### 3.5.1 Judging respondents

Thirteen (13) individuals, representing a range of areas, have volunteered their time as independent judges over the period 2009 to 2013. Some of these individuals have judged the Awards over multiple years. Five (5) of these judges responded to this survey, resulting in a 38 per cent survey response rate.

Of those that responded to the survey, one came from each of the following sectors; Registered Training Organisation (RTO), Local Government, Local, Local Learning and Employment Network (external region) and Industry.

### 3.5.2 Reason for volunteering

Respondent judges were asked why they offered their time as a volunteer judge and had a number of pre determined options from which to choose from with respondents able to select from as many as they deemed relevant. The top five selected reasons were "to support applied learning in the community" (100 per cent of respondents); "because applied learning awards are important" (80 per cent); "to support student growth and development" (80 per cent); "to ensure my sector is involved in judging" (60 per cent); and "to support quality applied learning provision" (60 per cent). Other areas such as sharing the Awards philosophy, networking with other judges and as part of an organisational corporate responsibility were chosen to lesser degrees. A detailed list of ratings are noted in the graph below:



Graph28: Reasons for volunteering (judges)

### 3.5.3 Sector involvement in judging

When provided with a list of all sectors that have been represented via volunteer judges between 2009 and 2013 respondents selected all sectors as being of equal value and importance. Over this period the following sectors have been part of the judging panels assessing and selecting Award winners: Australian Industry Group; Catholic Education Office; Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD); Learn Local (outside region providers); Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN) (outside region); Local Government Registered Training Organisations; Secondary Schools (outside region) and, TAFE

In reflecting on the variety and composition of the Judging Panels two respondents expanded upon their selections. One noted that “I think the variety of sectors on the panel well represents the type of nominations received, and this means the judging can be thorough and representative. I feel that as a group we are able to make good decisions during the judging”.

Another respondent said that “I think the sectors represented are all important to support and promote quality applied learning provision, particularly in education and government departments”

When asked to identify any other sectors that should form part of the judging panels respondents did not identify any others, with one respondent commenting that “I think the current representation is very good”.

### 3.5.4 Judging management and process

Respondent judges were asked to evaluate and comment on aspects of the overall judging management and processes that underpin their preparation, knowledge and ability to fulfill their Applied Learning Awards adjudication role.

When asked whether judges were satisfied with the way that nominations are presented to them (that i.e. nominations and relevant judging materials are presented in a hard copy 'Judging Pack Folder' two weeks prior to the Judging Meeting)? sixty per cent (3) were 'extremely satisfied', twenty per cent (1) was 'very satisfied' and the remaining twenty percent (1) was 'somewhat satisfied'.

Two additional comments provided by respondents attest to the professionalism of the Judging Pack. One said, "The Judging Pack I receive is very professional, well organised and thorough. Given how many nominations are received each year this is a big task for the organisers." Another said, "I really liked the way all nominations were presented in the Judging Pack. It streamlined the process for me. I thought it was very professional".

One criticism shared by a respondent judge regarded the level of information provided about nominees in their nomination forms, something that is somewhat outside of the capacity of the independent coordinators of the Awards. "Some nominations have limited background information. I disregard these nominations because there is not enough details for me to make a judgment".

Between 2009 and 2013 judges have received their nominations, judging guide and evaluation assessment sheet in the hardcopy 'Judging Pack'. In 2013, all judges were asked whether they would prefer this to continue to be provided in hardcopy or have it presented to them in 'softcopy' (e.g. all documents provided in a secure USB). All survey respondents, indicated that they are content with the current arrangement and would prefer these to continue be presented in hardcopy.

As part of the 'Judging Pack' all judges are provided with a 'Judging Guide'. The Judging Guide is developed per each category of nomination and provides judges with some ideas, tips and suggestions that can be referred to when evaluating nominations. Judges are not required to use this Guide as part of their assessment but it is provided as a tool of assistance which we know some judges use while others do not. In responding to the question "are you satisfied with the 'Judging Guide' provided as part of the Judging Pack" survey respondents indicated that sixty per cent (3) were 'extremely satisfied' with this tool and the remaining forty percent (2) were 'very satisfied'. One respondent advised that it was really useful to have the guide as at times it clarified/validated my evaluation of the nominations".

As part of the 'Judging Pack' all judges are provided with a 'Judging Evaluation Sheet' that is attached to each individual nomination form. This evaluation sheet provides a format by which judges can assess each nomination question criteria as being of high, medium or low level. Some judges choose to follow this approach as part of their pre-judging individual assessment whereas some prefer to read nominations and make assessments via an open conversation with their fellow judges at the Judging Meeting. In responding to the question "are you satisfied with the 'Judging Evaluation Sheet' that accompanies each Nomination" survey respondents indicated that sixty per cent (3) were 'extremely satisfied' with this tool and the remaining forty percent (2) were 'very satisfied'.

The Judging Meeting is generally conducted one to two weeks prior to the Awards Ceremony. The meeting is generally held over five hours with judges separated into three individual panels that reflect the knowledge and skills of judges. Each separate panel is then assigned with responsibility for assessing nominations that closely reflect their relevant expertise. During the meeting, the panels are divided into three separate rooms and time

for lunch allows for the entire group to meet collectively during the day. Overwhelmingly judges are satisfied with this coordination and arrangement. When asked ~~what~~ judges “were satisfied with the way that the Judging Panel Meeting was coordinated” forty per cent (2) were ‘extremely satisfied’, forty percent (2) were ‘very satisfied’ and the remaining twenty per cent (1) was ‘satisfied’.

Overall respondent judges satisfaction with, and interest in, the Applied Learning Awards is reflected in whether or not they would be willing to act in a judging capacity in the future. One hundred per cent of respondents said they would like to continue to volunteer as a judge, with one saying that “being part of the Applied Learning Awards is a highlight of my year as my role is a strategic policy development one which doesn’t always allow for direct connection with students and providers, but the Awards definitely do”.

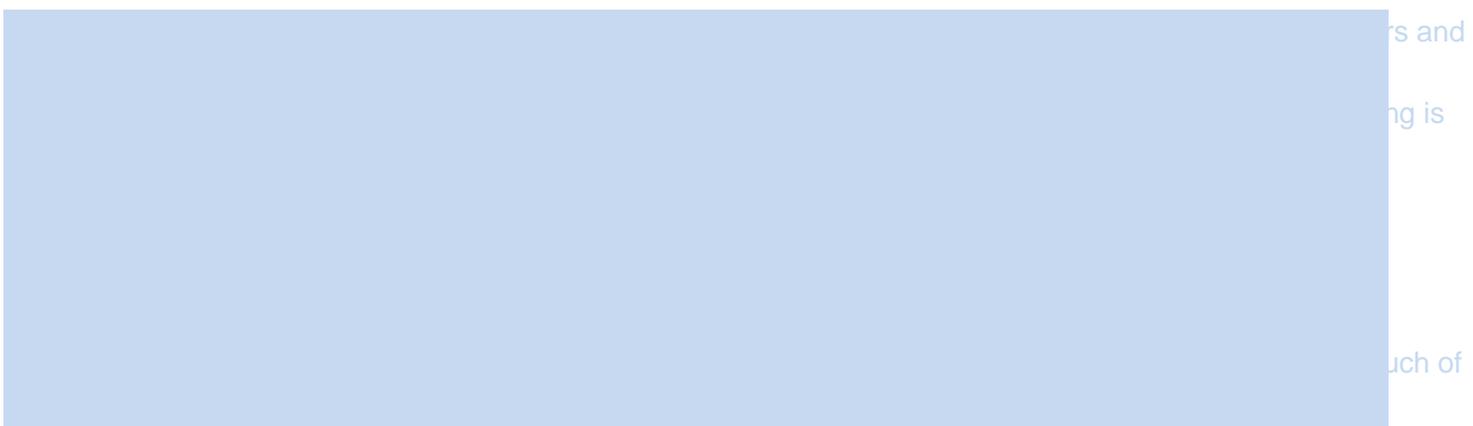
### 3.5.5 Awards Ceremony assessment

Respondent judges very pleased with, and impressed by, the Applied Learning Awards Ceremony. Twenty per cent (1) of respondents were ‘extremely satisfied’, twenty per cent (1) were ‘very satisfied’, twenty per cent (1) were ‘somewhat satisfied’ and two respondents (forty per cent) not able to respond to this question because he or she did not attend the Ceremony. ~~One comment was also provided by a respondent judge who “said~~ **Awards Ceremony is always a fun night and great to see the faces on the students as they are announced as winners. It is also great to see the impact that being included in the awards has on parents”.**

~~Two respondent judges (forty per cent) provided feedback to the ~~open~~ question “Do you have any comments about the guest speakers at the Awards Ceremony?”~~ **Notably, most of the comments made were regarding Eddie Perfect, the 2013 guest speaker. One respondent said “The guest speakers have been great and appeal to all the different types of people in the audience. Eddie Perfect was an excellent speaker this year”. One respondent who did not attend the 2013 Awards Ceremony advised that he “heard that Eddie Perfect was magnificent”.**

### 3.5.6 Outcomes and benefits of the Applied Learning Awards

~~Four of the five respondent judges commented on the outcomes and benefits of the Applied Learning Awards, all of which attest to the value and importance of this initiative at both community and individual levels. These positive comments were:~~



## 3.6 Considerations and Recommendations for the Applied Learning Awards

Recommendations and considerations for improvements to the Applied Learning Awards have been generated through the Author’s overall evaluation and through specific information provided ~~to~~ **those** stakeholders that

took part in the surveys and consultations. This report section outlines these considerations and recommendations.

### 3.6.1 Recommendations from survey and consultation participants

In reviewing feedback provided as part of the survey responses and consultations, a number of recommendations and considerations for enhancing the awards were identified. While some of these recommendations have already been actioned, due to the feedback provided in previous years and changes made to the 2013 Award program, some others require further consideration. Unfortunately, some recommendations are ones that are unlikely to be able to be accommodated due to the current format of the Awards and/or unavoidable logistical issues. However, all recommendations provided by respondents will be considered by the Awards coordinators as part of our annual quality assurance review.

The stakeholder recommendations and considerations, along with possible means of addressing these are noted in the tables below. Where the likelihood of addressing a recommendation is limited or not possible this is also noted, as are recommendations that have already been actioned.

