

NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training

***The Regional Development
Project***

***“Bringing Vocational Education and Training
To Cellulose Valley”***

Final Report

November 2003

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*Invest Northern Rivers***

Acknowledgements

Great thanks are due to the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training, the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board and the Department of State and Regional Development for their leadership in innovation by sponsoring, funding and supporting the project.

The project wishes to acknowledge the enormous contribution of its Steering Committee and consortium partners, who participated with such fervour and commitment to the project and the process over the two year contract period. As a direct result of their efforts, VET is an additional element in the regional development opportunities in the Northern Rivers.

The support of the partners for the project and the Project Manager, in identifying opportunities and enterprises that were willing to trial the range of VET and workforce planning interventions, was critical to the operation and success of the project. They challenged the boundaries of the project, VET and their own organisations in response to the issues rose. The editing and assistance with the reports provided by Ms Sue Ryan and Ms Colleen Williams were invaluable.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge the members of the Indigenous Reference Group for their generosity of spirit, time, commitment and energy. There was not enough time for all the ideas which sprang forth during the Reference Group meetings. Tribute needs to be paid to Bundjalung Elder Mrs Faye Smith who passed away in February 2003, for her vision and advocacy throughout the project, and to Bundjalung Elder Mr Charles Moran, who always reminded us that young people are our future and needed our attention.

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1

Executive Summary

The Regional Development Project – “Bringing Vocational Education and Training to Cellulose Valley”– brought together a consortium of stakeholders throughout the Northern Rivers who were keen to demonstrate that vocational education and training (VET) is a key element of regional development in Cellulose Valley¹. The project provided a unique forum for many of these stakeholders who had not met before in a forum as inclusive as that afforded by this project to expand upon notions and actions for regional development.

This is the Final Project Report, covering September 2001 to August 2003. It highlights the original project aims and concepts, key questions which guided the development of the project, and issues affecting outcomes and processes. It also outlines the project outcomes, which were achieved as a consequence of the growing awareness across the project consortium, key players in regional development and VET, of the potential of VET to influence social and economic development in Cellulose Valley. The importance of VET as a factor in regional development was manifestly demonstrated in the project.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the project was built upon a participatory action research method. A core body of key players in the region was brought together to form a Steering Committee. Facilitated by the Project Manager the Steering Committee was to drive the project. A suite of sub committees, or Reference Groups, was developed by the Steering Committee. Each Reference Group was chaired by a Steering Committee member thus being enabled to provide expert information to the Steering Committee. Through this participatory process of shared knowledge and expertise collaborative actions and interventions were developed to forge partnerships comprehensively into business, at enterprise level, and into the community.

Project participants sought to develop and demonstrate a model (and micro models) from this project that could be tested in the Cellulose Valley region and replicated in other regional development programs in NSW, Australia and overseas. To this end the project was able to develop, trial and implement innovative (experimental and additive) VET strategies with enterprises and targeted community segments.

Project Aims

The primary aim of the project was to identify and expand the role of VET in regional development to establish it as a leading and integral element in the

¹ Cellulose Valley is a term coined by Southern Cross University to describe the geographic area from Tweed to Taree on the North Coast of NSW.

regional development process. The Project Steering Committee was committed to ensuring that the process would incorporate:

- the creation of an advantage for individuals, businesses, and investors to locate to the Southern Cross University Business Precinct (formerly known as Cellulose Valley Technology Park)
- deliverable outcomes for Indigenous individuals and communities, including a focus on young Indigenous people at risk of disengaging, or who have disengaged, from learning
- the development of inclusive processes to identify the specific VET needs of stakeholders
- the establishment of sustainable structures to ensure ongoing viability of VET inclusion in the development and growth of the Cellulose Valley medicinal herb industries.

This report describes the constraints and successes of the project in general terms and provides individual case studies to illustrate more specifically the interventions and methods trialled in achieving our goals in this complex and innovative project.

Issues for the Project

Issues raised early in the project helped to determine concepts and approaches that would best serve planning, establishment and implementation of the project. At the outset of the project an overarching issue was the limited profile of VET in the general community. How then could VET transform itself, and its image, to become a leading agent for innovation in regional development? Its success in doing just this has been in large part due to the evident culture change that was brought about by the group of important regional players that drove this project. The change was manifest in the increasing awareness of the potential of VET by all players as they participated in the process of articulating common regional development aims as the basis of strategic planning for the project.

Recommendations

To maintain the impetus of this innovative and experimental project, and drive forward the achievements gained for business and communities in Cellulose Valley, it will be important to sustain the critical partnerships that made these achievements possible. In this way VET will be embedded as a critical success factor for well planned regional development in Cellulose Valley. Strategies to enable this are further elaborated in the report's Recommendations.

2

Demonstration and Evaluation Methodology

Action Research

Participatory Action Research² was selected as the theoretical model for this project, as it best reflected the aims of collaboration, participation, inclusiveness and sustainability. It is described as, "...a group process by which individual and cultural change can be facilitated where a collaborative approach is valued and practice is part of a continual critical assessment, through planning, acting, analysing and reflecting on the action and analysis...crucial to this are the ideas of investigation, group decisions and a commitment to improvement".³

This method is cyclical, incorporating evaluation in each cycle, commencing with a plan, proceeding to act, analysing that action, reviewing the analysis and altering the planning process to suit altered perceptions of the previous actions, resulting in new actions. Evaluation was undertaken at each cycle, that is, in the monthly project meetings, allowing flexibility for modifications to the practice.

The process, illustrated in Figure 1 below, emphasises definition of a problem, participating, collaborating, planning and critically assessing the process and the outcomes, so that planning and action are informed and agreed, within the group context.

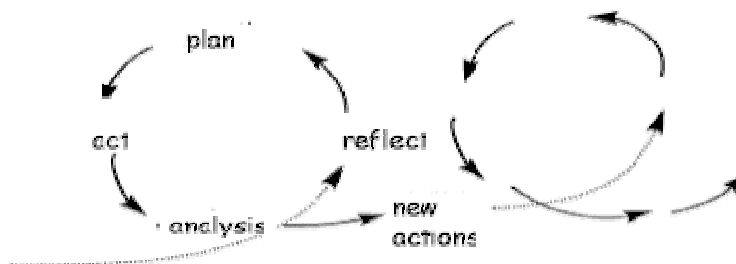


Figure 1 Participatory Action Research Cycles⁴

Collaborative and participative processes and strategies were selected based on incorporation of the action research model. In summary processes were selected to support the emergence of shared goals by building sustained collaboration among interested parties, including potential competitors, as a platform for informed and collaborative planning of strategic actions and interventions.

² *What is Participatory Action Research? Paper 2*, Yolanda Wadsworth 1998, Action Research International accessed from www.scu.edu.au/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html.

³ Kemmis, S. and McTaggart, R. *The Action Research Planner* 1988 Melb Deacon University 3rd Ed

⁴ *What is Participatory Action Research? Paper 2*, Yolanda Wadsworth 1998, Action Research International accessed from www.scu.edu.au/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html.

The Project Steering Committee, comprised of the consortium partners, was the cornerstone of the project's collaborative framework. Details of the Steering Committee are outlined at Appendix A. Steering Committee members acted, and continue to act, as supporters and champions, overseeing the project and undertaking strategic planning at the macro level.

A comprehensive range of Reference / Advisory Groups also collaborated to inform the development of strategies in specific areas. Thus strategies were developed in alignment with the goals of the project, to advance social and economic development across the Cellulose Valley region. Details of the Reference Groups are provided at Appendix B. Individual enterprises and projects with which the project collaborated to develop innovative education and training solutions were also included as project informers.

The participatory action research methodology upon which these partnership structures and strategies were built, allowed the project team to consult with, inform, and be informed by stakeholder reference groups and other project parties regarding trends in regional development and VET. This ensured a continuous evaluation and action loop for project initiatives to be strategically developed in a well informed and agreed regional context.

The overall structure provided a continuing systematic and reflective focus for all of the actions initiated through the project. Service initiatives to industry and communities ranged from linking individual enterprises with the Job Network to providing assistance in the development of Staff Confidentiality Agreements, Codes of Conduct and complete workforce planning. For communities strategies included identifying employment opportunities and partnerships with business, and targeting and implementing training to up-skill individuals seeking to gain employment. It also included gathering schools and VET data across local education and training providers to assess current skills development in line with potential skills needs within the regional framework.

“A major part of our activity is providing a skilled workforce for regional development, so participating in the project provides us with data and strategic networking with key agencies in a much more structured way.”
(Steering Committee Member)

Sustainability of all the project initiatives without the services of a designated co-ordinator was identified as an issue when the scope of the project interventions was broadened. Systematic development and sustainability of the project has been maximised by the continuing use and extension of existing communication structures and strategies established and nurtured throughout all project stages.

Through these processes VET has been recognised, and embedded, as a critical success factor in whole of community and whole of government regional development practice for the Northern Rivers (Cellulose Valley). The

ongoing contribution of a strategic cluster of supporters, champions and collaborators who have been attracted to the project is also focussed through their regular participation in the Reference Groups.

The Reference Groups continue to be constant in their support for, and commitment to, the project beyond its funded term. Their participation ensured the inclusion of VET as a major contributor to sustainable regional development and in communicating the benefits of VET back through to their constituents. For example, the Steering Committee and the Indigenous Reference Group have made a commitment to continue to meet to undertake the initiatives they have commenced, and the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board has offered administrative support to the Indigenous Reference Group to do so.

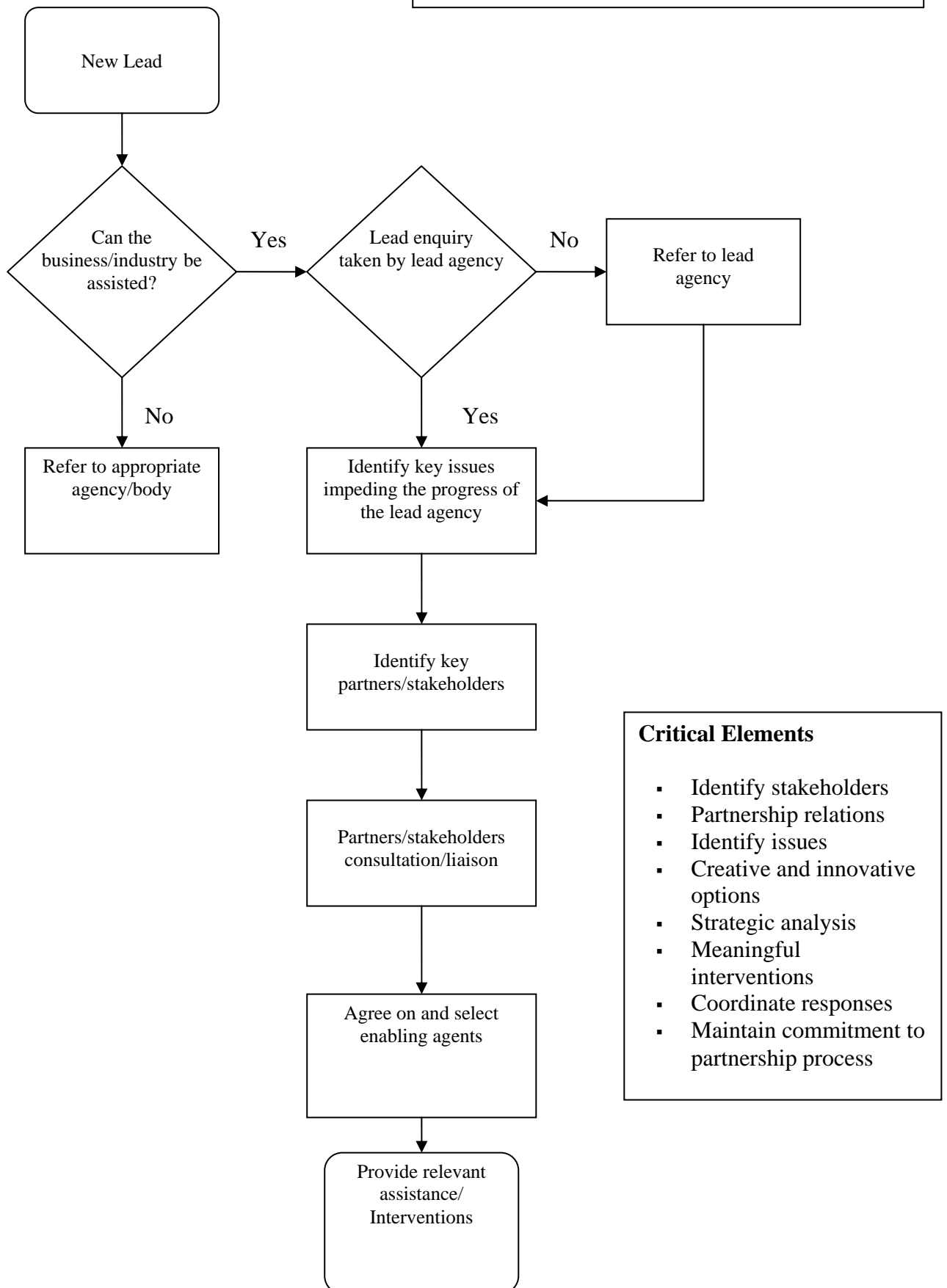
Micro Models and VET Interventions

The collaborative intervention process, shown in Figure 2 below, was used by the partners for dealing with each case study and overlaid the participatory action research methodology.

In each case and at each stage an enabling agent was identified. This person could be any one of the project partners or stakeholders at any given time throughout the process. There were eight critical elements to this process:

- Identification of the stakeholders
- Establishment of partnership relations
- Identification of the issues
- Developing creative and innovative options
- Conducting strategic analysis
- Ensuring meaningful interventions
- Coordination of responses, and
- Maintenance of the commitment to the partnership process

Figure 2: Collaborative Interventions Process



Evaluation

The action research cycle allowed project evaluation to be incorporated into the ongoing collaborative strategic planning cycles undertaken by the Project Manager with the Steering Committee in monthly meetings. Through this participatory model, evaluation and strategic planning were continuously informed by the Reference Group meetings, each of which included a Steering Committee member, and also by actions with firms and communities.

