

Save the Children

**Operation Newstart
Regional Expansion Plan**

July 2010



THINKING

DOING

LEADING



Contents

1	Executive Summary	3
2	Operation Newstart	5
3	Disadvantaged youth in Victoria	7
4	Expanding the program	12
5	Role of Save the Children	18
6	Critical success factors	20
7	Implementation	28
Appendix A	Evaluations of Operation Newstart	30
Appendix B	Further Socio-economic need data	31
Appendix C	Overview of each regional centre	32
Appendix D	Breakdown of program activities	41



1 Executive Summary

Operation Newstart (ONS) is a successful early intervention program that should be expanded to meet the needs of at-risk young people in Ballarat, the La Trobe Valley, Bendigo, Mildura and Geelong as priorities and other regional Victorian centres over the medium term. The establishment of new programs should include effective governance arrangements, clearly defined program objectives, a locally tailored set of activities built around ONS’ successful model and a minimum three year funding commitment.

There is a need for early intervention programs for young people in regional Victoria given relatively poor education and social outcomes. Regional centres are the best locations for such programs as they have a sufficiently large target student population and depth of potentially supportive stakeholders to sustain their operation.

Nous assessed seven regional Victorian centres against three criteria:

Criterion	Weighting	Geelong	Ballarat	Bendigo	Latrobe Valley	Mildura	Wodonga	Warrnambool
Level of need	50%	Medium	Very High	High	Very high	Very high	Medium	High
Target population	20%	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Very low	Low
Local stakeholder support	30%	High	High	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Total	100%	67	93	68	88	75	55	60
Recommendation		Priority	Priority	Priority	Priority	Priority		

Ballarat, the La Trobe Valley, Bendigo, Mildura and Geelong were identified as priority centres for the establishment of an ONS program in the short term. Other regional centres would also be worthwhile and feasible locations for programs in the medium term. This assessment would need to be fleshed out for each regional centre with detailed local program scoping and stakeholder interaction before a final decision as to timing is made.



While each ONS program operates in a unique way that depends upon local conditions, there are six critical success factors that apply to all programs. These factors will need to be addressed by key stakeholders (including ONV, DEECD, Victoria Police and major sponsors such as Save the Children) when establishing a new program:

Critical success factors

1. A governance structure built around an active Committee of Management that includes senior representatives of host schools, regional police, health professionals, local DEECD, major sponsors, such as Save the Children and key community organisations.
2. A clear set of objectives that include:
 - Improved behavioural outcomes
 - A reduction of involvement in criminality
 - Improved engagement with and participation at school
 - Improved awareness of and commitment to vocational outcomes.
3. A program of activities that is based on the existing ONS model and tailored to local conditions.
4. Professional and committed program staff.
5. Strong support from local stakeholders, including Victoria Police, DEECD, local schools and major sponsors.
6. A minimum three year funding commitment.

The Nous group would like to thank the program facilitators at ONS Shepparton, who devoted considerable time to this report. Their efforts both in providing direct feedback and in managing the stakeholder engagement process and data collation were critical to the quality of the final analysis. We also acknowledge the generous assistance of the Ian Potter Foundation and Save the Children, which provided the financial and logistical support that made the project possible,



2 Operation Newstart

2.1 Overview of the program

Operation Newstart is an early intervention program that targets young people aged 14-17 who are experiencing serious difficulties at school and may be in conflict with the law.

The program runs 4 days a week for a period of 8 weeks, with the fifth day of each week spent at school. The program engages students in a combination of adventure based activities, vocational education, community service and other personal development activities.

The first campus 'Southern' was established in 1997 by teachers and police who came in to contact with students disengaged from education on a daily basis. There are now six metropolitan and one rural Operation Newstart program:



Figure 1: Location of Operation Newstart programs in Victoria

There are currently 214 state secondary colleges that provide referrals to Operation Newstart. The program also takes referrals from other sources, such as Victoria Police and the Departments of Justice and Human Services.



2.2 Program objectives

Operation Newstart Victoria has five overall objectives:

ONS program objectives
1. Remove barriers that prevent students fulfilling their potential
2. Provide unique learning opportunities in challenging environments
3. Assist students in acquiring skills which promote individual achievement
4. Enhance students' self-confidence and self-esteem
5. Allow students to develop life skills and practice social skills within a safe environment.

2.3 Benefits

Evaluations of Operation Newstart have identified significant positive benefits to program participants, particularly around behavioural indicators and vocational outcomes.

The Nous Group conducted an evaluation of Operation Newstart Shepparton in 2010 which found a social return of at least \$3.68. for every dollar invested in the program. The evaluation found:

- A positive effect on participant's behaviour and their ability to relate to parents, peers and teachers
- An increase in participants' overall happiness levels, self-esteem and health awareness.
- A significant impact on participants' awareness of career pathways and their ability to gain employment
- Almost unanimous support from key program stakeholders and a strong preference that the program continue.

The Royal Children's Hospital conducted an evaluation of Operation Newstart Western (ONW) in 2006. It found that ONW had a significant impact on participants' social and emotional wellbeing, physical health, scholastic achievement and vocational opportunities.

A more detailed discussion of the results from these evaluations can be found in Appendix A.



3 Disadvantaged youth in Victoria

3.1 Identifying the need

Regional and rural students are more likely than metropolitan students to leave school early and suffer from socio-economic disadvantage. This highlights the need for more Operation Newstart programs in rural areas.

Young people living in rural areas are typically more vulnerable than urban youth due to a range of factors associated with geographic isolation. These include poorer access to services, education, training, employment and leisure opportunities compounded by a greater dependence on transport for utilising these services relative to young people living in metropolitan Melbourne.¹

This is reflected in lower average performance at school², lower rates of participation in higher education³ and greater social dislocation.

Figure 2 compares the distribution of ENTER scores in 2008 in metropolitan and regional Victoria. A markedly higher proportion of students in regional Victoria have an ENTER score below 50, which considerably limits post-school education and vocational opportunities.

This is reflected in the destination of students after school. Figure 3 contrasts the post-year 12 destination of young people in metropolitan Victoria and regional Victoria. A higher proportion of young people in regional Victoria end up either unemployed or not pursuing post school education or vocational training.

¹ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2009), *The State of Victoria's Children 2008 – A Report on How Children and Young People in Victoria Are Faring*, Melbourne.

² *Report advising on the development of the Victorian Tertiary Education Plan*, Expert Panel on Higher Education, December 2009, Skills Victoria, p68.

³ *Report advising on the development of the Victorian Tertiary Education Plan*, Expert Panel on Higher Education, December 2009, Skills Victoria, p63.

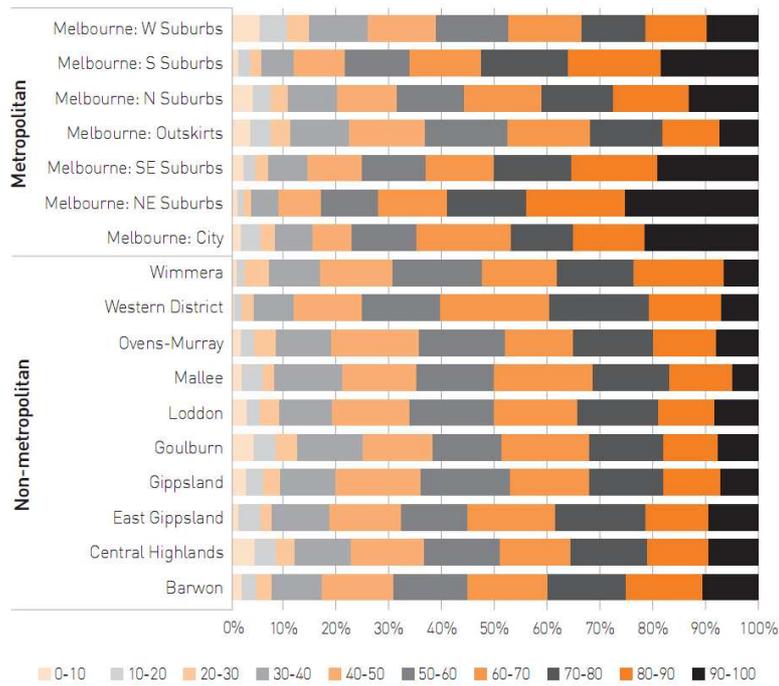


Figure 2: Distribution of 2008 ENTER scores in metropolitan and regional Victoria