Awareness of the Awards	Some students have recommended that information about the Awards be made known earlier in the year.	Advise teachers, trainers and schools of the Awards process earlier in the school year so that students can work towards nomination.
Resume	Some students are not using information about the Award nomination or win in their resume.	Remind students that including information in their resume may be useful / beneficial for future employment and/or education applications.
Alternative ways of providing a nomination	Some students advised that awarding nominations on the basis of a 'written only' approach did not suit all and the capacity to provide a nomination via other methods (eg. provision of tangible resources, direct conversations with judges) would be welcomed.	Consider utilising alternative application processes for students in the year.  Direct conversations between all student nominees and judges may be logistically difficult due to the fact that judges are volunteers and have limited time. Already judges do seek additional information about some students where choosing a winner is difficult.
Less speeches during the Award Ceremony	Some students indicated that they find the Award Ceremony too 'speech heavy' or include too much 'talking'.	Unfortunately, as many Awards and Nomination Certificates must be given on the night limiting the amount of 'talking' on the night is somewhat difficult.
Guest speakers	Some students indicated that the ceremony would benefit from having the inclusion of youth speakers who did not follow their pathway immediately after completing school but have discovered their ideal pathway later in life.	Review future youth speakers and select ones that meet this suggested selection criteria and approach.
Increasing professional confidence	It appears that some educators are uncertain about (and possibly lack personal confidence) when it comes to applying for future awards (be that Applied Learning Awards or other external ones).	Consider communicating with each nominee and winner after the Award ceremony advising of upcoming awards they may want to consider applying for.
Self-nomination	Some educators noted that they found it difficult	As part of the Awards marketing continue

process	<p>write about oneself and that the nomination process could be more equitable if others nominated colleagues and judges sought feedback through other mechanisms than just an application form (e.g. letters of support, interviews).</p> <p>One educator also noted that he / she had not encountered a self-nomination award process previously.</p>	<p>so remind educators to encourage colleagues to nominate as they are a worthy contender.</p> <p>Direct conversations between all educator nominees and judges may be logistically difficult due to the fact that judges are volunteers and have limited time. Already judges do seek additional information from referees provided by educators when choosing a winner is difficult.</p> <p>Make educators aware that self-nomination is a common professional award practice used within the education, industry and business sectors. Predominately used this way as nominees are in the best position to respond to personal/professional questions.</p>
Team Teaching Award	Some participants in the educator consultation suggested the establishment of a new Award Category for 'Team teaching' to reflect that much applied learning is conducted in teams of educators (particularly within the VCAL field).	Consider introducing a new 'Applied Learning Team Teaching Award' category that would allow for a team of teachers/trainers to apply for an Award as a group.
Guest speakers	Educators commented on the high caliber of some guest speakers used in recent years.	<p>Attempt to negotiate a 'standing arrangement' with the Minister for Education.</p> <p>Continue to involve guest speakers that appeal to all attendees and that are intelligent, humorous and appealing.</p>
Award ceremony	Some educators noted that some attendees used the interval to leave during the Ceremony.	Consider eliminating the interval refreshment period.
Involvement of school councilors	Some educators noted that having school councilors attend the Award Ceremony is a good means of promoting applied learning and contributing to strategic decision making within their school.	Include invitations to school councilors in Awards Ceremony invitations sent to schools and education providers.

Judging process	One employer suggested that the judging process could be enhanced by judges visiting workplaces prior to decision making to assess the efforts that employers put in to supporting students.	Direct conversations between all employer nominees and judges may be logistically difficult due to the fact that judges are volunteers and have limited time. Already judges do seek additional information from referees where choosing a winner is difficult.
Award ceremony	Some sponsors noted that some attendees used the interval to leave during the Ceremony.	Consider eliminating the interval refreshment period.
Independent judging	One sponsor suggested that the judges should receive greater recognition for their involvement and	Consider ways in which judges could be even more recognised than is currently

	contribution.	done as part of the Ceremony.
Cocktail networking event	Some sponsors suggested that holding a 'cocktail networking event' is one way of enabling sponsors connect with one another, other stakeholders and possibly lead to business benefits.	In 2013 a 'VIP Cocktail Event' for sponsors and key stakeholders was held just prior to the commencement of the actual Awards Ceremony. While successful, it was felt that a separate event (ie. not held on the same night as the Awards) would have more impact. This is being trialed in 2014, with a '2014 VIP Launch Cocktail Event' being held in June 2014.
Acknowledge anonymous sponsors	One anonymous sponsor indicated that acknowledging the private award sponsorship of specific categories is important as doing so shows to the winner and the wider audience that the specific category is valuable and important.	In 2013 this approach was utilised with the MACs and powerpoint display clearly identifying that anonymous awards were privately sponsored'.

### 3.6.2 Recommendations identified during the report development

In considering other factors and matters as part of this overall evaluation, some other recommendations and considerations have been identified. These are noted below:

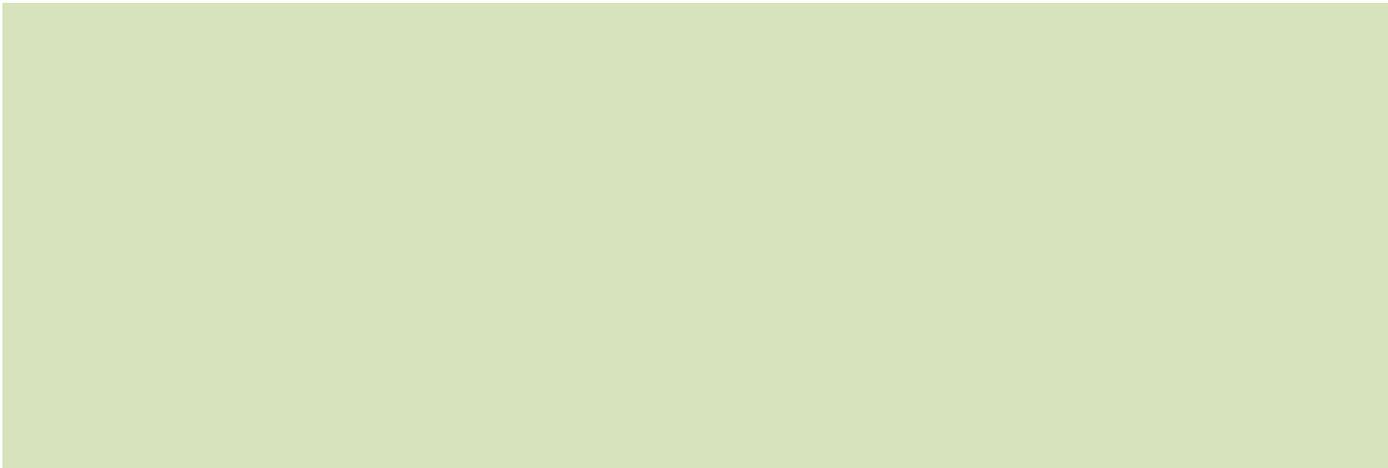
Increase nominations from non-government sector	Over half of all student, school, teacher, trainer, and coordinators nominations emanate from the government sector.	Increase awareness of the Awards with non-government potential nominees through increased levels of promotion and marketing to these groups.
Sustainability of the Awards	The Awards are now a well established 'brand' Awards across the BGK region making it important that the sustainability of this initiative is assured into the future.	Work with community, schools and business to ensure the Awards' future.
Support other regions to initiate their own Applied Learning Awards programs	It has been identified that other regions are interested in offering Applied Learning Awards (or similar) and have already sought advice regarding our Applied Learning Awards.	Disseminate this report widely to assist other regions to determine whether Applied Learning Awards (or similar) are relevant in their region and share the Implementation Guide contained within this report as a 'blueprint'.

## 4. Case Studies Young People, Secondary Schools and Educators

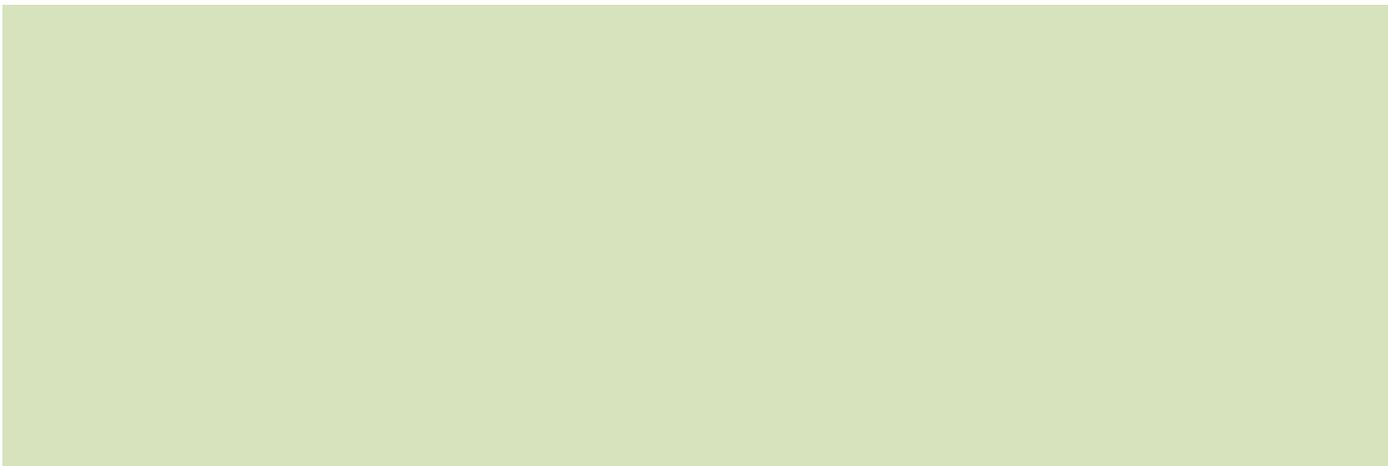
An array of Case Studies drawn from consultations with young people, educators and school Principals are presented below. These Case Studies provide insight into the personal, employment, further training, strategic and systemic outcomes that derived out of involvement in the Applied Learning Awards

### 4.1 Case Studies: Young People

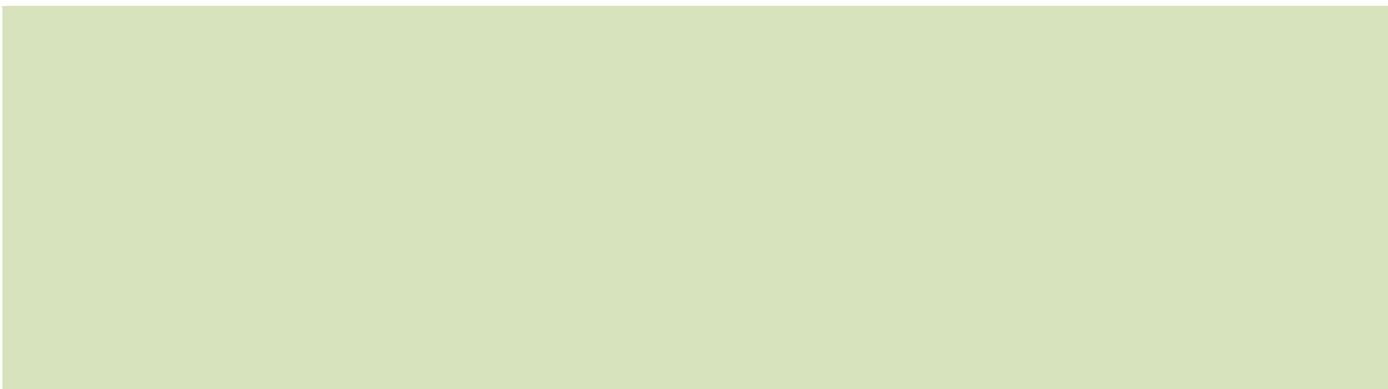
An array of Case Studies from young people who were nominated for or won Awards are presented below. Some of these young people have completed their secondary education and are now in employment or further education, while others are still attending secondary school.



icate of  
both  
ning an  
y  
ery  
ture get



pleted  
e.  
textiles  
lustry  
hat the  
to  
as still



udies and  
ng  
at  
o applied  
a  
d

[Redacted]

community  
undertaken  
ing  
ol  
h job

[Redacted]

