Consultation Paper
May 2007
Our vision

For technical and further education for Aboriginal people on the NSW North Coast -

Leading in learning socially, economically, and culturally in partnership with Aboriginal communities and enterprises.1

Purpose of this paper

TAFE NSW North Coast Institute is strongly committed to leading learning in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities now and well into the future. We are keen to deliver on our responsibilities under the recent statewide Aboriginal Education Review.

We have made a good start at the North Coast Institute (NCI) to Aboriginal education and training but the depth of the educational, economic, and social disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people on the North Coast requires a longer term vision and strategy.

Hence, this 2020 Vision Consultation Paper has been developed as a first step in ensuring that NCI can deliver on our commitment by improving our business and our responsiveness to Aboriginal learners.

Therefore, the purpose of the 2020 Vision paper is twofold:

- flag operational areas in NCI for closer review and continuous improvement to ensure that they are in the best possible position to deliver on the 2020 Vision, and

- propose a range of new Aboriginal learning measures at NCI, including a new operating model for Aboriginal education and training administration and delivery, for stakeholder consideration and feedback.

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1 This is a more focused and tailored version of our Institute’s overall vision statement: Leading in learning for individual, enterprise and community success.
We welcome your views

Our Institute welcomes feedback on this 2020 Vision Consultation Paper from internal stakeholders in NCI and external partners and stakeholders in government, industry, Aboriginal community, and non government sectors.

You may only want to comment on some parts of the paper – or all parts. It’s up to you. We’re asking you to review and possibly comment on the context for the changes we’re proposing, by reading pages 5 – 11 of this paper which cover:

- The forces for change for the education and training of Aboriginal people in the North Coast;
- The current and possible future role of the Institute in supporting and leading this change.

In particular we are seeking specific comments on:

- The new focus for our Institute’s AETU as described in pages 12 – 13 of this paper;
- The key new initiatives and measures set out in pages 13 – 17.

Your feedback on the 2020 Vision Consultation paper would be welcomed by Thursday 31 May 2007. Written comments can be forwarded to:

2020 Review Team
c/- Aboriginal Education and Training Unit
TAFE NSW North Coast Institute
PO Box 528 PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444

or email us at 2020vision@tafensw.edu.au

or telephone AETU’s Natalie Keanie-Smith on 02 6586 2217

We look forward to hearing your views and working with you to secure the best possible outcomes in technical and further education for the North Coast’s Aboriginal youth, adults, organisations, and communities now and up to 2020.

Elizabeth McGregor
Institute Director

Tony Dreise
A/Aboriginal Development Manager
INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade TAFE NSW North Coast Institute (NCI) has grown a reputation for responsiveness, innovation, and a strong commitment to Aboriginal lifelong learning. However, there remains much to do in equipping Aboriginal students and graduates to succeed in competitive labour markets and complex societies as well as overcoming the structural, pedagogical, and intercultural barriers that Aboriginal learners confront when it comes to education and training.

The quest for high performing and equitable programs in NCI is made all the more harder by the scale of Aboriginal social and economic disadvantage. In 2007, Aboriginal communities along the North Coast continue to experience significant disadvantage compared to the wider community as illustrated by higher rates of child protection, unemployment, poor health status, and overcrowding in houses.

It is against this backdrop of social and economic disadvantage that NCI strives to be at the cutting edge of providing educational solutions to these social challenges but also the significant economic and cultural opportunities and aspirations of the North Coast’s Aboriginal people. We will do this by:

- Diversifying the types and levels of programs that Aboriginal people are participating in
- Developing stronger learning pathways for Aboriginal students and graduates between NCI programs and employment
- Driving and measuring our performance in a more robust, accountable, transparent and strategic way, and
- Deepening and strengthening our partnerships with other education providers, government agencies, the business sector, and Aboriginal community groups throughout the North Coast region.

