



Response to the Consultation on Suburban University Study Hubs

In response to the consultation questions:

1. How can a place-based approach be fostered, as part of the Suburban University Study Hubs program, that ensures the voice of local communities is integrated in their design and operation?

- It will be important that any approach to a Study Hub is based on deep and meaningful community engagement, stakeholder collaboration, local representation, cultural sensitivity, comprehensive needs assessment, feedback mechanisms and assessment of impact. This extends to, where possible, staffing Study Hubs with members of the relevant community.
- Establishing and maintaining strong links to a 'parent' host organisation is key as is broadening the purpose of the Study Hub to emphasise these links as they are relevant to the community. For example, if the host is a university, it should form a consortium-type arrangement with local Tafe/VET/secondary school.
- Leveraging local infrastructure, such as well attended libraries, Tafes and schools, centres a Study Hub within elements already active within the community. Where there is food and beverage available, easy access to parking and public transport, childcare, medical and other support facilities, as well as underutilised infrastructure, there should be an opportunity to insert tertiary education infrastructure.
- With the socioeconomic disadvantage experienced by many in areas of low participation, it is likely students/participants will be working, so an offering that works with the development of expertise in the industries currently in/forecast for inclusion in the relevant area and within hours (daily) or blocks (periodically through the year) that work with this as a principle (rather than standard academic year) may be of benefit.

2. How can the Suburban University Study Hubs widen participation and support and extend further study opportunities, adding to existing or planned investments?

- Undertaking genuine and targeted outreach and partnership within the local community will enable the engagement and broaden the relevance to the community. This includes working with other learning centres in the region (schools, Tafes, VET, universities) and community hubs to identify and inspire pockets of interest and intention.
- New Suburban University Study Hubs can both leverage existing areas of strong university outreach engagement aimed at widening participation to

build further placed-based opportunities and choices for students to connect to higher education.

- Providing academic support services, for students at all stages of learning, will be essential to support aspiration and also grow confidence and capability. This will support pathway growth and success.
- Removing financial barriers to participation through relevant financial assistance and scholarships will grow the opportunity for people to make the time for study where earning is currently taking priority. In addition, employment opportunities within the Study Hub itself can be made available to students, helping them earn while they are learning, including offering evidenced-based peer support locally.

3. How can equity be embedded into the design of Suburban University Study Hubs?

- A Study Hub would need to be readily accessible – physically, visibly and welcoming, and offer appropriate amenities.
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or CPTED principles - the design of buildings, landscaping and outdoor environments can either encourage or discourage crime to ensure participants feel safe and welcome, particularly where this may be outside of typical hours of high activity within or around the Study Hub. This would include transparency at ground level, or ground floor activation that may encourage access and a sense of welcoming. Ensuring consistent and visible staffing at the Study Hub would create a more welcoming environment and give reassurance of a safe environment.
- Central location amongst facilities that are regularly accessed by the community and that are established and valued will reduce a barrier or a reluctance to participate. This includes being near/within schools, local council and state infrastructure that are familiar and offer a path for continuing education that is easy to transition. Well activated spaces with related and/or unrelated activities draw a critical mass to activation to create a sense of place.
- Within the facility, accessible and flexible learning spaces and technology should be designed with Universal Design Principles front of mind to ensure spaces and learning are accessible for all.

4. Where multiple communities may co-exist within the same area (for example, ethnic, cultural, industry-based, etc.), how can Suburban University Study Hubs ensure they meet the needs of these different communities?

- Engagement with the full range of community leaders and community members to identify the right offering will be important. This includes being sensitive and accommodating to advice and responding accordingly, and finding ways to balance and incorporate varying needs.
- Centres should offer or co-locate with appropriate facilities – for example prayer spaces, community assembly/meeting infrastructure, amenities, food offerings.

- Hosting or contributing to community festivals or events within the facilities is an important way to generate a place within the community and acceptance.

5. How can we ensure that Suburban University Study Hubs operate to support students engaging with any provider, while also ensuring strong connections with local providers, campuses and leaders?