Additional evaluation has taken the form of a survey of all Steering Committee members, detailed at Appendix C, and an independent assessment undertaken by Margaret Cargill of Adelaide University, *Report of a Qualitative Analysis of Selected Data from The Regional Development Project: Bringing Vocational Education and Training to Cellulose Valley* at Appendix D.

Steering Committee Survey/Questionnaire - February 2003

A primary focus of the Regional Development Project was to ensure that many of its components, if not its entirety, could be developed into a model, or suite of models, which could be replicated in other regions in NSW and across Australia. In considering some of the elements which make the project successful, it was agreed that the most significant factor was the consortium of partners. This success has been due not only to the specific agencies and organisations represented by the members but even more importantly to the commitment that each partner has shown to the project.

Discussion with other regions about the project, resulting from conference presentations, has identified a number of seemingly unique elements of the strategic partnerships. To understand these further and their impact on the outcomes of the project, Steering Committee members were surveyed to determine which elements, or “success factors”, could be applied in other communities. Details of the questionnaire and members responses are at Appendix C.

The questionnaire was designed to identify:

- individual skills and interests that partners bring to the process
- drivers motivating their active participation in the project
- sources of their enthusiasm in championing the project
- partners impact upon community knowledge and perceptions of VET
- motivations for their commitment to sustaining the partnerships even beyond the life of the project

Responses indicated a range of factors and interests motivating the collaborative partnership. These included:

- regional development and VET practitioners working together strategically to influence regional development. This was strongly

demonstrated by way of project initiatives that were collaboratively developed for attracting new business, supporting local business and empowering individuals and communities socially and economically

- business goals, for example, among job network agencies that were keen to expand their services to improve their own business by working together to better serve the needs of employers and job seekers
- opportunities for data and intelligence gathering through the partnership. This was an evident and overarching factor
- an increased understanding of VET was a highly valued factor for partners normally not in contact with VET providers, such as regional development and other government agencies and the Job Network
- linking existing programs with VET and other service providers. For example, regional development agencies came to realise the hitherto untapped potential of VET as a significant inducement in their strategic pitches for attracting the types of business investment to the Cellulose Valley region that aligned with the regional development priorities
- an increased understanding of regional development imperatives was also highly valued by the education and training representatives in the consortium - and consequent to this the potential for strategic skills development as a basis not only for supplying skills, but also for informing and influencing the demand for skills.

These and other findings from the survey will be significant determinants in engaging inclusive cross agency partnerships in other regions.

Independent Evaluation – August 2003

A qualitative analysis was undertaken by Margaret Cargill of the University of Adelaide and is at Appendix D. This was a qualitative analysis of the responses and other selected features of the project to identify the replicable aspects of the project.

The analysis is helpful in identifying the replicable features, which the evaluation considers in a number of areas as follows:

Strategies to support the emergence of shared goals

- gather participants with compatible institutional goals
- combine self-selection with a fully participatory planning process
- ensure that facilitator has a sufficient depth of local knowledge to see potentially problematic issues
- build sufficient flexibility into the initial plan that the needs of both potential and existing participants can be incorporated as planning and implementation proceed

Building consistent collaboration among potential competitors

- plan meeting processes and ambience to enhance the development of a collaborative ethos
- involve all participants in communication and relevant activities occurring between meetings
- ensure that facilitation role is carried out by a person independent of participating agencies' local agendas
- include the building of an effective collaborative ethos among participants as a performance indicator for the success of a replication project.

The role of process in the Case Study achievements and project sustainability

- interpret case studies in the light of the Collaborative Intervention Process Flowchart (above) to enhance their effectiveness of micro-models for replication
- include a strong focus on replicating the project's process features in order to give best chance of achieving successful outcomes with micro-model replication

The Cargill report was post hoc, based on documentation that had been prepared to a contract reporting imperative and on interviews with the Project Manager. It does not claim, therefore, to be a project evaluation. However its evaluation of information gained through the process provides justification for the Action Research method employed.

The report also provides a useful analysis of project outcomes in terms of the demonstration provided through the project of factors that can influence and bring about a VET lead regional development model.

3

Introduction

In this inclusive project, innovative regional development and regional capacity building initiatives were undertaken with a large and diverse range of stakeholders. The inclusiveness encompassed groups such as service providers; government and non government agencies; the indigenous community and Indigenous workers; equity groups; small, medium and large businesses; and VET and Job Network providers. A focus was to create value chain partnerships which would strengthen or develop linkages with business and deliver enhanced training opportunities.

In bringing together a range of consortium partners (Appendix A) and utilising a participative action research methodology the Regional Development Project ensured success in its aims and sustainability of the project model and initiatives by developing trust, quality communication and the application of non-financial measures to the success of the partnership. Whilst the project established and commenced the development of the strategic partnerships, it was the partners themselves who provided a strong leadership role in ensuring the partnerships functioned and were successful.

The project has interacted with regional development priorities and elements by working collaboratively with regional developers on joint ventures. This relationship has reinforced the role which VET can play in regional development and has lead to an expectation that this relationship will continue both operationally and strategically. Details of this interaction are elaborated in each of the case studies (Appendix E).

Enterprises and industries, as well as community issues were identified by the consortium partners, regarding their potential to benefit from the project. Once identified, the lead agency was determined and appropriate stakeholders were assembled. This combination of stakeholders varied from enterprise to enterprise. From this point using participatory action research with the enterprise and stakeholders, interventions were determined and resourced.

Key Questions

In establishing the project a number of key questions were raised which determined both its approach and methodology:

- There had been no formal experience of VET in significant regional development forums to date. Would VET be accepted as a contributor?
- Southern Cross University Business Precinct is a relatively new concept; potentially this would provide a limited range of VET options and opportunities for the project to consider. Could involvement in the Business Precinct alone provide enough VET interventions to establish a framework for the project?

- VET has often occurred in response to industry development in any given geographic or industry area and emerging industries are often unable to either articulate the training which might best position them commercially, or identify VET as a preferred training option. How embracing of VET solutions would they be?
- Could a well-trained workforce with particular skills entice an industry to locate outside a metropolitan area?
- The Indigenous community is significantly disadvantaged in education and employment. They also rarely experience any real advantage from regional development or economic growth. How could the project best position the Indigenous community, so that it could take advantage of the Cellulose Valley industry growth?
- The Northern Rivers, like many rural regions of NSW, has communities that are isolated geographically, educationally, and socially. Consultation to determine educational priorities and the delivery of those priorities is a key issue. What methods of consultation would best suit communities and the project?
- Schools are a significant resource with an increasing and proactive involvement in VET. VET options are limited to students in Years 11 and 12. Many Indigenous students leave school before reaching Years 11 and 12. How could the project best use VET options to support those students to continue into Years 11 and 12 and how could VET options be best introduced for those students wanting to leave school in, or before Year 10?
- In the Northern Rivers, the VET sector, Job Network agencies, and Group Training Companies are numerous and highly competitive. By what mechanism could they operate collaboratively and cooperatively in a commercial and competitive environment to promote VET in Cellulose Valley to potential investors?
- The piloting of VET options for businesses requires access to resources for training provision. How could the project access those resources?
- The establishment of a sustainable structure, past the life of the project, required the utilisation of existing structures, whose core function was not necessarily VET. How could VET be included as an integral part of the business of each of those structures?

Issues

VET Planning Process

Access to the state VET planning process was identified by the project as critical to the provision of VET resources to Cellulose Valley to enhance regional development priorities. It was difficult to inform the purchase of VET in the region so that it met strategic regional goals. Currently the process is

unclear and lacks a formal structure for input by regional developers in a regional planning context.

The Northern Rivers Regional Development Board provides a strategic framework and climate for much of the state's regional development activity in the Northern Rivers, along with the Department of State and Regional Development and Commonwealth program initiatives. In turn the activity enhances the strategic planning process. This framework informs the business activity but the activity can not be supported if skills in the workforce are not available. Participation in and contribution by VET to this process would position the VET sector more strategically within a regional development framework.

Staff of both the Department of Education and Training and the Department of State and Regional Development are resident in all regions. Yet, in cursory contact with staff in State Training Services (2), Business Development Managers and Department of State and Regional Development (4) they stated that they were unaware of each other and had no contact. Structured workshops could assist the networking and potential for collaborative partnerships at an operational level as outlined in the recommendations.

Solving Constraints of the Original Project Concept

During the course of the project Southern Cross University postponed further development of the Business Precinct subject to a review of its capital planning for 2003-2004; hence focus on the Business Precinct alone would not support the demonstrations required and had to be re-considered.

The participatory action research methodology was highly effective in allowing the Steering Committee to redirect the project and redefine the initial strategic plan. As a result, rather than concentrating only on the industries attached to the Business Precinct, a whole of region approach across industries was initiated, allowing the project to be proactive and responsive to other regional development priorities. This whole of region approach has been very productive and additive to the activities of the project and has expanded the range of activities and the opportunities for participation by partners and stakeholders.

Establishing a VET Profile

Expansion of the project from its initial remit allowed for the demonstration of a variety of VET and workforce planning interventions which partners would not otherwise have immediately identified as the purview of the VET sector. Outcomes have been an expansion of the view of VET in the consciousness of other regional developers, and an acceptance of VET as a significant contributor in effective regional development planning.

4

Project Outcomes

The project outcomes are reported in response to the aims of the project and the strategies which were identified in the Strategic Plan⁵. Case studies were written for each intervention and initiative. The project outcomes are described in general terms below and the detail of interventions, partnerships and processes are contained in the case studies (Appendix E).

The project has marketed VET and identified and selected different styles of partnerships and relationships to profile and implement the benefits of VET to industry, businesses, labour market intermediaries, government agencies and learning providers. The relationships with individual enterprises involved the project in providing workforce planning, including assistance with recruitment, human resource management, corporate structures and training. Relationships with the Job Network agencies and VET providers resulted in the collective contribution to a stand alone promotional brochure for the Northern Rivers and the development of a process by which all agencies would have an opportunity to tender for recruitment and training with enterprises referred to the project.

Creating an Advantage for Businesses in Cellulose Valley

A number of strategies were developed to create an advantage for emerging, new, existing and expanding businesses. Critical to the success of this initiative was the working relationship developed with project partner, the Business Development Manager, Department of State and Regional Development.

Where appropriate, the Business Development Manager referred enterprises to the project and worked collaboratively with other stakeholders to meet their workforce training and planning needs. More than half the enterprises referred came from the Department of State and Regional Development Business Development Manager.

Also critical to the process was the funding and resourcing of training from project partner TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute. The Steering Committee, through monthly meetings and the participatory action research method provided information, resources, advice and networks to address the needs of those enterprises referred.

⁵ Regional Development Project Strategic Plan 2002 – 2003 First Interim Report

The project dealt with **twenty seven (27)** enterprises. The nature of the assistance provided was:

Type of Assistance Provided	Enterprises Supported
Workforce Planning and Recruitment	13
Specialised Training	12
Prevocational training leading to employment	6
Information regarding training system	18
Human Resource Assistance only	3
<i>Existing Workforce Specialised Training</i>	3

The provision of this assistance, in conjunction with partners provided a comprehensive response to existing and expanding company needs and the framework for assisting emerging industries and attracting those seeking to relocate. This assistance was publicised widely by the regional developers involved in the project. Many of the interventions are detailed in the case studies (at Appendix E); however, where there were identical interventions for more than one company only one case study was developed.

In addition, a subsection of Steering Committee partners in conjunction with the Economic Development Team of a local government authority formed the Lismore Investment Team. This team sought to provide both generic and specific information to existing, emerging and relocating enterprises. The team converged when an opportunity was identified by any of the members. There was subsequently a multi sectoral response to all the requirements of that enterprise (Case Study Five and Fifteen). VET and the project participation in that team were seen as integral to the functioning and potential success in workforce provision of the team and its customers.

Creating an Advantage for Communities in Cellulose Valley

Deliverable Outcomes for the Indigenous Community

The project had a strong Indigenous focus, and the strategic partnerships with the Indigenous community have led to an expectation of greater involvement of the Indigenous community in VET and of VET in the communities' development economically and in regard to employment.

The Indigenous Reference Group⁶ was comprised of those Aboriginal employees in government and non-government agencies whose principal focus was that of regional, economic and employment development or vocational education and training. In addition, the Bundjalung Elders Council

⁶ Indigenous Reference Group participants are listed in Appendix B

was consulted and two representatives of the Council were nominated to the Reference Group.

Throughout the two year project period this group initiated and supported a range of innovative partnerships which led to both training and employment outcomes for individuals and communities. These partnerships were characterised as joint ventures with enterprises seeking to employ trained staff or communities desirous of training which would lead to employment or support of their community enterprises. Some of these are listed at Appendix E – Case Studies.

In all Case Studies, two or more of the Reference Group were involved in an individual initiative. Involvement was determined through a participatory action research process and utilised the collaborative intervention process developed by the project⁷.