An Aboriginal Elder once wisely said, ‘if you dwell on the past you lose one eye; if you forget the past you lose both eyes.’

In 2007 it is timely to reflect on the past decade of NCI Aboriginal programs by simultaneously looking forward to the next decade and beyond.

Hence, the 2020 Vision document has been developed for stakeholder (internal and external) review and comment.

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Forces for change

The North Coast of New South Wales is home to approximately 16,400 Aboriginal people, comprising both descendents of the traditional owners of the region but also historical and more recent arrivals of Aboriginal people from throughout Australia, especially from western and north-west of New South Wales.

One of Australia’s leading demographers, Dr John Talor from the Australian National University, has recently written about the high rates of Aboriginal mobility and fertility that regions such as New South Wales’ North Coast region are experiencing. This mobility and fertility will impact on public service delivery, including in education and training, now and well into the future.

Over the past decade the North Coast Institute’s Aboriginal Education and Training Unit, faculties, and management have worked together to respond to the needs and goals of Aboriginal students. This has led to record levels of Aboriginal enrolments, significant number of student contact hours, tailored courses, and greater specialist support services to NCI’s Aboriginal learners.

Aboriginal students and NCI alike have much to be proud of in terms of student achievement. However, as an education provider we at NCI cannot afford to rest on our laurels. This is particularly pertinent when one considers:

- the fact that 42% of the Aboriginal population of the North Coast is under 14 years of age (which is double the corresponding rate for the wider community of the North Coast)
- the disproportionately high rates of early school leaving and related low levels of proficiency in English language, literacy, and numeracy, and
- that Aboriginal unemployment is as high as 37% in some localities on the North Coast.
The magnitude of these issues will impact on NCI Aboriginal programs and operations now and into the next decade. We need to actively position our strategy, resources, and delivery effort now to effectively meet a suite of challenges, by:

- gearing programs to more effectively overcome seemingly entrenched high levels of Aboriginal unemployment,
- sustaining high performing and high quality curriculum, pedagogy, and teaching and learning resources and interventions which will result in greater retention and completion rates,
- providing consistent access to NCI programs across geographically and socially diverse settings,
- keeping learning experiences and programs fresh, timely, industry relevant, and culturally responsive,
- building on the high rate of Aboriginal participation in access and general education courses by supporting Aboriginal transitions into programs that yield more direct employment opportunities, and
- overcoming heavy skewing of Aboriginal students in the lower levels of the qualifications spectrum.
From Bundjalung to Worimi: a regional profile

(Acknowledgement: much of the data provided in this profile is sourced from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs’ “Two Ways Together North Coast Profile” of November 2006)

The North Coast region is one of Australia’s great scenic splendors. It is nestled between the blue hues and golden sands of the Pacific Ocean to its east and the greens and reds of the Great Dividing Range to the west. It is a natural spectacle of great rivers and lakes running alongside rolling hills.

The North Coast Institute operates proudly within the traditional owner boundaries of a number of Aboriginal nations such as Bundjalung to the north, Gumbayngirr and Dunghutti in the centre, and Biripi and Worimi to the south. The North Coast is home to many significant sacred sites including the Wollumbin (Mt Warning) which is a sacred women’s birthing site for the Bundjalung people. A number of languages such as the Gumbayngirr are still proudly spoken by Elders and a small number of others.

The rich cultural fabric and beautiful natural setting of the North Coast however belies the social and economic disadvantage experienced by many of its residents. Aboriginal people are particularly disadvantaged as evidenced by a range of social and economic indicators including an unemployment rate of 27% in 2001.

The high rates of social and economic exclusion among many of the North Coast’s Aboriginal people is both impacting and impacted by the relatively poor health and wellbeing of Aboriginal young people and adults, including lower birth weights for Aboriginal children, disproportionately high criminal justice contact, excessive rates of child protection orders, significantly higher levels of cardiovascular disease, and smoking at a rate of 70% higher than the non-Aboriginal community.