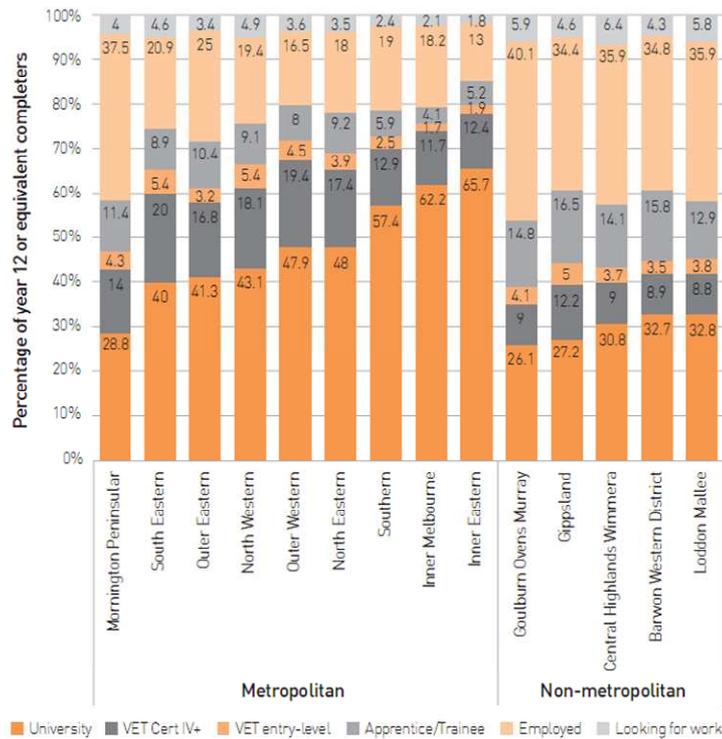


Figure 3: Destinations of Year 12 or equivalent completers by ABS labour force region (2008)⁴

⁴ Report advising on the development of the Victorian Tertiary Education Plan, Expert Panel on Higher Education, December 2009, Skills Victoria, p63.



3.2 The importance of early intervention programs

Operation Newstart’s approach is consistent with the Victorian Government’s early intervention approaches to vulnerable youth. This approach can produce substantial, long-run benefits for society.

Early intervention programs such as Operation Newstart are based on the premise that intervening early in a young person’s development can produce significant long term personal, social and economic benefits.

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that early intervention can be effective in achieving significant reductions in crime involvement, child maltreatment and substance abuse, and improvements in educational performance, employment, child and youth behaviour, and income.⁵

Early intervention is a key principle in the Victorian Government’s approach to reducing vulnerability among young people⁶. The Government’s *Pathways to re-engagement through flexible learning options* report⁷ identifies four different tiers of vulnerability as shown in Figure 4 below.



Figure 4: Different tiers of vulnerability in young people

⁵ Homel R et al. (2006) *The Pathways to Prevention Project: the first five years, 1999–2004*. Sydney: Mission Australia and the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice & Governance, Griffith University, Sydney.

⁶ Victorian Government (2008) *Vulnerable Youth Framework discussion paper: Development of a policy framework for Victoria’s vulnerable young people*, Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Melbourne

⁷ Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2010), *Pathways to re-engagement through flexible learning options: A policy direction for consultation*, Melbourne.



The students that participate in Operation Newstart sit between the second and third tiers of vulnerability. Students referred to Operation Newstart have low to medium levels of truancy, some are at risk of expulsion, some have had contact with the Police, most have behavioural issues and are unhappy, most are experimenting with drugs and alcohol, most have difficult relationships with their family members and many are involved in unstable peer groups.

The Victorian government recognises that a concerted effort through coordinated early intervention programs and policy is required to stop the flow of young people from tier 2 and tier 3 to tier 4. Young people in 'tier 2' require 'targeted initiatives' that address the young person's needs and risks.

3.2.1 Improvement in crime outcomes

Operation Newstart is closely aligned with strategic priorities of Victoria Police, which include the importance of community partnerships and engagement with young people.

The *Victoria Police Child and Youth Strategy 2009-2013* states that one of its underpinnings is "the importance of partnerships, research and engagement in understanding and effectively addressing youth issues."⁸ One of the key priority areas explicitly identified by the strategy is to improve youth engagement through effective partnerships.⁹

This builds on the broader strategy contained in the *Victoria Police Strategic Plan 2008-2012* in which Victoria Police aspire to "engage with our partners in local communities to work with young people who are at risk of becoming offenders or victims of crime to foster their social development, build their self-esteem and help them better connect with their local community."¹⁰

3.2.2 Improvement in education and vocational outcomes

At risk young benefit from remaining in their school classroom, while receiving additional supports such as 'mentoring, outreach services from the community into the school, case management support and tutoring or after hours'.

Young people in 'tier 3' require 'flexible learning options within school settings that include short term intensive placements' and aim to reintegrate young people back into school. Young people in need of flexible learning options 'may be experiencing poor concentration or self esteem, learning difficulties, behavioural issues, truancy and other related issues which make it difficult to remain in the classroom with their peers, increase their risk of disengagement (if not addressed) and reduce their potential to succeed in school. This option is designed to maintain connections to peers and teachers and to their regular school environment'¹¹.

⁸ *Child and Youth Strategy 2009-2013*, Victoria Police, 2009. p4.

⁹ *Ibid*, p7.

¹⁰ *The Way Ahead 2008-2013*, Victoria Police, 2008, p13.

¹¹ KPMG (2009) *Re-engaging our kids: A framework for education provision to children and young people at risk of disengaging from school or disengaged from school*, KPMG, Melbourne



3.2.3 Social return on investment

Programs such as ONS can produce lifelong benefits for participants. The primary benefits arise in terms of improved lifelong earnings, improved health outcomes and reduced association with criminal activity.

Quantifying the social return on investment (SROI) for social programs is increasingly being used as a way of measuring their overall impact. The “return on investment” is calculated by monetising social impacts (both positive and negative) so that they can be directly compared to the funds invested in providing the program. Program impacts that cannot be monetised can also be included in the assessment to add a qualitative dimension to the analysis.¹²

The key advantages of this approach are:

- a **broad** assessment of impact, which includes many factors that were often overlooked prior to SROI. The impact of a program is calculated by estimating what would have occurred in the absence of the program (often referred to as the “deadweight”) and comparing this with what actually occurred. The gap between the two (often referred to as “attribution”) is what occurred as a result of the program or intervention.
- a **long-term** perspective which incorporates both the short term and lifelong impacts of the program or interventions. The fact that long run benefits and costs are considered requires the use of net present values for all monetised values.¹³

The relevance of this approach to youth programs in particular is highlighted in a recent Canadian study of the costs of not completing high school.¹⁴ The study found long run benefits in terms of education and employment outcomes, reduced reliance on government assistance and reduced rates of criminality. This was reinforced by a recent evaluation of ONS Shepparton, which found a long run social return of \$3.68 for every dollar invested in the program.¹⁵

¹² UK Office for the Third Sector, (2009) *A guide to Social Return on Investment*, London.
http://www.thesroinetwork.org/component/option,com_docman/task,cat_view/gid,29/Itemid,38/

¹³ See Appendix A for a discussion of the discount rates used in this evaluation.

¹⁴ *Lessons in Learning. No “drop” in the bucket: the high costs of dropping out*, Canadian Council on Learning, February 4, 2009.

¹⁵ Reference to Nous Evaluation Report, 2010.



4 Expanding the program

Of Victoria's regional centres, Ballarat, the La Trobe Valley, Bendigo, Mildura and Geelong have the highest need for and ability to support a new ONS program. Other regional centres would also benefit from and be able to support ONS programs in the medium term.

Seven regional centres highlighted in Figure 5 were considered as possible locations for new Operation Newstart programs. Of these seven, five regional centres were identified as high priority areas for new ONS programs and two as potential locations for programs in the medium term. In each case, the need for an ONS program was analysed on the basis of the demographics of the regional centre and any surrounding areas (such as satellite towns) that are within a small enough commute to be feasibly included in operation of the program. When including outlying areas, there is a trade-off between increasing the pool of potential students (thereby making the program more sustainable in small centres) and the logistical challenges of servicing a larger catchment area.