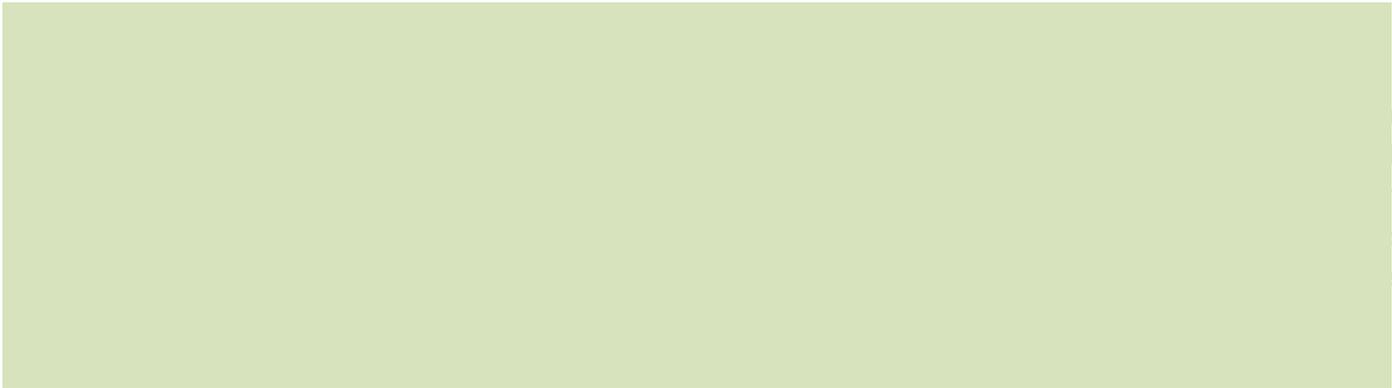
on at St  
ork  
greatly  
learning  
onardian'  
training  
arly in  
er

[Redacted]

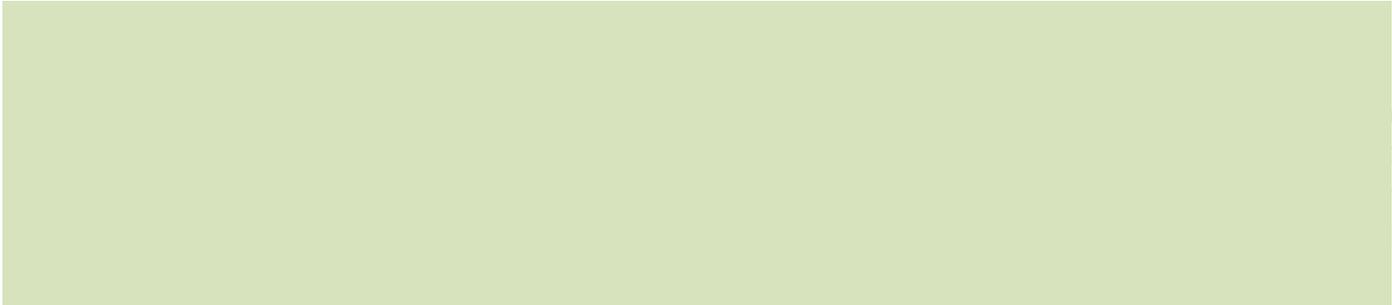
y College  
inning,  
ne  
ls that  
see

[Redacted]

ertificate  
ed  
Andrew  
r



and  
he  
worthy  
s.



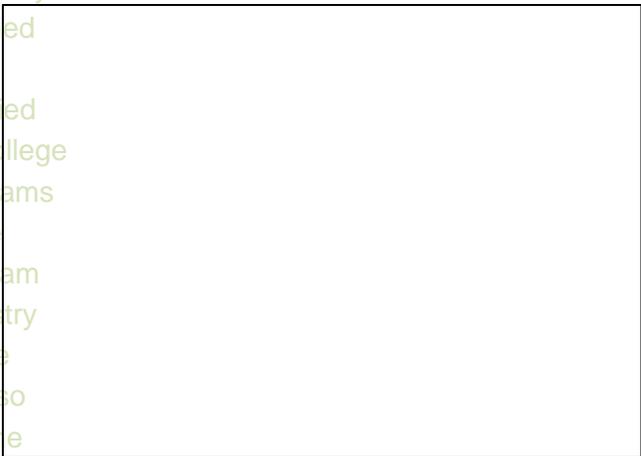
and been  
ed my  
on it"  
ll assist

#### 4.2 Case Studies: Secondary Schools and Educators

An array of Case Studies from Secondary School Principals and educators that have been nominated for or won Awards are presented below. In addition, each of these schools and individuals have also encouraged and nominated students, colleagues and employers for Applied Learning Awards over the years. The schools that form part of these Case Studies are: Sandringham College, Berendale School, Firbank Grammar, Secondary College / LEEP Program, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College and Cheltenham Secondary College.

##### Case Study: Sandringham College

Sandringham College is a very well respected secondary college that sees hundreds of students undertake applied learning programs, as part of their Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or their Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), each year. Some Sandringham College students undertake their VET in School (VETiS) programs at external training providers while others complete the training on the College grounds. Indeed, Sandringham College is auspiced to deliver a wide range of industry VETiS programs and, in addition to making these programs available to their own student cohort, they also allow external students from local schools attend the campus to undertake their chosen VETiS program.



The senior leadership team at Sandringham College are strong supporters of the Applied Learning Awards. Allen McAuliffe, Principal of Sandringham College, believes that the Awards reflect their school philosophy whereby all learning, be that academic or applied, is equally valued. “Winning an Award underpinned by a similar philosophy makes any win even more valuable and further legitimizes our strategic school direction”, said Allen.

Sandringham College has been the recipient of a number of school Applied Learning Awards, including the ‘Champion School Award’ over several years. In addition, staff have been the recipients of teacher Awards and countless students have also been Award winners. Sandringham College has also been “thrilled” to see students enrolled at other schools, but who attend their campus for VETiS programs, also win Awards over the years. Allen said that, “the beauty of the Awards is that they also help to unite secondary schools, from across all sectors, in a non-competitive way”.

Vivienne Mcelwee, Principal of the Senior Campus, believes that the Awards have enormous benefits for students. “The Awards provide students with different strengths the chance to shine and have a moment of their own and celebrate that with their family and friends”, said Vivienne. Sandringham College sees the Awards as another way of promoting programs and pathways to students, because they can show students progressing to the senior camps with ‘real life’ examples of students that have excelled in their chosen industry pathway or VCAL area.

Jeni Ritterman, Careers Coordinator at Sandringham College, believes that Awards generate considerable skill development for students “well beyond just the Award period”. By taking part and completing a nomination form, students are developing skills in interviewing, evaluation and learning about the employability skills they have developed through their applied learning programs. “The Awards themselves become a mini student learning program on their own”, said Jeni.

Allen feels that the Awards are very prestigious, elegant and that everything is coordinated with the utmost professionalism from beginning to end”. Allen is also aware that a number of school Principals, from outside the region, are keen to see awards such as the Applied Learning Awards offered in their area. Allen also ruminated on what would happen if the Applied Learning Awards was no longer offered and feels that if that was to happen “our region would lose an independent forum for community recognition of applied learning success; whether that is a school, a student, a teacher or an employer”.

The Sandringham College team can recount many Award highlights over the years but two have particularly stood out in recent years. Vivienne spoke about one Award winning student with a number of personal disadvantages “who, since leaving school, has stayed in touch and still talks about winning his Award as one of the absolute highlights of his life”. Allen was also moved by an incredible scene at last year’s ceremony where a young male, from another school, was being hugged to death by his mum and it really resonated with me that these Awards are not just about the win but also about young people and their families creating their own family history and identity”.

social  
n  
d: in  
and  
the  
. In  
ian  
ET in  
nosen

student

er  
ne that  
d belief in

alendar. A  
,

s has  
that was  
and rigor

ilies  
ur school

Firbank Grammar Senior School is an independent girl's school located in the Bayside region of Melbourne, Firbank Grammar is known for its high student academic success. In more recent years, Firbank Grammar has seen increasing numbers of its students pursue applied learning via a variety of VET in Schools (VETiS) programs delivered both on and off campus. Since the Applied Learning Awards were launched, Firbank Grammar students have been nominated for or won Awards and the excellence of one of their teachers was also recognized as an Award nomination.

Annette Davies Smythe, Careers Practitioner at Firbank Grammar, believes that Applied Learning Awards are seen by Firbank Grammar students as something that is "very special" and students are often very surprised that they have been nominated. Over the years I have found that nominated students take it very seriously; they

go away and fill out the nomination form and do spend a lot of time making sure they have filled it out correctly and answered the questions appropriately," said Annette.

Annette also commented that students are then very excited about the actual Awards Ceremony because the nominated students don't know whether they have won or not beforehand. Annette said that, "unlike some other awards, students nominated for an Applied Learning Award don't know in advance whether they have won, making it a night of much excitement."

After the Awards the Firbank Grammar Principals were really pleased and excited to announce a student win amongst the staff and student community. Annette also said that Applied Learning Awards successes are shared more widely through their school newsletter, at school assemblies and at parent information nights.

Annette feels that "increasingly people in the community are realising that applied learning is something that helps you to gain specific and generic employability skills and the Applied Learning Awards are an important vehicle for spreading this message".

In reflecting on specific highlights and outcomes that the Awards have delivered within the Firbank Grammar community Annette related the story of one student who was nominated for, but didn't win, an Applied Learning Award. However, this student used her Award nomination form content to apply for a tertiary scholarship which she then won. Annette and this student felt that one of the reasons she received her scholarship was because the Applied Learning Awards process helped to "increase her knowledge and personal confidence".

Annette also remarked on the Awards Ceremony saying that "it's a very prestigious night and it's this, and the high caliber of guest speakers, that is commented upon by the Firbank students and families each year".

Annette warmly thanked the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect in saying that "offering the Applied Learning Awards to our local community, and raising the bar every year, has been a lot of hard work and you should be congratulated for this effort".

