



DOXA YOUTH FOUNDATION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2011

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Background

The Doxa Youth Foundation (Doxa) is a philanthropic organisation formed in 1972 by Fr Joe Giacobbe with the support of a group of Melbourne business and professional people who shared a concern for disadvantaged young people.

Doxa believes that each individual is important and the community has a responsibility to ensure that every young person is given an opportunity to develop their full potential. Doxa's programs are targeted at giving special attention to the needs of disadvantaged young people where they are denied the opportunity for full participation in the community.

Doxa receives no direct Government funding and funds its programs through:

- financial contributions from the Doxa Social Club; and
- donations, bequests and sponsorships from Trusts, organisations and individuals.

This Strategic Plan sets out the directions for Doxa from 2008-2011.



Vision and Mission

The vision of Doxa is

To improve the life outcomes of disadvantaged young people.

The mission of Doxa is:

To create opportunities for disadvantaged young people
by
investing in education related programs that help them achieve their potential and meaningfully participate in the
community.

Young people include those aged up to 24 years, although emphasis is given to young people aged 10-18 years.

Objectives

The objectives of Doxa are to:

1. fund programs and direct service provision which contribute to disadvantaged young people becoming independent, confident and active members of the community;
2. work in partnership with schools, community organisations, business and government to leverage positive changes for disadvantaged young people at a broad level across Victoria;
3. advocate for policy changes and program enhancements which will enable disadvantaged young people to more fully participate in the community; and
4. take a leadership role in the promotion of knowledge and practice that is known to improve the life chances of disadvantaged young people.

Guiding Principles

In working towards its mission, Doxa is guided by the following principles:

- appreciating the potential of all young people and respecting their **values, rights and dignity**;
- understanding and valuing the **contribution of young people** in the planning and implementation of programs;
- accepting that some young people will need **more assistance** than others;
- acknowledging that **education** is a key foundation to help young people reach their full potential;
- fostering a sense of belonging and strong and **meaningful connections** between young people and their family, school, peers and community;
- nurturing greater **resilience** in young people which will enable them to effectively deal with the issues that may confront them in different social settings and to respond well to a range of life events;
- focusing efforts on **critical transition points** in young people's pathways;

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- embracing **cultural, religious and social diversity** to contribute to a more tolerant and equitable society;
 - recognising the importance of **evidence based practice** and committing to the **evaluation** of funded programs; and
 - undertaking work in a **professional and transparent manner**, underpinned by good governance and ensuring a sustainable organisation to achieve its objectives.

Conceptual Framework

Doxa's work is underpinned by two seminal pieces of work - the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Citizenship Model.

Universal Declaration on Human Rights

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights was developed in 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Particularly relevant to Doxa are Article 25 (1) and Article 26 (1) which state:

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of [her or] himself and of [her or] his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood".

"Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit".

These rights were reaffirmed for children in The Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 27-29) in 1989.

Citizenship Model

The Citizenship Model prioritises active participation by all members of the community, and recognizes that universal provision to meet basic needs in terms of health, education, housing, employment and standard of living is essential to enable and support such participation.

An important aspect of strengthening citizen participation is the principle of social justice which can be defined as the universal availability of opportunities and services which provide equitable outcomes for the diverse range of community needs, life situations and aspirations for all people. Four principles underpin social justice:

- **Equity:** meaning fairness in the distribution of social and economic resources
- **Equality:** meaning equal, effective and comprehensive civil, legal and industrial rights for all
- **Access:** meaning fair and equal access to services
- **Participation:** meaning the opportunity to participate fully in personal development, community life and decision-making

Also underpinning active citizenship is the notion of social inclusion; that is, providing the means and mechanisms for enhancing inclusion and thus participation by addressing those factors which impact on people's participation such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low income, poor housing, crime, ill health and family breakdown. These factors are often connected and mutually reinforcing, and the greatest risk of exclusion in mainstream society is among those with multiple disadvantages.

Defining Disadvantage

At Doxa we want to help ensure all young people have the same opportunity to flourish and live full and productive lives. Unfortunately many young people are subject to various forms of disadvantage that make them vulnerable to social problems, constrain their life choices, limit their potential and restrict their full participation in community life.

While disadvantage can take many shapes and there are no absolute definitions, Doxa is particularly concerned about young people who are themselves, or living in families or households, characterized by:

- Financial difficulties including unaffordability of some basic needs and consumer durables;
- Low educational attainment including illiteracy and early school leaving;
- Unemployment or underemployment;
- Stress on relationships;
- Poor health or disability;
- Isolation including geographic and social;
- Disadvantageous housing conditions or homelessness; and
- Living in geographically disadvantaged areas.