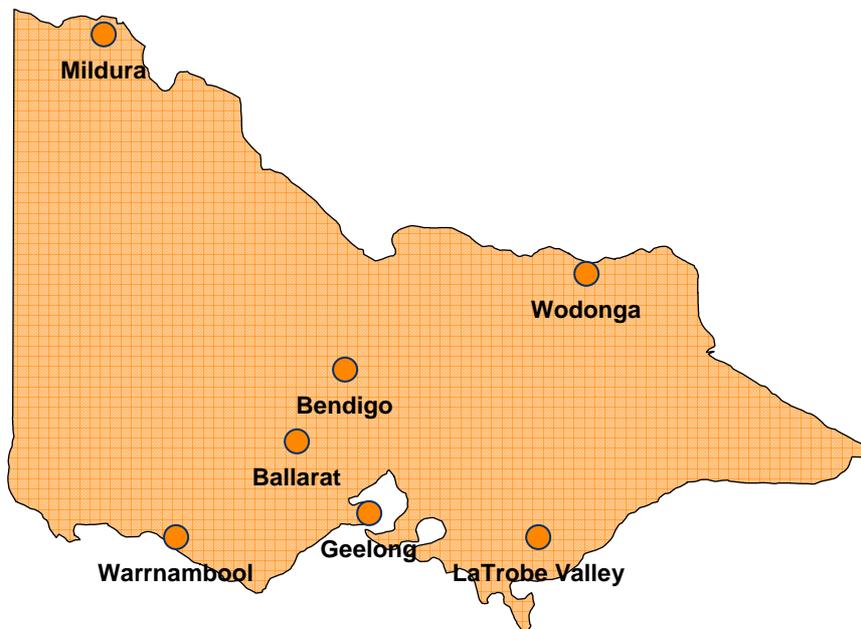


Figure 5: Possible regional Operation Newstart locations

We used three criteria to determine which regional centres were the most suitable for new ONS programs:

1. The level of need amongst young people
2. The size of the student population in the target age group
3. The level of local stakeholder support.



4.1 The level of need amongst young people

Regional Victorian centres are characterised by socio-economic disadvantage and, in most case, by crime rates above the state average in key categories.

Operation Newstart programs typically target areas of low socioeconomic disadvantage. The level of disadvantage in regional Victoria can be assessed from the ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) data. This is designed to provide a metric to compare the level of welfare of particular communities. It includes four indexes which provide a ranking of a particular geographic area compared with other Australian areas. These are provided as decile ratings (where the 10% of collection districts scoring the lowest have a score of 1, the next 10% have a score of 2, etc).

Table 1 below shows the SEIFA scores for regional centres that have been identified as possible targets for new regional Operation Newstart programs. Figures for Shepparton where the sole regional program currently operates are provided as point of comparison.

Region	Socio-economic advantage / disadvantage	Relative socio-economic disadvantage	Economic resources	Education and occupation	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage
Mildura	5	4	3	4	932
Latrobe Valley	5	4	2	3	932
Shepparton	6	5	5	5	945
Bendigo	7	6	4	6	958
Ballarat	7	6	4	7	965
Warrnambool	7	7	5	6	966
Geelong	8	7	6	7	976
Wodonga	8	7	6	6	976
Victorian LGA average	7	7	6	7	982

Table 1: Victorian Local Government Area (LGA) SEIFA scores¹⁶

These figures indicate that while some regional centres enjoys a socio-economic position close to the state average, pockets of regional Victoria have a much lower position than the state average and than metropolitan regions. **Mildura** and **Latrobe Valley** have particularly low SEIFA scores, indicating high levels of social disadvantage.

Appendix B contains further information in relation to socio-economic need, including the indigenous and CALD population in each regional centre.

¹⁶ ABS (2006), Local Government Area (LGA) Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage



Young people up to the age of 24 represent 32 per cent of Victoria’s population yet they account for 47 per cent of offenders processed for criminal offences.¹⁷ Moreover, most regional Victorian centres have higher crime rates than the state wide average, as shown in Table 2 below. These figures are for overall crime rates. We have assumed that levels of crime amongst young people are correlated with the figures for the overall population.

Region	Crime against the person	Crime against property	Drug offences	Other crime
Rate per 100,000 population				
State-wide	820	5,186	277	805
Latrobe Valley	1,588	6,193	296	1,652
Ballarat	1,252	7,248	208	926
Mildura	1,122	5,854	329	994
Shepparton	1,060	5,620	272	1,103
Warrnambool	1,020	3,158	434	1,172
Bendigo	901	3,840	289	1,030
Geelong	731	5,021	165	653
Wodonga	710	3,450	245	1,013

Table 2: Crime statistics for 2008/2009 by Victoria Police PSA¹⁸

4.2 The size of the student population in the target age group

Each of the seven candidate regional centres has a sufficiently large student population in the target age group to sustain an ONS program.

Table 3 describes the size of the target student population age group and the number of potential feeder schools in each regional centre. It is preferable to have at least four schools so that each school is not providing too many students to each cohort.

¹⁷ *Child and Youth Strategy 2009-2013*, Victoria Police, 2009, p4.

¹⁸ Victoria Police (2009), *2008/2009 Crime Statistics*, Melbourne.



Region	Resident population	Students in years 7-12 in Govt schools ¹⁹	Number of schools ²⁰
	(2008)	(2009)	(2010)
Geelong	172,300	4,603	6
Ballarat	94,088	5,157	5
Shepparton	89,995	3,432	4
Bendigo	78,531	3,883 ²¹	5
Latrobe Valley	49,387	3,458	3
Mildura	49,280	2,675	4
Wodonga	48,926	1,447 ²²	2
Warrnambool	32,712	2,743 ²³	4

Table 3: Size of the target student population in each regional centre

4.3 The level of local stakeholder support

There is strong support from local stakeholders in most regional centres.

Table 4 outlines the current level of support among local stakeholders in each regional centre. Even in those centres where support is currently only medium, there is potential to build on existing levels of support.

Regional Centre	Level of local stakeholder support	Comments
Geelong	High	Working group is well advanced and the set up and facilitator training phases are due to occur in Term 4 2010.
Ballarat	High	Regional DEECD office is “strong advocate”.
Bendigo	High	There is a steering committee in place comprised of Victoria Police, DEECD, ONV and SCA. DEECD is strongly supportive. There are opportunities to link with Goldfields LLEN and other key community stakeholders.

¹⁹ This includes students in surrounding satellite towns.

²⁰ The school totals include satellite towns. The satellite towns are listed in the tables in Appendix C which also include the distance from the regional centre to that particular town.

²¹ 50% of the total enrolments at Wodonga Middle Years College (a 3-10 school) and Maryborough Education Centre (a P-12 school) have been excluded in this total.

²² 60% of the total enrolments at Weeroona College Bendigo (a P-10 school) have been excluded in this total.

²³ 50% of the total enrolments at Terang College and Timboon P-12 School (P-12 schools) have been excluded in this total.



Regional Centre	Level of local stakeholder support	Comments
La Trobe Valley	Medium	ONS program was established several years ago but only lasted two terms. There is some support from local DEECD and Victoria Police.
Mildura	High	Local DEECD is keen to explore options. There is also a possibility to link with Youth Connections program run by local LLEN and council.
Wodonga	Medium	Local DEECD is aware of ONS through its support for Shepparton and is willing to discuss options for expansion into Wodonga.
Warnnambool	High	Local DEECD "very happy" to support an ONS program and to facilitate connections with local schools.

Table 4: Level of local stakeholder support in regional centres



4.4 Target locations

Ballarat, the LaTrobe Valley, Bendigo, Mildura and Geelong have the highest need and ability to support an Operation Newstart program. The other centres assessed would also benefit from the establishment of an Operation Newstart in the future.

An assessment of the suitability of each regional centre against the three criteria is set out in Table 5 below. Scores have been given based on the quantitative data in the above tables, desktop research, and interviews with key stakeholders such as regional Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) offices and local Victoria Police.

Further details about each location can be found in Appendix B.

Criterion	Weighting	Geelong	Ballarat	Bendigo	LaTrobe Valley	Mildura	Wodonga	Warrambool
Level of need	60%							
Socioeconomic disadvantage	25%	Medium (15%)	High (20%)	High (20%)	Very high (25%)	Very high (25%)	Medium (15%)	High (20%)
Crime rates	10%	Medium (5%)	Very high (10%)	Medium (5%)	Very high (10%)	Very high (10%)	Low (3%)	High (7%)
Absence of similar programs	20%	Low (5%)	Very high (20%)	Low (5%)	Very high (20%)	Low (5%)	Medium (10%)	Low (5%)
Local indigenous population	5%	Low (2%)	Medium (3%)	Medium (3%)	Medium (3%)	High (5%)	High (5%)	Medium (3%)
Target population	20%	20%	20%	15%	15%	10%	7%	10%
Number of students enrolled in years 7-12 at government schools ²⁴	20%	High (20%)	High (20%)	Medium (15%)	Medium (15%)	Low (10%)	Very low (7%)	Low (10%)
Local stakeholder support	20%		12%	12%	12%	12%		
Support from local DEECD office, schools and Victoria Police.	20%	High (20%)	High (20%)	High (20%)	Medium (15%)	High (20%)	Medium (15%)	Medium (15%)
Total		67	93	68	88	75	55	60

Table 5: Assessment of candidate sites for establishment of additional Operation Newstart programs

²⁴ This includes students in surrounding satellite towns.



