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## ABSTRACT

This report presents synopses of case studies highlighting workable local strategies to improve employment, education, training, and children's services in rural and remote Australia. Common features of each study include a description of the local context, the targeted group for each program, significant features, sustainability factors, major success factors, and plans for improvement. The South Australian case study highlights a vocational aquaculture course that prepares high school students to work in the area aquaculture industry. In Western Australia, a program makes information technologies and specialist assistance available to community members at school facilities outside school hours. Efforts to provide further opportunities to New South Wales students, especially indigenous students, consist of early childhood programs, parenting classes, school-to-work programs, and a course in Aboriginal performing arts. A Queensland high school instituted a school-industry partnership for developing a trained local workforce. In Tasmania, a vocational education training program for high-risk and adult students is described. Several Victorian schools cooperate in the provision of a broader range of courses via distance education to increase student retention. In the Northern Territory, a vocational education program that takes account of Aboriginal culture and learning styles is offered to limited-English-speaking secondary students. In South Australia, four regional schools cooperate in delivering vocational education programs with support from the Catholic system. A contact person is provided for each case study. (TD)

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**MCEETYA**

**TASKFORCE ON RURAL AND REMOTE EDUCATION, TRAINING,  
EMPLOYMENT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**NATIONAL CASE STUDIES**

June 2000

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**MCEETYA TASKFORCE ON RURAL AND REMOTE EDUCATION, TRAINING,  
EMPLOYMENT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**NATIONAL CASE STUDIES**

**Introduction**

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) Taskforce on Rural and Remote Education, Employment, Training and Children's Services has developed a body of work related to its terms of reference, ie:

*To develop a report through a range of local case studies in each participating state and territory highlighting workable and potentially workable local strategies to improve employment, education, employment, training and children's services in rural and remote Australia.*

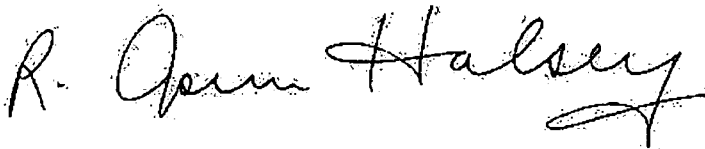
The case studies describe strategies and programs currently operating across rural and remote Australia. Common features of each study include:

- A description of the local context
- The targeted group for each program
- Detail of significant features
- A description of factors that make the program sustainable
- Identification of major success factors
- Planning for improvement.

A synopsis of each case study accompanies this introduction. Full descriptions of case studies are available by contacting the person named at the end of each synopsis.

Ministers have also agreed that other case studies be added to build on the stock of best practice examples.

To enable this to occur, a web page, available through the EdNA website, is currently under development. It is the intention of the taskforce to call for further case studies from those working in the area of rural and remote education, employment and training for inclusion on the web page. In this way, innovative and practical strategies can be accessed and shared by those who are seeking to possibly implement similar programs within their local rural and remote communities.



R J Halsey

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
MCEETYA Taskforce on Rural and Remote Education, Employment, Training and Children's Services

18 June 2000

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## **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CASE STUDY SYNOPSIS**

**Title:** Cowell Area School Certificate of Aquaculture

### **Local context**

Cowell is situated on the east side of Eyre Peninsula, 105 km south of Whyalla and 190 km north of Port Lincoln. The township is sited on Franklin Harbour, a large, almost land locked body of sea water, with a narrow entrance of 300m wide into Spencer Gulf.

Franklin Harbour has become a major oyster growing region of South Australia and coupled with the development of finfish aquaculture and the close proximity to Port Lincoln, make it an ideal area for the development of an aquaculture course.

The school caters for Primary and Secondary students and has a current enrolment of 190 students. Enrolment trends have been static over the last four years. Seventy-seven or approximately 40% are school card holders ie in receipt of financial assistance under a means tested State Government scheme designed to assist with the cost of education.

In 1993, following two years of development, the school commenced the Cowell Area School Certificate of Aquaculture as a direct response to the needs of a rapidly growing local industry. The course has been developed in consultation with representatives from a broad range of aquaculture ventures including oysters, freshwater crayfish, abalone, schnapper and finfish as well as representatives from SA Fishing Industry and Seafood Training Council, Department of Education, Training and Employment, Senior Secondary Assessment Board of SA and staff at the Spencer institute of TAFE, Pt Lincoln campus. This ensures that the course reflects both industry needs and maintains pathways into tertiary institutions and employment. A Board of Management has been established to oversee the course, thus ensuring community involvement and ownership of the course.