Through a strategic planning process the Indigenous Reference Group developed the following Key Areas of Achievement for the project:⁸ Strategies identified for areas of achievement included:

- Training in business skills, practices and management
- Encourage mentoring in business skills in those areas identified as opportunities
- Identify opportunities for local communities in conjunction with other projects, such as the Medicinal Herb Audit
- Encourage self determination through consultation at all stages of the project
- Hold a forum on Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights
- Provide mentoring, with respect to training and employment
- Ensure that existing skills of Indigenous people are utilised (may require additional or post qualification training)
- Encourage training pathways that assist Indigenous students to remain in school and increase job opportunities
- Encourage community participation in training offered through schools in isolated communities
- Increase VET opportunities to isolated communities through innovative models and delivery

The strategies were implemented through the following:

- Establishment of a Small Business Course for Indigenous business people (Case Study Ten).
- The development by the members, lead by the Aboriginal Business Development Manager, DSRD of an Aboriginal Business Mentoring Program to be conducted throughout the state by the Department of State and Regional Development, to commence late 2003/early 2004.
- Two separate VET pilots designed and conducted with Indigenous students in Years 9 and 10. The pilots were part of the *Ngumarhl*

⁷ Collaborative Intervention Model, Figure 2, outlined in Report Section 2

⁸ See Regional Development Project Strategic Plan 2002 – 2003 First Interim Report April 2002

Mibiyn project and are the subject of a separate report to the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training (Case Study Eighteen). Both pilots utilised mentors for the students.

- Project and financial management training for Local Aboriginal Land Council staff and Board members (Case Study Thirteen). The participants wanted to increase their skills incrementally and to work on issues which were of importance in their organisations. They intend to undertake competencies from the Diploma of Business. Delivery was designed to meet the needs of the projects upon which each individual was working.
- Development of an Indigenous Employment Strategy, negotiated by Strategic Partners that incorporates VET. (Case Studies Seven and Eight)
- Planning of prevocational courses in joint ventures with enterprises which are for Indigenous groups only and are linked to employment outcomes. (Case Studies Four, Eight and Nine)
- Linking VET to meaningful and realistic employment outcomes in joint ventures with business and enterprises (Case Study Nine and Sixteen).
- An Intellectual Property Rights workshop conducted in Lismore was designed especially to provide information for entertainment, cultural heritage and media. Thirty participants attended.
- Indigenous Reference Group members identified, with the ATSI Economic Development Officer, a range of training in Information Technology for employed and underemployed Aboriginal community members in the geographically isolated town of Bonalbo.
- The Indigenous Reference Group identified, with the Steering Committee, an opportunity for primary producers in the region to be involved in the culinary and medicinal plant product market. (Case Study Seventeen).

The achievements of the Indigenous Reference Group resulted in the following:

- 22 Indigenous staff in training at an Indigenous Development Corporation through the Existing Worker Traineeship program
- 23 Indigenous participants in Director's training through the NSW Land Council
- 12 Local Aboriginal Land Council employees in Project Management training (Diploma of Business).
 - Students are now seeking to undertake the Financial Planning module
- 18 Indigenous participants in Business Administration training
 - 3 Indigenous graduates of the Business Administration course now in fulltime employment as a result of their qualification.

- 15 Indigenous participants in Community Services (Aged Care nursing) training
 - 14 participants completed the course
 - 3 employed in the Enrolled Nurse Training Program
 - 1 employed permanently in the Children's Ward
 - 1 employed permanently in a Palliative Care
 - 2 undertaking the Degree in Nursing at Southern Cross University
 - 2 undertaking the Aboriginal Health Workers Course at TAFE NSW North Coast Institute
 - Others seeking employment in Aged Care
- 20 Indigenous employees and community members in computer training in a geographically isolated community
- 52 Indigenous Year 9 and 10 students in vocational education and training with TAFE NSW North Coast Institute.

The following training is planned for late 2003/early 2004:

- Community Services – Residential Care Certificate III for a private nursing service to commence February 2004
- Community Services – Residential Care Certificate III for a private hospital to commence April 2004 (awaiting construction of the facility)

In addition, this strategic partnership initiated and continued by the Indigenous Reference Group has led to the Indigenous community identifying that accredited training is important in meeting its employment and economic needs. Both Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Development Corporations will seek additional training from the project partners throughout 2004.

The Indigenous Reference Group continues to meet and has identified a number of projects and priorities for involvement in 2003 to 2005. These are listed in the project recommendations.

Provision of VET in isolated communities

One community, Bonalbo was identified as being significantly disadvantaged by geographic isolation and targeted as a potential micro project (see Case Study Twelve). The original concept was to offer any vacancies in VET courses within the school to the general community. It was also thought that additional VET opportunities could be offered in the community in which school students could participate. Thus, offering additional VET options to students. This additional VET provision was to be targeted towards local employment opportunities.

It transpired that the school had been offering any vacancies to the general community and required no intervention or assistance. In addition, the mode of delivery for the additional VET opportunities to the community militated

against the inclusion of school students. Whilst the community was advantaged by the additional VET provision there was not the anticipated advantages for school students.

Sustainable Structures

The partnership structures and strategies, built upon a participatory action research methodology, allowed the project team to consult with, inform, and be informed by, stakeholder reference groups regarding trends in regional development and VET. This ensured that project initiatives were strategically developed in a well informed and agreed regional context.

The consortium partners, who constituted the Project Steering Committee, demonstrated a strategic intent to support economic development with a strong employment generation focus. This strategic intent, whilst a collective focus, is also an organisational direction for each of the individuals participating and their respective employing organisations. This, in addition to the motivation of the stakeholders will support the sustainability of the initiatives.

Embedding the initiatives

The commitment of partners as a result of the project has led to their pro-activity in trialling new policy initiatives for their respective Departments and organisations. Other examples providing models of sustainable outcomes include:

- **Department of Education and Training / Department of State and Regional Development: Formal Partnership**

A formal partnership has been initiated between the Department of Education and Training and the Department of State and Regional Development. Both Departments agreed that negotiations for formal partnerships were required at a certain level beyond the scope of the project, which is at a state wide level.

- **Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and Northern Rivers Area Health Service**

As a result of the Indigenous Nursing Project (Case Study 9), the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations representative on the Steering Committee met with the Northern Rivers Area Health Service to ascertain the viability of a VET cadetship in nursing. The Department currently funds only undergraduate programs in nursing. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations representative on the Steering Committee is pursuing the development of a trial VET cadetship program through her Department.

Replication of the Project Model and Initiatives

Significant outcomes have been achieved as a result of the connectivity that the project has established with a diverse range of stakeholders, from

government, industry and communities. For communities strategies have included identifying employment opportunities and partnerships with business, and targeting and implementing training to up-skill individuals seeking to gain employment.

As a result of both the extent and scope of these interventions it has not been feasible to develop a single model for replication. However, a series of micro-models was developed, within a strategic framework. These delineate a critical process for utilising a participatory action research method and are demonstrated in the eighteen Case Studies outlined at Appendix E. The case studies represent a range of micro-models, all of which can be replicated. These case studies represent the practice which informed the construction and development of the model. It was the process of review in each case and each cycle which redefined and tested the models.

Diffusion of the Cellulose Valley Model

Additional promotional activities have been undertaken to contribute to diffusion and replication of the project outcomes. They include presentations at state and international conferences⁹ and presentations to state, regional and international development organisations.

The project has been involved with three rural and regional communities in replicating some of the initiatives of the project. Two of these communities are interested in the replication of the Indigenous workforce planning and training. Members of the Indigenous Reference Group have met with these organisations. The third is a consortium of rural shire councils interested in undertaking a similar approach to industry attraction and development. Members of the Steering Committee have met with representatives of these councils.

“We would have eventually got there, but now we have done it with much greater confidence...” (Steering Committee Member)

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the issues raised in the project, its primary aims of identifying the role of VET in regional development and establishing it as a leading and integral element in the regional development process were achieved. The project has contributed significantly to economic development and expansion in Cellulose Valley.

It has been important in identifying the role which VET can play in addressing skills shortages, predicting skill needs and providing innovative employment and training opportunities whilst also influencing demand for skills. It has used an intentionally collaborative process to demonstrate that, with committed strategic partners flexible, innovative interventions can assist the maintenance

⁹ *Spotlight on the Provider* Conference in May 2002; *Learning Cities and Regions Conference*, an International OECD conference jointly sponsored by the Victorian Government; and *People. Place and Partnerships II*, a National conference held in Sydney May 2003.

and support expansion of individual businesses and industry in a regional context. (Case Studies One, Five, Fourteen)

The project also met its secondary aims. In regard to the Indigenous community, the project exceeded the expectations. This was due to the commitment and impetus of the Indigenous Reference Group and the responsiveness of the community. In order to maintain this impetus and to continue with a program of significant projects the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board Indigenous Reference Group will seek additional funding assistance as outlined in the recommendations presented in this report.

The project has raised an expectation that there will be continuing VET participation in the regional development process, and the ongoing challenge is for VET planners and practitioners to capitalise on this expectation and participate meaningfully and collaboratively in both the strategic regional development and business activity process with other regional development and business stakeholders.

The project has illustrated the key role VET can play, and as a result VET providers feel more confident to participate and regional developers feel more open to their inclusion.

The project was launched by the then Minister of Education and Training Hon John Watkins MP. In his communiqué to the project and its partners he commented:-

"I am impressed by the networks and partnerships you have created between industry, schools, training providers and government agencies to address skills shortages and attract new businesses. The networks are highlighting the important role VET has in developing the region's workforce."

5

Recommendations

Recommendation One

That the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training in conjunction with Department of State and Regional Development support the development and implementation of workshops to promote regional development throughout the State.

Recommendation Two

That the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training supports the employment of a Project Officer for the Indigenous Reference Group of the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board for a period of 18 months.

The Indigenous Reference Group has identified the following priorities in carrying forward the initiatives of the project:

- **Aboriginal Employment Service:** Feasibility study and possible establishment of an Aboriginal employment service in the Northern Rivers
- **Import replacement of medicinal and culinary plant products:** Trials of agricultural and horticultural enterprises in conjunction with NSW Agriculture, NSW Land Council, Far North Coast Branch and 5 Community Economic Development Programs (CDEP) and TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute.
- **Pathways Program:** Furtherance of the replication of the Regional Extended Family Services Pathways Program for the Northern Rivers in conjunction with Southern Cross University and TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute.
- **Aboriginal Business Mentoring Program:** Establishment of an Aboriginal Business Mentoring Program in partnership with the Department of State and Regional Development, ATSIC and TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute.

All of these projects are substantial and it is expected that significant inroads will be made to these projects in the period October 2003 to April 2005. They will require maintenance only for that time which will occur within the Indigenous Reference Group.

The amount sought is \$85,500. These funds will be match by funds from:

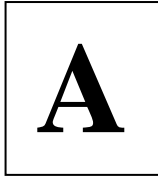
TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute

Department of State and Regional Development

NSW Agriculture

Northern Rivers Regional Development Board (administrative)

Philanthropic fund



Appendix A

Consortium Partners

The Project Steering Committee Members are introduced below. All represent stakeholder groups and agencies that are strategically placed to enhance the development and the continuation of The Regional Development Project.

Ruth Povall

Chair - Project Steering Committee

Currently Executive Officer, Far North East NSW Sustainable Region Advisory Committee

As Chair for the project, my job is to ensure that the Project realises the specific aims and objectives as stated in the Strategic Plan.

When I first joined the project as a representative for regional industry, (Regional Manager, Australian Business Ltd) I saw the Project as a vehicle for breaking down the old images of TAFE and other Registered Training Organisations, to demonstrate that today's vocational education and training is flexible and pathways can be developed to fit the needs of local businesses – now and in the future.

Now, as manager for a federal government pilot regional development programme, assisting communities identify and address strategic development priorities and recommend funding to the Minister, the Project has been a critical element in our overall success in contributing to triple bottom line outcomes (economic, social/community, environmental & governance) in the Northern Rivers

Colleen Williams

Chair – Registered Training Organisations Reference Group

Manager, Industry Training Services, Department of Education and Training

I can offer information about a range of information and services provided by Department of Education and Training. In addition I can offer substantial experience in dealing with industry and the New Apprenticeship system.

I want to see a co-ordinated response to the VET needs of industry that illustrates the value of training to industry productivity. Through this project, I want to assist in the maintenance of jobs in the region and the capacity for young people here to obtain work and life long training skills.

Margaret McNeil

Executive Officer

Office of the Vice Chancellor, Southern Cross University

I am keen to support my tenant companies in as many ways as possible and The Regional Development Project provides a responsive mechanism through which they can access information about specialised staff training and

placement programs. There is also the possibility of tailoring offerings to meet the specific needs of organisations in start-up / early-growth phase.

I will serve on the Steering Committee and Lismore Investment Team and offer as much strategic and practical support as I can at that level. I will also showcase The Regional Development Project to my tenant companies.

Paul Roberts

Director Education Planning

North Coast Institute of TAFE

Project Liaison – Schools Reference Group

North Coast Institute of TAFE has a commitment to providing training that meets industry needs and reflects changing priorities in the region's development. I would like to position the North Coast Institute of TAFE as a significant contributor to regional development on the North Coast.

As the North Coast Institute of TAFE representative on the Steering Committee, I can assist with information regarding the National Training Agenda and can assist in some way towards resources for the progressing of some training delivery.

Don Frater

Chair, Job Network Reference Group

Executive Officer, Northern Rivers Regional Development Board

As Executive Officer for the sponsoring body of the project, the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board is keen to use all resources to contribute to the development of and investment in the region to increase in employment options for our large underemployed population. We see this project as contributing to those outcomes.

I have been able to offer the project industry intelligence regarding investment opportunities and directions. As Chair of the Job Network Reference Group, I have been able to contribute knowledge and expertise in promotion. I also provide management and supervision of the project manager and strategic direction for the project.

Neil Davies

Chair – Indigenous Reference Group

Aboriginal Training Consultant

Department of Education & Training, New Apprenticeship Centre

In my role with the project and as Chair of the Indigenous Reference Group, I have been able to contribute knowledge about the Indigenous community, individual businesses, enterprises and development corporations - many of whom have now become customers of the Project. In addition, I have been able to contribute knowledge of funding programs for employment and small business to support some of the initiatives of the project. I am working with the Project Manager to increase the number of mainstream businesses establishing an Indigenous Employment Program. I want to add value to the project and the link to other State and Commonwealth programs to support Indigenous people and employers.