5 Role of Save the Children

Save the Children could play a critical role in expanding ONS into regional Victorian centres. If STC is the principal external funder for a number of new regional ONS programs, it will be appropriate for STC to clarify its role in the governance of these programs with ONV while the programs are being designed and the program MOUs are negotiated.

Operation Newstart Victoria is currently pursuing the establishment of ONS programs at Geelong and Bendigo. As highlighted earlier in this report, several other regional centres are well positioned for an ONS program to be set up within the next 18 months.

Save the Children is considering making a major funding commitment to new regional ONS programs on the basis of its productive engagement with the successful ONS Shepparton program. STC is well placed to provide significant support to ONV's existing efforts. This support will be more effective if ONV and STC can align their strategic vision for regional ONS programs and operational activities.

The concrete steps for aligning ONV and STC's strategic vision and operational activities could include:

- **An MOU between ONV and STC.** The key elements of a high level MOU should include:
 - A minimum three year funding commitment from STC. This funding security will be valuable for ONV in the inherently risky venture of rolling out new programs. Funding certainty from STC will be useful both in clarifying how much additional support is required from other sources and in actually gaining commitments from other funders.
 - The broad principles covering STC's role in the governance of new regional ONS programs. While the governance of each ONS program will need to be flexible enough to accommodate local conditions, the establishment of broad principles will provide a framework within which each local MOU can be negotiated. These principles should cover issues such as:
 - STC's role on the Committee of Management. This will depend, in part, on the funding arrangements for the program.
 - Whether STC will directly manage its funding commitment. If STC commits substantial funds to a program (eg as in Shepparton), it will generally be appropriate for STC to have a direct say in how those funds are spent and accounted for. Where this occurs, it will be appropriate to formalise STC's role in the governance of the program through the CoM.
 - STC's responsibilities for stakeholder engagement. As is discussed in more detail below, it is critical that all members of the CoM coordinate their interactions with external parties.
 - STC's role in funding and managing evaluations.
 - An agreement for ONV and STC to meet periodically (say, annually) at a high level to discuss progress in the roll-out of regional ONS programs.



- **A regional scale-up work-plan for the upcoming 18 months that is agreed between ONV and STC.** This should include:
 - The priority level of each regional centre.
 - The key steps to be undertaken in setting up each regional ONS program – and the approximate timing and order of these steps.
 - The development of key documents relating to governance, program monitoring and evaluation.
- **A coordinated approach** between ONV and STC in laying the groundwork for new ONS programs over the coming 18 months, particularly in relation to external relations:
 - Stakeholder engagement. It may be appropriate for much of this to be conducted jointly. It will be critical to ensure that ONV and STC coordinate both who they approach and what the message is.
 - Securing funding, both from major funding partners and local sources. It will be critical to ensure that ONV and STC each understand the other party's financial commitment before seeking either financial or in-kind assistance from other sources.



6 Critical success factors

The factors that are critical to the ongoing success of all Operation Newstart programs are:

1. effective governance
2. clearly defined objectives
3. appropriately structured activities
4. professional and committed program staff
5. strong stakeholder engagement
6. supporting funding and infrastructure.

While the critical success factors apply to all ONS programs, their application in practice will depend upon the particular needs of the local community, the funding arrangements of the program and the skills and knowledge of the program team.

Figure 6 sets out the overarching organisational structure for each Operation Newstart program. The following section discusses the critical success factors in terms of how they fit into this structure.

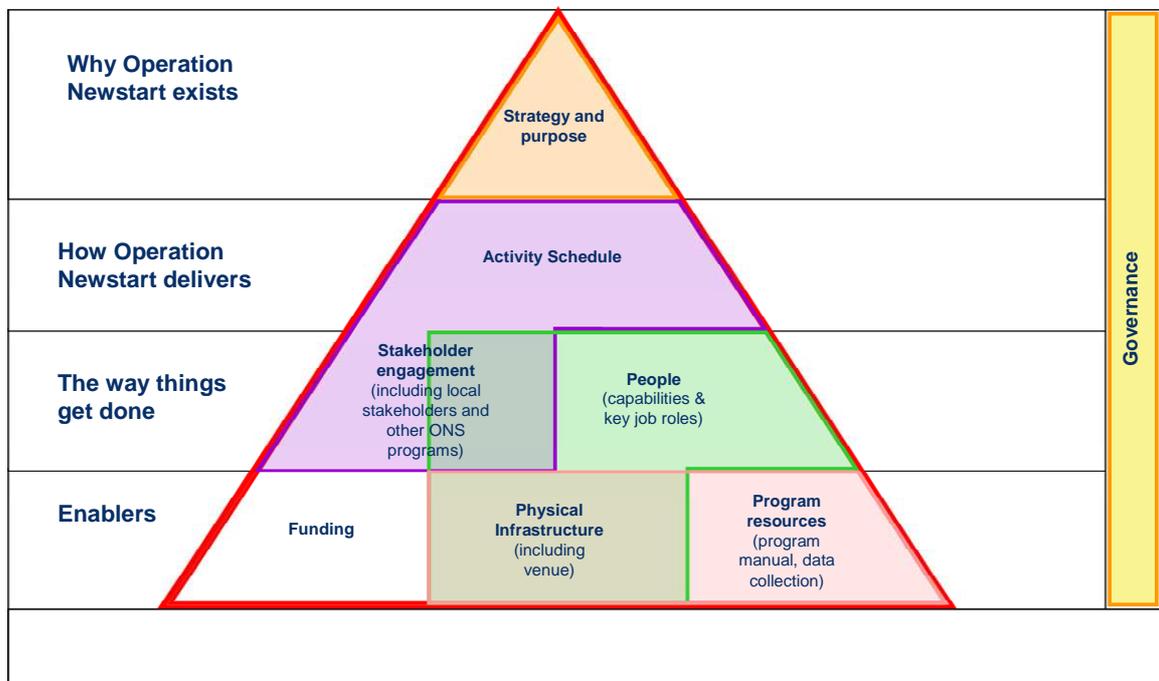


Figure 6: Operation Newstart Organisational Structure



6.1 Effective Governance

Each new Operation Newstart program will need a Committee of Management that is comprised of senior representatives of all local schools, regional police, a local DEECD representative, health professionals, sponsors and local community organisations. The Committee of Management should have clearly defined responsibilities and meet on a regular basis.

ONS program success to date has been built around a governance structure in which substantial responsibility is devolved to a program specific Committee of Management. The Committee of Management's functions include:

Committee of Management's functions

- Oversee the appointment and performance of facilitators
- Provide schools and police with information
- Monitor the success of the program via updates provided by the program staff
- Monitor financial performance and present an annual report at the program Annual General Meeting
- Drive and secure adequate funding at the local level
- Lobby for greater support and increased awareness at the local political level
- Interact with local media

In the start-up phase of a program the Committee of Management must:

- Allow enough time (minimum of two school terms) for appointed facilitators to work towards the delivery of the program and ensure that all necessary policies, procedures, equipment and paperwork are in order.
- Allow time for program facilitators to undergo training with other Operation Newstart programs who will act as mentors/trainers to the new program facilitators.
- Agree to and sign a 3 year Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Victoria Police.
- Appoint one or two members to attend regular ONV General Meetings which are held twice per year in March (Annual General Meeting) and September.



6.2 Clearly defined objectives

Each Operation Newstart should have a clear set of objectives that include:

- **Improved behavioural outcomes.**
- **A reduction of involvement in criminality.**
- **Improved engagement with and participation at school.**
- **Improved awareness of and commitment to vocational outcomes.**

The objectives for each ONS should form the basis of activity design. Each activity should be clearly linked to program objectives.

The objectives should also form the basis of program evaluation. Data should be collated in a way that informs whether objectives have been achieved.

6.3 Appropriately structured activities

Each ONS program should be designed so that the activities cover the wide range of themes that has underpinned ONS' success to date:

- **outdoor activities**
- **vocational awareness and training**
- **behavioural awareness and guidance; and**
- **community service activities.**

ONS has been characterised by the breadth of activities that its programs cover. This has been a core reason for its success.

While there are some activities that are standard across all programs, the contents of each Operation Newstart program have evolved separately over time. This is to be encouraged in that it enables each program to be tailored to local needs. As an indication of the range of activities across ONS programs, the current breakdown of program activities for four of the seven programs is shown in Appendix D.

All program activities comply with DEECD rules and regulations, including up to date Risk Management guidelines in line with DEECD requirements that all adventure based activities be conducted by a person trained in that field.



6.4 The Way Things Get Done

6.4.1 Professional and committed program staff

The Operation Newstart program requires a committed, passionate team of three facilitators that are experienced in working with young people.

It is critical that all team members have clearly defined roles and accountabilities, and for a shared leadership structure to be put in place. The ideal staff mix is shown in Table 6 below.