### **Program target group**

The course caters for Year 11 and 12 students. Students from Reception to Year 10 currently engage in aquaculture units across various curriculum areas to raise awareness of the local area and alternative job opportunities in a rural and remote coastal location.

### **Significant features of the study**

- Active involvement by community members through the provision of expertise, equipment and labour on a voluntary basis, greatly supports the program.
- The course is considered unique as it enables students to gain valuable vocational skills and knowledge of a broad range of aquaculture disciplines. On completion of the Certificate of Aquaculture students also receive credit towards the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).
- Where possible VET Industry and TAFE modules have been embedded within subject areas to allow students to achieve dual recognition in both the SACE and TAFE/Industry qualifications.
- Significant partnerships exist between the school, industry and training providers.
- The impact of the course on the community has been the provision of a skilled workforce and the halting of a trend in declining rural population.

### **Sustainability factors**

That the course meets the needs of industry is seen as essential, hence the large involvement of industry members in shaping the course. This is also of importance in the long term maintenance of the program as it allows for continuance in the event of key school personnel moving from the area ie there is a continuing supply of local personnel with knowledge of the course, its aims and intended outcomes.

The strength of the industry in the region will mean the school will continue to develop itself as a focus site for aquaculture.

The course attracts students from around the region. To cater for out of district students the school operates a modern hostel, providing full board facilities to students wishing to participate in the course

### **Major success indicators**

The School's aquaculture students have been achieving 100% employment or traineeships after graduation.

### **Improving the strategy**

The local study revealed a number of issues confronting rural and remote communities as they endeavour to support the provision of or

access to educational, training and employment opportunities. These include:

- **IT Provision - and technological support.** It is imperative that rural and remote communities have access to high quality, high speed Internet access to support education and training. A major telecommunications strategy providing all schools with high speed access to the Internet at the cost of a local call has begun. It is planned that all schools including those in rural and remote areas will be able to access this service by May 2000.
- Identifying or training appropriately qualified **workplace assessor** personnel to support VET in rural and remote areas.
- **Articulation** between schools and training providers to ensure courses lead to appropriate accreditation.

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## **WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CASE STUDY SYNOPSIS**

**Title:** Facilitating Community Access to Information Technology through Schools.

### **Local Content**

The Commonwealth Government funded a pilot program in 1998 and 1999 aimed at "Facilitating Community Access to Information Technology through Schools". The project concluded in June 1999.

The Objectives of the pilot program were to:

- make IT and specialist assistance available outside school hours to ensure groups that would otherwise be disadvantaged have an opportunity to familiarise themselves with technology;
- encourage use of the internet in the wider education community to support lifelong learning; and
- strengthen the role of schools as learning centres for their communities.

Significant diversity across the States and Territories was encouraged in fulfilling the project's objectives, including the number of projects funded, method of delivery and course content.

In Western Australia, one cluster project was funded, comprising three government and two nongovernment schools in the Esperance district. The Esperance District Office provided local coordination and leadership for the cluster.

Esperance is 800 kilometres from Perth, on the south coast of Western Australia. The town has a population of 9000 people, which increases significantly in the tourist season. The area is also a rich agricultural district and port.

Each of the schools participating in Western Australia (Our Lady Star of the Sea, Wongutha Christian Aboriginal Parents Community School, Condingup Primary School, Norseman District High School and Esperance Senior High School) worked closely with their community to design and deliver the program.

### **Program Target Group**

All members of each school's community was eligible to participate in the program. Aboriginal people were especially encouraged to participate in the program run by the Norseman District High School and Wongutha CAPS.

At Esperance Senior High School, special efforts were made to draw in the general community by advertising in the local media.

### **Significant Features**

The program run by each school was designed in consultation with the local community. Surveys were used to identify which elements of IT training would be of most value. The exceptions were Norseman District High School and Esperance Senior High School, where staff designed the course content on the basis of their local knowledge.

Most of the courses were of an unstructured nature, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of participants who had either little or no previous experience with IT and further education. Presenters were local school staff and skilled members of the community.

At Wongutha, the school has a special vocational orientation. The programs at this school were designed and delivered by a local tertiary institution. The courses were vocationally accredited.

All projects were evaluated independently at the conclusion of the program. The assessments from participants were very encouraging - it was interesting to note that about 60% of participants at one school were farmers who wished to use IT in the daily management of their farms.