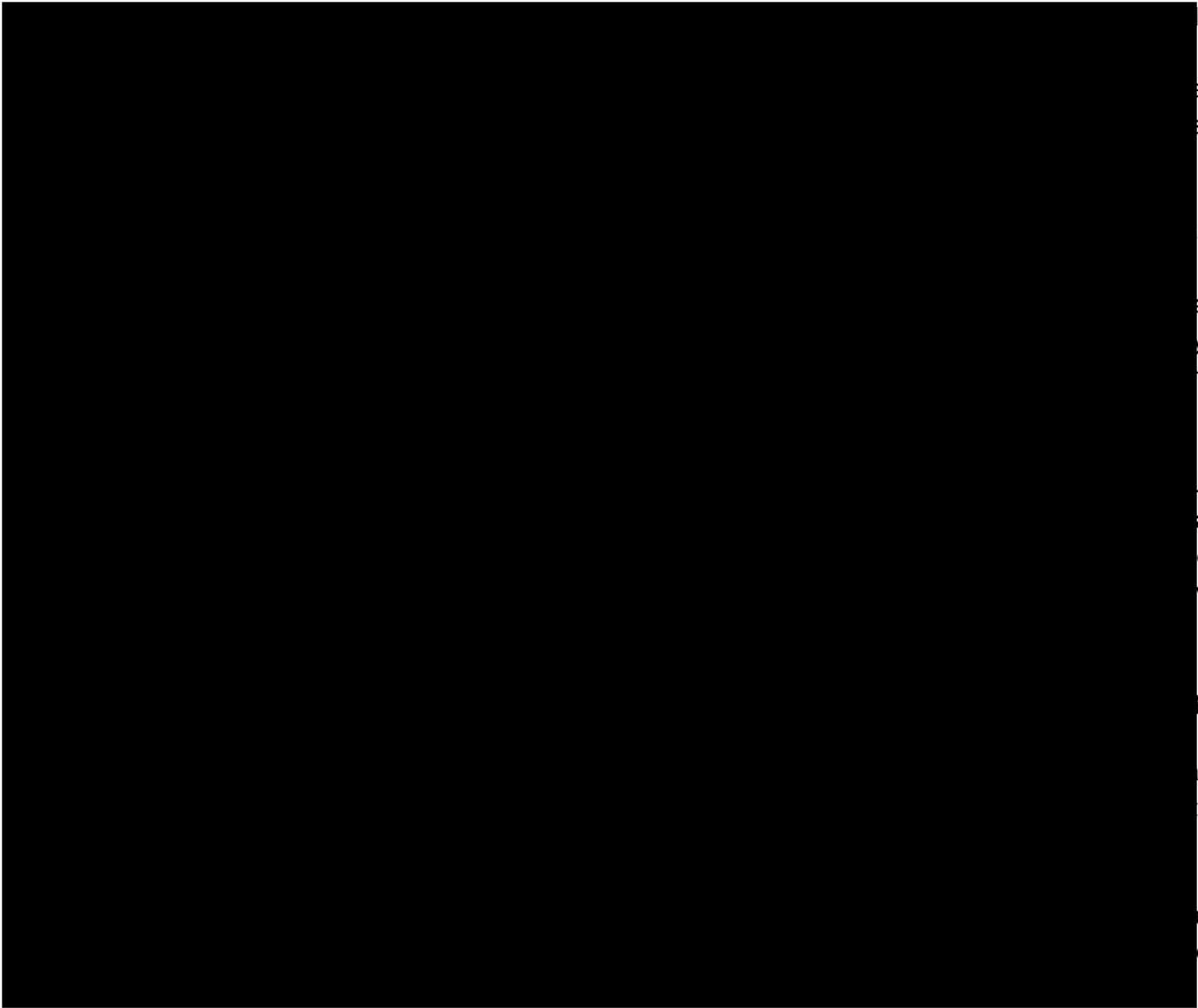


emic and

employment  
ect with

seeing the  
a number

ve a huge  
ake part  
nning an



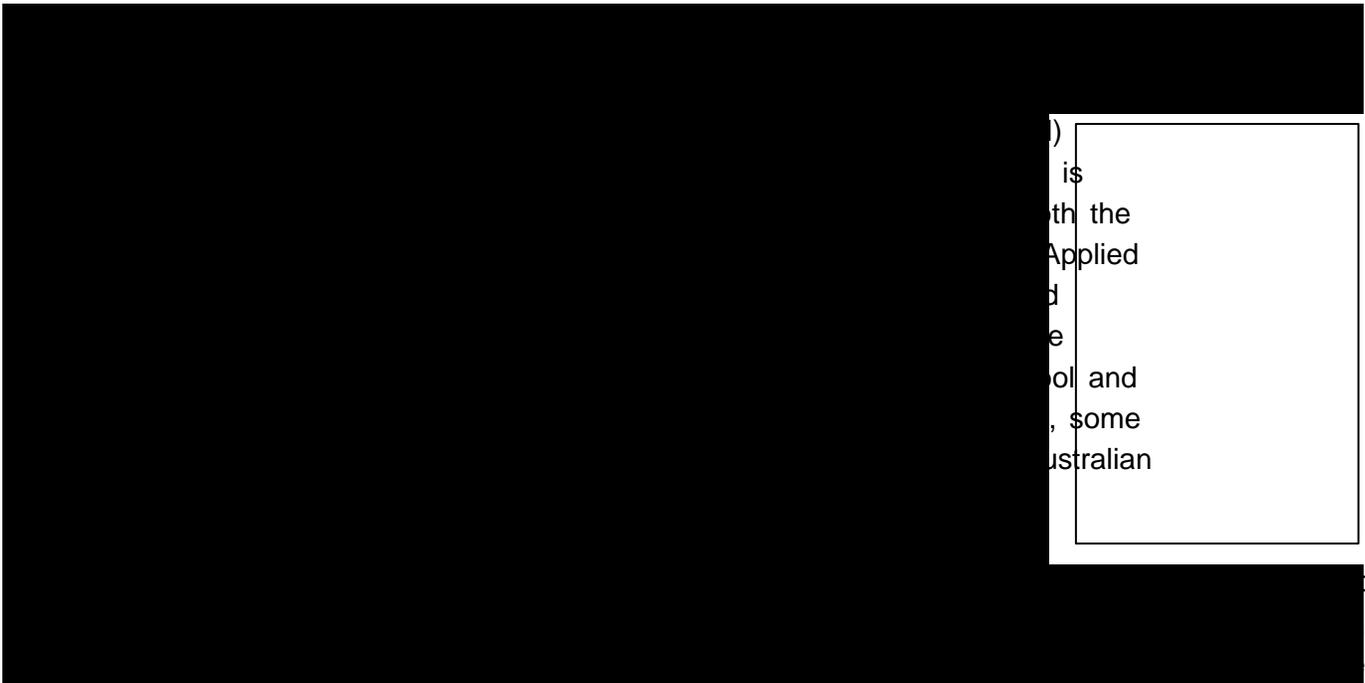
l Seconda  
profile of  
ess as it  
ses young

status of  
be  
arning  
ys  
ng pad to

an award  
en  
way really

ipient of a  
that "the  
ve  
into

to  
ey come



)  
is  
th the  
Applied  
d  
e  
ol and  
, some  
ustralian

ovision of  
arning for  
nt senior

of students

and

the

newspaper to

of

think that

ed.

ication to

because

gone on

ar.

ddition to

uch

t

ning

building

BGK

e for five  
within

xia feels

f

e them

dging is

ds

e

t

se Awards

D

about our

inaugural winner of the

d Award

when she

ed

ed in her

## 5. Public and Social Policy Linkages

The Applied Learning Awards demonstrate alignment or connectivity with a number of state and federal public policies and programs applicable between the period 2009-2013. Since 2014 some of these policies and programs, predominately federal ones, have been identified as ones that may be modified or eliminated. However, at the time of this report being prepared, final decisions regarding some of these policies are still under parliamentary review.

The Applied Learning Awards align with some of the practical and systemic goals and outcomes outlined in the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, a federal policy which “aims to increase the educational engagement and attainment of young people and to improve their transition to post school education, training and employment through immediate, concerted action supported by broader long term reform” (DEEWR2010).

The Applied Learning Awards also align and support the objectives of both the ‘School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program’ and the ‘Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions’ initiative, both of which call for increasing opportunities for young people to engage in broader education provision through a mix of academic and vocational learning pathways, and identify school and business partnerships as one mechanism for achieving this. The Applied Learning Awards recognise the critical role that organisations and individuals play in enhancing young people’s opportunity to engage with challenging, stimulating and diverse learning outside the classroom; all of which are seen as key ingredients in helping to increase student learning engagement and ultimately education attainment.

The Applied Learning Awards also recognise education and training programs that have the capacity to contribute to increasing education attainment at the local level. In addition, the Awards also provide teachers and trainers with a forum to promote their own professional successes and outcomes, something that is not often recognised within Australia or locally.

### 5.1 National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions

In 2009 The Council of Australian Governments (COAG), through the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, identified the achievement of a number of high-level outcomes as key to boosting Australia’s participation and productivity. The outcomes were summarised in the BGK LLEN’s ‘2013 Regional Scan’:

- x all children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling
- x young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving
- x schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially indigenous children
- x Australian students excel by international standards
- x young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study (Watts 2016).

In addition to the high level targets, each State and Territory also has individual implementation plans which are supported through federal funding arrangements. The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions informs the establishment of specific programs and initiatives, some of which specifically support and encourage applied learning provision and school-business-community involvement in student development, academic education and applied learning development.

## 5.2 Youth Attainment and Transitions Programs

As part of this National Partnership a number of programs and initiatives, aimed at advancing the outcomes high level noted above were launched in January 2010:

- x 'Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions' initiative to support the implementation of reforms in the areas of multiple learning pathways; career development and mentoring
- x 'School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program' to build community capacity and infrastructure and improve community and business engagement with schools to extend learning beyond the classroom, increase student engagement, deepen learning experiences, lift attainment and improve educational outcomes
- x 'Youth Connections Program' to provide an improved safety net for young people at risk
- x 'National Career Development' initiative to include development of national level resources for the benefit of all jurisdictions.

The Applied Learning Awards most closely aligns with the objectives of both the 'School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program' and the 'Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions' initiatives. Amongst other things, both of these policies specifically call for increasing opportunities for young people to engage in broader education provision through a mix of academic and vocational learning pathways, and identify school and business partnerships as a mechanism for achieving this. The Applied Learning Awards recognise the outcomes of students engaging in applied learning that sits within an academic and/or a vocational school pathway, while simultaneously recognizing the critical role that schools, teachers and trainers play in supporting students' applied learnings. Furthermore, the Applied Learning Awards also recognise and promote the important role that employers play in supporting student on-the-job training and building genuine business school partnerships.

Within Victoria the 'Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions' initiative has led to the funding of the 'Workplace Learning Coordinator' program which is locally delivered by Youth Connect Workplace Learning Coordinators are funded to increase workplace based learning experiences for students, and in order to achieve this play a role in increasing VET participation rates, sourcing Structured Workplace Learning placements (directly connected to the student's VET Certificate training), sourcing work experience placements and supporting SBATs (School Based Apprenticeships and Internships) placements with local businesses.

The 'School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program' initiative contributes to the development of Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) funding in Victoria. The BGK LLEN is funded under this arrangement with a local objective to facilitate stakeholder engagement, build community capacity and infrastructure and drive the government's education reform and social inclusion agenda. One aspect of the BGK LLEN's strategic planning is "Strategic Goal 3, Pathways: Expand the number and quality of school and business / industry partnerships that enhance the learning, social, economic and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people aged 15 years in the Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston region. Within this Goal, the BGK LLEN is to build stronger strategic relationships with local business and industry in an effort to increase their involvement in applied learning partnerships with education and training providers while simultaneously influencing regional momentum in career development of young people by supporting industry and education stakeholder groups. These strategic objectives evidence the BGK LLEN's commitment to enhancing applied learning in the local community, a goal that the annual Applied Learning Awards contributes to.

It is important to note, however, that funding for both the Partnership Broker (LLEN) and the Workplace Learning Coordinators (WLC) programs is only committed until December 2011 with no guarantee of ongoing funding for

either program beyond this date. Loss of funding for either or both of these programs would significantly affect the likelihood of future Applied Learning Awards delivery.

### 5.3 Supporting Business School Connections

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions strongly identified the role that business can, and should, play in young people’s successful move into sustainable training and employment. The policy also acknowledged that this could be enhanced through the development of strong partnerships between businesses and schools.

Undoubtedly, the Applied Learning Awards are a successful demonstration of partnership development between numerous schools and numerous businesses, who collaboratively share a mutual aim of enhancing young people’s education, training and employment outcomes. Some are direct partnerships (such as the partnerships highlighted in the ‘School Business Partnership Award’) while others are less direct in that a business provides work experience to one or more students from a school, a business employs an SBAT student or a Group Training Organisation works collaboratively with a school to source SBAT opportunities for multiple students. Sponsorship from businesses that support applied learning also evidence indirect commitment to successful youth outcomes. These are but a few of the school-business partnerships identified and recognised via the Applied Learning Awards.

Without the Applied Learning Awards, made feasible by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect as the local Partnership Broker and Workplace Learning Coordinator, many of these partnerships and genuine business partnerships and commitments would go largely unnoticed.

### 5.4 Federal and State Attainment

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions clarifies roles and responsibilities between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories and was established to contribute to the achievement of a national Year 12 or equivalent (e.g. Certificate II level qualification or above) attainment rate of 90 per cent by 2015.

Depending on Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates already achieved in each State in Territory at the time of signing the National Partnership with the Commonwealth, each jurisdiction has differing target rates to be achieved by 2015.

