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## Flexible and Inclusive learning for all young Australians Research Report Launched

Today Dusseldorp Forum releases *The Case for Inclusive Learning Systems*, a report that aims to move the national conversation from what isn't working in education to what is. Importantly it provides a framework and design principles that can be used to build flexible and inclusive learning systems that will increase engagement and outcomes for all young Australians.

Studies show that one in five Australian high-school-aged individuals are currently not attending school and that a further 20% of young people feel they do not belong in their school.

"Just last month Mitchell Institute released a report showing that while the system performs well for many, overall one in four young people living in Australia are missing out on critical educational milestones. Young people from low-socio economic backgrounds, Indigenous students and those living in remote communities are being failed by the system," says Teya Dusseldorp Executive Director at Dusseldorp Forum.

"Engaging more young people in learning is a priority. There are at least 900 flexible learning programs in Australia and we know what it is about these approaches that work. *The Case* provides a framework that can help us move from a one size fits all education system to learning systems for all young Australians. Now is the time to make significant inroads into improving educational equality," says Teya.

*The Case* is based on a series of national consultations, a review of research evidence and a review of current policy and practice. The report documents successful models already working across the country and shows how states and territories can build upon this. It also looks at various parts of the education system and includes the voices of young people who are now thriving in education thanks to flexible, inclusive learning approaches.

Dusseldorp Forum researcher and author of *The Case*, Dr Ani Wierenga says "It is the first time that, in one report, a system has been set out that would enable all young people to fulfil their potential by describing what an inclusive and flexible education systems looks like, using real life examples from across Australia."

One of the outstanding examples of increased retention is state, co-educational school, Cressy District High School (CDHS) in Launceston. Through offering a variety of engagement techniques CDHS has increased the number of their students continuing training and education beyond year 10 from 58% in 2009 to 97% in 2013.

The school offers the Beacon program to develop positive pathways into further education, training or employment with a particular focus on those falling between the cracks.

Engagement techniques used at CDHS like Try a Trade, Pathway Planning, 1-to-1 Support, University and Industry Tours, Guest Speaker Programs, Mock Interviews and Work Experience give students a better understanding of where their education could lead them.

CEO of the Beacon Foundation, Scott Harris says: 'The tremendous results of Cressy DHS are testimony to what can be achieved when a school is willing to look beyond the standard school curriculum and a community is willing to stand behind their school. Whether it be an initiative like Beacon or another, what all of these programs have at their heart is a focus on changing the way our young people are educated - and this is having results.'

"We know what works and there is evidence of effective practice all over the country. Now is the time to scale these initiatives up and build more inclusive learning systems for all young Australians," says Dr Wierenga.

END

### **About *The Case***

The Case for Inclusive Learning Systems: Building More Inclusive Learning Systems in Australia Report is written by Ani Wierenga and Jo Taylor. *The Case* will be officially launched to the alternative learning sector at the Exploring the Edge: Looking Beyond the Rim Conference on Friday 13 November 2015.

To read the report visit [www.dusseldorp.org.au](http://www.dusseldorp.org.au)

### **About Dusseldorp Forum**

Dusseldorp Forum is an independent philanthropic foundation with a 25-year history of working to improve the educational and life opportunities of children and young people throughout Australia. Dusseldorp champions' approaches to learning that are more engaging, inclusive and creative – to meet the diverse strengths, needs and interests of young people across Australia, particularly those who have experienced disadvantage.

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