- The management model is critical and should reflect the planning and future activity – both volume and type of activity. There are many examples of shared use spaces [REDACTED] is a great example of a homegrown [REDACTED] model - [REDACTED] where an individual organisation pays to access. While there is still building levels of activity, this takes the pressure off owning and managing a facility that may not be used around the clock or throughout the year. This would be optimised with some generalist type of facilities which could be used by many, with dedicated facilities inviting others to be involved as a better solution once there are higher levels or mature types of activity.
- An organisation could be paid to activate and manage the facility – integrating commonwealth/state/local government, education providers and industry users. Using an existing facility while proving and establishing the service is lower risk before moving to more independently owned/operated/dedicated facilities.
- The above models mean that institutions could block or regularly book the facilities, confident in their suitability to meet their needs but also able to ramp up or down depending on the student load and offering without the complication of the responsibility for the infrastructure and its costs.
- Leveraging the support of State Governments to help build and showcase centres as multi-university could help create local sense of place and strong and collaborative connection to local institutions.

6. What dedicated support services should Suburban University Study Hubs provide? Are there gaps in support for under-represented cohorts (for example, First Nations students, students with disability) Suburban University Study Hubs could address?

- A model that picks up on the cultural, success and well-being aspects of the targeted student would likely be hugely important. This may include specialised language support, enabling or bridging programmes, study skills sessions and facilitators representative of the participant groups. A great example of place-based targeted support is the [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] which offers a place, support and a sense of community for Indigenous students.
- Support services such as medical, childcare, ability or elderly care to enable students to attend scheduled activities, or provide time away from commitments to study, may remove barriers to study. This may be a

supplement or complement to other services the participants access (eg a short term creche to complement days of day care).

- Career guidance and career support, including being able to access local and relevant Work Integrated Learning, is an important link for students to an outcome and needs to be sensitive to cultural/social backgrounds/gender.
- The provision of financial support and advice is important including through scholarships, grants and support to access local work opportunities (funded student roles in centre or via local industry connections).
- Creating a sense of belonging is an essential factor for student success, which can be challenging for students with increasingly complex lives and who need to study remotely. Centres that are attractive, comfortable to be in, have warm and welcoming staff and student-peer support presence will help students connect to the Hub, and should be complemented by thoughtful curriculum design for online learning and opportunities to create belonging to discipline and institution beyond the Study Hub.

7. How can Suburban University Study Hubs provide a culturally safe environment for all students, that is relevant to them and their local context?

- Connections into local community groups (including schools) and potentially activation of these groups within the Study Hubs could help students find their place. Integration of a Study Hub within areas of community importance could create a sense of co-location, support and acceptance.
- Provide adequate staffing at the Study Hubs, and comprehensive training for those staff in cultural and community sensitivity, and employ staff that are members of the local and relevant community.
- Ensuring the facility is staffed and welcoming is a crucially important factor, alongside the space being inviting and comfortable.

8. Are there examples (in Australia or internationally) of similar support services (in tertiary education or other sectors) that could inform the design of Suburban University Study Hubs?

- Community Colleges in the United States
- TAFE campuses around Australia
- Regional university centres
- Nonprofit community education initiatives
- [REDACTED]
- Regional campuses around Australia eg [REDACTED]

9. Are there existing support mechanisms that could be leveraged and offered through the Suburban University Study Hubs? How could the Hubs provide a useful additional impact and avoid duplication of services?

- Yes, across universities, community groups, Tafe/VET, schools and government offerings there are existing support of broad cohorts of students. These are

generally developed in response to needs assessment and would need consideration within the requirements of the relevant communities.

- Duplication of some services will be necessary, and particularly in relation to questions 1-7. Complementary services may be more important to create, rather than aiming to remove all duplication.
- Working closely with the existing local universities to ensure spaces are digitally compatible with services and supports will help students more seamlessly access university-based supports that are available to students through their enrolment, and having Study Hub based local IT support that can actively help students navigate systems.

10. How can Suburban University Study Hubs best communicate the supports they provide to local students and support aspiration in their local community?

- Hosting workshops, seminars and study groups for students already studying that can activate the space and create a purpose for people to see the value.
- Host workshops and events for potential students – local school students, and events aimed at mature age students or relevant industry groups where ‘upskilling’ options are available through the Study Hub.
- Marketing and outreach activities to promote the Study Hub, through the local community channels and the relevant participating institutions.
- If the facility forms already part of a community hub, school/council/library/state operated facilities, continuing those activities and broadening the offer. In some areas, community comes together regularly and the Study Hubs could leverage off this merely as an extension to the activity.
- Connecting with existing university school outreach initiatives aimed at widening participation (eg. [REDACTED] partnership schools or [REDACTED] schools) to build connections, familiarity with the centre. Use these networks to have the schools help promote the Study Hub, and to host joint-school events for targeted students.

11. What role could Suburban University Study Hubs play in supporting enabling/tertiary preparation courses for students from under-represented backgrounds?