The Aboriginal unemployment rate of 27% in 2001 on the North Coast was the second highest among Aboriginal people of any region in New South Wales. In fact in some localities such as Taree the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people in 2001 was reportedly as high as 37%. These rates are in spite of significant overall economic growth in the North Coast region bolstered by robust growth in the construction, services, retail, and tourism and hospitality sectors.

Clearly the economic expansion and new labour market opportunities enjoyed by the wider population on the North Coast over the past decade and more has not extended to many Aboriginal people. In fact, the Commonwealth sponsored Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) schemes remain the largest ‘employer’ of Aboriginal people.
In 2000, some 1,176 Aboriginal people living on the North Coast were participating in CDEP. This participation in CDEP however has not, in the main, translated into ‘real jobs’. CDEP has regrettably become more of an ‘ends’ than a ‘means to an end’ for too many participants.

The Commonwealth Government has recently proposed substantial changes to CDEP which, if or when fully implemented in partnership with Registered Training Organisations such as the North Coast Institute, could have potential benefit for Aboriginal people by reinvigorating case management approaches to preparing Aboriginal job seekers for the world of real work through a combination of off the job training, work placements, and referral.

Given the nature of NCI’s work and its constant contact with a high number of Aboriginal job seekers and potential job seekers then there is great benefit in stronger labour market placement and case management activity among job network and Structured Training and Employment Program (STEP) providers in conjunction with the North Coast Institute.
Responding to a distinctive ‘triple bottom line’

Vocational, technical and further education cannot afford to be viewed through an economic window alone. Rather, a ‘triple bottom line’ of cultural strength, social wellbeing, and economic security is critically important for Aboriginal people as outlined in the national Indigenous vocational learning strategy – *Partners in a Learning Culture*.

This distinctive ‘triple bottom line’ has the potential to align well with the North Coast Institute’s vision to lead learning for individuals, enterprises and communities and our goal in advancing our region economically, socially, culturally and environmentally.

On a cultural level, Aboriginal people wish to reaffirm and pass down their first cultures, preserve their identity, and restore their languages. This is vitally important not only for Aboriginal people but also the broader community as an Aboriginal identity can and does enrich the broader cultural fabric of the North Coast. Aboriginal culture has nourished broader community quests for history, sense of place, and identity throughout Australia.

NCI is well positioned not only in playing a positive role in supporting the reaffirmation of first cultures on the North Coast through existing programs such as *Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Practice and Teaching Aboriginal Languages* but also by strengthening Aboriginal people’s desire and need to operate more fully and confidently in bicultural or intercultural contexts. This is critical to future and successful engagement in the world of work. This can only be achieved by moving NCI’s organisational capacity beyond a state of cultural awareness to a state of cultural competence.

Social issues are a vitally important consideration in Aboriginal education and training from two perspectives. First, the fact that so many Aboriginal people confront considerable family and community stressors (such as family violence, overcrowding, and unemployment) places a strain on families’ and individuals’ ability to engage and sustain engagement in education and training. For example, Aboriginal youth aged up to 17 years are four times more likely to a victim of family violence which makes schooling and training all the more harder for those affected.

Secondly, and on a more positive note, education and training is critically important in providing people and workplaces with the knowledge and skills to help secure Aboriginal child and family health and wellbeing.
NCI strives to be at the forefront of learning to secure Aboriginal child and family wellbeing. Our Institute aims to strengthen its partnerships with the community services, sporting, and health sectors and will immediately seek to enter into ‘learning partnerships’ with universities, government authorities, and key Aboriginal health, sporting, and community services organisations to better meet the high needs of Aboriginal children and families. These ‘learning partnerships’ are particularly important when one considers that 42% of the Aboriginal population is aged under 14 years, which is double the corresponding rate for the wider community of the North Coast.

The challenges that Aboriginal societies face today are big, not only in poverty and intercultural terms, but given the world is becoming increasingly connected, complex, technological, and changing at a rapid pace.