I would like the project to have an impact on increasing education and training opportunities to the Indigenous community, and through that, increasing the opportunities for employment and self-employment. I want the project to assist economic development for the region and Indigenous communities to share in that.

Sue Ryan

Business Development Manager

Department of State and Regional Development

My contribution to the project is the provision of industry intelligence and information regarding regional development priorities. Also, I am able to offer a client flow to the project to test the theoretical premise of the role of VET in regional development. Also, and more importantly for my service, the project is able to offer outcomes to businesses both existing and potential.

I am interested in the project being supportive of the State's capacity to make offers to potential investors of VET options as an inclusion in an incentives package. This could value-add for many of the packages which the Department of State and Regional Development currently develops for investors.

Ann Carkery

Executive Officer

Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee

The Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee has a focus on employment outcomes and enterprise development. We see this project leading to a reduction of unemployment and the up-skilling of our community workforce in a co-ordinated manner. The Northern Rivers has a huge pool of labour and we are keen to maximise that potential for any new enterprises or the growth of existing businesses.

My participation in the group brings established networks to the project. I can also offer expertise and knowledge of the region including other stakeholder groups and industries. This can provide enormous benefit to the project that can leverage off a number of other Commonwealth programs.

Neil Treverrow
Technical Specialist
NSW Agriculture

In my role with NSW Agriculture I am keen to develop linkages through the project to integrated educational packages that encompass a whole of enterprise approach. Such approaches are clearly integral to successful industry development. I strongly support the contention that good marketing is essential for good production systems, and good production systems are essential to developing good marketing systems.

I have brought to the project expertise in the area of development and extension of sustainable horticultural production systems with an emphasis on Quality Assurance and Best Practice culture.

Melissa Hughes
Secretary, Australian Herb Growers Association (until November 2002)
In my role as Secretary of the Growers Association I am able to offer information on the priorities for the Industry and its members and the capacity of the Industry to meet demand for product. I am also able to assist the project with access to an important network of producers.

I would like to see the project offer the industry VET opportunities and also opportunities for young people to enter the industry. In addition I would expect that the project has a role in the promotion of the Industry's capacity amongst investors and processors.

Consortium Partners Contribution

The following is a summary of the contributions made by the consortium partners to the project. In kind contributions as well as direct financial contributions are outlined.

Department of State and Regional Development	
<p>Staff involvement in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Steering Committee • Indigenous Reference Group • Development of a Department of Education and Training and Department of State and Regional Development protocol • Lead agency in the Lismore Investment Team, Aboriginal Business Mentoring Program, industry and company links • Promotion of the services of the project to companies and Indigenous communities. • Development and funding of the Indigenous Business Mentoring Program. • Assessment of the development of an Aboriginal Employment Service in the Northern Rivers <p>In addition, the Business Manager, Department of State and Regional Development, and the Project are collaborating on a draft document for both Department of State and Regional Development and Department of Education and Training to inform the development of a closer and more strategic regional development relationship. The document is in its first draft and currently being trialled.</p>	<p>\$55,000</p>

TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute	
<p>Direct funding of 5 courses through both the Aboriginal Education and Training Unit and the Get Skilled Program In conjunction with the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board, hosted the placement of a Premier's Department Diploma of Management (Government) candidate and have continued the secondment and payment of that candidate. North Coast Institute of TAFE contribution, valued at -></p>	<p>\$102,990</p>
<p>In kind contribution also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Indigenous Reference Group • Partnerships with Industry • Partnerships with community • Provision of specialised courses to meet industry need • Lead agency for the Local Area Land Council Project Management, Area Health Service Indigenous Enrolled Nurse Trainee Project, Aboriginal Development Corporation (Case Study 4) • Indigenous student support • Promotion of the services of the project to companies and Indigenous communities. • Partnership development with Southern Cross University in the replication of the New England <i>Pathways Program</i> and the employment of project officer to development of the program and delivery. 	<p>\$26,000</p> <p>\$54,000</p>

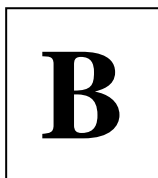
Department of Education and Training Industry Services	
<p>Involved in a range of elements of the project including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Project Steering Committee and the Schools Reference Group and the Registered Training Reference Group • Assistance with seeking additional specialised project funds • Advocacy of the Project to public and educational forums <i>Spotlight on the Provider and OECD Learning Cities and Regions International Conference.</i> • Active promotion of the services of the Project. • Development of a Department of Education and Training and Department of State and Regional Development protocol. 	
Department of Education and Training, Lismore Office	
<p>Involved in a number of elements of the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct funding of components of the <i>Ngumarhl Mibiyn</i> Project through funds from the <i>Learning Works</i> Program • Participation in Indigenous Reference Group • Participation in development of the <i>Ngumarhl Mibiyn</i> Project • Liaison with Schools and staff • Training of Mentors for Indigenous students • Student transport • Indigenous student support • Partnerships with Industry • Provision of a Schools Reference Group for the Lismore District 	\$23,990

Department of Education and Training, Tweed and Ballina Office	
<p>Involved in a number of elements of the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the initiatives of the project with VET school staff • Inclusion of the Project Manager in workshops • Direct funding of components of the <i>Ngumarhl Mibiyn</i> Project through funds from the <i>Learning Works</i> Program • Participation in development of the Ngumarhl Mibiyn Project Phase II with Ballina High School • Liaison with Schools and staff • Support for the staff of Ballina High School and their participation in the Ngumarhl Mibiyn Project • Indigenous student support 	
NSW Agriculture	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through its involvement in the Steering Committee and the <i>Import Replacement Project on Medicinal and Culinary Herbs</i> a number of opportunities in skilling individuals and communities have been identified. This synergy will assist communities to respond to the recommendations of the report • Has made available an Extension Horticulturalist to focus on the needs of herb growers and assist in the identification of skills required. • Mentoring Indigenous communities and Land Councils through a trial phase of herb growing. 	\$5,000

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	
<p>Locally based staff and subsequently Newcastle based staff have been very committed to the project through participation in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Steering Committee • Indigenous Reference Group • Development of the Ngumarhl Mibiyn Project • Partnerships with Industry • Partnerships with community and community groups • Assistance with seeking additional specialised project funds • Support to the Indigenous community to participate in the project • Promotion of the Project and the initiatives of the Indigenous Reference Group and the Steering committee. 	
Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee	
<p>Participating in several aspects of the project including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Steering Committee • Indigenous Reference Group • Partnerships with the Indigenous community and the Northern Rivers Aboriginal Economic Development Team • Promotion of the services of the Project across the State to other Indigenous projects and Indigenous communities • Assistance with seeking additional specialised project funds. 	

Southern Cross University	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Project Steering Committee • Partnerships with Industry • Promotion of the Project with potential tenants at the Business Precinct • Participation in Lismore Investment Team. • Partnerships with North Coast Institute of TAFE in the development of educational pathways for specialised industries and the Indigenous community 	
Australian Herb Growers Association	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in the Project Steering Committee and its initiatives. 	
Bundjalung Elders Council	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the Project through participation in the Indigenous Reference Group and its initiatives • Assists the Reference Group in the direction of activities of the group and provision of cultural advice. • Provision of direction for the Project in relation to the Indigenous community and enterprises. 	

Job Network Reference Group	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents 11 participating agencies. • Participate in the Steering Committee and Reference Group • Contributed significantly in the direction of partnerships between the Job Network, Northern Rivers Regional Development Board and individual companies and the regional development thrust of the Project. • Continuing to support the partnerships and maintenance of those structures which lead to sustainability of the processes which have been developed. • Development of a promotional brochure and material for investment tenders. • Website inclusion in the Invest Northern Rivers site 	
Department of Education Science and Training	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involved with the Indigenous initiatives. • Participating in Indigenous reference groups • Assisting with identifying additional funding sources. • Provision of resources to DET (Learning Works) for the Ngumarhl Mibiyn Year 9 and 10 	



Appendix B

REFERENCE GROUPS AND PARTICIPANTS

Indigenous Reference Group

Mr Neil Davies	Chair Aboriginal Training Consultant, Department of Education & Training, New Apprenticeship Centre
Ms Faye Smith	Elder (Ms Smith died on 25/2/2003) Bundjalung Elders Council
Mr Charles Moran	Elder Bundjalung Elders Council
Mr Roy Hatfield	Aboriginal Coordinator North Coast Institute of TAFE
Mr Craig Jenkins	Indigenous Business Manager, Department of State and Regional Development
Ms Wendy Ruttley	Indigenous Education Manager Department Education, Science & Training
Ms Dianne Harrington	Indigenous Education Officer Department Education, Science & Training
Mr Jodi Sampson	Aboriginal Project Officer Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee
Ms June Grace	VET Consultant, Lismore District, Department of Education and Training
Ms Robyn Ferguson	Indigenous Economic Development Officer Casino Business Enterprise Centre
Mr Harold Love	Executive Officer Far North Coast NSW Land Council
Mr Andrew Hegedus	Durahrwa Training and Development Corporation

Other Indigenous Organisations and Departments with which the Project has strategic links include:

Mr Cedric Hinton	Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commission
Mrs Bertha Kapeen	Chair, Bundjalung Elders Council
Mr Lance Manton	Executive Officer, Kurrachee Cooperative Society
Northern Rivers Indigenous Economic Development Team	
Shared Vision	

Job Network Reference Group

Mr Don Frater	Chair, Executive Officer, Northern Rivers Regional Development Board
Ms Pauline Amos	Work Directions
Mr Paul Bennett	Tweed Training Education Company
Mr Shane Hogan	Wesley Uniting Employment
Mr Mike Hetharia	Sarina Russo
Ms Ros McInnes	Mission Australia Employment
Mr Ron Rathborne	Tursa Employment and Training
Ms Debbie Fry	Tursa Employment and Training
Ms Wendy Dooley	Employment National
Mr Rod Mackenzie	The Business College
Ms Jan Praetz	Mission Australia Employment
Mr Garry Bargh	Ballina Employment and Training, Jobs Australia
Mr Garry White	Wesley Uniting Employment

The Job Network agencies come together under the auspices of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee. Both these organisations have been instrumental in bringing the Job Network together and assisted in supporting the model that the Job Network agencies have proposed for future collaboration.

New Apprenticeship Centre Reference Group

The North Coast is serviced by three New Apprenticeship Centres. They are:

- Australian Business Ltd (ABEN)
- Employment National
- Department of Education and Training New Apprenticeship Centre

Each has a representative on the Reference Group, which is chaired by the Project Manager.

Schools' Reference Group

In the Lismore District, the District Education and Industry Advisory Committee meets each term. Its membership includes:

- District Superintendent
- All secondary school principals
- Vocational Education Training Consultant
- Director of Education Programs, North Coast Institute TAFE

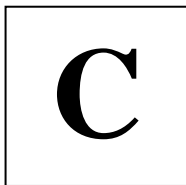
- Access and Equity coordinator
- Manager, Industry Training Services, Department of Education and Training
- Project Manager, Employment Skills Development Project

The committee has incorporated a standing agenda item of the project specifically and regional development directions generally. The project has utilised this group to inform direction on issues relating to schools.

Registered Training Organisations and Group Training Companies

A recently formed North Coast Vocational Education Training Promotion and Advisory Committee (NETPAC) committee representing registered training organisations and group training companies is operating as the access point to all member organisations for the Project.

Information distribution about and to the Project is made through the Chairperson of NETPAC.



Appendix C

Questionnaire to Steering Committee Members - February 2003

Request for participation

A primary focus of the Regional Development Project is to ensure that many of its components, if not its entirety, is able to be developed into a model or set/series of models which can be replicated in other parts of NSW and across Australia. In considering some of the elements which make the project successful, the most significant factor is the consortium of partners. The success has been due not just to the Departments represented or the positions held, but most importantly to the commitment that each has shown to the project. This questionnaire has been designed to identify those individual skills and interests which partners bring to the process which might be able to be replicated elsewhere. Your assistance in completing the questionnaire would be greatly appreciated.

Questionnaire items and collated responses to each

1. Where do you feel your goals intersect or are common with other participating agencies in this project in the pursuit of regional development?

- Others in the VET, business expansion and investment attraction areas.
- Promoting, facilitating, creating regional development it creates opportunities for VET and traineeships & apprenticeships.
- Department of Education and Training ITC are interested in promotion of VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING and its role in regional development and specifically industry and enterprise as well as individual (including youth, indigenous and mature workers). The participation in vocational training, identification of skills gaps and surpluses, promotion of quality training and outcomes.
- Jobs growth and the development of new industries thus providing more varied jobs as suitable pathways for students and leading to skills development demand.
- As the largest provider of VET services in the Northern Rivers and North Coast our aims coincide completely
- A major of our activity is providing a skilled workforce for regional development so participating in the project provides us with data, strategic networking with key agencies in a much more structured way

2. To what extent has this project and your participation in the Steering Committee assisted:

2.1 The focus of your organisation?

- Minimal assistance with the focus - this remains unchanged but the opportunity to provide a better service
- Provided access to more comprehensive, beyond farm gate component of horticultural systems - Important
- Identification of key strategic planning and implementation strategies for promote of VET. Increased knowledge understanding by other government agencies in the value of VET in supporting enterprises & industries.
- As the aboriginal training consultant with DETNAC, the work invest is doing with the Aboriginal Community will up opportunities traineeships and apprenticeships for aboriginal people.
- The project has been of great benefit to the *Sustainable Regions Programme* & has assisted clients with their VET need. The SRAC was always aware that VET would be an issue in business expansion or investment attraction, but have been surprised at how integral it is to sustainable regional development.
- Has not changed our focus but has enabled us to develop better strategic understanding of the corporate goals of other agencies and better links with new and emerging private sector developments which assists us to achieve our corporate goals with better info on achieving our corporate strategies

2.2 Strategies employed?

- My involvement in the Steering Committee is assisting with my committees efforts to develop the boat building industry in Tweed area, eg. Understanding if the national training package accreditation process, etc.
- Working closely with project manager and other Steering Committee partners to identify and facilitate opportunities for aboriginal people.
- The brokering role of the project manager has been a key strategy in supporting the role of (potential) in VET programs and services offered by the ITC.
- Opened up potentially new areas for industry co learning in the area of herbs.
- No change in strategies as much of this work is commercially sensitive tends not to be shared / discussed until a positive outcome is achieved – significant between business growth / improvement and investment leading to new jobs.