Position	Description
Education facilitator (permanent full-time)	The education facilitator has ultimate accountability for the program. This position may be funded by local participating schools jointly, by the regional DEECD office or by an agreed contribution from both parties.
Victoria Police facilitator (full-time minimum of 12 – 18 month placement)	The Victoria Police facilitator plays an integral role in transforming participants' attitude to the police and developing lasting relationships with young people. The nature of the position will vary, depending on the whether the Police officer is permanently or temporarily placed with the program. Where possible, the Police facilitator should be placed in the program for at least 12 months. Stakeholders commented that a placement of less than 12 months was seen to jeopardise the effectiveness of the program.
Facilitator with a mental health background (permanent part-time)	Operation Newstarts have traditionally employed an education facilitator and a police member. After observing significant benefits from employing mental health workers on Operation Newstart programs, ONV now recognises the need for mental health experts on each program. The funding of this position will depend in part upon whether ONV decides to make this position standard for all programs. This decision will be made following completion of a review of behavioural outcomes being conducted by the Royal Children's Hospital. It may be necessary to seek external funding sources for this role.
Administrative assistance (part-time, possibly on a volunteer basis)	A part-time administrative assistance would reduce time pressure on the other facilitators to devote time to directly assisting program participants. This could be particularly important in facilitating follow-up activities for program graduates. It may be possible to seek assistance from local stakeholders (eg community or service organisations) such that this is provided on a volunteer basis.

Table 6: Roles of Operation Newstart team members



6.4.2 Strong stakeholder engagement

Support from local stakeholders

Developing and maintaining close relationships with local stakeholders are fundamental to the ongoing success of any Operation Newstart program. The following relationships are of particular importance:

Stakeholder	Overview
DEECD	DEECD at both the central and regional levels is a critical partner and supporter of Operation Newstart. It is important that the outcomes of any program be framed in line with the strategic goals and priorities of DEECD.
Victoria Police	Resourcing a full time position currently places a burden on the local police authorities. It is therefore critical that the leadership of the local police is convinced of the long term benefits of the program. It is also important that the outcomes of any program are framed in line with the strategic goals and priorities of Victoria Police.
Schools	Operation Newstart programs should conduct quarterly meetings with social welfare coordinators, assistant principals and principals from feeder schools. These meetings provide an opportunity to enhance coordination (e.g. ensuring that schools refer students at a similar level of risk) and resolve any issues. Operation Newstart programs should also provide weekly progress reports to schools on participants' performance.
Parents	The experience of some ONS programs demonstrates that a high level of engagement with parents, through activities such as parent evenings, family days and the graduation, enhances the experience of the program. Some programs have successfully demanded a commitment from parents at the start of the program, requiring them to 'sign up' to the program.
Save the Children	The role of STC in program governance should be reassessed in light of future funding arrangements. As is discussed above, if STC is to fund a large component of the regional scale-up, it will be worthwhile to explore a possible MOU or other agreement between STC and ONV. This should cover issues such as funding certainty, governance arrangements and stakeholder engagement.
Major funders	The support of major funding organizations underpins the viability of the program. Depending upon the nature of local arrangements, it may be appropriate for one or more major funding organizations to have a role in the governance of an ONS program.
Local community partners	It is important to actively seek early buy-in from a broad range of local community partners. These partners will often be able to assist in program delivery either with financial or in-kind support.
Youth service programs	It is critical that each ONS program is linked with other local youth services. This will be important for ensuring that young people are referred to the appropriate program. It will also reduce wasteful overlap between programs and assist each program in best tailoring its activities and overall focus. In some areas, coordination between programs might be facilitated by local and/or state government (eg the Bendigo Better Youth Services Pilot).

Table 7: Local stakeholder relationships



Coordination between ONS programs

ONV plays a key role in facilitating state-wide collaboration between programs. This is primarily executed through quarterly meetings between all ONS programs. These meetings provide an opportunity to share lessons between programs and learn from each others' experience.

Given that there may be particular issues that affect regional communities, it may be worthwhile establishing a separate forum in which regional ONS programs can meet. Depending on its agreed governance and funding role, it may be appropriate to include STC in this forum.

Carefully managed referral and intakes

Each ONS program should establish and maintain on-going relationships with referring schools in order to maintain a level of consistency in the profile and needs of the students entering the program.

While recommendations for participants may originate from Victoria Police or community agencies such as DHS or DOJ - all referrals to the ONS program must be made through the student's school, with the final decision for entry into the program resting solely with the program facilitators. It is therefore critical that ONS staff are in close contact with schools and that feeder schools coordinate their referrals. Coordination between schools should be easier to achieve in regional programs than programs based in Melbourne since the former will involve a relatively small number of schools.

Ideally each intake should only contain one student per referring school. Given the small catchment areas that many regional programs will be drawing from, this will usually not be practical.

If future Operation Newstarts run intakes for Indigenous or CALD students, the staff managing the referral process must have appropriate training in cultural awareness. It will also be important that there is an appropriate gender mix amongst facilitators – for example, so that there is at least one female staff member for programs in which girls are participating.

6.5 Program enablers

6.5.1 A minimum three years of program funding

In order to provide the certainty for staff and local stakeholders that will underpin program effectiveness, a new ONS program should seek a minimum of three years of program funding.

This will allow the program to become embedded in the local community and will provide job security to the program staff.

Operation Newstarts across Victoria receive funding support from the sources listed in Figure 7 below. The relative contribution of each source differs across the program sites. The funding mix for the new program sites in regional Victoria will differ depending on the



willingness of external organisations and local community partners to make funding contribution beyond the core funding provided by ONV.

The average cost per participant across current Operation Newstart programs is approximately \$10,000.

DEECD	DEECD and/or the local participating schools fund the salary and on-costs of the education facilitator. In addition, the government schools may pay between \$200 and \$600 per student
Victoria Police	Victoria Police fund the salary and on-costs for the police facilitator.
ONV	Core funding for each Operation Newstart program is generally managed centrally by ONV, which is a registered charity. ONV receives funding from a wide of government and philanthropic bodies ²⁵ . Some programs have alternative arrangements – such as Shepparton, where Save the Children directly manages the funds that it provides (see below). Whether ONV should manage all program funds will depend upon the preferences of the funder(s) for that program and the particular governance arrangements of the program.
Direct funding	Some Operation Newtstarts receive direct funding from external organisations. For example, Save the Children directly funds administrative and logistical costs and the program assistant role in Shepparton.
Local partners	The level of funding support differs between each program. Funding from local partners may range from in-kind support from the automotive repairers providing free buss servicing, to grants from the local Magistrates court.

Figure 7: Funding support for Operation Newstarts

6.5.2 Physical Infrastructure

ONS programs require an independent space that is participant friendly. This space should serve as a program office and a ‘home base’ for participants. Having this type of space allows flexibility in program design and also means past participants are more likely to approach staff members if they need further support.

²⁵ ONV’s donors include The R.E. Ross Trust, Variety, CFA, DOXA, Royal Children’s Hospital, Save the Children, The Jack Brockhoff Foundation, Mazda Foundation. Victoria Police Youth Foundation.



6.5.3 Program Resources

Detailed operation manual

A detailed Operations Manual that addresses all aspects of the program is the foundation for all new Operation Newstarts. The Operations Manual should be developed by ONV and tailored by each Committee of Management for the particular needs of the program.

Regular and consistent monitoring

Regular monitoring and evaluation of activities allows for effective evaluations to be conducted and ongoing improvements to be made to program design and implementation. They also provide an evidence base that can be used to build support with stakeholders.

At a minimum, all ONS programs should:

- administer SDQ surveys pre-program, post-program and 12 months after graduation.
- conduct a formal evaluation 2 - 3 years into the program.
- set-up and maintain a reliable, computerised data base.
- follow-up with past participants, 3, 6 and 12 months after the program.
- maintain data, where possible, in relation to applicants who do not participate in the program.