‘Social entrepreneurialism’ or ‘community enterprise’ is a concept that is gathering momentum in public policy circles throughout the world to deal with such complex social challenges through a new paradigm. Ashoka.org defines social entrepreneurs in the following terms:

“Rather than leaving societal needs to the government or business sectors, social entrepreneurs find what is not working and solve the problem by changing the system, spreading the solution, and persuading entire societies to take new leaps.”

Put another way, social entrepreneurialism is about applying the best characteristics of business thinking including product innovation and creativity, research and development, financing and incubation, and just-in-time services to community and social services context.

The education and training sector can play a key role in equipping communities for complex social issues through the creation of innovative learning experiences, especially for Aboriginal communities seeking self determination and self sufficiency. This may be in the form of a training package which fuses relevant competencies from the community services and business services national training packages as well as unique cultural competencies into a customised learning program. To advance this thinking, the Aboriginal Education and Training Unit (AETU) of NCI will conduct research into the feasibility of developing and providing a Diploma in Aboriginal Community and Social Entrepreneurialism.
On an economic level, the North Coast is experiencing significant growth in key industries such as tourism and hospitality, services, transportation, construction, retail, horticulture and aquaculture. Despite this, at the time of the last published national census the North Coast had the second highest Aboriginal unemployment rate in New South Wales. To turn this trend around, Aboriginal community pursuits for economic independence through enterprise development and labour market participation will need to be strongly supported. However, Aboriginal enterprises, like many small businesses, continue to struggle when measured against the ultimate test of business sustainability.

NCI will continue to work hard in contributing favourably to community economic and employment pursuits through the provision of community based and timely training programs. In recent years, the Institute has been at the forefront of training Aboriginal boards of directors through the Managing our Mob (MoM) governance programs.

NCI recognises that skills acquisition is the key to self determination both at individual and collective levels. We will therefore continue to work with Aboriginal organisations to expand the MoM project and other business faculty initiatives into new communities.
Reaffirming AETU as a central driving force

The Aboriginal Education and Training Unit (AETU) of the North Coast Institute has worked hard over a decade or more to make TAFE more accessible, more attractive, and more responsive for Aboriginal students. It has helped create the Djigay Centre of Excellence as part of the North Coast Institute’s suite of programs and services to Aboriginal students.

NCI’s efforts and AETU’s leadership have seen Aboriginal enrolments reach record levels. These efforts are justifiably a source of great pride and ongoing celebration.

In order to meet the ‘forces for change’ outline above, the AETU has never been more important. The Unit will need to be at the forefront in driving future effort and initiating smart and strategic investments in Aboriginal lifelong learning across the entire Institute, all its faculties, and all of its campuses.

The Unit’s partnerships and relationships both internally and externally, including its capacity to influence and communicate in a high performing manner, are critical to its future success and that of Aboriginal students.

Furthermore, the recruitment of Aboriginal people into key areas such as TAFE teaching (including through customised approaches to Certificate IV in Training and Assessment), administration and management, and growth areas such as information technology (through IT traineeships) are illustrative of the Institute’s current commitment to recruit more Aboriginal people into the NCI workforce.

After ten years in operation it is timely to check the currency, orientation and effectiveness of the AETU’s ‘operating model’ to ensure its capacity and capability to meet the social, economic and cultural challenges previously mentioned and to drive the proposed initiatives outlined and proposed below.
In partnership with the industry faculties and all functional units, a high performing AETU will need to lead the NCI’s efforts in:

- diversifying the industry areas and levels of programs that Aboriginal people are participating in,
- developing stronger pathways between TAFE and labour market participation,
- leading the pursuit of cultural competency and community engagement,
- driving and measuring our performance in a more robust and strategic way, and
- deepening and strengthening our educational and employment partnerships with other education providers, industry, and Aboriginal community groups throughout the North Coast.