- Developing training partnerships with other agencies and industry groups.

2.3 Relationship development with other partners?

- Much better relationships (indirect) with potential training provider.
- Assists, especially with federal areas
- Key to establishing relationship with Department of State and Regional Development, Invest Northern Rivers, Indigenous employment and training interests.
- Working closely with project manager and other steering committee partners to identify and facilitate opportunities for aboriginal people.
- I am following up on the leads in the boating industry via contacts made on the steering committee.
- This has enabled us to develop a closer relationship with DSRD and the regional development boards.

2.4 How you now do business?

- Business not done radically different, but I'm quicker at picking up the vet/skills development issues early on in the piece- even if the client is not aware of it.
- Working closely with other partners eg. TAFE, DSRD Aboriginal Business Manager, build networks.
- Greater focus on local industry and enterprise skills needs
- Potentially strong influence
- There is a danger of role confusion eg. The private hospital - would normally have been the primary contact but got mixed up with the board activities - not the normal or the intent of the dept.
- We have sought the assistance of DSRD and the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board in a R&D project to assess the training needs of the composites industry with partners contributing intelligence and funds. Hopefully there will be more opportunities to work collaboratively in assessing regional needs.

3. What professional skills and resources do you feel you bring to the project?

- Good business knowledge and knowledge of regional opportunities
- Understanding the systems issues for horticultural production, as opposed to the production focus.
- Knowledge and understanding of State Government, priorities and programs in relation to VET.

- I have been working in Aboriginal employment field for the past 8 years and in regional development for Aboriginal people for the past 4 years.
- I have a post graduate education background, with 15 years of business, industry and regional development skills.
- Extensive knowledge of the VET system, corporate and strategic skills and resources to undertake some of the micro models planned by the project.

4. How have you been able to utilise those skills in the project?

- Referral of business and other investment opportunities to the project – live cases for the project
- I feel I've been able to bring my experience to the project.
- Providing input to steering committee decision making and priority setting, providing support to Project Manager in relation to specific projects.
- Understanding the systems issues for horticultural production, as opposed to the production focus.
- I would like to use my regional development skills more.
- Potentially applicable for herb project.
- Provision of resources, both human and financial to assist the project to develop a range of new training projects and opportunities to support new, emerging and expanding industries.

5. What is the advantage to you of your involvement in the project?

- We are the cutting edge of this field in the world. Even the OECD is interested. This is the biggest action research project, probably undertaken so far. This knowledge helps me directly in my job.
- Added benefits for my clients and if the referral and State offer can be formalised this will be a significant benefit in the future for improved services offered by DSRD.
- Potential to operate in a wider scope projects than usual.
- Greater awareness of the needs of enterprise and industry, greater awareness of the role of indigenous programs and needs of Indigenous community.
- Working with the project manager and other member's of the steering committee.
- An understanding of others corporate directions and goals for the region and matching those to my organisation's strategic goals. This has enable us to develop synergies which might other wise not have occur in such a structured way.

6. What are the advantages to your organisation?

- More strategic and integrated approach to VET in regional development.
- Opportunities for traineeships and apprenticeships, recognition
- Opportunity to engage with emerging industry in a less ad hoc way.
- Apart from knowledge, the Federal Government has now taken an interest in this field and has involved ANTA in the proceedings. ANTA has now approached the Canberra sustainable Regions People and wants to do joint projects. Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery.
- As Above, additional benefits to – DSRD clients- businesses and investors. Will enhance the Dept role in investment attraction and business growth.
- Matching of the strategic goals to those of other regional development agencies and services for a better outcome for the community and industry along better use of resources. Opportunities to partner with expanding industries and industry organisations to target skills development.

7. How will you continue to be involved in these activities at the completion of the project?

- Formal referral process under development so will continue to use the service provided during the pilot period.
- Through my job regional development, ANTA and via my own knowledge of the subject matter.
- Follow some initiatives
- Provide opportunities for and information to the local program field officer.
- Will continue with the work initiated for the Aboriginal Community.
- Maintain the networks and the partnerships with other agencies which have been developed

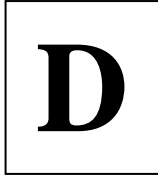
8. Are there other comments you would like to make about the project, to date?

- The terrific work, Chris Pauling has done on the project. Her drive, commitment and professionalism
- Follow some initiatives
- It has provided opportunities for information sharing with organisations that I might otherwise not be involved with.
- The project enabled North Coast Institute of TAFE to develop an appreciation of the number of other regional development organisations and the scope of their involvement in the area where skills acquisition

is essential. It has brought a greater understanding of the number of enterprises and their education and training needs and the sort of services which we can provide. It has helped to give a stronger skills development leading to employment focus for some of our programs.

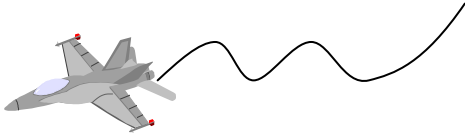
9. What are your priorities for 2003 for the project?

- Finalise system for VET assistance to investors in order to enhance State's offer to potential members.
- I would like to go more into the regional development business/expansion side more.
- Product outcomes in target project.
- Hopefully continue with the priorities we identify for the Indigenous community.



Appendix D

SciWriting



Communicating Science Effectively in English

Margaret Cargill
34 Moules Rd, Magill, South Australia 5072

Report of a Qualitative Analysis of Selected

Data from

The Regional Development Project:

Bringing Vocational Education and Training to Cellulose Valley

24 August 2003

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PROPOSAL FOR A QUALITATIVE (THEMATIC) ANALYSIS OF SELECTED DATA FROM THE PROJECT “BRINGING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO CELLULOSE VALLEY”	58

Executive Summary

1. Brief and methods

The brief was to conduct a qualitative analysis of selected project data to identify features able to be replicated in other contexts where it is desired to establish Vocational Education and Training as a lead component in regional development. A thematic keyword analysis was conducted of evaluative questionnaire responses from the project consortium partners, to identify salient themes. By tracing expressions of these themes in other relevant sections of the data, I identified the key role played by the project manager, and issues where more information was needed to respond appropriately to the brief. These were pursued in a telephone interview with the project manager, and a final report was prepared incorporating the results of all stages of the analysis.

2. Summary of results of the qualitative analysis

The two overarching themes that emerged from Stage 1 were

- ‘Coinciding goals and reciprocal benefits (for participants’ home organisations and the project)’ and
- ‘Features contributing to the experience of synergy in the project’.

Replicating these outcomes will clearly require a sound understanding of the strategies and processes used to support their development in the original project. These were the focus of the telephone interview with the project manager, the importance of whose contribution to the achievement of the project outcomes had originally been somewhat masked by the reporting format used. The final analysis indicates that the role of appropriate and effective processes in the success of the project can be summarised under three headings:

- Strategies to support the emergence of shared goals,
- Building consistent collaboration among potential competitors, and
- Identifying the role of process in the Case Study achievements and project sustainability.

Replicating the specific features which contributed to each of these clusters should enhance the likelihood of similar successful outcomes in other contexts.

3. Project features with replicability in other contexts

3.1 Strategies used to support the emergence of shared goals

- Gather participants with compatible institutional goals
- Combine self-selection with a fully participatory planning process
- Ensure facilitator of the planning process has appropriate depth of local knowledge to foresee potentially problematic issues
- Build sufficient flexibility into the initial plan that both potential contributions and needs of all participants can be incorporated as planning and implementation proceed.

3.2 Building consistent collaboration among potential competitors

- Plan meeting processes and ambience to enhance development of collaborative ethos
- Involve all participants in communication and activities occurring between meetings
- Ensure facilitation role is independent of participating agencies' local agendas
- Include the building of an effective collaborative ethos among participants as a performance indicator for the success of a replication project

3.3 The role of process in the Case Study achievements and project sustainability

- Interpret Case Studies in light of the Collaborative Intervention Process flowchart (Final Report pg 16) to enhance their effectiveness as micro-models for replication
- Include a strong focus on replicating the project's process features in order to give best chance of achieving successful outcomes with micro-model replication.

* * *

1. The Brief

The brief was to conduct a qualitative, thematic analysis of selected data from the project, with a view to identifying elements of the project methodology and conduct that are likely to be able to be replicated in other contexts. The goal of the proposed replications would be to establish Vocational Education and Training as a lead component in regional development in these new contexts. Further details of the brief can be found in the Proposal document, which is included at Appendix 1. The proposal was accepted via an email message from the Project Manager, Ms Christine Pauling, on 5 August 2003.

2. Constraints placed on the analysis by the nature of the data

As outlined in the Proposal for this investigation (Appendix 1), the conduct of a thematic investigation was affected by various features of the data available. The most salient of these was that the Reports had been formulated to meet management requirements and focussed heavily on outcomes, with less emphasis on the specifics of how the outcomes were achieved. For this reason some additional steps were added to the investigation, beyond the initial analysis of the written data presented. These are explained sequentially in the Sections that follow.

3. Data selection and key-word identification

The data selected for the initial keyword analysis were from the Final Report: all sections except the Case Studies were included. The Case Studies were excluded at this stage because they are by necessity extremely specific to the individual situations they report, and are not written in terms lending themselves to generalisation by an analyst not previously familiar with the business environments concerned.

Once a thorough understanding of the goal of the analysis had been gained through discussion with the Project Manager, the data were read in detail, and key words and phrases identified in terms of their apparent importance and their likelihood of contributing to an identification of replicable aspects of the project. The initial deep reading of the selected data threw up 188 key words and phrases, which were recorded on a spreadsheet together with their locations in the data set (Executive Summary Aims, Appendix C, etc).

4. Preliminary analysis

4.1 Initial category formation

As a first analysis step, the 93 keywords from the Questionnaire to Steering Group Members (Appendix C, Final Report) were gathered into related clusters, which were then grouped into broader categories. The outcome of this procedure was the identification of two main features of the project, under which all the identified keywords/phrases could provisionally be fitted:

- Coinciding goals and reciprocal benefits (for the project and the consortium partners' home organisations), and
- Features contributing to the experience of synergy in the project.

The first of these is not a surprise, as it is an explicit focus of the Questionnaire. It is instructive, however, to list the sub-categories that clustered under the second point in the analysis; these are shown in Figure 1 below.

networking	development of active partnerships
conceptual development	affirmation of project during its course
needs identification	structures: provided and developed
facilitative role of project manager	information development and sharing
	beyond normal boundaries

Figure 1: Sub-categories that cluster under the category 'Features contributing to the experience of synergy in the project'

4.2 Relationship between keyword groupings and location data

When the categories that cover the Questionnaire responses were applied to sorting the keywords from other Report sections, it became clear that the key concepts highlighted in Section 4.1 cycle through the document. For example, features identified by the Steering Committee members in their questionnaire responses largely reflect the intentions for the Project demonstrated by the choice of Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the methodology, and the reasons given for choosing it in the Report section entitled Demonstration and Evaluation Method. The feature that links these two parts of the data is the wording of the questionnaire items. The questions to which participants were asked to respond give some clear indications

of the project features the questionnaire writer perceived as most salient to its success. I list the questions below for reference.

Items in Questionnaire to Steering Group Members, February 2003

1. Where do you feel your goals intersect or are common with other participating agencies in this project in the pursuit of regional development?
2. To what extent has this project and your participation in the Steering Committee assisted the focus of your organisation?
3. To what extent has this project and your participation in the Steering Committee assisted strategies employed?
4. To what extent has this project and your participation in the Steering Committee assisted relationship development with other partners?
5. To what extent has this project and your participation in the Steering Committee assisted how you now do business?
6. What professional skills and resources do you feel you bring to the project?
7. How have you been able to utilise those skills in the project?
8. What is the advantage to you of your participation in the project?
9. What are the advantages to your organisation?
10. How will you continue to be involved in these activities at the completion of the project?
11. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the project to date?
12. What are your priorities for 2003 for the project?

It is clear from the foregoing that the first main project feature identified in Section 4.1, coinciding goals and reciprocal benefits (for the project and the consortium partners' home organisations), had been clearly identified by the questionnaire writer (the Project Manager) and foreshadowed in the wordings of the questions. What has been obtained through the questionnaire is strong confirmation that the writer's perceptions of the importance of this feature are shared by the Steering Committee members.

The second main cluster identified, Features contributing to the experience of synergy in the project, seemed to offer considerable scope for further investigation. Again, by applying this category to the keywords from other Report sections, a likely link was

identified between the 'inclusive process' highlighted in the Participatory Action Research information in the section entitled Demonstration and Evaluation Method, and the experiences identified by the questionnaire respondents. The goals of using PAR appear to have been achieved to a high degree, and the questionnaire responses tell us how participants experienced the outcomes. What cannot be identified so clearly at this stage is the process through which this 'cultural shift' was achieved.

I suspect that this information cannot be elicited from the data because the Report emphasises the real-world project outcomes, rather than reflecting on internal project implementation strategies. A key to unpacking this issue is provided by the occurrence in the data of several references to the role of the Project Manager: her professionalism, drive and commitment, and the degree to which she worked closely with other participants. It seemed that this person may hold additional information that would assist in identifying replicable features of the project. Therefore a series of inter-related questions was devised to be put to the Project Manager in a telephone interview.

