Over the last four decades the educational component of government initiated but developer delivered urban developments in Australia have seen a gradual shift from the provision of ‘schools’ to the delivery of ‘education services for all’ in a community. Such examples include:

- New forms of collaboration between schools and early childhood education and care providers (Mawson Lakes SA, Caroline Springs VIC);
- New forms of collaboration between government and non-government schools and local government (Golden Grove SA, Caroline Springs VIC, Forest Lake QLD);
- Close attention to the contribution of education services to the development and maintenance of social connectedness in communities (Golden Grove SA, Mawson Lakes SA, Caroline Springs VIC, Springfield Lakes QLD);
- Close attention to the connection between education provisions and economic needs and opportunities in a community (Ropes Crossing NSW, Caroline Springs VIC);
- New forms of collaboration between schools and tertiary education and training providers (Varsity Lakes QLD, Mawson Lakes SA, Caroline Springs VIC); and the
• Establishment of a focal point within the community for education services management, coordination and delivery (Mawson Lakes SA, Caroline Springs VIC).

New service delivery models, to meet the needs of people moving into the communities aim to deliver more and better educational services within existing funding arrangements. This approach has produced innovative educational solutions which have improved the quality of facilities, enhanced their cost efficiency and broadened the scope of learning and services available to students.

A key objective of this approach is to increase the critical mass of facilities, increase community use after hours and to enhance lifelong learning opportunities for these communities. Some of the South Australian examples—West Lakes, Golden Grove and Mawson Lakes—illustrate many of these features.

**WEST LAKES**

West Lakes (1970–1992) involved the development of 650 hectares of coastal swampland and wasteland, 12 kilometres west of Adelaide. Key objectives for this development included the creation of a sense of belonging, greener open spaces, fully planned communities, quality housing options, business prosperity, attention to detail and respect for the environment.

Despite excellent partnerships with state and local government and flexibility of the planning framework, West Lakes was inhibited to some degree by traditional models and thinking related to education and community planning which existed in the 1970s and 1980s. The prevailing view of government at the time was to wait until a community was established before determining the nature and extent of education and community facilities required. For example, it was standard practice not to consider public schooling until there were at least 250 school-aged children in a community. Families moving into new communities had to take their children to nearby schools in surrounding suburbs.

Consequently, from an education and community perspective, West Lakes failed to deliver any innovations. While a school was originally planned for West Lakes, this was never built because the education department considered the surrounding schools had sufficient surplus capacity to cope with the educational needs of school age children in the West Lakes community. Furthermore, no provisions were made for post-school training, adult or community education.

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2 Delfin Property Group West Lakes: A Story Worth Telling, Adelaide.
GOLDEN GROVE

Golden Grove (1984–2003) is a 1,230 hectare site 22 kilometres north-east of Adelaide. This was the first joint venture between a government agency (the South Australian government’s SA Urban Lands Trust, SAULT, and a private property development company, Delfin. Many of the initiatives implemented continue to shape urban community development planning across Australia. The Golden Grove development provided a planning framework for:

- Improving the lifestyles of people living in new communities on the fringes of cities;
- Providing shared public and private education and community facilities of a high standard, when required by the community;
- Enhancing the natural landscape of a region through the design of individual villages and their surrounds; and
- Building a strong social inclusion agenda, including public housing, public and private schools and welcome events for new residents.

The early provision of community facilities, including a district town centre and a comprehensive range of public and private schools sharing facilities was revolutionary at the time. Led by SAULT—now the Land Management Corporation—a process was put in place with the government and the non-government sector to develop a community planning document.

This document, the first of its kind, provided the timing and framework for the provision of social, health, education and community facilities. It required a special vision and an innovative financial model which included the joint venture funding and the provision of community facilities so that schools, transport, retail and recreational amenity could be provided up front and as required.

Prior to Golden Grove, education facilities had typically been provided in new regional areas by the government, with private schools arriving after the area matured. This made planning for regional facilities difficult and led to less than optimum opportunities for the student community. For these reasons a combined Education Services Planning Committee was formed to consider innovative approaches to shared education and community facilities based on more efficient use of such facilities, less land uptake and greater value for no additional cost.

Five educational sites were selected—four for primary education and one for secondary. In each location there was at least one government and one non-government school, together with community service providers and community recreational facilities. Interim facilities were provided by the joint venture to facilitate the early provision of education services and schools were encouraged to share facilities—including ovals, staff rooms, tuck shops, libraries and community sporting facilities.

“Many of the initiatives implemented continue to shape urban community development planning across Australia.”