In light of these challenges and opportunities, a diagnostic assessment of the AETU will be undertaken to ensure that its strategic focus, operating model, resources, and programs are on target to not only meet demands of current Aboriginal students but rather proactively influence future choices of Aboriginal people into learning experiences that yields greater labour market and economic participation.
Key proposed initiatives at a glance

The North Coast Institute is giving consideration to the following raft of initiatives to help deliver on a **2020 Vision**. These initiatives comprise new strategies as well as an extension and consolidation of certain existing initiatives. The proposed **2020 Vision** measures are listed below as well as in a matrix (Table 1) form to assist stakeholder feedback:

### Diversifying participation by:

- Introducing a *Goori Learning Frontiers* program to target Aboriginal specific supplementary funding to lift participation in industry growth areas and areas that Aboriginal people have not traditionally participated in large numbers, such as information technology, horticulture, and aquaculture, tourism and hospitality, retail, and services industries

- Reviewing the Djigay Centre’s progress as a ‘centre of excellence’ with a view to widening the pursuit of excellence in Aboriginal education and training to a whole of Institute level through a new *Djigay Without Borders* initiative

### Driving performance by:

- Renewing the operating model for the Aboriginal Education and Training Unit that best supports the **2020 Vision** and its strategic directions with the view to strengthening AETU’s business relationships with faculties through a new strategic purchaser-provider operating model whilst simultaneously improving levels of industry and community engagement in two key geographical zones (north and south) within the region

- Initiating an *Institute Director’s Aboriginal Learning Partnerships Group* comprising representatives of AETU and key faculties to drive innovation and strategy

- Establishing a NCI *Aboriginal Education and Training Performance Baseline Report* to be reported against annually to the Institute Council which outlines progress against the key performance indicators outlined later in this paper

- Developing a Cultural and Quality Assurance Charter for Aboriginal Student Learning in the North Coast Institute
Strengthening the evidence and best practice base by undertaking more research into innovative areas such as training in social entrepreneurialism and engaging knowledge networks commencing by hosting a National Indigenous Learning Symposium in September 2007

Creating Partnership Agreements and Protocols between the AETU and industry faculties to help drive joint strategic and operational endeavours.

Developing pathways by:

- Doubling our efforts in promoting TVET opportunities and participation for Aboriginal secondary school students
- Initiate an *Ambassadors for Aboriginal Employment and Training* network comprising civic leaders and industry champions on the North Coast
- Negotiating with relevant employment authorities on the recruitment of an *Aboriginal Post-TAFE Job Placement Consultant*
- Promoting training and employment opportunities in growth industries to Aboriginal people through direct and tailored marketing
- Identifying and committing to ‘stretch targets’ for Aboriginal participation in key growth industries and faculties
- Hosting community celebration events which promote success stories in higher qualification classifications and in non-traditional learning areas for Aboriginal students, and
- Engaging Aboriginal curriculum specialists to develop learning and teaching resources that are culturally appropriate at the local and regional levels.
Deepening partnerships by:

- Reenergising the Institute’s commitment to the reconciliation agenda through a range of measures including an *Aboriginal Student Art Acquisition Program* and an *Aboriginal Cultural Sites and Signage Program*.

- Developing a *Cultural Competency Policy Framework and Implementation Plan* for the North Coast Institute by 2008 including a one day compulsory cultural awareness program for frontline staff followed by a cultural competency program for NCI staff working closely and regularly with Aboriginal students.

- Matching community and industry stakeholders together in *Gooris Skilling Up* joint engagement and careers forums.