Australian Capital Territory	95.0per cent
New South Wales	89.2per cent
Northern Territory	71.6per cent
Queensland	92.5per cent
South Australia	84.7per cent
Tasmania	81.6per cent
Victoria	92.6per cent
WesternAustralia	86.2per cent

Source: Ministerial Council for Federal Financial Arrangements

While the Applied Learning Awards won’t, on its own, make a significant contribution to States and Territories achieving their attainment targets, increasing the opportunities for applied learning participation by students will play a role in increasing young people’s engagement with learning and attainment of higher levels of school

education. Indeed, the increasing levels of young people participating in VETiS, SBAT and VCA, and greater cognisance by local educators as to the important role of such programs, has the capacity to lead to a shifting local education paradigm which recognises the importance of broad and flexible learning provision.

## 5.5 Recognition of Teacher Excellence

In recent years there has been considerable discussion about the critical role that teachers play in educating and developing students, and therefore the need for new models of rewarding quality teaching. A number of policy approaches have been proposed with many of these, particularly the sensitive matters such as performance and bonus payments, still being debated.

Research reports and policy statements from a range of agencies and peak associations identify to recognise and reward teachers who are contributing to excellence student outcomes (within the context in which they teach); contributing to teaching innovation; undertaking professional development; and, receiving positive reviews in meaningful performance evaluation. Indeed, in the 2008 OECD Report [Teaching and Learning International Survey \(TALIS\)](#), only 25 per cent of Australian teacher respondents indicated that they received any public recognition for their positive appraisal and feedback.

Within the Australian Government context, recognition of Australian teachers is a policy area currently under discussion, particularly in relation to the [Conski Review](#), professional standards, performance pay and other matters. Recognition is promoted at both federal and state levels via competitive Excellence Awards. The Australian Government funds the annual 'Australian Awards for Outstanding Teaching and School Leadership' program, awards open to all primary and secondary teachers. The Victorian Government also funds an annual 'Victorian Teacher/Trainer of the Year Award' which is more specifically linked to applied learning and seeking applications from those professionals offering training to students at a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or in partnership with an RTO.

This brief evaluation of teacher recognition indicates that Australian teachers do not generally receive public recognition for their outstanding contributions to student learning. There are also very few opportunities to seek state or national recognition through external / government bodies. The need to recognise and value the important role that teachers play in contributing to the development of young people is important. The Applied Learning Awards provide a forum for encouraging teachers and trainees to self-evaluate their performance and contribution to their profession. Because these applications are assessed and evaluated by external educators the Applied Learning Awards are ones that are independently peer reviewed and evaluated. At a local community level it allows for these applicant teachers and trainers to be publicly recognised for their contributions and further promotes the critical role that educators play in our community.

## 6. Awards Transference and Scalability

The Applied Learning Awards is demonstrative of a mechanism that not only promotes, validates and celebrates applied learning excellence across a range of stakeholder groups, but it is also one that is aligned against some state and federal policy agendas.

The model that underpins the Applied Learning Awards is one that easily lends itself to both scalability and transference. From a scalability perspective, the Applied Learning Awards have demonstrated a capacity to grow to meet identified needs, such as the introduction of new award categories. The Awards recognise and seek to celebrate success across a diverse range of applied learning actors, individual and organisational categories that are not confined to our region but also critical applied learning contributors across Victoria (and indeed Australia). The underpinning philosophy, partnership approach and adaptable guidelines could easily facilitate expansion of the existing Applied Learning Awards into other regions (thus building a much larger opportunity and system). Alternatively, the model and approach could be used by organisations and partnership networks in other regions to initiate their own place-based Applied Learning Awards (or similar) program.

Transference and scalability of the Applied Learning Awards could be achieved in a couple of ways. Firstly, the Awards could be expanded by the BGK LLEN / Youth Connect to enable them from other regions thus are expanding the geographic footprint of the existing project. Another means of achieving expansion would be to support other organisations or partnership networks in other regions to utilise the expertise and resources developed over time by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect, to build their own place-based Awards project. Regardless, any transfer or sale of the model would align with the philosophy that guides our Applied Learning Awards by contributing to an even greater and wider appreciation and recognition of applied learning in society.

## 7. Project Implementation Model, Guide and Recommendations

The BGK Applied Learning Awards development and ongoing delivery has facilitated the development of a guide with process recommendations that could assist other organisations or partnerships to establish their own Applied Learning Awards (or similar) in their region. The following information outlines the approach taken when developing our Applied Learning Awards and recommendations for ensuring key planning aspects are considered if initiating a novel awards initiative.

### 7.1 Establish 'Awards Working Group' Partnership

At the beginning of the development of the Applied Learning Awards, the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect established a partnership network 'Working Group'. Members of this Working Group were sought from a range of areas related to applied learning and were able to share their sectoral and regional knowledge to assist in establishing and planning the first year of the awards. Planning meetings commenced one year prior to holding the first Awards Ceremony. Working Group representation included:

- x Australian Apprenticeship Centre / Group Training Organisation (MEGT)
- x Education Department (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)
- x Industry- (Australian Industry Group)
- x Registered Training Organisation (Holmesglen TAFE)
- x Secondary School with considerable applied learning offering (Sandringham College)

From the outset it became clear that a platform with which to recognise and celebrate regional applied learning achievements would be supported by the sectors represented within the Working Group. The Working Group was disbanded after the first year, once the model and structure was clearly established.

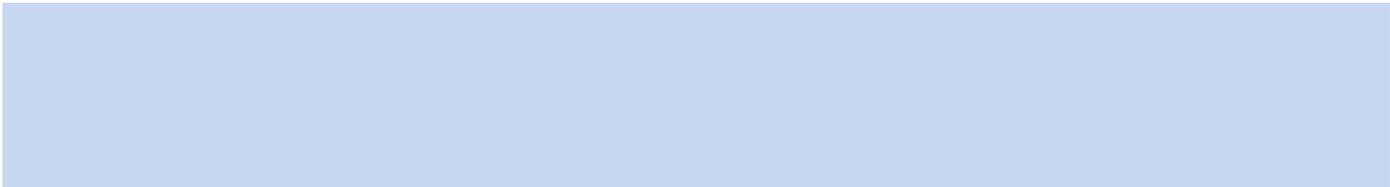
Ongoing development, from the 2010 Awards year has been the sole responsibility of the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect. However, when any significant changes have been made to the model we have generally sought feedback from external individuals / organisations such as those who were part of the first Working Party.

### 7.2 Identify Awards Purpose and Mission

Establishing a partnership with wide sectoral representation facilitated the development of a common philosophy and purpose. The first meeting of the Working Group led to the purpose statement below:

"The purpose of the Applied Learning Awards is to showcase industry involvement, celebrate young people's achievements, recognise young people who have overcome barriers, give equal standing to applied learning as is given to academic studies, enhance the standing of applied learning in the community, promote school achievements and best practice publicly, and ensure that the awards are open and transparent."

This philosophy and purpose underpinned the planning of the first Applied Learning Awards, and it has also been the guiding statement which has driven the Awards since its establishment.



is still in

### 7.3 Identify Award Categories

The awards offered in the Applied Learning Awards reflect the needs and interests of the Bayside Glen Eira and Kingston region and in light of this there have been amendments and updates to awards over the years.

When the Applied Learning Awards were established in 2009, there were only four category areas:

- x Students- VETiS, SBAT and VCAL awards
- x Schools / Education Providers- VETiS Access, VETiS Delivery, VCAL, Community Champion School / Education Provider
- x Employers- VETiS, SBAT, SWL, GTO and Champion Employer

In 2011, two teacher/trainer awards were added:

- x VETiS teacher / trainer
- x VCAL teacher / trainer.

In 2012 a new student award the 'Applied Learning Student of the Year Award' was introduced to recognise an outstanding applied learner who also demonstrates outstanding community participation and leadership.

In 2013, a new award was launched for those personnel who coordinate or support applied learning in their school or organisation. The Jenny Marks Memorial Award for Applied Learning Coordination and Support' offered in recognition of the critical role that such staff play in ensuring that programs offered to students are of a high quality and standard. This award also recognises the considerable administration, management and innovation that coordination and support persons undertake in ensuring students receive access to programs that meet student and industry pathway needs.

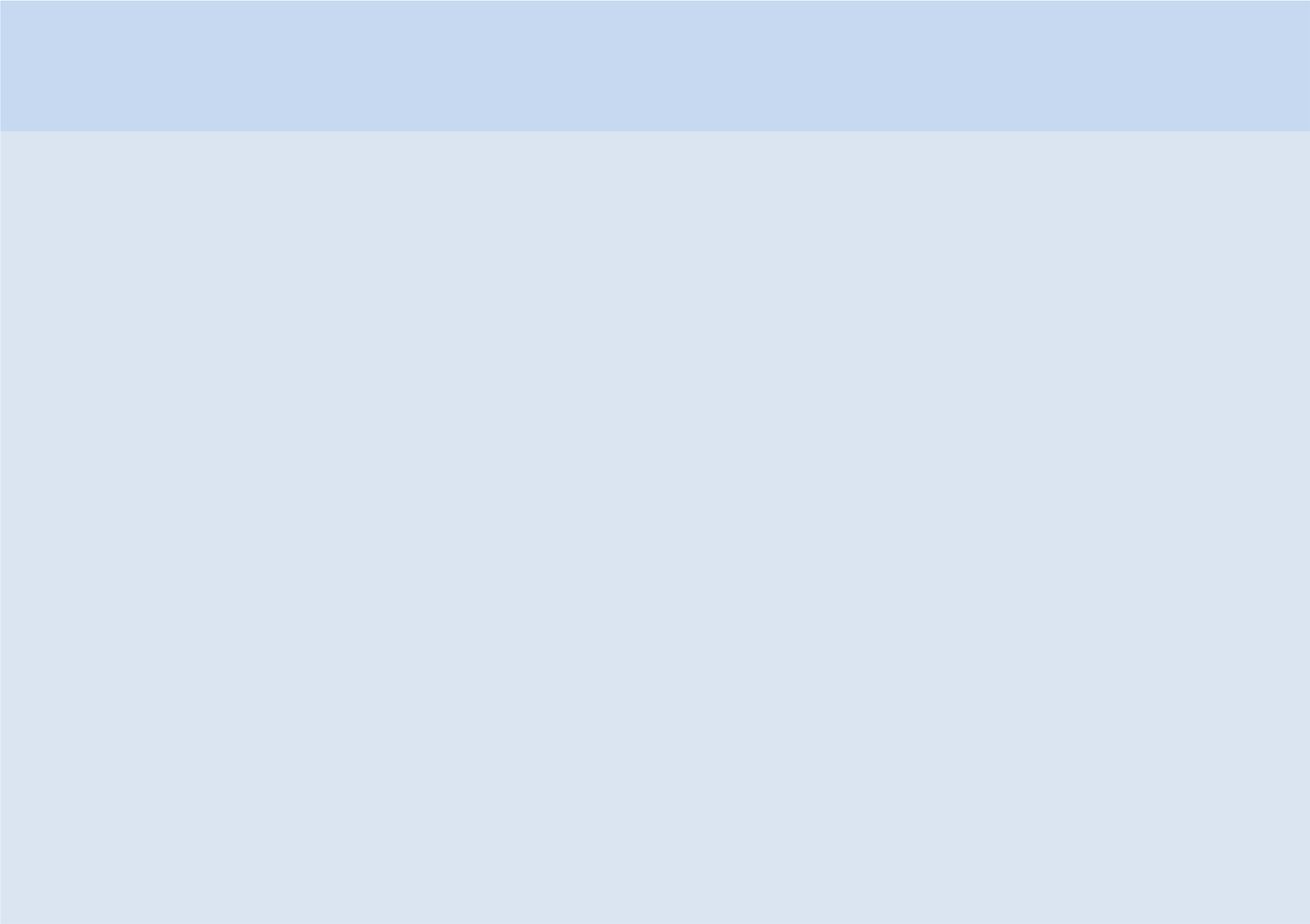
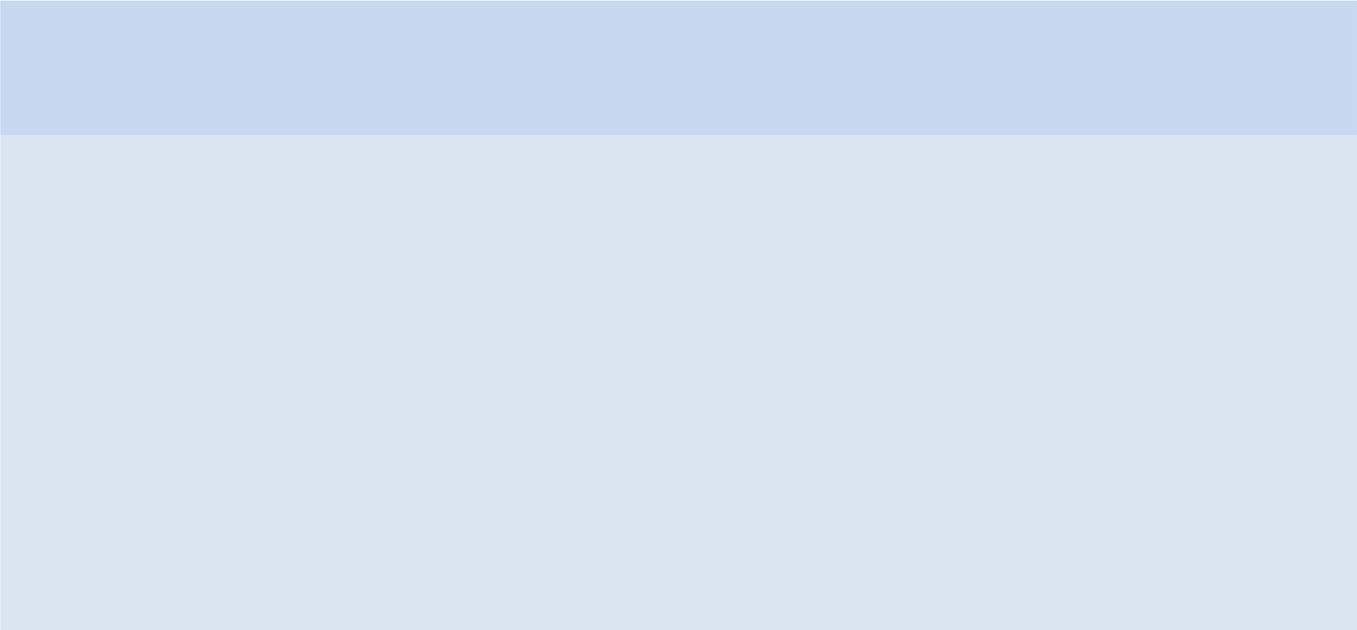