### **Program Development**

While the project was of limited duration, links with the community were particularly strong in both program design and delivery.

### **Sustainability Factors**

The Commonwealth Government provided supplementary funding of \$73,000 to each participating State and Territory. This was critical to the project being introduced.

The leadership role of the Esperance District Office in coordinating the project and undertaking a range of administrative tasks was important to its success.

#### **Major Success Indicators**

Independent evaluation has shown that the pilot project was useful and successful.

#### **Improving the Strategy**

Recommendations to improve the project were made in the independent evaluation.

The impact of this project on rural and remote communities is potentially very large. Increasingly, access to further education and training, and participation in work, requires access to IT and skills in its use. This project aimed to ensure that people in rural and remote areas develop the necessary skills for participation in this area.

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## **NEW SOUTH WALES CASE STUDY SYNOPSIS**

**Title:** Moree District - A case study in educational change

### **Local Context**

- Moree is situated in north west NSW. It has a population of approximately 10,150 of which 25-30% are indigenous.
- Moree is an affluent town, built on the strengths of diverse agricultural resource production. The Moree Plains Shire is noted nationally for having the highest income per capita for rural shires and has an economy which should be attracting and retraining population growth.
- There is a high level of unemployment among indigenous people. Youth unemployment is also very high for indigenous youth. There are high incidences of petty violence, theft, burglaries, car damage and bag snatching.
- A long history of conflict between indigenous people and government agencies including education has been resulting in a low valuing of education and negative student attitudes towards school
- Students who leave early often do so with low levels of literacy and numeracy and enter the workplace at the most basic level of work experience.

### **Initial Town Response**

- Youth issues have been a focus for the community over the past few years. Moree participated in the Community Youth Support Task Force organised through the NSW Social Policy Directorate from 1994 to 1997.
- The Moree Place Management Project currently operates to contribute to more effective planning and coordination of resources and Government interagency services. All local government agencies and some community groups have participated in these projects. Education issues are frequently the focus for discussion at these meetings.
- Moree Plains Shire Council initiated a community forum to discuss the future of secondary education in Moree. Declining student numbers in secondary have caused the viability of 2 small comprehensive high schools to be questioned. The community forum is part of a broad based consultation with the Moree community to discuss structure of the schools for the future through implementation of the Collegiate Education Plan.

### **Program Target Group**

There is a distinct level of urgency in engaging indigenous people in employment to address imbalances.

The projected secondary reforms are designed to enable the town offer further opportunities to students. This will occur by developing a more competitive education image, providing from within the existing infrastructure a better mix of secondary delivery involving TAFE and University in a collegiate education plan and increasing retention of indigenous students into postcompulsory education.

### **Significant features of the initiatives**

- Improvement in literacy, numeracy and social skills is the focus early childhood of programs in prior to school services and in the early years of schooling. Teachers receive special support in the early years.
- Schools have developed student attendance plans in consultation with their communities. The plans endeavour to create a welcoming environment for all students and provide support for chronic nonattenders to assist them to reenter the school system.
- Parents As Teachers (PAT) and Moree Family Support (for young adolescent parents) provide programs for parents to assist them with parenting as well as the development of early literacy and social skills in their child's first three years.
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses for students at risk of leaving school early have been run as Joint Ventures between Courallie High School, Moree High School and TAFE.
- A strong industry partnership with the community is in operation for coordinating work placements. The workplace coordination program supports students and employers through workshops addressing cultural and work readiness issues.
- Community consultation has resulted in the provision of a course in Aboriginal Performing Arts by the New England Institute of TAFE in conjunction with Adult Community Education.
- The University of New England has a project officer in Moree examining the articulation of Certificate IV TAFE course to Diploma and Degree courses at the university.

### **Project Development**

- The Moree community is currently engaged in consultation and discussion regarding reforms in secondary education delivery. The Shire President is promoting this discussion.
- An initiative for further community development has been implemented through the Moree Place Management Project. This aims to improve the delivery of government services through increased interagency collaborative planning and co-operation with the Moree Plains Shire Council.

- The Indigenous Employment Strategy (IES) is supported by the Moree Cotton Growers Association. This strategy has enabled over 70 indigenous people to be placed in meaningful work in the commercial and rural sectors of the Moree business community. The IES also supports Year 11 and 12 students with weekly work placements for Rural/ Primary Industries VET course that are run in conjunction with schools and TAFE.
- Federal government projects, through DETYA and DEWSBY, have funded pilot programs in Moree to develop a successful model of school to work plans for indigenous students. DETYA also operates a Jobs Pathways Program (JPP) in Moree servicing an expected 1200 clients.