Government Policy Context

No organisation operates in a vacuum and it is important to understand the policy context in which we work. There are both Commonwealth and State government policies which are relevant to Doxa including:

- **Education Revolution** – As the next step in the federal Government’s Education Revolution, the Council of Australian Governments at its meeting on 27 March 2008 agreed to develop a new schools reform plan for the 21st century. Strategies will be developed to progress the following policy directions: improving teacher and school leader quality; high standards and expectations; greater accountability and better directed resources; modern, world class teaching and learning environments including information and technology; integrated strategies for low socio-economic school communities; and boosting parental engagement.
- **Future Directions. An agenda for Young Victorians** – which outlines the State Government’s priorities for young people. These are increasing the number of young people who contribute more to their communities and want to make a difference; make a successful transition from school to a job they like; know how to access information, support and services they need; lead healthy, active and culturally diverse lifestyles; and live in a secure environment and choose safe behaviours.
- **A Fairer Victoria. Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage** – which sets out action the State Government will take to improve access to services; reduce barriers to opportunities; strengthen assistance for disadvantaged groups and places; and improving ways of working with government.
- **Growing Victoria Together** – which is the State’s 10 year vision that focuses on a thriving economy; quality health and education; caring communities; and a vibrant democracy.

Profile of Young People

Key statistics relating to young people include:

- Figures from the 2006 census indicate that there are approximately 2.9 million young people aged 15-24 years in Australia, with approximately 700,000 living in Victoria. Approximately 14% of the population in Victoria is in this age-group. (ABS Australian Demographic statistics, December quarter 2006, Cat. No. 3010.0 ABS, Canberra)
- In May 2007 close to 86% of Australia's teenagers aged 15-19 years were actively engaged in either full-time study or full-time work. A total of 196,000 teenagers aged 15-19 years and 330,000 young adults aged 20-24 years were not engaged in full-time study or full-time work.
- In May 2007, 20% of school leavers who had completed Year 12 were not fully engaged in study or work compared with 45% of Year 11 completers and 50% of Year 10 or below completers.
- The proportion of young adults aged 20-24 with at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate III rose from 77% in 2001 to 87% in 2006.
- Year 12 completion was estimated to be 67% in 2005. The completion rate of students in low socio-economic backgrounds was estimated at 59% compared with 79% of students from high socio-economic backgrounds. Estimated completions have been relatively static during the 1990s and 2000s.

- Most students (approximately 90%) reach the years 3, 5, and 7 national benchmarks for reading, writing and numeracy. However, certain population groups are less likely to meet these benchmarks, including students from a non-English speaking background, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students in very remote areas, and children under the guardianship of the states.
- The national average attendance rate of indigenous school students is two to three times lower than the corresponding rate for non-indigenous students. This means that, on average, indigenous students are missing out on more than a year's schooling in the primary years and more than a year in secondary years. (National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy)
- 800,000 children in Australia are growing up in households where no one has a job.
- In 2006 only 30% of all undergraduate students received Youth Allowance.
- Unemployment rates for young people remain consistently higher than the national rate, which was 3.9% for persons aged 15 years or over in July 2007. In comparison, 22% of the unemployed population were aged 15-19 years, and a further 16% were aged 20-24 years.)

- In 2005-06, 36% (36,700) of all people seeking assistance from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) were young people aged 24 years of less, equating to a rate of 5.4 per 1,000 people aged 24 years or less in the general population. Approximately half of these SAAP clients were aged 15-19 years, and a further 43% were aged 20-24 years. The most common reasons for seeking assistance were related to interpersonal relationships such as relationship/family breakdown, domestic/family violence and time out from family/other situation.
- In 2003-04 the police apprehension rate for juveniles aged 10-17 years was twice that for adults in Victoria in Victoria. This has decreased by 26% since 1995-96. Juvenile offenders are most commonly apprehended by police for property related offences such as theft.
- There has been a steady increase in the number of children and young people (aged 17 years and under) who are abused, neglected or at risk of harm, or whose parents are unable to care for them. Between 2001-02 and 2005-06, the rate of children who were the subject of a child protection substantiation increased from 5.3 per 1,000 children to 7.2 per 1,000. Since 2002, the number of children placed on care and protection orders and in out-of-home care have increased by around one-third.¹

¹ It should be noted that changes in the administration of child welfare in all states and territories has affected the number of cases handled. Trends over time must therefore be interpreted with caution.