- Expanding the *Managing our Mob* program in partnership with Aboriginal community and business organisations, and

- Offering the *Aboriginal Cultural Education Program* to private sector organisations and government agencies on a commercial basis.
## Strategic directions matrix

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<th>Diversifying Participation</th>
<th>Cultural strength</th>
<th>Social wellbeing</th>
<th>Economic security</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Establish a range of professional development courses to underpin the Cultural Competency Policy and Program Framework</td>
<td>Increase training effort to key areas such as family support work, Aboriginal Health Workers, and youth at risk work</td>
<td>Expand tailored provision of training in the key areas of governance and business management. Establish ‘stretch targets’ in new/growth industry areas</td>
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<th>Developing Pathways</th>
<th>Case manage students graduating from Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Practices Program into employment and industry based training programs</th>
<th>Undertake research into the viability of a Diploma of Aboriginal Social Entrepreneurialism</th>
<th>Negotiate the engagement of a Post TAFE Jobs Pathways Consultant with employment agencies</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Engage Aboriginal curriculum specialist to customise training and learning materials, including online material</td>
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<td>Increase support and promotion of TVET to Aboriginal students</td>
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<td>Tailor marketing and promotional activity to Aboriginal students by focusing on employment growth industries.</td>
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<td>Driving Performance</td>
<td>Cultural Strength</td>
<td>Social Well Being</td>
<td>Economic security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a Cultural Competency Policy and Program Framework for the North Coast Institute</td>
<td>Review the Djigay Centre of Excellence aspiration with a view to expansion of the pursuit of excellence across the Institute</td>
<td>Introduce a Goori Learning Frontiers program to target Aboriginal specific supplementary funding to lift participation in industry growth areas</td>
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<td>Convene an Institute Director’s Aboriginal Learning Partnerships Group</td>
<td>Review the operating model of the AETU to position it as a strategic broker, purchaser-provider split, and lead facilitator</td>
<td>Provide annual performance reports to the Institute Council on Aboriginal participation including by industry type</td>
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<td>Create Partnership Protocols and Agreements between AETU and key faculties</td>
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| Deepening Partnerships | |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Create an Aboriginal Student Art Acquisition Program and a Cultural Sites and Signage Program | Develop a Memorandum of Partnership between TAFE NSW NCI, DoCs and NSW Health to strengthen training provision in the key areas of Aboriginal pre and ante natal health, child safety, and family wellbeing | Host a national Aboriginal vocational and enterprise learning symposium |
| Deliver Aboriginal Cultural Education Program (ACEP) training to NCI staff, other government agencies, and private sector commercial operators | | Matching community stakeholders with industry leaders through Gooris Skilling Up forums and through an Ambassadors for Aboriginal Employment and Training network |
Our Key Measures of Success

We will know if the 2020 Vision is being realized or not by regular monitoring the following key performance measures:

Quantitative

An Annual Aboriginal Education and Training Performance Report to the Institute Council comprising:

- Aboriginal Enrolments by faculty, award/AQF level, and locality
- Aboriginal Completion Rates
- Number of Aboriginal Personnel in NCI by level and status
- Number of Aboriginal TVET students
- Post TAFE job outcomes as measured by the number of cases managed by the Post TAFE Job Placement Consultant

Qualitative:

Regular reports to map progress against the initiatives outlined in the Strategic Directions Matrix above.
Have your say

Aboriginal community, non government organisations, business groups and educators are encouraged to have their say in the **2020 Vision** Consultation Paper. There are a number of ways this can be done including:

**Contact us**

By emailing us at [2020vision@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:2020vision@tafensw.edu.au) or ringing the North Coast Institute’s Aboriginal Development Manager’s Office on 02 6586 2239.

**Write to us**

By posting your feedback to:

**2020 Vision** Team  
c/- Aboriginal Education and Training Unit  
TAFE NSW North Coast Institute  
PO Box 528  
PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444

**Or meet with us**

The **2020 Vision** Team would be happy to consider requests for meetings where times and dates are mutually suitable.

You can do this by contacting the Aboriginal Development Manager’s Office at North Coast Institute on 02 6586 2239.

We would sincerely welcome your feedback and views on how North Coast Institute best deliver on our vision of leading in learning in partnership with Aboriginal communities now and right up to the year 2020.