#### Sustainability Factors

- The appointment of a Place Manager has enabled planning to commence and facilitated an integrated strategy to address perceived impediments to service delivery and growth in Moree. The crossflow of information between government departments has enabled more focused service delivery in targeted areas.
- The emphasis on preparing students for employment and students completing secondary education with dual accreditation in recognised areas of work at Australian Qualification Framework accreditation levels (AQF) has forced the hand of schools to provide more relevant courses combining school, TAFE and work placement.
- Moree District Office has been given Registered Training Organisation (RTO) status through compliance assessment with Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and the Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET) to enable all secondary schools to deliver AQF courses.
- The District Superintendent and the district office have representation on many community forums such as Crime Prevention, Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Place Management, the District Council of Parents and Citizens Association and Industry education assistance.
- Moree District Office of Education provides a consultancy and service support base to assist school principals to manage and lead these initiatives.

#### Major Success Indicators

Anecdotal comments and benchmark data on those people already employed indicate that the combination of interagency services and resources focused on improved local employment are producing results.

#### Improving the Strategy

- Key factors in sustaining this improvement will relate to the private sector maintaining a willingness to employ indigenous youth and appropriate training opportunities being made available to prepare students for the world of work. Whilst a saturation point for employment would be expected, it is anticipated that the employment of indigenous people in Moree will provide an appropriate role model to the younger generation to engage in education and training to better their life opportunities.
- The need to have a broad offering of industry curriculum framework courses in the HSC has caused Moree and Courallie High School staff to rethink their senior school organisation and work co-operatively to provide a combined curriculum across the two sites. This flexibility and co-operative response will forge changed attitudes and new ways of thinking about secondary education delivery in Moree.
- This is expected to have a flow-on effect to increase parent expectations of schools undertaking innovation to meet the needs of their students. It is envisaged that parent perceptions of education delivery in Moree meeting their needs will be realised.

<p><b>Contact Person:</b> Dr Alan Rice, Executive Director Early Childhood and primary Education, NSW Dept of Education. e-mail: alan.rice@det.nsw.edu.au</p>
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## **QUEENSLAND CASE STUDY SYNOPSIS**

Title: GOONDIWINDI STATE HIGH SCHOOL: A School at the Centre of the Rural Community Through Industry Partnerships.

### **Local Context**

- Goondiwindi SHS has a student population of 400
- Population of Goondiwindi is 4000
- Goondiwindi SHS augmented formal school-industry links in 1993 with the introduction of TRAC (Training in Retail and Commerce)
- In 1997, Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) was introduced
- In 1998, school based traineeships were introduced
- In 1999, Goondiwindi SILO (School-Industry Links Outreach) program commenced.

### **Program Target Group**

- SILO aims to increase the number of students undertaking rural work placements
- SILO aims to highlight the importance to farmers and associated industries of establishing and maintaining a local trained rural workforce to guarantee the districts growth
- Targeted students come from Goondiwindi State High School and Boggabilla Central School (NSW)
- Cross-cultural issues have been addressed in gaining work placements for students from Boggabilla, as have cross border issues.

### **Significant Features of the Study**

- Goondiwindi SHS provides multiple valid pathways for senior students
- Goondiwindi SHS has addressed flexibility of curriculum delivery issues
- Strong community partnerships are a feature of the school's operations
- The approach of Goondiwindi SHS has attracted national recognition

### **Program Development- Silo**

- The extensive training agenda of Goondiwindi SHS began in 1993, following survey indicating 70% of graduates finding employment locally, of which only 23% were formally qualified or involved in training post school.
- Of 80 students in Structured Workplace Learning in 1998, only two in the rural industry
- Goondiwindi SHS led the formation of Goondiwindi and District Rural Work placements Committee in 1998, a partnership between education, rural-industry, community
- In association with Rural Skills Australia, National Farmers Federation and funding from ASTF, SILO was launched on 23 April 1999

### **Sustainability Factors**

- School has Strategic Plan in place
- Catherine O'Sullivan, Deputy Principal, has played key coordinating role
- ASTF funding was critical to employment of SILO liaison officer
- ASTF funding has been gained in 2000 to assist with coordination of school work placements and traineeships
- An alliance has been formed between Goondiwindi SHS and Cotton Australia
- Strong community support exists for multiple pathways actioned by the school