- Study Hubs could be a place where there is an aggregation of activity that builds aspiration or confidence among the community through smaller learning bites (micro credentials or bridging/enabling courses) or other engagement activities as well as a place for people to study their course.
- Institution agnostic careers/future student advisory services could be located in the Study Hub to provide an opportunity for potential students or their families to have a discussion about study options.
- Wherever possible, the pathways could be integrated into Yr10 Secondary and upwards, or activity between schools and the Study Hub could be complementary to support aspiration.

12. What factors should be considered when selecting locations for Suburban University Study Hubs?

- Proximity to key transport infrastructure relevant to the catchment area and appropriate community amenity. Where it makes sense, this could be proximity to or co-location with a Tafe or a secondary school and should otherwise not be within a primary catchment for an existing university. An alternative would be to leverage off an existing university – ie. integrate and utilise existing infrastructure. If the model is not working adequately within the university, it could be broadened to accommodate the needs and expectations of the local community.
- Place-based approaches, developed by engaging local people from different sectors and targeting the specific circumstances of the place that provide career links, aspiration and buy-in from the community.
- Ideally near to other regular activity where there is a critical mass of people for multiple uses including commercial, educational activity or future employers who can actively engage with the providers to deliver a workforce with skills required. This could include organisations that would provide placements for students who need professional placement.

13. What other types of social infrastructure should be located in close proximity to Suburban University Study Hubs to maximise their success? (e.g., childcare services)

- Food outlets, libraries, gyms, community gardens or outdoor areas, 'green spaces'
- Reliable and secure Wi-Fi
- Elderly/ability care - a service linked to student attendance and success
- Easy access to health care provision
- Parking and transport
- Possibly some accommodation for student attendance in blocks where distance is still challenge

14. How can Suburban University Study Hubs complement, rather than replace, the innovative solutions being implemented by education providers to support students in outer metropolitan and peri-urban areas?

- Choosing activity that is designed to complement and not compete. This will vary markedly between regions and relevant institutions. The Study Hub will need to offer a pathway beyond the provider into further education and or the workforce. Links across education sectors is important for this.
- Engagement with relevant providers in the region identified for a Study Hub is a good way to work within this, or inviting relevant providers to participate for any Study Hub may garner the best of both worlds.

15. What skills, services and attributes should an organisation be able to demonstrate as evidence of their ability to establish and operate a Suburban University Study Hub?

- Risk and resource management, facilities management and activation
- Comprehensive local needs assessment and engagement, some staff from the local communities.
- Strong performance in student engagement and retention in high culture, low SES or lower attainment environments
- Credentialed in managing all aspects of student wellbeing given the remoteness to core services generally easily accessible as part of a larger university campus.

16. What governance mechanisms should be in place to ensure each Suburban University Study Hub is operating effectively and meeting the needs of the local community?

- Local advisory committees
- Cross provider committees, locally and nationally based
- It will be important that a system encourages, rewards and maintains the motivation and drive of those who are capable of raising participation, and entrepreneurial enough to act

17. Should a single organisation be eligible to operate multiple hubs? If so, how could local community drive and engagement be built into the Suburban University Study Hub operating model?

- Where there is success, it should be supported. However, this should be in the context where exclusion of other providers in participating should be discouraged.
- Depends on the nature of what activity is to be delivered – is it homogenous or bespoke to the location. Clearly there are likely to be economies of scale if one provider delivers at multiple locations, however there may be distinct needs defining different operators.

18. How could the Suburban University Study Hubs encourage collaboration between hubs and education providers (including universities and VET)?

- Colocation, share activities, agnostic pathways and support services, no prioritised outreach or marketing
- Shared leading practice and open engagement

19. How can Suburban University Study Hubs encourage and support partnerships that benefit students? What incentives would be most effective to promote partnership development?

- Internships, career development activities, work integrated learning and local community mentoring programs. Exposure to careers and jobs that participants may otherwise not see, while early in their learning journey.
- Scholarships, volunteers, confidence-building programmes can all be developed through links to relevant community groups and business.
- Financial incentives and links to workforce needs are great to incentivise partnership.

20. What learnings are there from existing initiatives, and/or are there new ideas that could support the design and development of the Suburban University Study Hubs, noting that they are intended to be different from institution specific study centres/hubs.

- The consortium approach of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are great cross-institution success examples that take a community need and apply a cohesive response
- Coworking spaces and multi-use facilities (including innovation hubs) are great examples of activation within communities, industry and across businesses