Key Activities 2008-2011

Objective	Activities	Indicators
<p>To fund programs and direct service provision which contribute to disadvantaged young people becoming independent, confident and active members of the community</p>	<p>To provide an innovative, educational and enriching camp experience at Doxa Malmbsbury Camp and Doxa City Camp for young people whose life circumstances would otherwise preclude them from participating</p>	<p>Both camps accredited by Australian Camps Association</p> <p>Camp programs integrated into school curriculums</p> <p>Achievement of industry benchmark occupancy rates at Doxa Malmbsbury camp (6580 bednights per annum) and increase in Doxa city camps to 30 camps per annum</p> <p>Both camps utilized by disadvantaged schools</p> <p>Program activities reflective of industry best practice</p> <p>Strategies implemented to reduce "carbon footprint"</p> <p>Alternative revenue streams investigated to offset costs of camps</p> <p>No major adverse risk occurrences</p> <p>Camps maintained to high standard</p> <p>Evaluation indicates that camps are innovative, educational and enriching</p>

Objective	Activities	Indicators
<p>To fund programs and direct service provision which contribute to disadvantaged young people becoming independent, confident and active members of the community</p>	<p>To provide a focused educational intervention in an alternative setting for young people aged 9-14 years who are experiencing difficulties in mainstream education through Doxa School West Melbourne and Doxa School Bendigo</p>	<p>Full enrolment at Doxa School West Melbourne and Doxa School Bendigo Regular tracking survey of graduates completed Increase in ongoing engagement in education of participants Commitment from alternative funding sources to support replication of model</p>
	<p>To provide support, mentoring and work experience to disadvantaged young people during university studies through the Doxa Cadetship Program</p>	<p>Applications from 150+ disadvantaged VCE students per annum Training and work placement requirements successfully completed annually by cadets Mentor training completed by all new mentors Development of ancillary program Corporate sponsor and broader financial support obtained for the program</p>

Objective	Activities	Indicators
<p>To fund programs and direct service provision which contribute to disadvantaged young people becoming independent, confident and active members of the community</p>	<p>To provide support, mentoring and work experience to disadvantaged young people during university studies through the Doxa Cadetship Program (cont.)</p>	<p>Support of corporate sponsors for 60-75 cadets per year across a broad range of sectors and geographical areas</p> <p>Program actively promoted in media and in-house corporate publications</p> <p>Incorporation of DCP in sponsor company's Corporate Social Responsibility commitment</p> <p>Minimum of one successful sponsor event per annum</p> <p>Graduation event held annually</p> <p>Development of sponsor awards program</p> <p>Employment of all graduating cadets</p> <p>Annual review of sponsor satisfaction</p> <p>Tracking survey of graduates</p> <p>Establishment of active DCP Alumni</p>
<p>To work in partnership with schools, community organisations, business and government to leverage positive changes for disadvantaged young people at a broad level across Victoria</p>	<p>To support the Back to School Program with the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal for 2009</p>	<p>Provision of 1,000 gift vouchers to disadvantaged young people across Victoria to assist their going back to school</p>

Objective	Activities	Indicators
<p>To advocate for policy changes and program enhancements which will enable disadvantaged young people to more fully participate in the community</p>	<p>To increase young people's engagement in education during the middle years of their schooling</p>	<p>Launch of 10 Point Plan outlining engagement agenda</p> <p>Increase in the number of tertiary institutions providing a specialist subject for student teachers on teaching young people at risk of becoming disengaged</p> <p>Increase in availability of alternative education programs that have been shown to work</p> <p>Consistent exclusion policies adopted throughout the state</p> <p>Awareness campaign on the value of education</p> <p>Active key stakeholder Advisory Committee providing input into relevant government policy directions</p>

Objective	Activities	Indicators
<p>To advocate for policy changes and program enhancements which will enable disadvantaged young people to more fully participate in the community</p>	<p>To raise awareness about young people's disadvantage and how these issues can be addressed</p>	<p>Input into key committees and forums Opinion pieces/comments published in media</p>
<p>To take a leadership role in the promotion of knowledge and practice that is known to improve the life chances of disadvantaged young people</p>	<p>To evaluate all major funded programs and promote findings</p>	<p>Publication of key findings reports Presentation of papers at conferences</p>
	<p>To build capacity to address issues related to engaging disadvantaged young people in education</p>	<p>Increase in provision of information and support provided to student teachers on teaching disengaged young people Increase in professional development provided to teachers and teacher aides in mainstream schools on teaching disengaged young people Establishment of a Wiki on alternative education</p>

Objective	Activities	Indicators
<p>To take a leadership role in the promotion of knowledge and practice that is known to improve the life chances of disadvantaged young people</p>	<p>To effectively promote Doxa's programs internally and externally</p>	<p>Re-development of website and database Dissemination of Doxa newsletters and other related materials Increased media exposure and speaking engagements Professional event management including hosting one major annual event showcasing Doxa Appointment of Doxa Patron and ambassadors Increased brand awareness Risk management strategy in place Evaluation of communication activities Written history of Doxa launched</p>
	<p>To give young people a voice across Doxa's programs</p>	<p>Consultative Committee including young people established Newsletters include articles by young people involved in programs Promotional materials highlight young people's stories Virtual camp and school tours on website Student podcasts, music and art work on website</p>

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