### **Major Success Factors**

- 1998 and 1999 - All Year 11 students undertook SWL, with over 95 local businesses, as willing participants
- 1998 - 10 students undertook School Based Traineeships, increasing to 26 in 1999, with 30 enrolled in 2000 (? of senior school population)
- only 2 students in SWL did so in rural industry. SILO set target of 24 students. Target was exceeded 1999. February 2000 sees 45 students, including Boggabilla Central School students participating
- Over 100 rural businesses on the SILO database

### **Improving the Strategy**

- Success of project has resulted in a strategic alliance between educators, community and industry to conduct a feasibility study

regarding need for a rural skills training centre in the community, eg. to overcome difficulties arising from rural/remote delivery of TAFE modules to traineeships

- School undertakes destination studies to monitor outcomes for students
- Assured long term funding would assist ongoing programs

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## TASMANIAN CASE STUDY SYNOPSIS

**Title:** The Continuing Education and Training Committee for the Huon [CETCH] inc

The Continuing Education and Training Committee for the Huon CETCH inc was formulated in 1997 to address the needs associated with the provision of training in the Huon Valley. Prior to the existence of this group little coordination had existed between training providers and pathways for youth and unemployed people were disjointed and unrecognised. The Committee consisted of representatives from the Department of Education, TAFE, Skillshare [a private RTO], Adult Education, principals from the four schools in the region, business leaders and community members. The present committee evolved from a Ministerial Advisory Group that had been set up to address training and employment issues in the Huon

The Huon region is located south of Hobart and covers the towns of Huonville, Geeveston, Dover and Cygnet. The area is characterised by:

- **Low participation in post compulsory education and high unemployment rates.**

The Huon Valley has three state high schools and one Catholic school providing education to Year 10. The current Year 10 population in secondary schools in the region is approximately 150 students. Less than 50% of these were continuing on to senior secondary college or TAFE. In Tasmania years 11 and 12 are mainly provided by large senior secondary colleges in metropolitan and larger regional centres. Students at risk of leaving school early are less likely to leave their home town to travel and those that do frequently drop out after the first term.

- **High levels of unemployment and other measures of social inequality**

Employment opportunities within the Huon region for youth leaving at the end of Year 10 are limited and youth unemployment is approximately 40%. A significant number of these are recent Year 10 leavers.

- **Low incomes**
- **9.5% of the population is Aboriginal**
- **Low status of vocational education and training**

This is despite the high unemployment and a strong interest from employers in offering vocational education and training placements.

- **Presence of a number of existing training providers.**

These include providers of rural, horticulture, aquaculture, assessor and small business training.

As a result of the low retention rates and the need to enhance and coordinate training in the region a group of training providers educators, businesses and community members formed a committee to investigate the issues. The Committee is chaired by one of the State school principals and there is active business and community input.

The CETCH, in consultation with the Department of Education VET in Schools Section identified setting up a Skills Centre as a means to address the issues outlined above, while at the same time addressing national vocational education and training policy. A Skill Centre is a learning facility that provides the opportunity for students and the local community to access the latest in educational IT equipment. There is a developing network of Skill Centres across Tasmania that are used to facilitate off-the-job training but also allow access to on-line delivered and/or supported training programs. Skill Centres provide a learning hub within rural communities, not only providing access to VET but also incorporating Adult Education, community programs and online access centres within their operations.

The committee decided to situate the Skill Centre outside of a school to provide a more accessible venue for all members of the community and avoid any perceptions relating to "school" and thereby encourage participation in training for all. The Centre was the first to be established in Tasmania under the ANTA infrastructure program and has provided a benchmark for facilities in future centres.

In 1998 the year 11 program commenced in the TAFE Centre adjacent to the proposed Skill Centre site. The initial enrolment in the program was for 6 students, all of whom were recent school leavers and deemed to be "at risk" of not continuing on to any form of further education. In 1999 17 students enrolled in the program. In 1998 and 1999 Huon Valley students were provided with the option to study part time in the Huon and part time at Hobart College (a senior secondary College approximately 50 minutes away).

Students study the Certificate of Work Education, Workplacement and Enterprise in the Huon and then attend college for Tasmanian Certificate of Education [TCE] subjects as electives. These include such subjects as Automotive, Design in Wood, Childcare, Human Interactions, Catering etc.

