

## **Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE)**

### **Maranoa Regional Council submission**

#### ***Connected Futures***

Under the “Connected Futures” umbrella, we are nurturing an economic development model which sees the combination of local jobs and quality lifestyles as the foundations for sustainable communities. Our definition (in the Maranoa) of sustainable communities is based upon adaptability and responsiveness to changes in external markets, environments and technology.

#### ***Entrepreneurship***

Intrinsic to community adaptability and responsiveness are social, economic and environmental entrepreneurship and our willingness to foster those capacities in our current and future generations. We need to take our communities, especially our youth, on education journeys that will foster this entrepreneurship.

#### ***Guiding visions***

The current education journeys for rural, regional and remote young people are not guided by visions that make sufficient links between entrepreneurship, sustainable communities and the education process. Further, especially in rural and remote areas, we see potholes and disconnects in the education pathways, for example in the gaps from Grade 12 to employment.

#### ***Encouraging progress being made***

We are aware that there are a growing number of programs, methodologies and practices which are seeking smoother education journeys. The approaches taken in the discussion paper released on the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE), are generally supported, with the section on “Entrepreneurship and schools” being very encouraging. We also take heart from the *Everybody’s Core Business* final report produced by the Ithaca Group in 2016 and its evaluation of research into the non-technical qualities students required for academic, employment and social success.

#### ***Setting sustainable communities as targets***

Our visions for the education journey, for all members of our communities, see pathways that are built on partnership networks between schools and businesses, where the quality of the partnerships will determine the smoothness of the pathways. Our visions incorporate providing directions and greater meaning to the education journey in rural, regional and remote areas by setting sustainable communities as targets and entrepreneurship as the vital technology for sustainability.

### ***Alignment with an understanding of business***

Our endorsement of social, economic and environmental entrepreneurship for creating sustainable communities is aligned with the notion of individuals and families recognizing that they are all operating businesses. For example, all employees of the Maranoa Regional Council operate their own labour-hire businesses. Each person makes a business decision to hire their labour to the Council for an annual amount and under various conditions. In a related manner, families operate partnership businesses where responsibilities, incomes, budgets and family objectives are shared under the partnership agreement.

### ***Understanding partnerships and business operating responsibilities***

We propose that education in understanding partnerships and accepting business operating responsibilities are essential to social, economic and environmental entrepreneurship and consequently to sustainable communities. This approach seeks changes to cultural as well as educational paradigms and embodies an enhanced recognition of individual and collective responsibility for our decisions.

### ***Whole of community***

To effectively implement the sorts of improvements to educational pathways that have already demonstrated incremental successes, especially in the integration of education, training and employment, and to adopt new methods, whole of community engagement is pivotal. This characteristic is recognized by the Maranoa Regional Council and is an area of current endeavour under the “Connected Futures” umbrella.

### ***Regional hub – a pragmatic start***

A pragmatic approach underpins our visions. The Maranoa Regional Council has recently invested in investigations by a tertiary institution into integration of education, training and employment through hub structures. This is significant for a local government engaged in tightening its financial belt. We see the hub structures as a realistic way of strengthening an array of critical partnerships which then create flexibility in education and training delivery for regional and rural communities. We can see this as part of moving forward, step-by-step, to our visions.

### ***Fertile ground in the Maranoa***

We believe that the local communities of the Maranoa region, oriented around the administrative centre of Roma and facilitated under the “Connected Futures” umbrella and incorporating the projects such as the regional hub, provide fertile grounds for further developing, in an integrated manner, education journey improvements.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### ***An integrated national academic and training certificate register***

We ask that the IRRRE consider a national register that links the academic and training achievement records of students of all schools and institutions across Australia. This spans the whole spectrum of primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational certificates.

### ***Helping employment and fostering achievement***

Presently, there are so many hurdles to a person assembling and retaining their achievement records, especially in the event of inadvertent losses because of fire, floods or personal calamities.

This academic and training certificate information is not only essential to employees and employment, but it can also be vitally important to the mental health of individuals and to encouraging a continuation of the education journey.

### ***Controlled access***

We suggest that access to the academic and training certificate information take a number of forms; ranging from full access to the person who achieved the certificates to restricted forms of access for a potential employer.

### ***Verification and simplification advantages***

It also has the advantage of providing verification of authenticity and simplified employment application processes.

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