4.3 Questions for interview with Project Manager

1. How were the consortium partners originally recruited?
2. What was the process used to reach shared goals, or did they pre-exist?
3. What was the process used to reach the Key Questions listed in the Executive Summary?
4. What was the process used to arrive at the flow-chart (Figure 1)? In particular, what was the genesis of the point 'Maintenance of the commitment to partnership processes'?
5. In the questionnaire responses, there are only 2 that have possibly negative overtones:
 - There is a danger of role confusion, and
 - I would like to use my regional development skills more.

Can you comment on these, and whether they relate to the issue of competition discussed under Issues in the Executive Summary?

6. What strategies did you use to address the issue of potential competition between Consortium Partners?

7. Under Replication in the Executive Summary, there is a mention of ‘a number of seemingly unique elements of the strategic partnerships’ that had been identified during discussions with other regions. Could you elaborate on this point?
8. How was PAR implemented in the three contexts of Steering Committee, Reference Committees and Case Studies?
9. In your view, how did the project build and maintain collaboration?

This interview took place from 3:00 to 4:00pm on August 18th and was tape-recorded in full.

5. Analysis incorporating interview data

Because of the limited timeframe allowed for the completion of the analysis, it was not possible to transcribe the responses in full. Thus, rather than reporting the responses to the interview questions individually, the synthesis that follows reflects my growing understanding of features that contributed to the project’s success and that could be replicated, as that understanding was grounded in the preliminary data analysis presented in Section 4, and further informed by the interview and by listening to the response tape. The subheadings used reflect the categories that became salient during this process. Quotation marks indicate brief transcribed segments of the Project Manager’s responses.

5.1 Strategies used to support the emergence of shared goals

From the Preliminary Analysis, it is clear that the sense of shared goals was important to participants. I was interested to know how that sense emerged.

The consortium partners came together originally through an ad hoc process specific to the site and the circumstances pertaining there at the time, relating to funding opportunities and initiatives already underway. A key element appears to have been a large meeting of stakeholders in regional development and education that was called as the project was being developed, which helped ensure that people who saw a role for their group in the project could be included in the project structures. Participants thus came to the project with their own specific agendas, arising out of the existing

goals of their own organisations, but with an expectation that they could “perhaps extend that”.

Ownership of project aims was facilitated through the process used for articulating them: a full-day planning session with the brief to construct a Strategic Plan for the project (see First Interim Report for the full text). Participants worked first in small groups specific to their home organisations, and then reported back to the full group for further input and discussion, followed by the production of an agreed synthesis as a Vision, Aims and Key Strategies. Important preliminary work had been done before this day by the Project Manager and others to identify the Key Questions that would need to be addressed (see Executive Summary, Final Report). These specifically addressed the initially narrow focus of the project, and thus encouraged participants to look beyond these bounds and develop an expanded vision of what could be achieved. The resulting breadth of focus contributed significantly to the degree to which all participants could refer opportunities to the project, as well as contribute to building the creative and collaborative interventions that characterise the project outcomes. All this strengthened further the sense of shared goals highlighted by participants in their questionnaire responses.

Replicable features:

- Gather participants with compatible institutional goals
- Combine self-selection with a fully participatory planning process
- Ensure facilitator of the planning process has appropriate depth of local knowledge to foresee potentially problematic issues
- Build sufficient flexibility into the initial plan that both the potential contributions and the needs of all participants can be incorporated as planning and implementation proceed.

5.2 Building consistent collaboration among potential competitors

This outcome is of particular note in my view; only two questionnaire responses hint at vestiges of more individually-focused views, and there is an overwhelming affirmation of the experience of benefit gained by participants in the initial keyword categories (see Figure 1). The importance of an active focus on developing and

maintaining this feature can be imputed from the items included in the 'Critical Elements' list in the Collaborative Interventions Process flow-chart (Figure 1 of the Final Report). Three of the eight elements refer to this component: Partnership relations; Coordinate responses; and Maintain commitment to partnership process.

There was little evidence in the original data as to how such a noteworthy outcome was achieved and maintained, let alone how it could be replicated. This issue was therefore a particular focus of my questioning in the telephone interview. The responses given suggest that at least two intentional focuses by the Project Manager were important contributors: the style and conduct of the meetings; and an active commitment to staying in touch with all participants between meetings and as new referrals were received, to invite participation and ensure involvement.

Meetings were described as relatively informal, highly convivial (fresh coffee and muffins provided) and structured to highlight positive outcomes for any participant and ensure maximum involvement in evaluation, further planning and decision-making, according to the Participatory Action Research model. The achievement of this level of participation was made easier by the fact that contact was very likely to have occurred between most participants outside the meeting context since the last meeting. A number of experiences noted by participants in their questionnaire responses, and featured in the original keyword process, reflect the positive outcomes of this collaborative and non-competitive ethos: e.g. much better relationships; recognition; beyond usual bounds.

I would propose, from my reading of the data, that it was important for the building of a collaborative ethos that the role of facilitator was played by a skilled person with a considerable degree of independence from the participating agencies. It also seems highly salient that it was necessary for me to seek very persistently to obtain the information reported here. The Project Manager had intentionally focussed the Reports almost exclusively on the activities of the Consortium Partners and the outcomes achieved in the Case Studies, rather than her own role in facilitating these. A danger inherent in this approach, however, is that the value of a cognate role in any replication could be overlooked.

Replicable features:

- Plan meeting processes and ambience to enhance development of collaborative ethos
- Involve all participants in communication and relevant activities occurring between meetings
- Ensure facilitation role is carried by a person independent of participating agencies' local agendas
- Include the building of an effective collaborative ethos among participants as a performance indicator for the success of a replication project

5.3 The role of process in the Case Study achievements and project sustainability

I return now to the Case Study data, as it is here that the details can be seen of the very wide range of situations in which the project was instrumental in designing and implementing creative interventions. To gain most benefit from the Case Studies as micro-models, it is my view that they should each be considered in close conjunction with the flow-chart diagram 'Collaborative Interventions Process' at Figure 1 of the Final Report. If this frame is adopted for viewing each Case Study, it becomes clear that the bare bones reported in each case represent the outcomes of a process which relied for its effectiveness on a complex set of relationships and practices built up gradually and intentionally over the course of the project. Without the successful development of the sense of shared goals, and of the collaborative ethos overlaying any tendency to compete, new leads (top left, Figure 1) may not have been introduced to the project. Lead agency status may have been contested; creativity of interventions may not have been so evident.

In addition, the structures developed in the project which will lead to its sustainability (e.g. the inter-agency referral form) may not have been possible without the prior work with process. Structure featured in two ways in the keyword collection. It was noted that the project provided a structure for desired outcomes to be achieved "in a less ad hoc way". In addition, the project allowed for and in fact led to the development of new structures amongst participating agencies. If parallel outcomes are desired in a replication of the project, a parallel focus on process will be needed.

Replicable features:

- Interpret Case Studies in light of the Collaborative Intervention Process flowchart to enhance their effectiveness of micro-models for replication
- Include a strong focus on replicating the project's process features in order to give best chance of achieving successful outcomes with micro-model replication.

A summary of the analysis outcomes is provided in the Executive Summary of this Report.

* * *

Appendix 1:

Proposal for a qualitative (thematic) analysis of selected data from the project “Bringing Vocational Education and Training to Cellulose Valley”

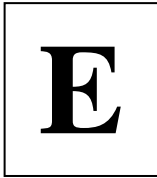
I understand that the goal of the proposed analysis is to help determine elements of the project methodology and conduct which are likely to be able to be replicated elsewhere. In the longer term, the elements identified may contribute to the description of the project in terms of a theoretical model or model set for implementation in other regions.

At the outset, I want to say that a number of features of the data may constrain the degree to which the desired goal can be fully achieved in the time available. The four documents provided to me have been written to report to a funding body against agreed goals and indicators which did not explicitly include an analysis such as is now envisaged. The questionnaire data (Appendix C, Final Report) and the self-report ‘introduction’ data (Appendix A) cannot be easily compared in their current forms. The case-studies are necessarily succinct and omit details where business confidentiality may be an issue. Lastly, the specific ways in which the Participatory Action Research approach was implemented in the various committees and client interactions are not accessible, and I would not expect to find them in reports of this type. As a result of these features of the data, I would propose to follow the steps below, if my proposal and quotation were to be accepted.

1. Select a representative sub-set of the report data for close analysis, on the basis of likelihood of contributing useful ‘keywords’ for later sorting and grouping under themes. This would include, but not be limited to, these parts of the Final Report: the Executive Summary, Demonstration and Evaluation Method, and Appendices A and C.
2. Identify from these sections the keywords that seem to relate to important or recurring aspects of the processes and outcomes of the project, and enter them into a spreadsheet attached to a code tying them to their location in the original data.
3. Using a mind-map approach, link and group the keywords into clusters, and create names for the clusters that represent themes emerging from the data.
4. Test whether the original location of keywords that cluster together is of any significance.
5. On the basis of this tentative first-stage analysis, conduct and tape-record a semi-structured telephone interview with the Project Manager, Christine Pauling, to obtain her impressions of the salience of the elements that seem to

be emerging. (There will be no time to transcribe this, but I will make notes of relevant points.)

6. Compile and submit a report incorporating the initial thematic analysis, the outcomes of the telephone interview, and a final set of summary elements that appear to best represent the ideas and concepts that emerge from the data I have worked with. I would expect to be able to complete this work by 22 August.



Case Studies

The following case studies provide detailed information on selected project initiatives. They include specific information on the service brokered and provided by the project and its consortium partners.

In the development of the case studies, actual names and distinguishing features of many companies have been omitted due to the confidential nature of the business, its contracts, and identified business needs.

These case studies do not represent all the enterprises and community groups with which the project has been involved. The 18 chosen for inclusion in the final demonstrate the more complex and innovative interventions provided by the project and its partners, and therefore provide useful micro-models for replication in other contexts.

Case Study	Title
One	Professional Skills Development
Two	Trade Skills Development
Three	Promotion and Tender Information
Four	Aboriginal Development Corporation
Five	Lismore Investment Team
Six	Laboratory Project
Seven	Tourism and Hospitality Project
Eight	Call Centre Project
Nine	Indigenous Nursing Project
Ten	Food Processing Project
Eleven	Indigenous Small Business Skills and Mentoring Project
Twelve	Whole of Community Project
Thirteen	Project Management – Local Area Land Councils
Fourteen	Plastics Company
Fifteen	Private Hospital
Sixteen	Private Nursing Company
Seventeen	Export Replacement Project
Eighteen	Ngumarhl Mibiyn – Year 9/10 VET Pilot

Case Study One - Professional Skills Development

Core Business	A prominent planning and mapping company with highly sophisticated digital mapping skills. The company has a range of Australian and overseas contracts.
Employees	Currently 83 people are employed who are engineers, town planners, surveyors or administrative support staff.
Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The company has not been able to attract professional staff for permanent employment in the areas of engineering, surveying, environmental sciences, nor town planning. 2. A professional association advised the company that new graduates were not interested in leaving metropolitan areas where there were perceived to be professional and social advantages. The company spent \$20,000 in 2000/2001 advertising for professional staff throughout Australia. They finally recruited one new graduate. 3. By June 2004, the company will be requiring an additional 58 staff for their core business and staff for the 100 extra positions that are being created by a proposed merger.
Referral	Business Manager, DSRD.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Business Manager, DSRD.
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of recruitment and training strategy; Identification of appropriate training packages, negotiation with the Industry Training Advisory Board regarding development of industry identified qualification; development of potential partnership with North Coast Institute of TAFE and Southern Cross University for the development of a degree stream incorporating Spatial Information Services/ Geographic Information Services; development of a

	<p>cadetship program; development of educational pathways.</p> <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commitment to conduct the training for the enterprise; negotiation with Southern Cross University in the development of a higher education qualification and commercial options and partnerships <p>Southern Cross University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to investigate development of higher qualification and commercial options and partnerships <p>Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions regarding funding for the employment of school leavers in affected Dairy restructure areas <p>Lismore District Office (DET)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion and distribution of employment opportunities with this employer <p>Enterprise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The company prepared material suitable for secondary school students regarding their business and employment opportunities <p>Replicable features</p> <p>This case study has illustrated the extent of the partnership collaboration and cooperation in a whole of government approach to assisting this enterprise. The company has a commitment to employing young people using an educational pathway model.</p>
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Case Study Two – Trade Skills Development

Core Business	<p>A ship design company, which has secured contracts to design and build three large ships for an overseas client. The first ship is valued at \$1m; the subsequent ships are valued at in excess of \$20m each.</p> <p>The company employs ship design technicians only and subcontracts the ship construction. The company is currently based in Queensland, but the need for access to appropriate slipway facilities has the company looking to the North Coast of NSW.</p>
Issues	<p>The company has had problems because its subcontractors in the Northern Rivers are having difficulty finding tradespeople skilled in shipbuilding, metal fabrication and welding to complete the contract in the time available. Given the short initial contract, skilled tradespeople are not prepared to relocate. Recently, the subcontractor employed the services of a specialised recruiting company to provide a team of tradespeople from Brisbane.</p> <p>The design company could be in a position to employ its own construction staff for the subsequent contracts. This would require approximately 60 trade staff.</p>
Referral	Business Manager, DSRD.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Business Manager, DSRD.
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of a training and recruitment strategy; negotiations in the delivery of post trade qualifications; coordination of recruitment; consultation with Australina Industry Group and its ship building industry skills research <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of post trade training to meet VERITAS standards. • Development of an ecoskills project to investigate the needs of the industry <p>Job Network Reference Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion and publicity of vacancy; provision of

applications for those suitable for the vacancy

Department of State and Regional Development

- Negotiation with North Coast Institute of TAFE regarding an eco skills project for the metals and composites industry on the North Coast and co-funding of a research project to investigate the needs of the industry.

Replicable features

For several reasons, this company did not continue in the Northern Rivers once the contract had been completed. The VET interventions successfully assisted the company to complete its contractual obligations but did little to maintain the company in the area.