7 Implementation

7.1 Proposed timeline

The establishment of new ONS programs is already well underway in Geelong and Bendigo. For the other regional centres that have been identified as priorities, Nous recommends the following timeline for the introduction of new ONS programs

Task	Timing	Responsibility (subject to future governance arrangements)
Continue discussions with regional DEECD offices and commence conversations with the local police force to gain a deeper understanding of local need and support for ONS. Conduct further research into existing youth services to ensure minimal overlap with any new ONS program.	By September 2010	ONV, STC
Shortlist 1-2 sites for introduction of an ONS by mid 2011	November 2010	ONV, STC
Establish Committees of Management with senior representatives of host schools and participating schools, Regional Police, Regional DEECD, health professionals, sponsors and community organisations	Early 2011	ONV, STC
Establish links within the community and seek funding and/or in-kind support for program activities	Early 2011	ONV, STC
Recruit program facilitators	Early 2011	ONV, STC
Train program facilitators and develop Operations Manuals	Mid 2011	ONV, STC

Table 8: Next steps for the introduction of new programs

7.2 Workplan

The design and develop of new Operation Newstart programs will differ depending on local conditions. There are however, common tasks to be addressed before a program commences that are included in the workplan below:



Task	Owner	2010		2011				2012			
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Governance											
Committee of Management (CoM) established											
Appoint one or two CoM members to attend regular ONV General Meetings											
Relevant policies, procedures, equipment and paperwork in order.											
Stakeholders											
Research all current youth programs in the local area to minimise program overlap											
Local partnering opportunities with other youth providers explored											
Develop, agree to and sign a 3 year MOU											
Program Design											
Program logic with clear objectives and outcomes that are directly linked to program activities											
Program Activities											
Program activities that reflect the particular needs of the local student population and available resources and skills											
Activities comply with DEECD rules and regulations including up to date Risk Management guidelines											
Internal Capabilities											
Position descriptions that clearly define roles and accountabilities											
One full time qualified leading teacher and one full time Victoria Police Senior Constable											
One youth worker, social worker or psychologist											
Facilitators trained/mentored by other Operation Newstart programs											
Infrastructure											
Base school that will auspice the program and act as an administrative base											
Independent space that is participant friendly that will be the program office and 'home base' for participants											
Process and Systems											
Detailed Operations Manual developed and finalised											
Clear referral guidelines that identify criteria for participating students											
Monitoring and evaluation systems and tools in place and implemented (including SDQ surveys, follow-up with past participants, and a database)											

Figure 8: Draft workplan for ONS expansion



Appendix A Evaluations of Operation Newstart

A.1 Operation Newstart Shepparton

A recent evaluation of the Operation Newstart Shepparton by The Nous Group found that the program has had a very positive impact on participants. Some of the key changes that the evaluation identified include:

- A positive effect on participant's behaviour and their ability to relate to parents, peers and teachers
- An increase in participants' overall happiness levels, self-esteem and health awareness
- A significant impact on participants' awareness of career pathways and their ability to gain employment

A Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of the Shepparton program indicates a social return of \$3.68 for every dollar invested in the program. This is largely attributable to improved educational and vocational training outcomes for participants which result in higher lifetime earnings.

A.2 Operation Newstart Western

An evaluation of Operation Newstart Western (ONW) in 2006 also found that the program had a significant positive effect on participants, including:²⁶

- Participants experience a significant improvement in self-esteem and self reliance, and a decrease in depressive symptoms
- Parents and teachers reported participants having fewer behavioural problems following the program
- Parents report improved social and interpersonal skills following the program
- Students who have completed ONW (80%) demonstrated significantly better employment and training / apprenticeship outcomes than those students (20%) who dropped out of the program early
- Comparisons between young people who did not complete ONW and graduates of the ONW program found that some two years post-program, graduates made significantly less court appearances and had fewer convictions
- Participants who returned to school after ONW demonstrated improved attitudes towards their school and teachers, less behavioural problems, and significantly less absenteeism.

²⁶ Wendy Bunston and John Dileo (2006), Operation Newstart Western: Progress + Evaluation Report 1999 – 2006



Appendix B Further Socio-economic need data

Region	Resident population	Students in years 7-12 in Govt schools ²⁷	Est. resident indigenous population	% of pop. born overseas
	(2008)	(2009)	(2008)	(2006)
Geelong	172,300	4,603	0.8%	17.2%
Ballarat	94,088	5,157	1.1%	8.2%
Shepparton	89,995	3,432	1.2%	6.0%
Bendigo	78,531	3,883 ²⁸	1.3%	13.8%
Latrobe Valley	49,387	3,458	1.2%	3.7%
Mildura	49,280	2,675	3.2%	9.1%
Wodonga	48,926	1,447 ²⁹	4.1%	11.3%
Warrnambool	32,712	2,743 ³⁰	1.4%	6.1%

²⁷ This includes students in surrounding satellite towns.

²⁸ 50% of the total enrolments at Wodonga Middle Years College (a 3-10 school) and Maryborough Education Centre (a P-12 school) have been excluded in this total.

²⁹ 60% of the total enrolments at Weeroona College Bendigo (a P-10 school) have been excluded in this total.

³⁰ 50% of the total enrolments at Terang College and Timboon P-12 School (P-12 schools) have been excluded in this total.

Appendix C Overview of each regional centre

Further background details for each of the centres identified as possible targets are outlined below in order of the assessment score they received in Table 5 above.

C.1 Geelong

Geelong is a region of medium need with a large student population. Plans for an Operation Newstart in Geelong are already well underway and the program is due to launch in 2011.

Resident population	Students in years 7-12 in Govt schools	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage	Est. resident indigenous population	% of pop. born overseas
172,300	4,603	976	0.8%	17.2%

Table 9: Key indicators for Geelong

C.1.1 Level of need

Geelong is an area of moderate high socioeconomic disadvantage. Its score on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage of 976 sits just below the state average of 982. Geelong is home to a high percentage (17.2%) of citizens born overseas.

C.1.2 Target population

There is a more than ample student population size in the greater Geelong region for an Operation Newstart to be sustainable. There are over 4,600 students enrolled in government schools between years 7 and 12. The attendance rates at these schools are relatively high and the population of indigenous students is low. Two schools in the region have ICSEA scores below the average of 1,000.

Name	Suburb	Year range	Total enrolments	Attendance rate	Indigenous students	ICSEA ³¹
Corio Bay Senior College	Corio	10-12	298	92%	4%	952
Flinders Peak Secondary College	Corio	7-10	142	83%	2%	954
Western Heights Secondary College	Hamlyn Heights	7-12	1213	90%	1%	1,013
Lara Secondary College	Lara (17km away)	7-12	812	89%	1%	1,017

³¹ The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) enables meaningful comparisons to be made across schools. The variables that make up ICSEA include socio-economic characteristics of the small areas where students live (in this case an ABS census collection district), as well as whether a school is in a regional or remote area, and the proportion of Indigenous students enrolled at the school. The average ICSEA value is 1000. Most schools have an ICSEA score between 900 and 1100.



Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College	Geelong	7-12	961	90%	1%	1,035
Bellarine Secondary College	Drysdale (20km away)	7-12	1177	90%	1%	1,052

Table 10: State schools in Geelong and surrounding towns

C.1.3 Local stakeholder support

Local stakeholder support for Operation Newstart is high. A working group to establish a program in Geelong is already well advanced and the set up and facilitator training phases are due to occur in term 4 of this year.



C.2 Ballarat

Greater Ballarat is a region of relatively high socio-economic disadvantage and high crime rates. It has a large student population and strong support from the regional DEECD office for an Operation Newstart program.

Resident population	Students in years 7-12 in Govt schools	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage	Est. resident indigenous population	% of pop. born overseas
94,088	5,157	965	1.1%	8.2%

Table 11: Key indicators for Ballarat

C.2.1 Level of need

Ballarat’s score of 965 on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage places it in the less disadvantaged half of the possible target cities. Ballarat’s crime rates per capita are well above the state averages across all categories of crime.

C.2.2 Target population

The number students enrolled in government high schools in and around Ballarat is substantial. Only one schools in the region (Sebastopol College) has an ICSEA score below the average of 1,000.

Students in the Grampians region are not expelled from school and the regional DEECD office works with schools and local agencies to develop a personalised program for students that are suspended from school.

Name	Suburb	Year range	Total enrolments	Attendance rate	Indigenous students	ICSEA
Sebastopol College	Sebastopol	7-12	986	89%	3%	972
Ballarat Secondary College	Ballarat East	7-12	1189	87%	5%	1,011
Ballarat High School	Lake Gardens	7-12	1395	94%	1%	1,027
Mount Clear College	Mount Clear	7-12	1100	91%	1%	1,042
Daylesford Secondary College	Daylesford (42km away)	7-12	487	91%	1%	1,067

Table 12: Government schools in Ballarat and surrounding towns

C.2.3 Local stakeholder support

The regional Grampians office of DEECD is a “strong advocate” of Operation Newstart, as it believes there is a “significant cohort” of young people that would benefit from the program. Staff at the DEECD office have expressed their willingness to talk further about the program and to arranges meeting with schools in the Ballarat region.



C.3 Bendigo

Greater Bendigo is a region of relatively high disadvantage, average crime rates and a large overseas born population. There is strong local support for Operation Newstart and preliminary discussions are underway to start a program.

Resident population	Students in years 7-12 in Govt schools	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage	Est. resident indigenous population	% of pop. born overseas
78,531	3,883 ³²	958	1.3%	13.8%

Table 13: Key indicators for Bendigo

C.3.1 Level of need

Bendigo is an area of high disadvantage with a score of 958 on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage. Bendigo’s crime rates per capita are below the state averages.

