



Education and social inclusion

Submission to the Victorian Government's
Review of Education and Training Legislation

Brotherhood of St Laurence

67 Brunswick Street
Fitzroy Vic 3065
Ph (03) 9483 1183
www.bsl.org.au

May 2005

Summary

In this submission, the Brotherhood of St Laurence focuses on issues that relate to social inclusion and education and that have been drawn from our research and service experience.

A key role of education and training is to promote social inclusion in our society. Performance of the education system and individual schools should be assessed by how well they include rather than exclude students. Our three main concerns are:

- 1 The need for *'free'* education so that children and young people can participate fully in the education offered and not be excluded because of costs
- 2 The need for an education system that can respond to the *diversity* of young people so that all can be included
- 3 The need for *choices of pathways* so that children and young people can move between different parts of the education and training system and remain included.

We recommend that these three areas are explicitly included in the guiding principles of any new legislation.

We support VCOSS's call that the key principles of universality and equity and ensuring 12 years of learning should underpin the new legislation in Victoria.

Introduction

The Brotherhood of St Laurence

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) is a Melbourne-based community organisation that has been working to reduce poverty in Australia since the 1930s. Our vision is 'an Australia free of poverty'. Our work includes direct service provision to people in need, the development of social enterprises to address inequality, research to better understand the causes and effects of poverty in Australia, and the development of policy solutions at both national and local levels. We aim to work with others to create:

- an inclusive society in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect
- a compassionate and just society which challenges inequity
- connected communities in which we share responsibility for each other
- a sustainable society for our generation and future generations.

Education and training are central to the inclusive society for which we are working. They are crucial both in their own right and also as pathways into employment and out of poverty.

The Brotherhood has provided a range of educational and training services over many years, from preschool to vocational, and has also undertaken research and policy development in the area of education.

We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the Victorian Government's Review of Education and Training Legislation.

Our current educational and training services include:

- HIPPY – (home-instruction program for pre-school youngsters) an early childhood enrichment program for 4 and 5-year-olds and their parents
- The Cottage and Craigieburn Family Day Care Services, which both provide early childhood education
- Greater Dandenong Early Childhood Psychology Service
- Homework Program, Fitzroy – tutoring support
- Transition Program – an early intervention program to assist young people to engage with school or make a smooth transition to other training or employment options.
- Parents as Career Transitions Supports (PACTS) – empowering parents to help their children making career and transition choices
- JPET – case management of young people aged 15 to 21, who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, leaving the juvenile justice system, wards of state or refugees, to assist gaining access to education, training and employment.
- Vocational training – as a Registered Training Organisation, the BSL delivers accredited training through pre-employment programs, providing people with a nationally recognised qualification and the opportunity to continue learning through a traineeship or other educational options. Programs include: Furniture Works Frankston, Green Corps Frankston, Job Network, STEP group training, Transition to Work
- Education Coordinator, who works to bring the understanding of poverty and exclusion to students, student teachers, teachers and teacher educators, through workshops and lectures, including work on curriculum design.

- Our recent research with a focus on education includes the Life Chances Study, a longitudinal study following the complexities of lives of children in low income and more affluent families as they grow up (Taylor & Fraser 2003); research on school costs (MacDonald 2003); and evaluations of our programs including PACTS (Perkins & Peterson 2004).

Guiding principles

We submit that the guiding principles for Victorian government legislation about education and training should explicitly promote the importance of social inclusion and participation in the education system and in the wider society. The elements of social inclusion in education include enrolment, attendance, participation and learning opportunities.

Performance of the education system and individual schools should be assessed by how well they include rather than exclude students. Our three main concerns are:

- 1 The need for '*free*' education so that children and young people can participate fully in the education offered and are not excluded because of costs
- 2 The need for an education system that can respond to the *diversity* of young people so that all can be included
- 3 The need for *choices of pathways* so that children and young people can move between different parts of the education and training system and remain included.

The State Government's primary concern must be the provision of a public (government) education system that fully meets these three areas.

We recommend that these three areas are explicitly included in the guiding principles of any new legislation.

We support VCOSS's call that the key principles of universality and equity and ensuring 12 years of learning should underpin the new legislation in Victoria.

The three areas are discussed further below.