Students exiting the program at the end of year 11 are able to leave with qualifications in Certificate in Work Education, TCE English, TCE Maths, and two TCE "C" syllabus [150 hours per year] courses.

Training is flexible and offered in small groups to cater for individual needs and a major component of the delivery includes an enterprise focus, where students participate in the development of a number of small businesses. This has provided for a number of essential competencies from Training Packages to be both taught and reinforced in realworld settings.

The Skill Centre became fully operational in 1999 and is now a Registered Training Organisation offering a variety of Training Packages and short courses. At present co-location with Adult Education and the Huon Open Learning Centre provides for a broad range of course offerings particularly Computing courses. Other courses include, Running a Small Business, the Aquaculture Industries Basic Dive Course and Workplace First Aid for Forestry Tasmania employees. Industries and business groups are beginning to see the benefits of customised workplace training delivered locally and access to local facilities for meetings and workshops

Certificated VET Training Packages include Information Technology, Tourism, Retail, Administration and Business, Forestry and Workplace Training and Assessment. Other courses will still be delivered in partnership with Hobart College. Through auspicing arrangements with other established Skill Centres and VET providers the CETCH is in a position to offer a onestop-shop approach to training with students able to access a full range of Training Packages and courses in a supportive learning environment. All students participating in the program complete a six week (240 hours) Structured Vocational Placement.

This year there has been a significant increase in the enrolments and currently 26 students are enrolled in year 11 and 12 which includes several mature age students returning to study. The DoE provide the CETCH with staffing appropriate to the year 11 and 12 enrolment. In this way viable groups are made up of small numbers of students from the four schools and mature age students

A number of local businesses access the Centre on a fee for service basis using the Centre's facilities and trainers to deliver training in areas such as, Occupational Health and Safety, First Aid, Information Technology and enterprise specific training.

The Centre is well equipped to provide training to students with disabilities and utilises support from a variety of groups to engage "at risk" students and students with literacy and numeracy difficulties. Formal partnerships have been created with youth services, employment services, training providers, the DoE Aboriginal Education Unit and adult literacy programs.

Employment outcomes have exceeded 70% in both 1998 and 1999 with a further 25% continuing on to further education and training pathways.

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## **VICTORIAN CASE STUDY SYNOPSIS**

**Title:** Cooperative Provision Of VCE Studies And Vet In Schools Programs For Senior Students In The East Gippsland Shire

### **Local Context**

The East Gippsland Shire occupies the sparsely populated eastern corner of the State of Victoria. The main commercial centre, the town of Bairnsdale is served by both a State and a Catholic secondary college, each with enrolments well above 1000 students. The town is also the headquarters for the East Gippsland Institute of TAFE.

The smaller centres of Orbost, Swifts Creek, Lakes Entrance, Mallacoota and Cann River each have State secondary schooling, the largest being Orbost SC with 325 students and the smallest Cann River P12 College with 30 secondary students.

The separate cluster arrangements which support this cooperation have strong local ownership. However each development was in response to a clearly articulated policy initiative in the postcompulsory domain and the guidelines for the provision of some elements of the fundin required the commitment to a cooperative approach.

### **Program Target Group**

Both arrangements have been developed out of a need to provide senior students with a relevant, useful and accessible curriculum to encourage as many as possible to prolong their schooling to the end of Year 12.

### **Significant Features of the Study**

In both instances schools have been prepared to cede significant elements of their autonomy to make cooperation a success. The cooperative approach to VCE provision give the shared programs a priority when timetabling classes reducing the schools flexibility in other areas.

The foundation of the VET cluster is the pooling of the additional funding each school receives to support its VET programs. In addition the VET cluster looks for local and creative solutions to maximise the number of programs available to students and the number of students who can access each program. The cluster includes both industry and local government in its governance arrangements.

### **Program Development**

Cooperative VCE provision using technology began over a decade ago in response to the imperative to improve school retention rates by providing a broader range of options for students at the senior levels of secondary schooling. The extent of common provision varies from year to year depending on the subject selections of students in each of the colleges.

Funding was initially provided through Commonwealth Resource Agreement No. 3 which enabled the establishment of a teleconferencing infrastructure, the purchase of fax machines and linked macintosh computers. An attempt to establish a dedicated microwave link between Bairnsdale and Orbost was abandoned in 1992 due to technical difficulties.

Teleconferencing equipment has been provided to each school by the Department and funding for operating costs is included in each schools global budget.