with the  
learning

### 7.4 Conduct Financial Budgeting and Project Planning

In the first year of the Awards, both the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect agreed to underwrite the financial cost with a commitment to source sponsorship to offset costs. However, because this was a new initiative, it was impossible to ascertain whether sponsorship would be sourced and, if so, to what level. Over the years, the level of sponsorship has increased but each year both organisations commit a minimum contribution to ensure that

the Awards will be delivered that year. This financial commitment does not include the in-kind contribution made by each organisation. A list of financial and in-kind costed activities are listed below



### 7.5 SourceIndependentJudges

As per the philosophy underpinning the Awards, the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect have maintained a commitment to ensuring that the Awards are independent and transparent. A particularly important way of ensuring this has been the use of independent and knowledgeable Judges. Judges are separated into panels as a way of evenly distributing the workload and attaching groups of nomination categories to Judges with particular knowledge/expertise.

Since the inception of the Awards the number of judges has grown from five to nine members. The composition changes annually to reflect availability of past members, added award categories and to ensure that the Judging Panel accurately reflects the range of applied learning sectors. The judges willingly volunteer their time to undertake this role, making it critical that the judging process is managed professionally and effectively.

### 7.6 DevelopResources(marketing, forms, sponsorship and event)

The BGK LLEN and Youth Connect have developed a range of key resources since the Awards were established. These resources are amended each year to reflect annual modifications or information updates. The key resources are categorised into marketing collateral guidelines, nominations, judging sponsorship and event.

#### Marketing Collateral

A professional designer was utilised to prepare the Awards logo. Two versions are a generic logo and one that also includes the word 'winner' for use on plaques and certificates. Two banners have also been produced and are used at the event from promotional purposes and to be included in professional photos taken at the event. The logo is slightly amended annually to also include the year in the logo.

#### 'Awards Guidelines'

The Awards Guidelines outline the rationale behind the Awards and define applied learning as per each category area (including conditions of entry, nomination process, nomination steps) describe the judging

process outline the Awards Ceremony, present key dates and include contact details for further information. This document is distributed widely prior to the nominations going live.

#### 'Nomination Forms'

The Nomination Forms are prepared for each of the categories: student, school / education provider, teacher / trainer, coordinator / support person and employer. The forms are versions that can be completed directly into the PDF form which can then be saved and returned as per the designated process. Within each form, respondents are asked to identify which award they are applying for, respond to quantitative and qualitative questions and are also asked to supply referees. The student Nomination Form differs slightly as students cannot nominate themselves but are nominated by teacher, trainer or employer initially after which the student then completes the qualitative questions requested in the remainder of the form. A number of questions in each form have 'drop boxes' and 'tickboxes' to make completion easier.

#### 'Judging Criteria Forms'

The Judging Criteria Forms are distributed to each judge prior to their adjudication meeting, as part of their Judging Pack. The Criteria Forms provides a brief outline about organisational applicants, outline the judging process, outline the scoring per question and encourage review of Nomination Forms prior to the adjudication meeting.

#### 'Sponsorship Pack'

The Sponsorship Pack contains: an introductory invitation letter which describes the purpose and value of the Awards; a description of the benefits of sponsoring; lists the various sponsorship types available; and, the sponsorship tax invoice form whereby sponsors identify what areas they wish to sponsor and to what level.

#### Event Documents

A number of event documents are prepared, including:

- x Certificates of Nomination - all nominees who do not win an award receive a Certificate of Nomination (distributed at the event) that is prepared by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect. This Certificate contains details about the Award nominated for, has the Award logo, BGK LLEN and Youth Connect logos, Platinum sponsor logo and individual award sponsor logo
- x Certificate of Award (students only) - all students who win an award receive an Award Certificate (distributed at the event) that is prepared by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect. This Certificate contains details about the Award nominated for, has the Award logo, BGK LLEN and Youth Connect logos, Platinum sponsor logo and individual award sponsor logo
- x Event Guide - a handbook is professionally printed which outlines the order of events, lists sponsors and provides a brief description of the Awards' purpose
- x Registration Form - attendees are required to RSVP and sign on arrival at the event
- x Various documents - various documents used at the event include: signage, event survey, email collection for follow-up research

in the  
by those

## 7.7 Market and Promote the Awards

When the Awards were first established, the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect engaged in a range of marketing and promotional activities. Prior to any promotional activity, a professional designer was recruited to design a logo for the Awards that reflected the philosophy and brand of the Awards. Preparation of a logo also reflected that the Awards, whilst facilitated by the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect, do belong to the community (sponsors, judges, working party members, nominees etc). Once a logo was decided upon, this logo was then used in all marketing and promotional materials and proved an ideal way of building a brand for the Awards.

Before communication materials were prepared, the Awards Guidelines had been prepared. This ensured that all marketing and promotion of the Awards was 'on message', that key dates had been confirmed and details about the Award Ceremony could be outlined. Audiences are reminded of dates that Nomination Forms will be released and closed. Brief information communications were prepared and distributed via stakeholder channels, at regional meetings and events, and through organisational newsletters and communiqués.

## 7.8 Source sponsorship

The BGK LLEN and Youth Connect sourced sponsorship in the inaugural year of the Awards, however the level of sponsorship was not as significant as it is in its fifth year. Because neither organisation could anticipate the level of sponsorship in the first year, both organisations committed to underwrite the costs of the first year in the event no sponsorship was sought. Both organisations still commit a financial contribution each year, however it now receives more sponsorship to offset their annual contributions. It is important to note that financial contributions from both organisations still make up the largest proportion of annual funding to the Awards.

Prior to promoting sponsorship opportunities a detailed 'Sponsorship Pack' is prepared each year. The Package outlines the value and benefit of sponsoring, the range of sponsorship opportunities and a tax application form. The 'Sponsorship Pack' is promoted via stakeholder channels, at regional meetings and events, and through organisational newsletters and communiqués.

## 7.9 Administer Nominations and Applications

The BGK LLEN is responsible for receiving and administering all nomination forms and disseminating these to the Judging Panel members. Nomination Forms are prepared as 'writeable' PDFs. Nominators can write content into the form and save as are preparing their form. Nominators can then return the completed PDF form electronically via email. Each year the form is reviewed and updated to reflect any changes or modifications identified by Youth Connect and the BGK LLEN.

The BGK LLEN receives completed forms and confidentially saves each electronically and hardcopy versions. As each nomination is reviewed, the BGK LLEN checks over each to ensure that no critical information (name of applicant, award category area) has been omitted. If such mistakes are found the BGK LLEN then contacts the nominator to source the required information. Once the nomination period has closed the BGK LLEN then collates all the nominations and creates the 'Judging Packs' which contain the relevant nominations per Judge, criteria judging sheets, judging instruction and details about the adjudication process. Gifts per Judge are also purchased for presentation at the Judging Panel adjudication meeting.

## 7.10 Plan and Conduct the Awards Ceremony Event

From the outset, both the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect were committed to conducting a very professional Awards Ceremony that would inspire all attendees. The first Ceremony was held in the function room of a local Golf Club, incorporating a cocktail style event with theatre style seating during the Awards Ceremony. Over the past five years the Awards have been held in golf clubs and at a reception centre.

The planning of the event includes a range of activities including:

- x Invitations and RSVPs. Sending invitations to all nominees, VIPs, sponsors, school leadership staff and Judges. Once RSVPs are received this is communicated to the venue and a registration list for the evening is prepared
- x Catering and venue preparation. Liaise with the venue finalise food and beverage choices, confirm attendee numbers, finalise room setup, confirm audio visual requirements
- x Prepare the Masters of Ceremony (MC) Script. The MC responsibilities are shared between the CEOs of both the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect. The MCs introduce the nominees and award winners, acknowledge sponsors and VIPs, introduce Judges, introduce guest speakers. The preparation of the script takes place after the judging has been conducted
- x Prepare powerpoint presentation. A powerpoint presentation is prepared and used at the Event to introduce the MCs, guest speakers, sponsors and judges. The powerpoint presentation also includes details about the winner, which is only shown as that winner is announced. In addition, a full list of all nominees is also detailed on a number of powerpoint pages.