The role of education

Education has a key role in our vision of an Australia free of poverty. The most important aspect of education is young people, their learning and the enhancement of their capacity to embrace the society which they inherit, to shape and improve on the structures they find themselves in, and to examine the deeds and values of their forebears including us. Young people require the opportunity to inquire, to investigate practically and philosophically, to reflect and respond as they explore the possibilities for their and our futures.

All students should have equal opportunity and access to best-quality education. For this to happen, there should be distribution of resources according to need in order to ensure equal opportunities. The debate is not only about private and public schools it is also about fairness and justice. Resources are needed for designing the best curriculum and for the development of teachers for the benefit of all learners. Education involves a partnership with all sections of society and particularly parents. Education is not just about skills but is also about forming good citizens who will help to create a fair and just Australia (and world) that is free from poverty on all levels.

1. The need for free education

New legislation should enshrine the provision of free education as a guiding principle. While many aspects of education have changed over the years, children continue to miss out because of school costs.

Australia's international obligations to provide free education are spelled out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to which Australia is a signatory. Article 13 provides that states which are signatories agree that:

education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity' ...

and recognise that the full realisation of this right be achieved by ensuring that:

- a) Primary education ... be compulsory and free to all;
- b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, **shall be** (writer's emphasis) made generally available and accessible to all by appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of **free** (writer's emphasis) education (Durbach & Moran 2004, pp.5–6).

In Australia, in spite of the nation's overall wealth, many families on low incomes are excluded from fully participating in the education system. The Brotherhood of St Laurence believes unequal access to education is a key social contributor to poverty and has developed a number of programs (see p.3) to increase the capacity of families on low incomes to benefit from the education system. Our research and services experience shows many low-income Victorian families face difficulties in their endeavours to provide the best possible education for their children. They value highly a 'good education' but are frustrated and even angry at the costs of obtaining it and the effect of unequal access to the benefits of schooling.

In spite of considerable government expenditure on education, costs present a problem for those on low incomes at all levels of education, from pre-school through primary and secondary to vocational and university levels. Even within government schools, educational expenses are a constant problem for families on low incomes. Other studies of families on low incomes confirm our findings (Weaving et al. 2004).

Costs of education can prevent young people attending school or training at all or, if they are attending, can prevent them from fully participating in the education offered.

Quality early childhood education provides an essential foundation for further education and learning. Children who cannot access early childhood education because of cost are also those least likely to fully participate in the opportunities offered through the school system.

Social exclusion within school can be related to costs which many families on low income cannot afford, including payment of fees and levies, clothing and uniforms, books, school excursions and camps. Computers constitute a relatively new area for possible exclusion. Government education is not, in practice, the 'free' education that many people strongly believe it should be to ensure all children in Australia have full access to schooling.

Issues of contention in the current 'free' education include the 'voluntary' levies at government schools which some schools treat as compulsory and embarrass parents and students about failure to pay. The distinction between core and non-core educational costs is far from clear or helpful given the breadth of educational experience which is in students' best interests.

The effects of missing out at school can be profound. Research has shown students' participation in extracurricular activities has a strong effect on a range of educational outcomes. Finn (1989) argued that students who regularly participate in extracurricular activities develop a sense of 'belonging' to their school community, in that they are a conspicuous part of the school and that the school is an important part of their own lives.

Disengagement from school—indeed, anything that reduces the children’s positive experience of school—is likely to lead to poorer academic performance and early school leaving. These in turn limit life chances and may lead to low income in the next generation.

Life Chances Study

Our longitudinal Life Chances Study of children born in Melbourne in 1990 showed the cumulative effect of low income on children’s educational opportunities (Taylor & Fraser 2003). School costs were a problem for half the low-income families (including half the low-income families with children at government schools), despite the Education Maintenance Allowance and ‘free’ state education. Over a quarter of the 11 and 12-year-olds in low-income families had missed out on school activities because of costs in the past year. One mother commented:

Camp? They’ve never been with the school, we have never been able to afford it. They can’t take part in everything. It makes them and me feel bad.

Low-income parents often spoke of making arrangements with school to pay other costs off over time, for example, for camps. While this enabled the children to participate in the particular activity, some children were made very aware they were not paying ‘on the real day’.

The cost of uniform was an issue for low-income families. There is a view that uniform is helpful for low-income children as it means they do not have to compete with fellow students in wearing the latest fashion clothes. However, some families had difficulty in affording the correct uniform and both parents and children spoke of the embarrassment for children who lacked it: ‘They won’t go to school if they don’t match’.