The VET cluster was established in 1994 as part of an ASTF funding submission process and includes East Gippsland Institute of TAFE and the Eastern Victorian Group Training Company as well as each of the secondary schools.

This lead to the formation of the East Gippsland Vocational Education Committee, with added industry representation to manage cluster programs and activities. In 1998 the cluster established the Vocational Education Training Advisory Board (VETAB) to assist in the development of programs linking school and work and to provide employers and the community some input into VET programs.

The key role played by a number of individuals in the early development of the cluster provision of VCE studies was critical to its success, and the current VET cluster coordinator has been the key to the expansion in both the number of students undertaking VET and the range of programs available to them.

### **Sustainability Factors**

The proposed availability of web based teleconferencing under the Departments IT Plan will reduce the Clusters reliance on external funding and increase the range of providers with whom programs can be shared. How the existing cluster arrangements will accommodate the potential for a larger number of partners is yet to be tested.

However, the VET cluster is reliant on ASTF funding to support the coordinator position and its withdrawal without a substitute source of funding comes at a point in the clusters development when the coordinator role is pivotal.

#### Major Success Indicators

This year there are four VCE studies being provided on a shared basis within the cluster. Three of these consist of a sharing arrangement between pairs of schools and one is shared between four schools.

The number of students within the cluster undertaking VET programs has grown from 270 in 1999 to 438 in 2000. The number of different programs students can access has risen from 10 in 1999 to 18 in 2000.

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## **NORTHERN TERRITORY CASE STUDY SYNOPSIS**

**Title:** Maningrida VET in Schools program Maningrida Community Education Centre

### **Local context**

Maningrida is located 420 km east of Darwin, in Central Arnhem Land. Access during the wet season is by air or barge. During the dry season 4WD access is possible. The town supports about 2000 people, some living in Maningrida, others at the 200 homelands surrounding Maningrida. Maningrida Community Education Centre (CEC) provides preschool to secondary age classes. The school is a bilingual school.

### **Program target group**

The Maningrida VET program aims to provide relevant community skills, as well as educational and work options for those men aged 16- who have recently left school or returned from boarding schools in Darwin or who are currently attending school but would benefit from a vocational program. The community has indicated that the VET class must be single sex. Young women aged 16-18 years are withdrawn from the senior girls class to do some accredited VET and structured workplace learning. All students are ESL/EFL learners.

### **Significant features of the study**

Training is based on adult education principles, and those which take account of Aboriginal culture and learning styles. The VET program includes vocational learning – literacy and numeracy through an understanding of workplace issues, accredited VET to support work placements and work based learning. Off the job training focuses on modules in literacy and numeracy, such as Filling in Forms and Basic Measurement, as well as training such as workplace environment, driver education, first aid, level 0 sports coaching and trade entry certificates in carpentry, automotive, welding and computing. Electives such as music, art, sport and recreation are also provided.

All training and/or work placements are done in week blocks which maximises student attendance. In this way students are able to complete modules/competencies when they are at school, and fulfil ceremonial commitments during the year. Students are involved in up to 35 days of structured work placement with local employers. Participation in work placements and other training is dependent on commitment to the program. Most work placements are in building and construction, retail and clerical. The workplace coordinator, with assistance from the project officer has developed a generic training record book and has also worked with local workplace supervisors to improve their knowledge of the training system.

A two week music training program was held in the latter part of 1999. Students completed two modules, wrote three songs, and performed about eight numbers at a community concert, as support to another local band. Funding has been received to continue the music training in 2000.

### **Program development**

In 1997 Maningrida CEC began investigating options for the provision of a relevant pathway for students leaving school at age 15+ having completed part of Foundation and/or General Studies. The Coordinator of the Young Australian Student Access (YASA) program in Katherine was invited to visit the school. As a result Maningrida school staff and community were keen to provide a YASA type program.

The program partners include Maningrida JET (Jobs Education and Training) Centre, Maningrida Progress Association, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, CDEP (Community Development Employment Programs), Community Council, Health Centre, Police and the school. The Maningrida JET Centre, a local Indigenous training organisation, works to identify community needs and where possible, provide training to meet those needs. Through the JET Centre all Maningrida tradespeople had identified a desire to work with school students.

The Maningrida staff and the project officer have worked closely together to:

- obtain ASTF funding for workplace coordination for 1999 and 2000
- trial curriculum and resources identified by the project
- develop a process to move from work experience to structured workplace learning
- develop a database to simplify data recording for community schools.