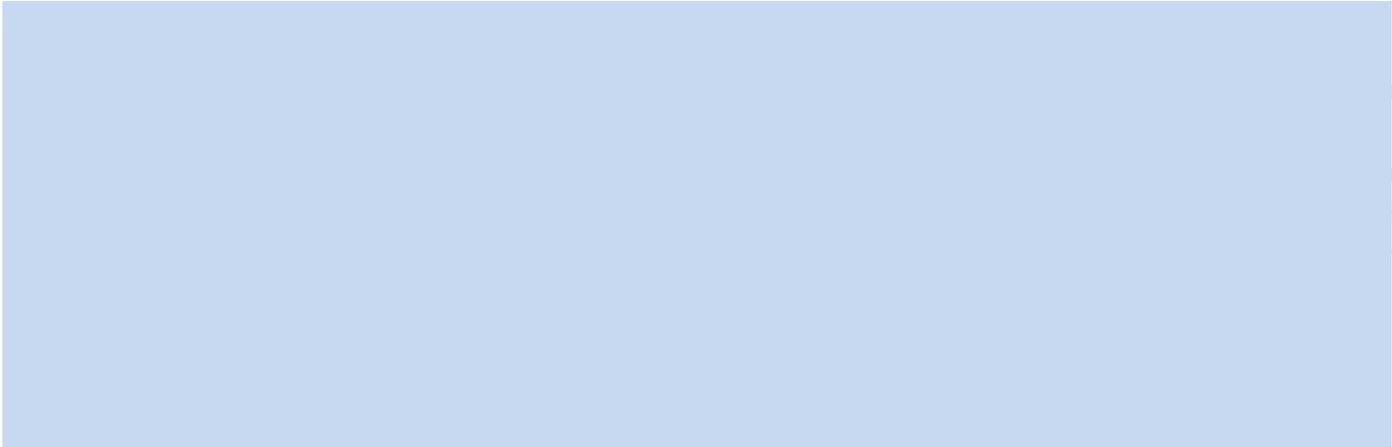
- x Prepare plaques and certificates. Finalise content for award winner plaques (schools, education providers, teachers / trainers, employers, sponsors) and liaise with printer. Prepare and print internal Certificates for all nominees and student award winners
- x Prepare and print event handbook. Finalise content for event handbook (contains event timeline, name list, sponsor logos) and arrange for professional printing
- x Purchase student award gifts. Student award winners receive a \$100 gift card
- x Purchase guest speaker gifts. Kind guest speakers receive a gift
- x Arrange sponsor displays. Sponsors are offered the opportunity to display banners or promotional materials (different levels of sponsorship entitle different display opportunities). Sponsor displays are coordinated individually with sponsor organisations
- x Coordinate Photography. All nominees and winners are individually photographed with their certificate or plaque. In addition, photographs of the event more widely taken.
- x Staff briefing. All BGK LLEN and Youth Connect receive a project plan and briefing prior to the event and an allocated specific jobs at the event. e.g. registration table, car parking attendant, seating assistant etc)



Awards  
 e final  
 critical

### 7.11 Prepare a Media and Promotions Plan

A 'Media and Promotions Plan' has been utilised to each year to ensure that the event is promoted and the greatest opportunity for media recognition achieved. The Plan allows for the preparation and distribution of Media Alerts and Media Releases. Outlets such as metropolitan media, local media, industry bodies, education and applied learning bodies, government bodies and other relevant organisations are communicated with prior to the event and after the event.



dy  
 however,  
 tent of

## 7.12 Conduct Evaluation and Research

Until 2012, the BGK LLEN and Youth Connect did not formally evaluate and conduct research into the Applied Learning Awards. Increasing levels of interest in the Awards, in terms of nominations and sponsorship levels and attendance at the Awards Ceremony were seen as positive reflections of the success of the project. Anecdotally, we were also made aware by stakeholders that the Awards were filling a gap in our community and contributing to improved support and recognition of Applied Learning. On reflection, both organisations agree that it would have been useful to formally evaluate the project annually to continue to ensure we were meeting our stakeholders' needs and make adjustments to the content and processes to reflect feedback.

nity  
and  
,

## 8. Conclusion

The Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston's regional Applied Learning Awards has demonstrated success on multiple levels. From the inaugural Awards year in 2009, the Applied Learning Awards has grown in awareness, participation and representation from the community and education sectors.

What this report has highlighted is that there has been significant positive impacts toward recipients (students, schools, teachers, trainers, coordinators and employers), increasing levels of community interest and awareness (through sponsorship, volunteer judging and media), educational recognition (by becoming an intrinsic part of the school year, leadership support and internal celebrations) and business support (actively engaging students in employment and work experience).

This report has been able to identify the areas of success and opportunities for the Awards (past, present and future) as well as balance a range of incredible narratives from Awards recipients, teachers, employers and school leaders. Sustainability, sharing of good practice and regional growth were also purposes identified in the early stages of the Award's development and what this report has been able to also clearly outline the role and importance of holding awards to celebrate achievement in applied learning. In addition, this report has provided guidelines to facilitate replication of such an awards initiative in other regions.

The BGK LLEN and Youth Connect are incredibly proud to have invested significant time, resources and expertise into this region's Applied Learning Awards over the past five years and to have seen such important systemic changes across our region's education providers and community in relation to applied learning. We look forward to the Awards continuing into the future and its continued growth and strengthening.

## 9. Bibliography

COAG Reform Council, 'National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions: Participation target assessment report', COAG Reform Council, 2011

Clayton. B, Lewanski. R, Pancini. G, Schutt. S, 2010, 'Enhancing the retention of young people to Year 12, especially through vocational skills', Australian College of Educators, 2010

Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 'National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions', DEEWR, 2010

Lamb, S. et al. 2004, 'Staying on at school: Improving student retention in Australia', Queensland Department of Education and the Arts.

Lamb, S and Rice, S. 2008, 'Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion', DEECD

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2008, 'Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments, Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)', OECD

Waugh, F. 2014, 'Regional Scan 2014', BGK LLEN

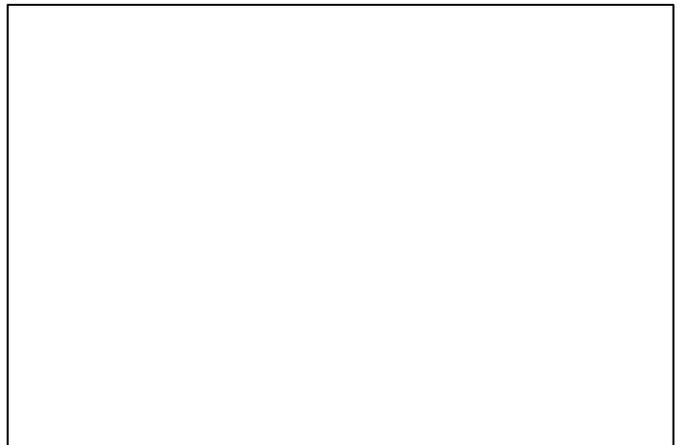
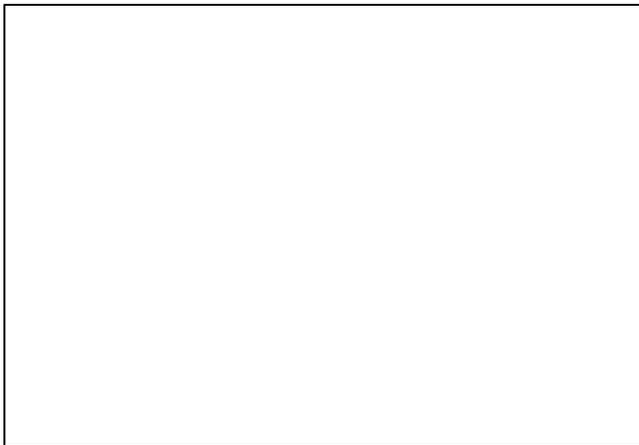
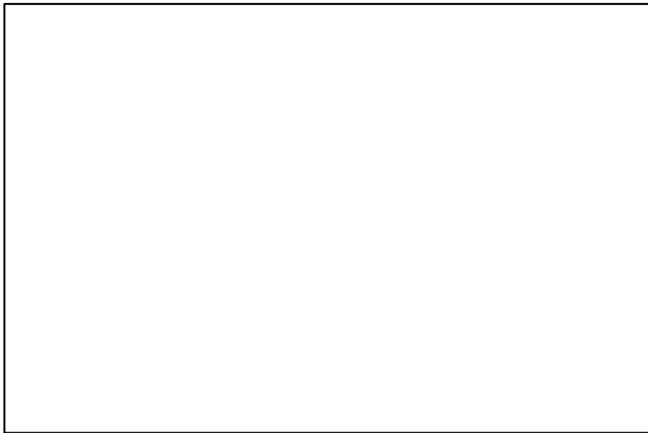
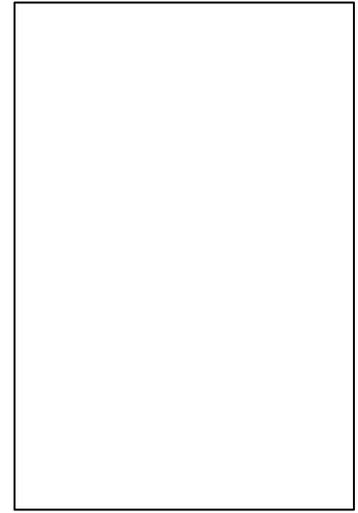
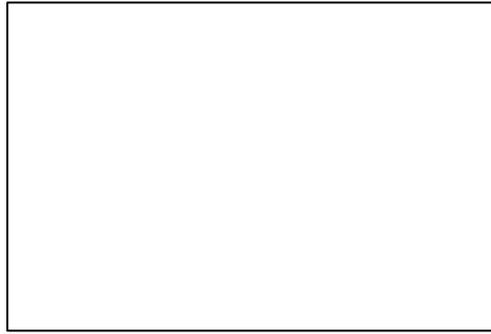
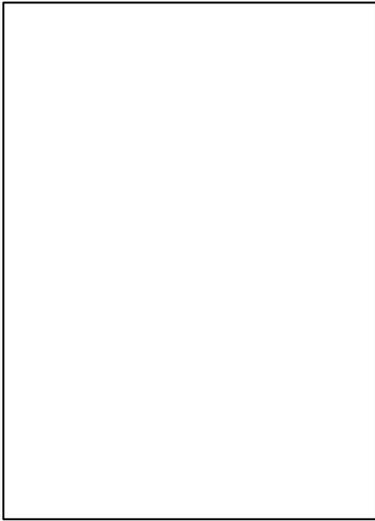
## Appendix 1: Sponsors (2009-2013)