Children who missed out on school excursions and camps because of costs felt ‘left out’, resentful or sad. Some children themselves chose not to go because they knew their parents could not afford the cost; they would say that they ‘didn’t really want to go’. The outcome was that not only did they miss out on a desired social and educational event, they were likely to be conspicuous at school while their peers were away.

Education costs survey

The Brotherhood of St Laurence surveyed 115 low-income families receiving education packs from a range of Victorian welfare agencies (MacDonald 2003); most of the families were reliant on Centrelink payments. The majority had difficulty meeting the costs of books, uniforms and excursions; some 87 per cent found books difficult to pay for, 95 per cent found the cost of uniforms difficult, and 88 per cent reported that excursions were difficult to afford. Over half had missed out on excursions (56 per cent) and uniforms (54 per cent) during 2002, and about one-third (32 per cent) had missed out on books. A further 22 per cent of respondents’ children had been unable to participate in some subjects due to the cost, while as many as one-third (32 per cent) reported that their children had not attended school at times due to the cost. Reasons for non-attendance included staying at home when an excursion could not be paid for, having no food or money for lunches, no petrol or money for bus fares, being unable to pay for swimming lessons, incorrect uniform or school levies being overdue.

One respondent summarised the views of many regarding issues of access and costs:

Free education – ha ha!! I think education costs are spiralling out of control even in the government schools. It is getting so expensive they’re forcing children from low-income families to miss out on education creating a bigger rift/gap between so called middle class/middle income families and low-income families.

Computers and the Internet in the home were an important resource that was unavailable to many families but which would enhance their children’s education experiences:

My child is in Year 9 next year, even though she's at a government school there is one class for the children with laptop computers and a different class for those without. How can they say the system is fair? In my opinion the children with the laptops will be far more computer literate than my child who does not even have a computer system to work on at home.

Some children were excluded from school activities if their parents have been unable to pay the charges and 'voluntary' levies:

For so called free education, it costs a fortune. My daughter had been excluded for not paying fees. She wasn't allowed to bring home what she cooked as fees were not paid.

Even though I have managed to pay for school books, uniforms and some excursions, my children still have missed some camps and excursions I would have preferred to have seen them attend.

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was inadequate to meet the costs of schooling for the families responding to this survey. It did not cover the basic expenses of schooling—uniforms, books and fees—and compounding the problem was the fact that the schools retained half of each families' entitlement therefore denying them choice over how they used it to meet their education expenses. As the principal initiative available to assist Victorian families to meet their educational costs, the adequacy of the EMA and the way that it is paid to families is an important area for further policy and program development.

Vocational education and training

The cost of vocational training is a further barrier faced by some young people in trying to complete their education and find a career.

The Brotherhood's Transition Program, which works with potential early school leavers, finds that cost of education is a definite barrier to young people completing their secondary education. This is particularly so as they are often unable to afford their desired subjects (such as VET subjects in schools) in post-compulsory years. In a climate where there can be significant disadvantage if young people do not complete their post-compulsory education, it is vital that barriers to completing education are minimised.

Equity of resources: federal and state funding

Current allocation of Commonwealth Government funding to schools compromises the fairness of our education system. The States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act 2000 provided generous funding support for private schools and especially for some of the wealthiest private schools. By 2004, government schools, which educate about 70 per cent of Australia's children, received only about one-third of Commonwealth education funding (Martin 2003). This is an extremely inequitable distribution of federal government resources, reinforces divisions based on wealth, and displays little commitment to building equitable educational outcomes for all young Australians.

The implications of inequitable federal funding for government schools include the need for increased state funding for government schools to address the inequity. Whatever calls private schools may have on state funding, it is essential that priority is given to a well-funded public education system that fully provides for all those who choose to attend.

2. Embracing diversity

New legislation should address how to be inclusive of diversity within the general principles guiding education policy.

Schools need to be learner-centred, with resources and learning options meeting the needs of individual participants. Schools and school programs should be open to all. Students and their families should be able to choose options that suit them.

Centrally developed generic ‘solutions’ will only have limited success, given the diversity of family, school, and personal circumstances of young people at school today. There needs to be sufficient flexibility for students to be able to pick and choose learning experience from a wide suite of options.