Dr Stan Salagaras

The highlight is the internationally recognised shared secondary/community complex which provides education services for some 2,500 students from three secondary schools—a government, an Anglican-Uniting Church and a Catholic College. While operating as separate entities the schools are joined together by walkways and share an extensive range of specialist education facilities for senior students including a single library, science laboratories, technology facilities, music and drama suites as well as quality home economics facilities and art studio service rooms.

The schools also share with the community indoor sporting facilities and the performing arts theatre in the adjacent multipurpose community centre, which is owned and managed by the local council. All of these facilities are more elaborate than any of the schools could build alone.

Further collaboration has now occurred with the schools sharing resources and teachers to provide year 11 and year 12 students across all three schools with a broader range of curriculum offerings.

**MAWSON LAKES**

The latest such project in South Australia is Mawson Lakes (1998–2010). This 620 hectare greenfields site 12 kilometres north of Adelaide builds on to the achievements of Golden Grove with a vision to create a fully integrated socially, environmentally and economically sustainable 21st-century urban community.

Established in proximity to an existing state supported technology park and the University of South Australia’s northern campus it is a true mixed use development with residential villages, town centre, business enterprises, retail, educational and community facilities, landscaped neighbourhood parks and meeting places.

Education has been a key element in the success of Mawson Lakes with a wide range of accessible and seamless educational services—formal as well as informal—which provide for the continued learning and development for people of all ages from birth to retirement. It has provided a strong foundation for social cohesion and community integration through an coordinated approach to education service delivery.

The focus on creating a learning community supports the building of the community’s social capital by:

- Addressing the learning needs of the whole community;
- Making optimal use of new information and communications technologies;
- Developing partnerships between education, business and community groups;
• Establishing innovative funding arrangements;
• Generating alternative ownership and governance structures; and
• Creating an education services model that can be transferred to other communities.

Mawson Lakes provides the opportunity for learning for anyone, at anytime and anyplace. One of the key vehicles through which this is being achieved is the Mawson Centre—a state of the art, innovative learning, cultural and community facility in the heart of the town centre. The centre is owned and managed by the University of South Australia, the City of Salisbury and the Department of Education and Children’s Services on land provided by the developers and with the support of a significant grant from the South Australian government—a truly collaborative partnership.

It provides access to education and training services for:

• Students at pre-school, primary, secondary and university levels;
• Residents interested in adult and community education programs;
• Workers and businesses looking at developing their skills and capacities;
• The many people from the surrounding communities who come to Mawson Lakes to learn.

Mawson Lakes has provided several important lessons about the role of education services in community creation. These include:

1. Adopting a ‘services-delivery operating model’ driven by the educational and training needs of learners in the community, by the demands of emerging industries and by the opportunities new technologies provide—not by the building of facilities, as is usually the case in new communities.

2. Adopting a fine-grain model of education by developing ‘the entire community as a school’—not ‘the school as self-contained community’. With access to 21st century technology communities can learn in a variety of places, schools, university, work, home, town centres, neighbourhoods or elsewhere, so a network of multiple learning settings needs to be created which maximise these opportunities.

3. Establishing learning partnerships/alliances and new resource models between state and local government, private and public education providers, non-government service providers, business and community organisations to underpin a community’s learning needs. A key strategy to facilitate coordinated planning and delivery of services to new communities has been the secondment of education and community officers from state government authorities.

“EDUCATION IS A CRITICAL ELEMENT IN SUSTAINING NEW COMMUNITIES.”

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4. Recognising that education is not just a service but is a business crucial to the success and economic sustainability of communities. Education creates employment opportunities and provides vocational and job training for school leavers or the unemployed.

5. Recognising that educational services need to have the built-in capacity to grow and develop—they cannot remain static. They need to be 'fitted with' those elements required to provide quality educational services for today and, at the same time, be flexible and able to deliver educational services into the future. 

**EDUCATION SERVICES IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

Education is a critical element in sustaining new communities. The approach summarised above represents a significant change in the way education services are delivered. We live in an era characterised by change—change is occurring faster, more dramatically and less predictably than ever before. But what is clear is that successful communities in the 21st century will have a diverse economy, strong links with knowledge-based organisations and a well-educated workforce. The immense changes occurring in our society impact on our schools and educational institutions, forcing us to reconsider the way education services are being delivered.