### **Sustainability factors**

In developing the program a number of sustainability factors were considered:

- the commitment of the Workplace Coordinator who has vast experience in secondary education in remote communities, and is aware of community needs and requirements

- community support for the program through the JET Centre, the management committee, the school and the councils
- responding to needs identified by the community
- identification of employment growth areas and training requirements for these areas
- developing culturally appropriate guidelines for the operation of workplace learning
- students being treated as adults, and given an opportunity to improve literacy and numeracy in a different and holistic way.

#### Major success indicators

Successes of the program so far include:

- the increased interest, attendance and self-confidence of the young men
- provision of a meaningful alternative for those students for whom the academic pathway is not relevant, thereby leading to increased enrolments
- a number of students have gained employment as a result of workplacement
- two students returned to the VET program after three months employment to continue their education
- the provision of a similar program this year at Numbulwar CEC.

Many of the trials and experiences of the Maningrida program have now been, or will be, adopted by other programs. These include:

- doing training and work placement in week long blocks to capitalise on student attendance for that period
- use of the generic training record book produced
- movement towards the delivery of structured workplace training from the new Training Packages.

#### Improving the strategy

- A second teacher to be provided for the training of young women
- Funding for remote training Indigenous communities needs to take account of ESL learners and incorporating literacy, numeracy into training and to be flexible and ongoing
- Certification of the program offered
- Students need to commit to the program and outcomes need to be realistic & achievable
- Knowledge of staff about the training system, including accessing funding sources, support systems and administrative requirements
- Ongoing support for VET in remote Indigenous communities
- Currently, training needs to be nationally accredited to receive funding. The usefulness of a national qualification is questioned by many in remote communities.

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## **CATHOLIC EDUCATION CASE STUDY SYNOPSIS**

**Title:** Spencer Gulf - SA

### **Local Context:**

The study was based upon four regional colleges within the Spencer Gulf area of South Australia. Individual schools and regional management groups instigated various strategies that were documented in the study. Consequently, ownership of the various programs and partnerships rested with the instigators but with commitment gained from other stakeholders.

### **Program Target Group:**

All middle and senior secondary students in these rural and isolated centres, including those from designated target groups who might also require dedicated initiatives to ensure their access to vocational education.

### **Significant Features of the Study:**

Utilisation of boarding facilities and cluster approaches to facilitate training opportunities for staff and students. This overcame the lack of local trainers, small student numbers and restrictions on staff release due to a lack of relief staff in these areas. It was easy to accomplish due to an existing history of partnership amongst schools and their community that does not necessarily exist in metropolitan areas.

Identification of a need to resolve two conflicting mental models that exist in parental and community groups. These were "that students were the next generation of the town and needed to be retained" and that "a university pathway guaranteed success". The realisation of community needs gains ownership of the program and changed attitudes to education.

Formation and utilisation of TAFE and industry partnerships overcomes problems of high staff turnover and a lack of relevant expertise in rural and isolated schools. Another variation of this approach has been the exploration of using open learning strategies within programs.

Identification and support for the teacher, who is the essential driver of the program, and any employer/parent champions of the program. Nurturing a of a truly regional management group.

### **Program Development:**

Since the appointment of a Vocational Education Adviser (January 1996) and assisted by the introduction of ANTA, DETYA and ASTF funding (1997-2000). Significant industry participation accompanied ASTF funding during 1997-1999 but has only reflected the pursuit of more significant community representation in the past twelve months.

### **Sustainability Factors:**

Some evidence of shifting from financial dependence on several funding sources was suggested but not fully explored in the study. It was also evident that student success stories and employer champions were two elements of sustainability that made the programs so valued that they would be retained.

Support structures were the regional schools, local management group and the vocational education support from the Catholic system.

### **Major Success Indicators:**

485 upper secondary students from a total secondary enrolment of 1506 students are currently participating within VETIS programs. This registers a fivefold increase since 1997. Both student and employer participation in workplace learning reveal a similar trend but with a longer incubation period.

The longer-term benefits of increased relevance and purpose in learning, recognition of learning from other sources and more comfortable transition to training and employment are emerging as valued outcomes. Small numbers of New Apprenticeships and employment placements (part/full time) have been recorded.

### **Improving the Strategy:**

Once more representative management groups are formed, there is a need to evaluate their level of community ownership for vocational education. There is also a need to monitor how closely programs align with the forecasts and strategic planning of regional development

groups. Schools need to demonstrate commitment within their own budgets and structural change.

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