There is a range of programs and services for young people in Bendigo, but there are few that target those in the third tier of vulnerability (see Figure 1 above). The regional DEECD office also states that flexible learning options are virtually non-existent” in Bendigo.

C.3.2 Target population

The number of students enrolled in years 7 to 12 at government schools in the Greater Bendigo region is marginally higher than in Shepparton (3,883 versus 3,432). Three of the five schools in the region have ICSEA scores below 1,000, and two schools have attendance rates below 90%.

Name	Suburb	Year range	Total enrolments	Attendance rate	Indigenous students	ICSEA
Eaglehawk Secondary College	Eaglehawk	7-10	599	89%	8%	977
Maryborough Education Centre	Maryborough (70km away)	P-12	1,200	87%	2%	987
Weeroona College Bendigo	Bendigo	P-10	805	91%	3%	997
Castlemaine Secondary College	Castlemaine (39km away)	7-12	884	88%	1%	1,020
Bendigo South East 7-10 Secondary College	Bendigo	7-10	1281	92%	1%	1,058

Table 14: Government schools in Bendigo and surrounding towns

C.3.3 Local stakeholder support

DEECD staff at the Loddon Mallee region office are highly supportive of Operation Newstart, and they have provided seed funding for a program to start next year. The

³² 50% of the total enrolments at Wodonga Middle Years College (a 3-10 school) and Maryborough Education Centre (a P-12 school) have been excluded in this total.



DEECD office is particularly keen for the program’s main objective to be encouraging students to go back into regular schooling post-program.

Local DEECD staff have also suggested that the program include Maryborough and Castlemaine, which are 70 and 39 kilometres away from Bendigo respectively. The issue of travel could be overcome by having have Castlemaine and/or Maryborough specific programs in one term.

There are opportunities for an Operation Newstart program in Bendigo to link with the Goldfields LLEN to broker partnerships, and with Youth Connections to provide additional support and services to students.

It is likely that office for the Bendigo program will be in a venue provided by the Salvation Army.

C.4 LaTrobe Valley

The LaTrobe Valley is an area of very high disadvantage, high crime rates and a relatively large student population. Despite a failed attempt to run a local Operation Newstart program several years ago, there is still support for the program from key stakeholders.

Resident population	Students in years 7-12 in Govt schools	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage	Est. resident indigenous population	% of pop. born overseas
49,387	3,458	932	1.2%	3.7%

Table 15: Key indicators for the Latrobe Valley

C.4.1 Level of need

The LaTrobe Valley is a region of very high disadvantage, with the equal lowest score of 932 on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage. The LaTrobe Valley’s crime rates per capita are well above state averages across all categories, with crimes against the person almost double the average (1,588 versus 819 per 100,00 population). The valley has relatively small populations of indigenous and overseas born citizens.

C.4.2 Target population

The valley’s three high schools are large, resulting in a total of 3458 enrolled students. This number is virtually identical to the population in Bendigo. Of the three schools, only Kurnai College has an ICSEA score below 1,000 and only Lowanna College has attendance rates below 90%.

Name	Suburb	Year range	Total enrolments	Attendance rate	Indigenous students	ICSEA
Kurnai College	Churchill	7-12	1138	96%	3%	985
Lowanna College	Newborough	7-12	1054	86%	3%	1004
Traralgon College	Traralgon	7-12	1266	96%	3%	1007

Table 16: Government schools in the Latrobe Valley



C.4.3 Local stakeholder support

An Operation Newstart program was established in the LaTrobe Valley several years ago, but it only survived for two terms. The program was suspended following problems that arose when siblings were taken together on an outdoor camp.

Despite these issues, there is still support from DEECD’s regional Gippsland office. Staff from Operation Newstart Victoria have recently started talks with the DEECD Regional Director.

C.5 Mildura

Mildura is an area of very high disadvantage, high crime rates and a moderate sized student population.

Resident population	Students in years 7-12 in Govt schools	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage	Est. resident indigenous population	% of pop. born overseas
49,280	2,675	932	3.2%	9.1%

Table 17: Key indicators for Mildura

C.5.1 Level of need

Mildura is a region of very high disadvantage, with the equal lowest score of 932 on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage. Mildura’s crime rates per capita are also well above state averages across all categories. Like Shepparton, Mildura’s economy is highly dependent on agriculture and the region therefore has large numbers of seasonal workers and cycles of high unemployment.

The Northern Mallee LLEN has been a key player in the Schools-Community Water Resource Project, which reconnects young people with learning while strengthening community connectedness. The LLEN has also conducted a major needs analysis and have an excellent understanding of the issues facing young people. In a state parliament hearing, the director of the LLEN stated that the percentage of disengaged young people is far greater in Mildura than the rest of the Loddon-Mallee or for Victoria. Mildura “has an issue with young people disengaging altogether, not going on to education, not going on to training and not going into employment”.³³

C.5.2 Target population

The high school student population in Greater Mildura is lower than in Shepparton (3,432 versus 2,675), which may indicate that an Operation Newstart based in Mildura may not be sustainable over the longer term.

The students in Mildura fall in the high need bracket, with three of the four schools having ICSEA scores below 1,000 and two schools having attendance rates below 90%. One of the schools, Chaffey Secondary College, has a very high percentage of indigenous students (13 percent).

³³http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/rrc/disadvantage_and_inequality/transcripts_of_evidence/R.Broadhead.pdf



Recently interviews with 110 of Mildura’s 250 early school leavers from 2008 found that relative to the rest of the state: ³⁴

- Fewer students took up apprenticeships
- More students took up traineeships
- Less students took up full-time employment
- More students took up part-time employment.

Name	Suburb	School type	Year range	Total enrolments	Attendance rate	Indigenous students	ICSEA
Chaffey Secondary College	Mildura	Secondary	7-10	568	82%	13%	928
Mildura Senior College	Mildura	Secondary	11-12	772	95%	3%	972
Irymple Secondary College	Irymple	Secondary	7-10	738	87%	3%	985
Red Cliffs Secondary College	Red Cliffs	Secondary	7-12	597	90%	1%	1002

Table 18: Government schools in Mildura

C.5.3 Local stakeholder support

The Loddon Mallee DEECD office has stated an Operation Newstart program in Mildura would be “worth exploring”. There is also a possibility that the program could link with the Youth Connections program run by the Northern Mallee LLEN and local Council.

C.6 Wodonga

Wodonga is an unsuitable Operation Newstart candidate town as it has moderate socio-economic disadvantage, low crime rates and a small student population.

Region	Resident population	Students in years 7-12 in Govt schools	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage	Est. resident indigenous population	% of pop. born overseas
Wodonga	48,926	1,447 ³⁵	976	4.1%	11.3%

Table 19: Key indicators for Wodonga

C.6.1 Level of need

Wodonga is the least disadvantaged candidate town along with Geelong, with a score of 976 on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage. Wodonga’s crime rates are well below the state average.

³⁴http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/rrc/disadvantage_and_inequality/transcripts_of_evidence/R.Broadhead.pdf

³⁵ 60% of the total enrolments at Weeroona College Bendigo (a P-10 school) have been excluded in this total.



C.6.2 Target population

Under the current DEECD funding arrangements, an Operation Newstart program in Wodonga will not have access to students in neighbouring Albury. This limits the number of possible students in years 7 to 12 to approximately 1,447, which is less than half the number in Shepparton.

Name	Suburb	Year range	Total enrolments	Attendance rate	Indigenous students	ICSEA
Wodonga Middle Years College	Wodonga	3-10	1066	94%	3%	999
Wodonga Senior Secondary College	Wodonga	10-12	914	92%	1%	1005

Table 20: Government schools in Wodonga

C.6.3 Local stakeholder support

The local DEECD regional office is aware of the Operation Newstart through its support for the Shepparton program. Local DEECD staff are willing discuss a program in Wodonga further.

C.7 Warrnambool

The Warrnambool region is an area of relatively high disadvantage, moderately high crime rates and a moderate sized student population. The local DEECD office is very supportive of the program.

Resident population	Students in years 7-12 in Govt schools	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage	Est. resident indigenous population	% of pop. born overseas
32,712	2,743 ³⁶	966	1.4%	6.1%

Table 21: Key indicators for Warrnambool

C.7.1 Level of need

Warrnambool is a region of relatively high disadvantage, with a score of 966 on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage. Warrnambool's per capita rates of crimes against the person and drug offences are well above the state averages. Warrnambool has relatively small populations of indigenous and overseas born citizens.