These 21st century educational models for the knowledge society are supported by such academics as Professor Barry McGaw, past CEO of the OECD Education Directorate and a globally respected education policy expert,\(^4\) together with a group of other eminent Australian leaders. They are also based on some earlier work by the OECD Centre for Effective Learning Environments (formerly the Program on Educational Building) which is summarised in ‘Under One Roof’.\(^5\) Delfin has examined its own practical experience and taken into account the growing global consensus about education expressed by groups such as the OECD, Tony Blair’s government in the UK, CEFPI, the Council for Educational Facility Planning International, in the USA, and commissioned independent research in a number of universities. Gradually a new education services model has evolved which, not surprisingly, differs from the education service model appropriate 50 years ago and still operating today. 

**THE EDUCATION SERVICES MODEL\(^6\) HAS THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:**

1. A service that meets the diverse and changing needs for every person, organisation and enterprise in the community

The model proposes that no one provider can meet the diverse and changing needs for education in any 21st century community. Multiple providers will continue to exist and new providers may emerge. Collaboration, joint ventures and formal partnerships between education providers at all levels and across sectors will ensure the high degree of coordination necessary to cater for community learning needs and close the gaps that would otherwise exist in the range of services needed. Education will be promoted as a core element of the life of the community through a year-round learning program with events and celebrations of learning.

2. A service that contributes to the sustainable economic development of the local community

Education is a business in its own right making direct economic contributions to the community, providing jobs and creating wealth. The model proposes an education service that contributes to the economic sustainability of the local community at various levels. At a personal level every member of the community will have access to education and information services aimed at increasing individual employability through the acquisition of appropriate knowledge, skills and understandings. At the enterprise level every business—from small, home-based enterprises to global corporations—will have access to high-quality education and information services. Close partnerships between business and education will help ensure that gaps in education are identified and closed.

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6. Implemented by Delfin Lend Lease
3. A service that contributes to the social connectedness of the community

The model proposes that education service providers work to build all forms of social capital. While retaining the distinctive identities that enable individual providers to continue to build strong social capital among their students, they will also cooperate in ways that gives students rich connections with others outside the more limited environment of their own providers. This will create opportunities for stronger ‘bridging’ social capital to be built in communities. Beyond this connection between education providers and employers, engagement of the local community and socio-cultural events will be promoted and delivered to build a sense of belonging, a shared experience and social cohesion.

To enable these characteristics to be developed and sustained, the new model will also require the following enabling characteristics:

4. A form of governance that enables the community to shape the education service that fits its needs

The model requires a form of governance that enables the community to shape the education service that fits its needs. Communities need an education agency, for example a local education council, to take an overall view of the community’s education service needs with the power to negotiate with potential providers. The council can coordinate local community education services across a range of providers, including public, partly publicly funded and private providers. It will be accountable:

“THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF COMMUNITIES DEPENDS FUNDAMENTALLY ON STRONGER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT ARE RESPONSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.”

Dr Stan Salagaras
• To the local community and local business for the range and quality of service provision, forward planning and measurement of outcomes; and
• To central authorities, including the ministers responsible for the range and quality of education services, local government and relevant systemic authorities.

5. Resource arrangements that ensure efficient, high-quality provision

Finally, the model requires a new set of resource arrangements shaped at the community level to maximise the efficiency and quality of service provision. This can be achieved if communities:

• Define the existing or likely provision of education services, based upon the extant conventional planning models;
• Estimate likely local demand for education services;
• Identify gaps that would be unlikely to be met via conventional provisions; and
• Determine how the savings in capital and recurrent expenditure might be deployed.

It should be noted that this paper only provides a brief overview of the new education services model. More detail exists including the measurement criteria for determining whether the model delivers the improved outcomes sought. Some aspects of the new model have already been implemented in communities over the past 20 years, notably Mawson Lakes and Caroline Springs. The complete model will be trialled in Australian communities over the next few years.

CONCLUSIONS

These developments have shown that people prefer to live in communities where they can access quality education and community services where the focus has been on creating the foundation to enable the social capital of a community to grow. The social, economic and environmental sustainability of communities depends fundamentally on stronger education, training and community services that are responsive and accessible to all.

The delivery of education services has evolved since the early creation of the West Lakes community, where education was not a core consideration, to Golden Grove with its innovative shared school model, to the 21st century Mawson Lakes with its focus on integrated education services for all.

The new education services model not only meets the diverse and changing characteristics of every person, organisation and enterprise in the community, but also contributes to the sustainable economic development and social connectedness of the local community. This approach represents a significant change in the way in which education services are delivered, but this is the way of the future if we are to attain the aspiration of improved social, education and community outcomes for a 21st century knowledge-based society.