Key areas of diversity that need to be addressed in the provision of education include:

- disability
- Indigenous education
- refugee and migrant children
- rural and regional needs
- young people who are homeless and have no family support.

Indigenous education

Nationally, only 38 per cent of Indigenous children complete schooling, reflecting the racism, cultural chauvinism and poverty they face. Consequently, the unemployment rate for Indigenous people is more than three times higher than that of the non-Indigenous population, and the average income level for Indigenous people is 65 per cent of that of the general population (Your Voice 2005). The following proposals advocated by Indigenous leaders to address this are supported by the Brotherhood:

- Recruit more teachers of Indigenous background through scholarships, including living allowances while they are undertaking their studies.
- Broaden the mainstream school curricula to include a deeper and more comprehensive treatment of Indigenous culture and history, and of the cultures and belief systems of other societies.
- Introduce short courses specifically designed for Indigenous people of all ages to increase management skills in the Indigenous community.
- Introduce bridging and remedial courses to widen educational opportunities for mature age students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Children and young people in refugee and migrant families

The Brotherhood’s research and service work with refugees points to:

- the need to support refugees’ home languages and cultures to facilitate their learning
- the need for more homework support programs targeted for refugee students, and in particular for programs that make the students’ parents welcome.

Linking access to schooling to specific ages can also present difficulties for refugee and migrant young people trying to gain an adequate education. They are often told they are too old or too young for a particular program. Refugees aged over 18 are not eligible for language school even though they may be eligible for a place in regular schools. Placement in adult learning settings may put the young person at a severe disadvantage as they have often experienced disrupted schooling overseas, which may have affected their emotional development. On the other hand, assessments based on educational attainment alone, without taking into account life experience, may result in students being placed in inappropriate classroom situations. Educational provision for refugees and migrants needs to be flexible enough to respond to each individual’s circumstances.

The plight of young refugees with Temporary Protection Visas is a particular example of inequity, with students unable to undertake tertiary studies because they are charged international fees.

The Brotherhood's Life Chances Study (Taylor & Fraser 2003) found that racism and language differences could be a cause of social exclusion for 11 and 12-year-olds within schools. A few children reported having been teased by other children because they were, for example, Chinese; a small number of refugee mothers felt the teachers were racist in their contact with them—behaviours contributing to their feeling socially excluded.

Parents as Helpers program

Background: Fitzroy Primary School is looking to increase numbers of students and to assist refugee parents to participate in school life. Currently it is very difficult to engage parents and for them to assist their children in homework. Many parents have come from war-torn countries without formal education systems like Australia's.

Solution: a partnership has been established between the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Victoria University School of Education, City of Yarra and Fitzroy Primary School.

A City of Yarra community grant has enabled Fitzroy Primary School to employ a coordinator (a parent who is a qualified teacher on maternity leave) for half a day per week to manage the program. Student teachers have a school placement of one day per week: half a day in class with students, half a day in the project training refugee parents about the Victorian school system and about how they can become involved in school life. The ultimate aim is that as parents improve English and become more involved in school life there will be career pathways into integration and support roles within local schools (using their advantage of other languages) and then the possibility of entering undergraduate teaching courses.

The many benefits to the community include greater connection of Atherton Gardens (public housing estate) residents with the local school, greater multicultural integration in the community, more families wanting to live in Fitzroy because of the schooling opportunities and career pathways. It is also a terrific experience for student teachers to draw on throughout their teaching careers.

3. Choice of pathways

The concept of 'choice' is often used in discussion of education policy (for example the Review's question 3), but the reality of lack of choice for disadvantaged students and families is often ignored. There needs to be a range of valid pathways for young people to choose after the age of 15. The pressure on schools to get high VCE pass rates sometimes leads to the exclusion of those students who may struggle. These young people need diverse kinds of assistance.

The Kirby Report in 2000 pointed out that completion of Year 12 in Victoria was low by international standards, was uneven and was socially skewed. The Victorian Government responded to this with a number of initiatives (Local Learning and Employment Networks, Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning, On Track (follow-up of year 10–12 students after leaving school) and broadened Vocational Education and Training).

One initiative was the implementation of the Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) to provide guidance to all students over 15 in government schools. This is a useful initiative that requires adequate resourcing.