C.7.2 Target population

The relatively low number of students in Warrnambool may mean that Operation Newstart may not be sustainable in the long term. Greater Warrnambool has a year 7-12 student population of approximately 2,743, which is 700 less students than Shepparton. This total

³⁶ 50% of the total enrolments at Terang College and Timboon P-12 School (P-12 schools) have been excluded in this total.



also includes students in Terang and Timboon, which are 46 and 52 kilometres away from Warrnambool respectively.

All of the four schools in the region have ICSEA values over 1,000, and only two have attendance rates just below 90%.

Name	Suburb	Year range	Total enrolments	Attendance rate	Indigenous students	ICSEA
Warrnambool College	Warrnambool	7-12	937	88%	2%	1034
Brauer Secondary College	Warrnambool	7-12	1313	89%	2%	1038
Terang College	Terang (46km away)	P-12	407	90%	1%	1039
Timboon P-12 School	Timboon (52km away)	P-12	578	91%	1%	1076

Table 22: Government schools in Warrnambool and surrounding towns

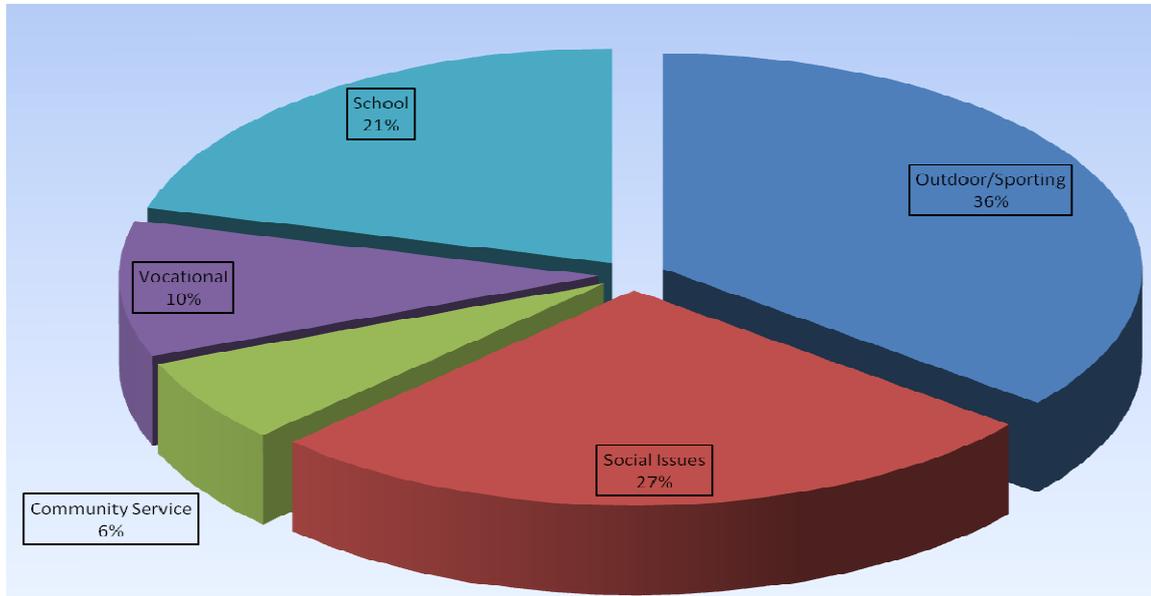
C.7.3 Local stakeholder support

Local DEECD staff would be “very happy” to support an Operation Newstart program in the Warrnambool region. The DEECD staff are also willing to organise meetings with the Assistant Principals and Well-being staff at the local schools.

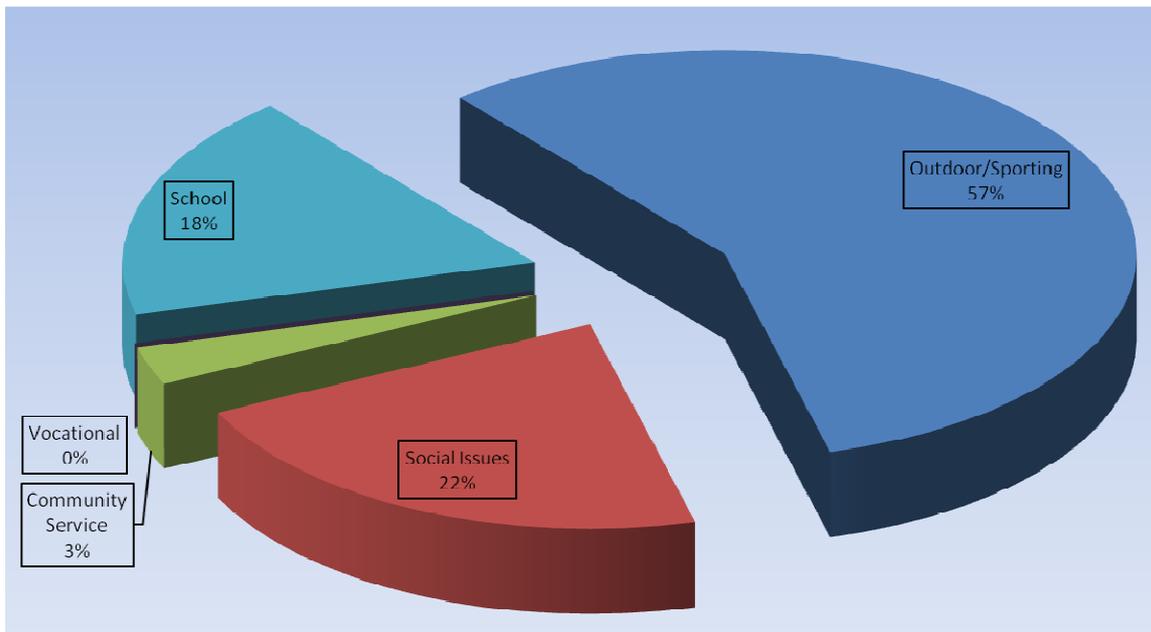


Appendix D Breakdown of program activities

D.1.1 Operation Newstart Shepparton

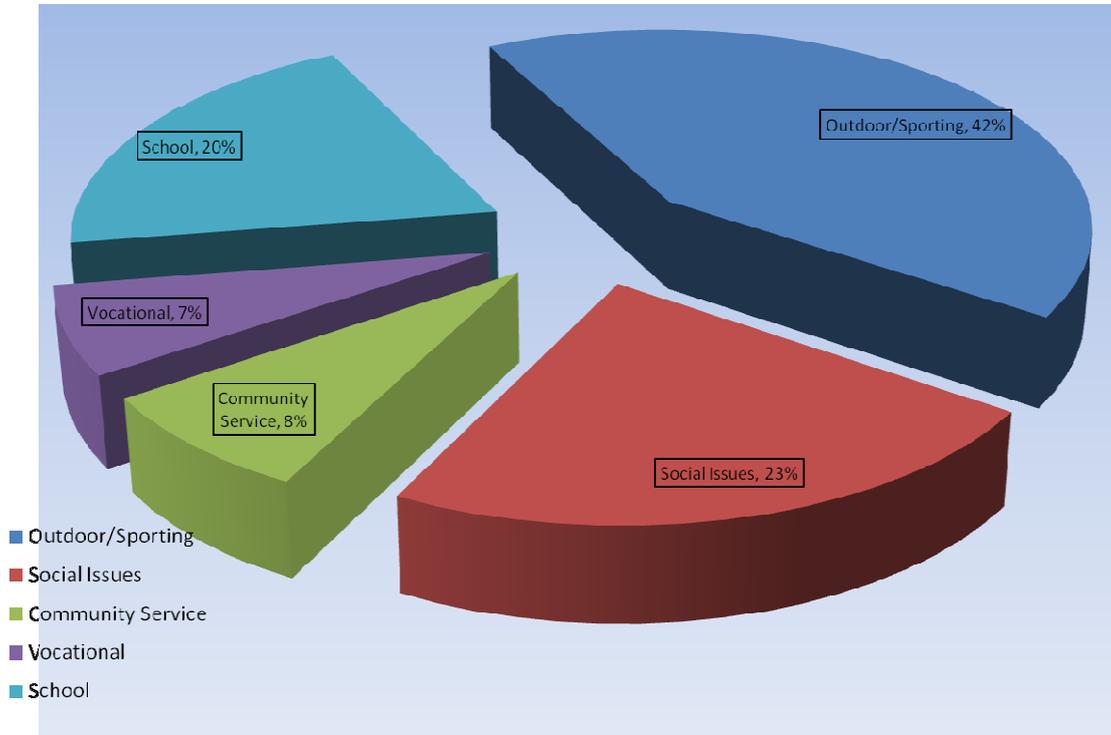


D.1.2 Operation Newstart Southern





D.1.3 Operation Newstart South Eastern



D.1.4 Operation Newstart Northern