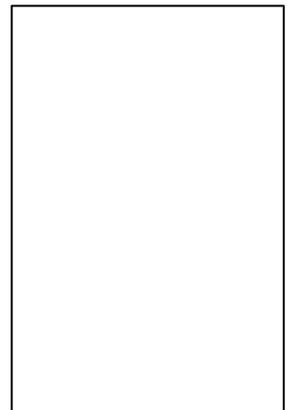
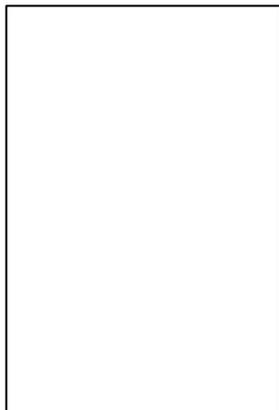
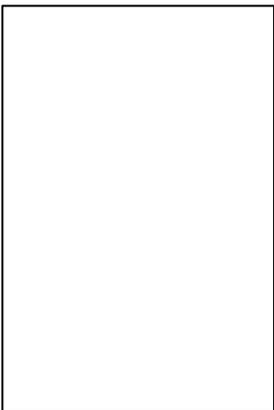
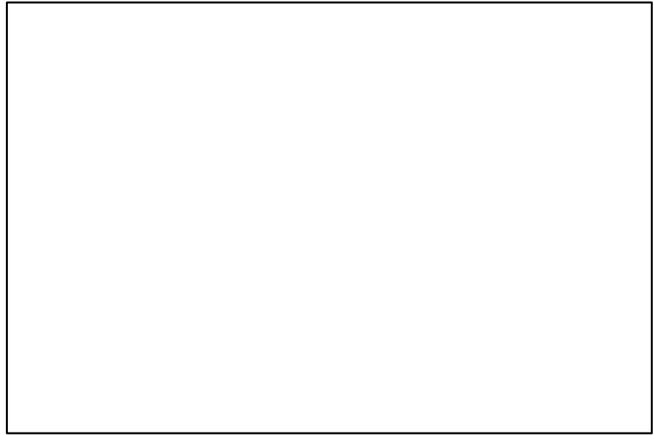
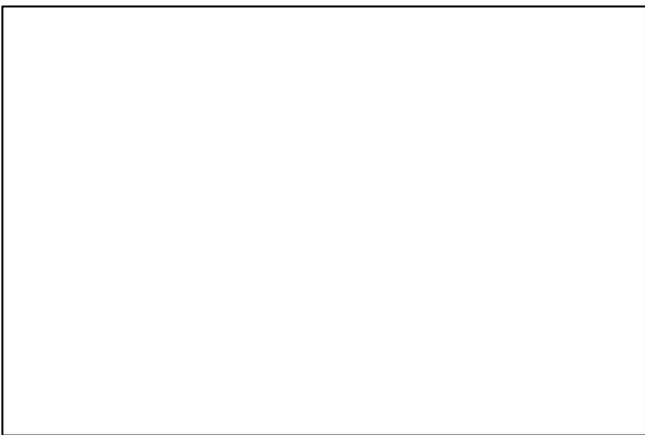
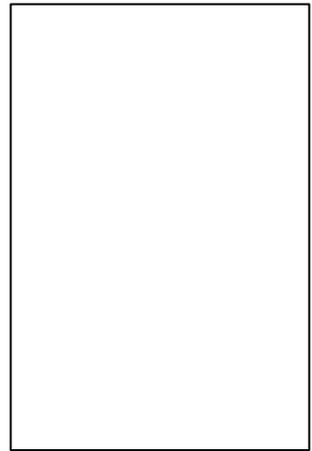
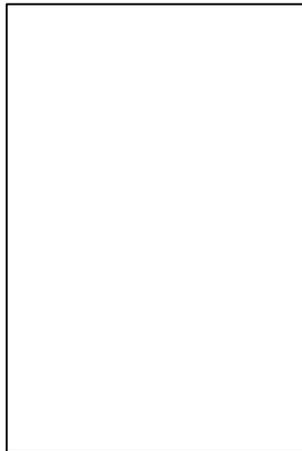
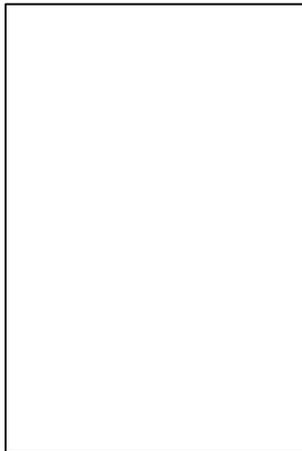
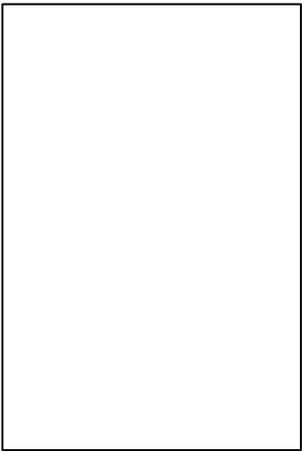
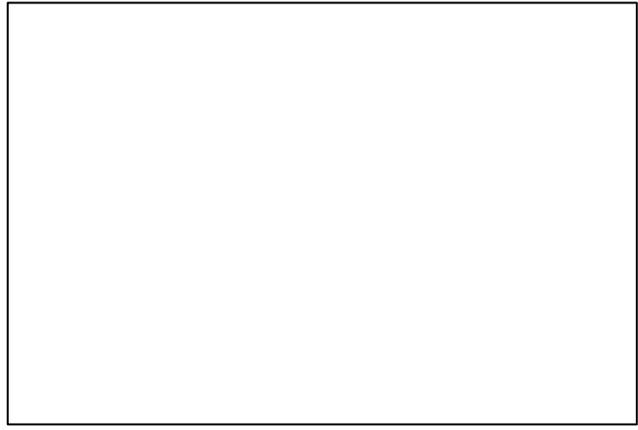
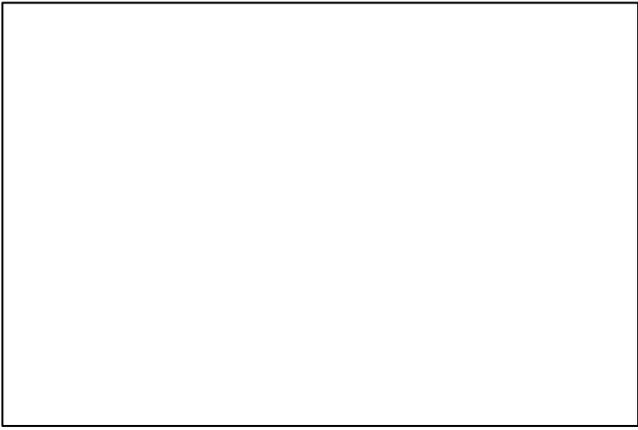
Platinum Sponsor	Bendigo Bank - Highett & East Malvern Community Bank Branches
Gold Sponsors	Apprenticeship and Traineeship Employment Partners (ATEP)
	Holmesglen
Individual Awards	Bayside City Council
	Careers in Manufacturing
	Community Services & Health Industry Training Board Inc (Victoria)
	My Freight Career
	Peter Norman Personnel
	Renoma Printery
Platinum Sponsor	Bentleigh Moorabbin Central Rotary Club
Gold Sponsor	Pow Wow Group
Silver Sponsors	Apprenticeship and Traineeship Employment Partners (ATEP)
	Bayside Business Network
	Simonds Homes and House of Learning
Individual Awards	AusDance
	ACFE Southern Metropolitan Region
	Atlite Skylights
	Bayside City Council Youth Services
	Chirag Tooling
	The Curry Club Richmond
	Eastlink
	Engineers Australia
	Highett Community Bank (Bendigo Bank)
	Local Business Network
	Nethena Training and Consulting
	Renoma Printery
	Women's Housing
Platinum Sponsor	Bentleigh Moorabbin Central Rotary Club
Gold Sponsor	Pow Wow Group
Silver Sponsors	Apprenticeship and Traineeship Employment Partners (ATEP)
	Highett Community Bank (Bendigo Bank)
Individual Awards	Bayside City Council Youth Services
	KanKlean
	Renoma Printery
	Victorian Applied Learning Association (VALA)
Major Sponsor	Highett Community Bank (Bendigo Bank)
Platinum Sponsors	Bentleigh Moorabbin Central Rotary Club
	SkillsPlus

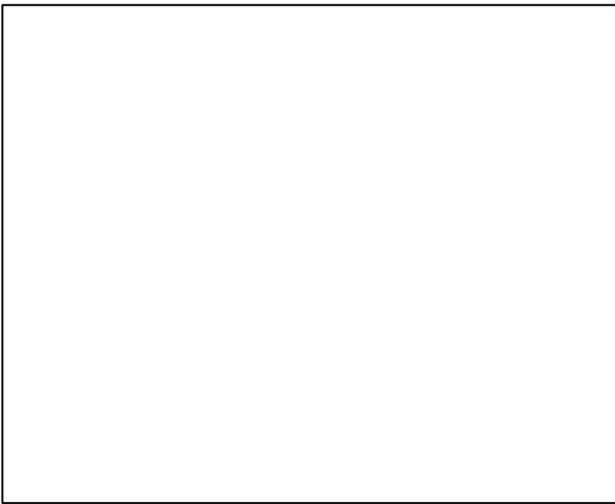
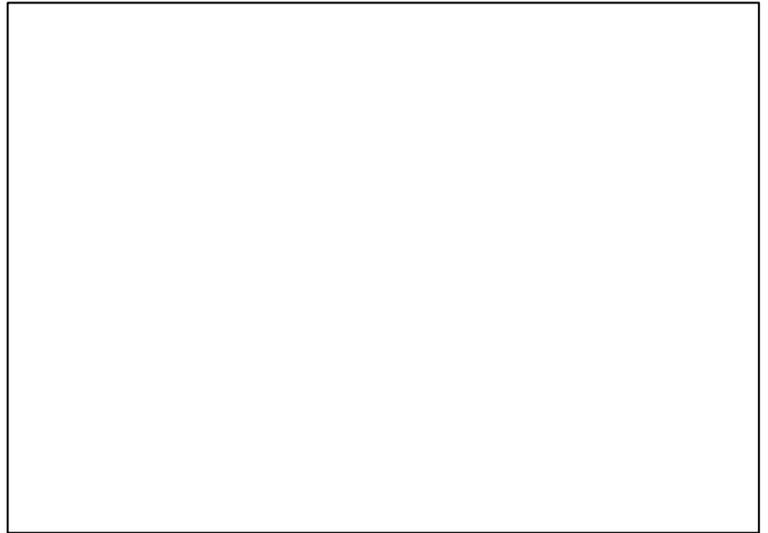
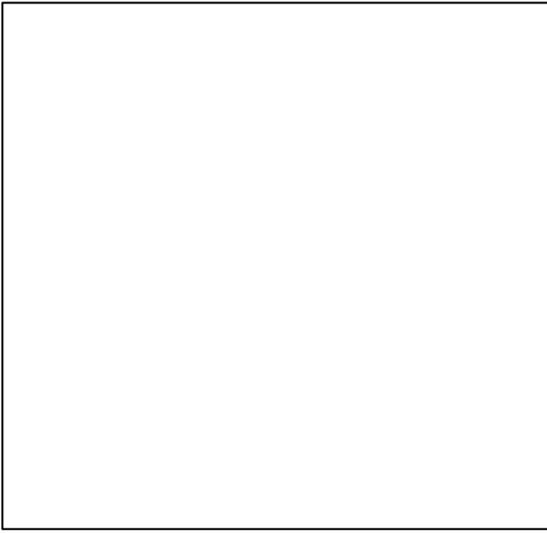
Gold Sponsor	Bayside City Council Youth Services
	PaperCut
	370 q
Major Sponsor	Highett Community Bank (Bendigo Bank)
Platinum Sponsor	MOIRA
Gold Sponsor	Chisholm Institute
	SkillsPlus
Silver Sponsors	City of Kingston
	Bentleigh Moorabbin Central Rotary Club
	Holmesglen
Bronze Sponsors	Daisy Dry Cleaning
	Hawker Brownlow Professional Learning Solutions
	Marriott Support Services
	TaskForce
Individual Awards	Apprenticeship and Traineeship Employment Partners (ATEP)
	Atlite Skylights
	Bayside City Council Youth Services
	Chicken Soup Computer Services
	PaperCut
	Sarina Russo Apprenticeships

NB. Each year we also receive a number of sponsorships from individuals who would like to remain anonymous

## Appendix 2: Award Ceremony Photos









**APPLIED LEARNING  
AWARDS**

BAYSIDE GLEN EIRA & KINGSTON REGION

# Applying the Learnings

A report reviewing the effectiveness  
of the Applied Learning Awards  
between 2009–2013

Author: Fiona Waugh, BGK LLEN