Issues also arose when the Job Network was engaged by the project to assist with recruitment and it transpired that one Job Network member had been working closely with the company. A strategy then needed to be developed in order to avoid this perceived breach of protocol.

The Department of State and Regional Development is currently working with a number of resident business people interested in utilising the boat building site and the provision of training will be incorporated.

The Department of State and Regional Development and North Coast Institute of TAFE are partnered in a research project to determine the skills needs in the composites industry including boat building.

Case Study Three – Promotion and Tender Information

Core Business	<p>An interstate IT Software Company wished to relocate from a large metropolitan base. It would be employing approximately 300 people. The company was prepared to relocate anywhere in Australia; however, it required a significant potential pool of employees and proximity to a University with which it could establish its own software course for employees. After considerable negotiation by the Department of State and Regional Development, Lismore is short-listed as one of three locations that the company is investigating.</p>
Issues	<p>Workforce planning and supply were significant issues for this company. The original tender required information from District Schools regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students in Years 11 and 12 undertaking studies in Level 3 and 4 Mathematics • Range and number of IT courses offered in schools and student participation rates • Range and number of courses offered through TAFE and other Registered Training Organisations • Numbers of enrolments and completion rates in those VET courses
Lead Partner with Enterprise	<p>Business Manager, DSRD.</p>
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Department of State and Regional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing of the footloose business; activation and coordination of the Lismore Investment Team; provision of the enterprise information and coordination of the tender documentation <p>Lismore City Council, Economic Development Unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of industry, land and planning material along with investment package <p>Southern Cross University Business Precinct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of the University service and infrastructure information and tender material

	<p>Lismore Office, DET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of school leaver information <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of VET information regarding the number of graduates in certain certificated courses; prevocational courses available for identified employees <p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compilation of VET resources; Job Network and recruitment information; production of publicity material in conjunction with the Job network Reference Group <p>Replicable features</p> <p>The Northern Rivers are still short listed with this company. The move, however, has been postponed due to a range of company issues.</p> <p>This case study identified difficulties in accessing certain information quickly and easily, which partners moved to correct. It also highlights the degree to which all the partners worked collaboratively and efficiently against a very tight deadline to ensure the tender information to attract this company was extensive and complete.</p>
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Case Study Four – Aboriginal Development Corporation

Core Business	The Corporation is a complex operation and auspices a plethora of activities including Legal Aid Service, Tenants Advice Service, Furniture Company, Ceramics Company, CDEP teams, Finance and Banking, Information Technology, Tea Plantation and Manufacturing.
Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to the employment of skilled workers and a commitment to offer them the training and skills they needed to undertake the tasks and, in some cases, run the enterprise • Supplying a diverse range of training options for a diverse range of discreet units within the Corporation.
Referral	Aboriginal Co-ordinator, TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Aboriginal Co-ordinator, TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial workforce planning and training assessment; preparation of traineeship and training options <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of training for both new and existing workers through traineeship packages; delivery of on-site training for tea plantation workers in geographically remote area <p>Indigenous Reference Group Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 other Indigenous Group members are working with this organisation through their individual organisations on related issues but not specific to the training. <p>Replicable features</p> <p>22 staff in training, both existing and new workers, in a range of areas including Frontline Management, Ceramics and Amenity Horticulture</p>

Case Study Five – Lismore Investment Team

Core Business	<p>A pilot to trial a collaborative approach to proposal and tender preparation for prospective industries and businesses. The purpose will be to act responsively and proactively as a team. Participants in the Team include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Development Manager, Department of State and Regional Development • Executive Officer, Northern Rivers Regional Development Board • Business Manager, Southern Cross University Business Precinct • Executive Officer, Lismore Economic Development Unit • Project Manager, Regional Development Project <p>The Team also brings together other specialists, where a tender requires technical expertise, e.g. Department of Agriculture, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning</p>
Issues	<p>Issues include the development of relevant and up-to-date material for tender preparation; the development of solid generic information on the region's capacity to support certain enterprises; the capability to meet the needs of the enterprise through liaison and negotiation with stakeholders, i.e. supply of raw product; and the effective use of information to stakeholders, regarding industry requirements.</p>
Lead Partner with Enterprise	<p>Business Manager, DSRD and Executive Officer Northern Rivers Regional Development Board.</p>
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Project partners are listed above.</p> <p>Replicable features</p> <p>All partners have been involved in the preparation of material to attract investors/companies and have custom designed responses to specific requirements of individual companies.</p> <p>Lismore is currently preparing an investment prospectus to handle future enquiries of this nature and will be seeking</p>

	<p>funding from the Department of State and Regional Development. This material will be loaded onto the Lismore City Council and Invest Northern Rivers (Development Board) websites when completed</p> <p>Three large companies have been the focus of the Investment Team. Latest developments with these partners has been the planned incorporation of the Investment Team into the Planning Team, Lismore City Council, to provide a full package of assistance for the Private Hospital (See Case Study Sixteen)</p>
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Case Study Six – Laboratory Project

Core Business	Three biotechnology businesses, all based at Southern Cross University or the Business Precinct.
Issues	One had an issue of continuity of employment of graduate staff in the laboratory, the second had an increasing work output with few resources to meet the output demands and the third had a significant project to undertake requiring a possible 5 extra employees.
Referral	Business Manager, DSRD.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Business Manager, DSRD.
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Department of State and Regional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support package to the 3 companies <p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce planning and redesign of recruitment strategy • Training needs identification • Referral to RTO for training; to NAC for traineeship incentives • Negotiation of prevocational training <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of funding for prevocational training • Conducting training and negotiating with each company any additional or specialised training required • Negotiation of work placement with the partner companies <p>New Apprenticeship Centre (NAC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traineeship information and sign up of 5 trainees <p>Replicable features</p> <p>These three companies now employ trainees to fulfil other positions and the employment opportunities for trainees in these companies have increased. All trainees have now completed their traineeship and have commenced additional education.</p>

Case Study Seven – Tourism and Hospitality Project

Core Business	Two like businesses are described in this Case Study. Both are in the Tourism and Hospitality industry and own and operate motels. The first is a hotel chain company wishing to relocate and build a four star hotel in Lismore. The second is a locally operated hotel with substantial expansion plans. The issues and solutions for the first have been replicated for the second.
Issues	Potential for increase of 30 positions in each establishment. Requirements for staff range from front of house to housekeeping and grounds maintenance.
Referral	Business Manager, DSRD.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Business Manager, DSRD and Economic Development Officer – Lismore City Council Economic Development Unit.
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial workforce planning • Negotiation of prevocational training in a number of operational areas of the enterprise • Negotiation with Southern Cross University, School of Tourism, for placements with the enterprise for undergraduate and post graduate students <p>Department of Employment and Workplace Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial negotiations of an Indigenous workforce strategy (STEP Program) <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding of the prevocational training for Indigenous job seekers <p>Replicable features</p> <p>One company is still in the construction phase of the facility – training and STEP are expected to come on line in February 2004. The second company is in the building development phase.</p> <p>It is anticipated that both will commence their prevocational training with a partner RTO early in 2004.</p>

Case Study Eight – Call Centre Project

Core Business	<p>A large Call Centre based in Lismore with 60 employees was expanding and, in July 2002 and planned to increase its staff size to 150 employees.</p> <p>The Call Centre has its own training room and is a Registered Training Organisation. It provides substantial on-the-job training, to meet its particular needs.</p>
Issues	<p>The recruitment of skilled employees who can be trained for Call Centre work. This company employs the services of a private recruitment company.</p>
Lead Partner with Enterprise	<p>Aboriginal Co-ordinator North Coast Institute of TAFE & Indigenous Employment Officer, Department of Work Place Relations.</p>
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation of pre-employment training in Teleservices • Negotiation of joint delivery of training with the enterprise and their employment recruitment company • Negotiation of funding for training of Indigenous group <p>Department of Employment and Workplace Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation of a local Indigenous Employment Strategy • Joint negotiation of utilisation of enterprise training facility for the specialised training components <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding of the preemployment training • Negotiations with employment recruitment company <p>Replicable features</p> <p>Predicted outcomes not achieved because a few weeks into the training the company closed a call centre in the area. Existing staff members were relocated, thus eliminating the need for additional staff with our partner company. Half the participants withdrew from the course due to lack of employment opportunities in the industry. Of 7 course completions, all continued with other education with North Coast TAFE & 3 completed the Diploma of Business (2 now employed fulltime). A positive educational outcome for a small group but a demonstration that when education is linked to employment opportunities, participants are more motivated to re-engage in education and complete training.</p>

Case Study Nine – Indigenous Nursing Project

Core Business	An Area Health Service providing primary, secondary and tertiary care to the community.
Issues	The service has had an inability to attract sufficient Indigenous candidates to the Enrolled Nursing Program and to maintain them through training and employment.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Aboriginal Co-ordinator, North Coast Institute of TAFE.
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations with the enterprise vis-à-vis career pathways • Negotiation with partners in the provision of training • Negotiations with Southern Cross University regarding recognition of Certificate III Community Services-Aged Care and RPL • Negotiation with the enterprise regarding recruitment for the prevocational course and the timing of the completion of the course <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <p>Funded the Certificate III Recruited to the course Provided student mentoring Maintained liaison with the enterprise Enterprise Offered work experience to students Recruited Enrolled Nurse Trainees from the course</p> <p>Department of Workplace Relations</p> <p>Negotiation with Policy Directorate to investigate the funding of VET nursing options through an undergraduate program to fund both the course and/or individual participants.</p> <p>Replicable features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiation of the expansion of a Department's funding priorities and policy by a Steering Committee member • Partnership development between the Northern Rivers

	<p>Area Health Service and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14 participants successfully completed the course• 3 are employed fulltime as Enrolled Nursing Trainees with the Area Health Service and will undertake the training in Newcastle on block release• 1 is employed fulltime in the Children's Ward• 1 is employed fulltime in the Palliative Care Unit• 2 have applied and been accepted for the nursing degree program at Southern Cross University• 2 are undertaking the Aboriginal Health Workers Course at North Coast Institute of TAFE• 3 intend to apply for the positions with the Private Hospital (see Case Study Fifteen)
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Case Study Ten – Food Processing Project

Core Business	This company has been in beef production and export. This is a Brisbane based company which has recently located its new venture to the Northern Rivers of NSW. This venture involves processing meat which will be sustainable at room temperatures, for the overseas market.
Issues	Currently 12 people are employed in the first stage of the development of the factory. It is anticipated that the factory will have 2 shifts employing 12 people in each shift. This company will utilize the same process with other meat products and plans to have a potential workforce of 50 people per location with 4 discrete locations (200 staff), 3 of which will be located in the Northern Rivers.
Referral	Business Manager, DSRD.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Business Manager, DSRD.
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with training manual to meet AQIS accreditation guidelines • Development of position descriptions • Development of an employee Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement • Assistance in workforce planning and recruitment • Assistance with workforce training • Assistance with post qualification training <p>Job Network Agency</p> <p>Provision of preemployment training and supervision</p> <p>On the job training for the trainees</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The Project has assisted a company to be involved in best practice training and employment opportunities through the provision of a holistic workforce planning and training service.</p>

Case Study Eleven – Indigenous Small Business Skill and Mentoring Project

<p>Descriptor</p>	<p>The Project consulted with the Indigenous Reference Group, ATSIIC, Indigenous Economic Development Team, the NSW Land Council Far North Coast, Indigenous community leaders and Development Corporations. The findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Councils were becoming large businesses with control of substantial assets and resources (see Case Study Thirteen) • Development Corporations vary from one area to another, but were potentially significant contributors to economic and employment growth within the Indigenous community • Many communities, Corporations and individuals had ideas and potential for economic or business opportunities • CDEP, without more formal training, does not provide a career path for participants
<p>Issues</p>	<p>Issues included a lack of business and entrepreneurial skills in the general community.</p>
<p>Strategies</p>	<p>The issues of delivering business and entrepreneurial skills to the Indigenous community were dealt with by the Indigenous Group as a whole and also separately by the consortium partners.</p> <p>Investigation of <i>Pathways Project – New England</i></p> <p>(NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training funded)</p> <p>The Project and consortium partner Department of Workplace Relations visited the <i>Pathways for Indigenous People in Education, Training Employment and Business</i> Program in New England. It was evident that the <i>Pathways</i> Project had developed a course that might be replicable on the North Coast for Indigenous communities and individuals. The focus of our attention was the Small Business Course and the Family Therapy modules (<i>Bookoola</i>). The Project was keen to replicate the course.</p>

	<p>Small Business Mentoring Program</p> <p>At the instigation of the Aboriginal Business Manager, Department of State and Regional Development, the Project participated in the development of a Small Business Mentoring Program for Indigenous individuals who are currently operating a small business.</p>
<p>Lead Partner with Enterprise</p>	<p>Aboriginal Business Development Manager, Department of State and Regional Development</p> <p>Aboriginal Coordinator, North Coast Institute of TAFE</p>
<p>Project Partners and Involvement</p>	<p>Department of State and Regional Development</p> <p>The development of a policy to deliver a pilot Aboriginal Business mentoring program in the Northern Rivers</p> <p>Development of a funding submission</p> <p>Negotiation with Department of State and Regional Development regarding policy inclusion and evaluation</p> <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <p>Funding of a Project Officer to investigate the conducting of the Pathways Program in conjunction with Southern Cross University in the Northern Rivers</p> <p>Investigation of funds allocation for the delivery of the program</p> <p>Provision of funds to provide modules form the Certificate IV in Small Business to the mentoring program graduates.</p> <p>Regional Development Project</p> <p>Negotiation of the partnership between North Coast Institute of TAFE and Southern Cross University</p> <p>Negotiation with the Pathways Program regarding the license to operate the Program</p> <p>Negotiation to provide additional training opportunities for those undertaking the Business Mentoring Program.</p> <p>Replicable features</p> <p>There has been an enormous amount of work by a number of the Indigenous Group members on both these initiatives.</p> <p>It is anticipated that both programs will commence planning in August to September 2003.</p>