A potentially valuable approach to flexibly meeting the need of early school leavers would be to have an entitlement to 12 years of education, with the funding that would have gone to secondary school being available for other educational options for young people who leave school early.

JPET and barriers for young people at risk of homelessness

JPET is a federally funded program that works with 15 to 21-year-olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Our JPET staff say:

If we are talking about people living in poverty there is a whole group of young people that live on less than low incomes. When you look at what a young person receives on Youth Allowance, and then look at the cost of education or access to education, most young people are absolutely excluded from even considering this as an option. Young people who are ‘independent’ do not receive any extra benefit for attending school or education, so on approximately \$324 per fortnight the young person has to pay fees, books, texts, uniforms, not to mention the daily cost of food and travel. This is on top of basic living expenses, paying rent and bills.

Enrolling young people in courses is quite easy; paying the fees is the difficult bit. In JPET we have approximately \$200 per young person in client support. When you consider the increases in TAFE fees plus the added expenses of books etc., it becomes clear that our education system is not about equity or access at all.

To date in the JPET program from the 104 young people we have seen this year (March 2005) the education levels that have been completed are as follows:

Below Year 10	35
Year 10	30
Year 11	18
Year 12	15
Certificate and other	6

Transitions

Education and training are key pathways into employment and social participation, and out of poverty. They are also critical to creating economic growth, generating higher standards of living and fostering socially cohesive communities. Unfortunately there has been little change in the retention and completion rates of young people undertaking year 12 or equivalent over the last decade. Of particular concern is the fact that those who do leave school early are more likely to come from disadvantaged backgrounds (McClelland, MacDonald & Macdonald 1998). Lack of money for books, computers or excursions is known to contribute to lower retention rates and reduced opportunity for further studies.

Young people who leave the education or training systems early are at considerable risk of experiencing long periods of disadvantage and poverty and unemployment, and are more likely to have poorer health and rely considerably on welfare services and to become involved in crime. The risk of these adverse outcomes is exacerbated by the collapse in the full-time labour market for 15 to 19-year-olds over the past two decades, with the number of unskilled and low-skilled jobs declining significantly.

The Transition Project

The Brotherhood’s Transition Project works with six schools to support young people who want to leave school early. One of the projects has involved a special 10-week program for 14-year-olds refusing to attend school. Of the first 10 students, seven returned to mainstream education and two went on to further education.

Case study from the Transition project

Simon struggled his way through school. He did not have many friends and often felt alienated from his peers. He was quiet in class and teachers paid him little attention. Simon’s family was never able to afford to send him on camps, excursion, and interschool sports due to cost involved. He was often picked on by other kids as his uniform was ill-fitting—either it was too small or, when he did get a new (second hand) one, his mum bought it two sizes too big so ‘he could grow

into it'. He sometimes had detentions at school as he did not have the 'right' uniform. He is the oldest of four children and his mum is on a sole parent pension and works long hours cleaning people's homes. This has meant that Simon is often responsible for his siblings. This responsibility helped him to develop a passion for cooking. He would research recipes, create his own variations, and go grocery shopping with the challenge of making gourmet meals for his family for the least amount of money.

Simon met the transition worker at his school when he went to leave school as soon as he turned 15 at the end of year 9. His plan was to get an apprenticeship in cooking, as school was not the place for him. The transition worker worked with him to develop a clearer plan, looked at job opportunities and realistic ideas of how to achieve his goal. She spoke to him about what employers were looking for and pathways through school including VET hospitality and VCAL.

Simon reassessed his plan and could see how school would be able to help him reach his goal. He hit year 10 with new vigour (though he still did not enjoy it). He loved doing work experience in a hotel and received a great report. Simon then enrolled to do VCE with the expectation that he would be able to do VET hospitality at the local TAFE. He was excited until he was told it would cost \$1,000 a year to participate.

Simon once again went to leave school. He had an opportunity to work casually for another hotel cleaning dishes. These hours were irregular and would mean he would often finish work at 1 am; his mum was worried as it was a 40-minute walk home, and she could not leave the other kids to pick him up. The transition worker was concerned the position would not lead to anything, as this employer had a reputation of using young employees (as he did not have to pay them much) and getting rid of them when they turned 18.

