Reach for the Sky

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We acknowledge the Australian Government Department of Employment, Education & Workplace Relations (DEEWR), which provided the funding for this initiative under the Industry Training Strategies Programme (ITSP).

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BACKGROUND

- Difficulties experienced by Indigenous people to access and participate in nationally recognised vocational education and training (VET)

- *Reach for the Sky* was formulated as a way to engage Koorie community 19 years and older who would otherwise be excluded from the VET system

- Recruitment of a dedicated Koorie Program Coordinator was seen as crucial to the ongoing engagement of the participants in the *Reach for the Sky* program
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PROGRAM COMMENCEMENT

Enrolment process

- Two week induction program:
  - Leadership camp
  - Cultural camp
  - Mentoring program
  - Individual Learning Plans

- Enrolment into TAFE course of the participant’s choice

- Ongoing intensive support by Program Coordinator

- Positive role models from within the Koorie Community

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STUDENT ENROLMENTS

Participants by Gender

Induction Program Outcomes

- Continued into TAFE VET course
- Withdraw after induction
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The fifteen (15) students continuing with the program enrolled in a variety of Vocational Education & Training (VET) courses:

• Certificate III & IV in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts (ATSICA)
• Diploma in Children's Services
• Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
• Certificate III in Business Administration (Legal)
• Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery)
• Certificate III in Business (Small Business)
• Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management
• Certificate II in Building & Construction (Carpentry)

Reasons for the seven participants withdrawals were:

• Family issues
• Health / personal issues including pregnancy and ill-health
• Peer pressure
• Moving from the district
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CHALLENGES

• Timing of program commencement – January school during holidays

• Timing of camps – school holidays / single parents

   “The only problem has been the camp over the school holidays – because I have kids at home and can’t get a baby sitter” Reach for the Sky student

• Engagement of Elders

• Program Coordinator commencing / change

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POSITIVE EXPERIENCE AS THE FOLLOWING QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS INDICATES

The Reach For The Sky program:

➢ ".....‘has enabled me to look at my and my family’s future with some confidence. The training program has assisted me in developing our family business based on country and culture. It has given me the opportunity to further develop my dream of creating employment and training for my people.”

➢ ".....The courses offered were exactly what I wanted to do. All the options and support was there (TAFE)......”

➢ "Exceeded my expectations with the support and encouragement”
POSITIVE EXPERIENCE AS THE FOLLOWING QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS INDICATES (cont)

The Reach For The Sky program:

➢ "........ I have to manage my time effectively so that I don’t miss lectures but am also able to take her to and from school. The lecturers have been very understanding in this area"

➢ "........mixing with other Koorie kids has been great”

➢ "The adventure camp was fantastic and I learnt a lot from that”

➢ "The most important thing to me was the access I had everything needed for research. Internet, library, people – all available”

➢ "The support I have received has been excellent”

SUCCESSES

• The number of students who enrolled who had been disengaged for a number of years

• Personal Growth of students

• Partnerships with stakeholders

• Outcomes
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SUCCESSES (cont)

“The completion of my “Head Chef For A Day” was an achievement...”

Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery) student

ENTRÉE Grilled tuna with wasabi mayonnaise

MAINS Rare roasted Kangaroo with du-puy lentils & red wine poached pears

DESSERT

REACH FOR THE SKY OUTCOMES SUMMARY

The completion of the Reach for the Sky Program has seen a number of successes.

Of the nineteen (19) students enrolled in a TAFE VET course:

- 6 completed their VET training in 2008; of these
  - 2 found employment in 2009
  - 6 returned to VET in 2009

- 6 found employment in 2008 (Total 8 employed)
- 2 withdrew for health reason
- 1 untraceable
- 4 disengaged
REACH FOR THE SKY OUTCOMES SUMMARY

- Students enrolled into VET in 2009 in the following courses:
  - 1 student graduated into Certificate IV in ATSICA
  - 1 student, after transferring courses in 2008 returned to complete the Certificate III in ATSICA
  - 1 student has graduated into Certificate III in Business Administration
  - 1 student returned to complete their Certificate III in Hospitality
  - 1 student competing 2nd year of Diploma in Children Services
  - 1 student re-engaged and commenced the Certificate II in Hairdressing

OUTCOMES

- 2008 Outcomes:
  - Completed VET course 2008: 8 (25%)
  - Withdrawn after induction program: 9 (33%)
  - Withdrawn during VET course 2008: 11 (42%)

- 2009 Outcomes:
  - Completed 2nd year VET course 2009: 5 (13%)
  - Re-engaged into TAFE 2009: 1 (7%)
  - Total employment: 9 (60%)
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INSTITUTE FEEDBACK

• “From a TAFE perspective we feel that the Reach for The Sky program has enabled TAFE to gain a better understanding as to how we can structure our educational programs so that they better meet the needs of the Koorie community within our region”

  Director of Communication & Capability

• “Building networks between Koorie students, educators, community and elders to enhance the student’s personal development and growth and vocational opportunities “

  Director of Education

“Reach for the Sky Program was very culturally appropriate & easily accessible for my jobseekers to access.” SuniTAFE Indigenous Employment Consultant

“By the middle of the term a number of students had left the course and gained meaningful employment with long-term futures being put in place. This has been encouraging as we believe the RFTS program has given students the confidence to look for permanent employment. Even more important is the nature of the employment that they have taken on – all with continuing training.”

Original dedicated program coordinator