	<p>North Coast Institute of TAFE and the Indigenous Reference Group will lead the Pathways Program partnership with Southern Cross University.</p> <p>Department of State and Regional Development will lead the Indigenous Business Mentoring program in conjunction with the Indigenous Reference Group.</p>
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Case Study Twelve – Whole of Community Project

<p>Community Descriptor</p>	<p>This project was designed to assist communities which are geographically isolated to access VET options currently offered by schools and the North Coast Institute of TAFE, thus providing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education options for the whole community, • encouragement of students back to school, • increase in school enrolments, • potential increase in VET options to students and the community, and • a focus on the Indigenous community and participation in the school. <p>In initial discussions, Bonalbo was the community identified as a possibility for the trial. Bonalbo is located 35kms west of Kyogle and 60kms north-west of Casino. It has a Central School committed to inclusive programs for Indigenous students, participation in the community, and offering students as many opportunities as possible. Bonalbo Central is one of four schools nominated to participate in the Interactive Skills Centre Project. A Co-ordinator has been appointed to the Interactive Skills Project and an assessment of VET skills amongst the staff at all four participating schools is taking place.</p>
<p>Issues</p>	<p>The Bonalbo pilot has a number of issues, making it attractive to pilot such a project. They include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • too few Year 11 and 12 students to offer a range of VET options to maintain students in the school (some transfer to Kyogle); • geographic isolation; • a large Indigenous population; and • early attrition for Indigenous students.
<p>Lead Partners with Community</p>	<p>Lismore District office, Department of Education North Coast Institute of TAFE Indigenous Reference Group</p>
<p>Project Partners and Involvement</p>	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <p>Identification of an industry with workforce issues where training could assist employment opportunities for the general community and offer training opportunities for</p>

	<p>students in Years 11 and 12</p> <p>Negotiations with the Northern Rivers Area Health Service (NRAHS) regarding Nursing shortages in Bonalbo and Urbenville</p> <p>Lismore District Office (DET)</p> <p>Preparation of School Based Traineeship material for the NRAHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of skills and current offerings of the participating school cluster • Identification of number of students currently enrolled and vacancies available • Skills of teachers in adult education, cultural awareness and interactive teaching • Delivery options for maximisation of course completion • Support mechanisms for teaching staff and participants • Suitability of teaching materials <p>Community Technology Centre Program</p> <p>Identification of possible courses for the whole community</p> <p>RTOs</p> <p>Three RTOs have submitted for contestable funds through State Training Services to provide the Certificate III Community Services Aged Care at Bonalbo.</p> <p>Replicable features</p> <p>Initial negotiations with the NRAHS resulted in no funds being available for the school based traineeship program. There were also not enough students (1) interested in nursing to provide the Certificate III in Community Services – Aged Care one half session a week, when the community were requesting the course fulltime.</p> <p>This has resulted in an inability in this instance to provide a meaningful integration of general public and TVET for Bonalbo students.</p> <p>Training and employment opportunities will be delivered to the community in late 2003. A strong interest has now been generated among the community in Bonalbo for training with requests having been made for IT training to be conducted by North Coast Institute of TAFE in July.</p>
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Case Study Thirteen – Project Management – Local Area Land Councils

Core Business	The thirteen Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC) in the Northern Rivers are involved in complex and in many cases large projects within their communities.
Issues	The LALCs in the Northern Rivers have often employed consultants to undertake the Project Management of their projects both large and small with varying degrees of success. The NSW Land Council, Regional Manager (a member of the Indigenous Reference Group) and the Northern Rivers Economic Development Team were keen to see project management skills developed in the local Indigenous community.
Referral	NSW Land Council – Far North Coast Branch Manager.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Aboriginal Co-ordinator, North Coast Institute of TAFE.
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <p>In conjunction with TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute, Aboriginal Education and Training Unit and the Regional Manager, NSW Land Council the project identified appropriate training for both staff and Councillors of LALC s in Project Management.</p> <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <p>Provision of the funding to conduct the training</p> <p>Provision of the training flexibly to allow for participants from isolated and remote areas to attend. The training also needed to be of a highly practical nature.</p> <p>NSW Land Council – Far North Coast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance to identify the appropriate training • Communication and advertising of the course amongst Land Councils • Coordination of the venue for training • Participation in the course <p>Replicable features</p> <p>North Coast Institute funded delivery of the 40 hour module in Administering Projects for 15 people. This module was</p>

	<p>selected from the Diploma in Business. The training was designed for participants to work individually or in small groups on projects that they were currently undertaking.</p> <p>The group has commenced the training and has identified financial management training as their next training goal.</p> <p>The project has created a stronger relationship between North Coast Institute of TAFE and the Far North Coast Land Council office. Additional training can now occur</p>
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Case Study Fourteen – Plastics Company

Core Business	This company has recently been acquired by a Melbourne consortium. It produces plastic products for industry, in particular the food industry. This company provides 3 shifts per day and is operational 24 hour per day five days per week.
Employees	There are currently 11 fulltime employees, and approximately 20 casuals are employed dependent on production demand. Staff are mostly highly skilled in plastics Injection Moulding but have no qualifications.
Referral	Business Manager, DSRD.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Business Manager, DSRD.
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <p>Identification of training requirements for the fulltime and casual workforce</p> <p>Identification of training and traineeship opportunities for the company</p> <p>Negotiation with RTOs interested in the delivery of the traineeship in Plastic Injection Moulding</p> <p>Negotiation with company to provide training on site.</p> <p>Negotiation with RTOs vis-à-vis commercial training for the company</p> <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <p>Provision of commercial training</p> <p>Addition of Plastics Moulding to the scope of delivery</p> <p>Replicable features</p> <p>This company is a supply chain company to many industries affected by the drought. They also have end users in South East Queensland. As a result the company announced in July 2003 that it will cease its Lismore operations. In this instance training interventions were not able to assist to maintain the company in the region</p>

Case Study Fifteen – Private Hospital

Core Business	This company wishes to establish a private hospital, day care and dementia respite service. They anticipate that construction will be complete in late January 2004.
Employees	The company will create 74 FTE positions in nursing, hotel services, reception, accounts and allied health. The first stage of the development to be opened by February 2004 will provide for 52 of those positions.
Referral	Executive Officer, Northern Rivers Regional Development Board.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Lismore Investment Team.
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Department of State and Regional Development</p> <p>Activation and coordination of the Lismore Investment Team</p> <p>Provision of an incentive package</p> <p>Referral to other funding agencies</p> <p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development in conjunction with the enterprise of a workforce strategy, including a traineeship model • An Indigenous Employment Strategy for the company in conjunction with Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. • Recruitment solutions utilising the Job Network agencies • Suggestions for Membership of the Medical Staff Council • Negotiations with North Coast Institute of TAFE regarding the allocation of funds to provide prevocational training in a range of hospital functional areas • Activation of the RTO and Job network Reference groups in applying for contestable funds to provide prevocational training.

	<p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <p>Provision of funding for training in hotel services, administration and nursing</p> <p>RTO Reference Group</p> <p>Preparation and submission for contestable funds for to meet the company's training needs</p> <p>Replicable features</p> <p>The North Coast Institute of TAFE has committed funding for the prevocational courses to commence as soon as the timetable for the recruitment phase is complete.</p> <p>The company will continue to meet with the Lismore Investment Team and is keen to embrace all the above options. The Lismore Investment Team has now been invited to participate with the local council development and planning team to have a multidisciplinary approach to meeting the needs of this company.</p> <p>This is an example of the success of the collaborative partnerships which have developed and illustrates the degree to which that partnership can attract investment and build upon the strengths of the region.</p> <p>This is also an example of the degree to which provision of trained staff can assist in the decision to locate an enterprise in a given geographic area. There is currently a state-wide shortage of appropriately qualified nursing staff. However, through planning and collaboration the partners in this project will be able to assist in the provision of trained staff.</p>
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Case Study Sixteen – Private Nursing Company

Core Business	This is a Queensland based company delivering residential care and home and personal care packages to the aged and disabled in the Tweed area.
Employees	The company employs Tweed residents in the Tweed branch of the service.
Issues	The company is seeking to increase its Indigenous staff by 6 new positions and to recruit to its team of Personal Care Assistants in both residential and non residential care. This company is also an RTO.
Referral	Indigenous Employment Officer, Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Aboriginal Co-ordinator, North Coast Institute of TAFE.
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the employment strategy with the Queensland branch of Department of Employment and Workplace Relations • Referral and initial negotiations between the Project and enterprise <p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial discussion regarding workforce planning and training needs identification in conjunction with the enterprise • Negotiations with State Training Services and RTOs regarding contestable funds and capacity for the delivery of the training • Negotiations with the enterprise regarding the appropriate training package and delivery <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of funds to commence training July 2003 – Certificate III Community Services Residential Care for an Indigenous group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial negotiations with the enterprise on sharing the delivery of the course <p>Replicable features</p> <p>North Coast Institute of TAFE is due to commence the provision of a course for 15 prospective employees in late July 2003.</p> <p>The company is keen to select future employees from the course graduates and to participate in some joint delivery of the course material. The company will offer work experience places to all course participants.</p> <p>The company has identified the delivery of the VET intervention strategy as efficacious in their recruitment process.</p>
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Case Study Seventeen – Export Replacement Project

Descriptor	<p>The Export Replacement Project was funded by the combined Area Consultative Committees of New England, Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast and the NSW Department of State & Regional Development. Each Regional Development Board was involved</p> <p>This Project was to investigate the degree to which the combined regions could develop a culinary and medicinal plant industry which would reduce the importation of raw materials.</p> <p>The project was to investigate the status of the existing industry players and the indigenous community's capacity to be involved, and to recommend strategies for seeking industry partners (end users) of this product.</p>
Issues	Initially there was no inclusion of a training needs analysis of existing or potential growers or others in the supply chain.
Referral	Executive Officer, Northern Rivers Regional Development Board.
Lead Partner with Enterprise	Northern Rivers Regional Development Board had overall responsibility for the project and responsibility for the training need analysis and recommendations. Department of Agriculture was responsible for the advice and establishment of trial plots with the Indigenous communities
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Most consortium partners were involved in this project in some way, most in relation to their own agency contributions. The contributions listed below are those related to the training needs analysis and potential outcomes for the Indigenous community</p> <p>Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning and release of the report • Potential support of the Indigenous agricultural plots <p>Northern Rivers Regional Development Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of the training needs analysis in the consultants brief.

	<p>Regional Development Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial negotiations with the consultants regarding the training needs analysis • Calling of tenders for the mapping of the training needs analysis against the national training package • Liaison with the Indigenous Reference Group regarding the Indigenous community involvement <p>NSW Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of an Extension Horticulturalist to work with existing and new agriculturalists in the medicinal and culinary plant product industry • Identification of potential opportunities for identified Indigenous communities and groups • Development of a strategy for the Indigenous community's involvement in the industry • Identification of potential trial plots • Assistance to communities involved in the trial plots <p>Indigenous Reference Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of stakeholders and landowners to participate <p>Far North Coast Branch of Local Area Aboriginal Land Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised meetings • Identified those prepared to undertake a trial plot • Close cooperation with Department of Agriculture <p>Replicable features</p> <p>To date the mapping of the training needs analysis to the National Training Package has been completed and circulated to all stakeholders</p> <p>Other agricultural groups are interested in the training, including the Stone Fruit Growers.</p> <p>All Land Councils and Indigenous organisations have been invited to attend the Herb Conference in Lismore in August.</p> <p>The Indigenous Reference Group will call for Expressions of Interest to undertake trial plots with Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee and Department of Agriculture support for the analysis and matching of micro climate to species or variety.</p>
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Case Study Eighteen – Ngumarhl Mibiyn

(This case study is the subject of a separate report to NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training.)

Descriptor	<p>This Case Study outlines Indigenous Year 9 and 10 pilot programs. The aim was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer competencies in a Certificate II credential at TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute • To create interest amongst Indigenous students to stay at school longer to undertake further education • Offer a Traineeship/Apprenticeship advantage to those leaving school at the end of Year 10 • Increase opportunities for learning and employment
Issues	<p>Issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision for a very young cohort on TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute campus – inclusion of a larger than anticipated Year 9 students • Support mechanisms for teaching staff, participants, and families • Suitability of teaching materials (culturally appropriate) • Tutoring support for students where necessary • Timetabling for the schools to ensure students were not disadvantaged in their school studies
Lead Partner with Enterprise	<p>Lismore and Tweed Ballina District Offices of Department of Education and Training and TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute</p>
Project Partners and Involvement	<p>Lismore District Office, DET</p> <p>The Lismore District Office of Department of Education and Training provided staff who negotiated with communities and students and provided funds for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumables, • Transport and supervision • Training and support of mentors for the participating students. • Employment of mentors for students • Consultation with schools and families

Tweed Ballina District Office, DET AND Ballina High School

The Tweed Ballina District Office and Ballina High School provided support for the program in the following:

- High levels of supervision for students and assistance to the VET staff in the training setting approx 1:6
- Support for students with disabilities to ensure their full participation
- Timetabling to ensure the training was incorporated into the students program across two term

Outcomes

- 52 students completed the VET pilot.
- Overall attendance by students was excellent with absenteeism in Ballina students reduced
- Students gained competencies towards a VET course in one of the following areas:
 - Hairdressing, Manufacturing and engineering, tourism and hospitality (Food and Beverage) retail operations or Automotive Panel and Paint
- Mentoring for the students was a contributor to attendance and student performance
- Most students were eager to continue at school and to select a VET course for their HSC.

Replicable features

The whole program is replicable given commitment to timetabling issues for students and teachers and available resources. Incorporation into the year 11 and 12 program can overcome issues of supervision and transport.