The school and the transition worker intervened and together struggled to raise the funds and Simon was able to go back to school. Simon is now in year 12. He is doing very well and his future is looking good. Yet without intervention Simon could have easily fallen through the gaps due to the cost involved in getting an education. Many others like Simon would have left in year 9, heading to a life of uncertainty.

Training

Access to vocational training is also important for people who are unemployed. Over the last few years, the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) has been working closely with residents of local public housing estates in Fitzroy and Collingwood to help them gain employment (Temby et al. 2004). This initiative has involved working with state and federal governments and has been strongly supported by the State Government Neighbourhood Renewal strategy.

Brotherhood staff work with long-term unemployed people with multiple barriers to employment: most have been out of work for more than two years, few have post-secondary educational qualifications, and there are often other issues such as health or personal problems.

Supportive pre-vocational training—offering a combination of work skills and personal development skills such as communication, team building and conflict resolution—is crucial to the successful transition from unemployment to sustainable employment. A flexible and rich program enables people to establish daily work routines and manage their personal issues while maintaining their training/work placement schedule. The program's success is based on providing holistic training addressing both occupational skills and an individual's specific needs such as numeracy and literacy, culture, health and well-being.

Response to specific Review questions

Our response is outlined to selected questions only.

1 Should the principle of a free instruction to a certain age or attainment level be affirmed as a guiding principle in new legislation?

Yes, 'free' instruction is essential, so children and young people in low-income families are not excluded from this key resource. But 'instruction' should be seen in its widest sense as 'education', the free education to which we are committed by our international obligations as well as our desire for a just Australia.

Age should not be used to exclude young people from education. We question whether specifying an age above 15 years is the most relevant criterion and support the alternative idea of an entitlement to 12 or 13 years of some form of free education which is not tied to age. The experience of Brotherhood services in working with disadvantaged young people points to the need for those who have dropped out of school at an early age to be able to re-engage at a later time. For example, homeless young people, teenage mothers or young refugees who have missed out on schooling all need ways, to be able to link into education again, possibly at age 19 or 20 or even later.

5 Should the right of public access to information about provider performance be established as a guiding principle in new legislation?

This submission holds that if there is to be a guiding principle about the right to performance information that the performance must be measured to give an accurate view of the school's overall performance. The public has a right to information regarding performance in terms of:

- how *inclusive* the provider is
- how well *diversity* is catered for.

A focus on academic performance alone would obscure the achievements of schools seeking to include students with particular needs and would direct resources away from other goals.

7 Should a common and flexible regulation and quality assurance regime be established for all schools?

Yes, a *common* regime should be established for all schools receiving government funding to the extent that this regime promotes social inclusion of all students in all schools in terms of affordability, meeting the needs of diverse students and providing choice of pathways.

Yes, a common regime should be *flexible* in such a way as to better promote such social inclusion and to cater for diversity.

References

Durbach, A & Moran, S 2004, *Rights, roles and responsibilities: the right to education and the nature of obligations on Australian governments*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Sydney.

Finn, J D 1989, 'Withdrawing from school' *Review of Education Research*, vol.59, no.2, pp.117–42.

MacDonald, H 2003, Education costs survey results, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne (unpublished).

Martin, R 2003, *Free for all? Is there a future for universal services? The case of schools*, paper presented at the ACOSS 2003 National Congress, viewed 3 May 2005, <<http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Debates/acossfreeall.pdf>>.

McClelland, A, Macdonald, F & MacDonald, H 1998, *Young people and labour disadvantage: the situation of young people not in education or full-time work*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.

Perkins, D & Peterson, C 2004, *Supporting young people's career transition choices: the role of parent: interim evaluation of the Parents and Career Transition Supports (PACTS) program*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.

Taylor, J & Fraser, A 2003, *Eleven plus: life chances and low income*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.

Temby, P, Housakos, G & Ziguras S 2004, *Helping local people get jobs: the Brotherhood of St Laurence experience in Fitzroy and Collingwood*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.

Weaving, M, Lloyd, G, Atkins, C & Savage, A 2004, *The rising cost of 'free' education: a survey of Emergency Relief clients presenting at Victorian Community Information Centres, January–February 2004*, on behalf of the Emergency Relief Victoria Network, VCOSS, Melbourne.

Your voice 2005, *Indigenous issues*, viewed 20 May 2005, <<http://www.yourvoice.org.au/indigenouslives.html>>.