

Port Macquarie
Community
College Inc.

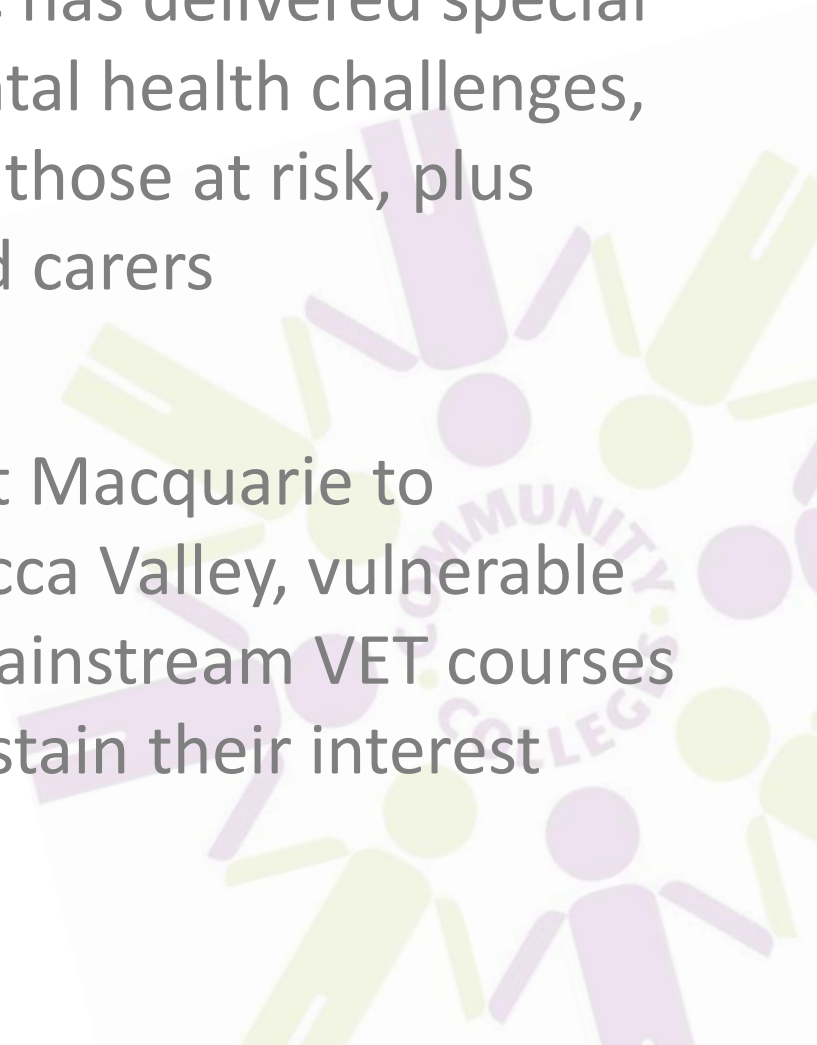
CCA Conference: Investing in our Future
25-27 July October 2017
Citadines on Bourke Hotel, Melbourne

**Shape Shifting between VET and the
Virtual World of ACE in the Community**

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Delivering Adult Community Education in NSW Rural and Coastal Communities

- For the past three years PMCC has delivered special programs for people with mental health challenges, disengaged young people and those at risk, plus those living with disability, and carers
- From Taree to Wauchope, Port Macquarie to Kempsey and into the Nambucca Valley, vulnerable people need alternatives to mainstream VET courses to attract, engage, retain & sustain their interest



Shape Shifting from VET to Virtual ACE

- Using Imagination to Capture Attention and inspire new Pathways to Learning & Life Development
- Life Skills Express – all sorts of learning happens when you're having fun
- Stepping up – catching young people when they are least expecting to become keen learners
- Creative Arts for Recovery bring all sorts together



Barriers to Engaging Vulnerable Groups

- Overly prescriptive Assessment and Accreditation requirements, and tight Policy Boxes prevent local flexibility and discretionary judgement about how best to meet the learners' needs
- While Transparency and Accountability are welcomed, the lack of trust in local Learning Facilitators creates rigid generic programs
- Creativity requires staying open to each moment

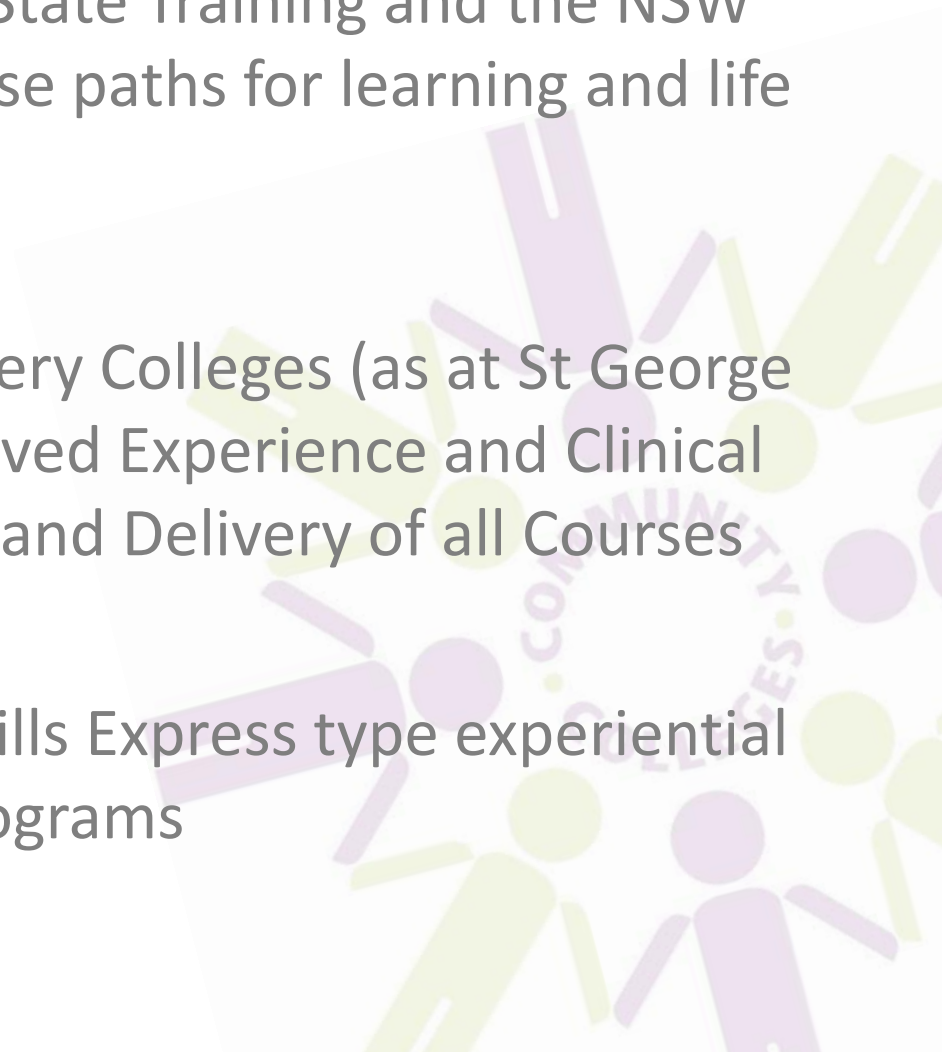


Tight Funding Eligibility Locks Out Key Targets

- Industry is saying the same thing as community groups serving the vulnerable – More Flexibility!
- Being able to adapt technology to learners' interests, and to create different forms of assessment, creates new choices and evidence of effective learning
- Video evidence is easy, accessible and so much faster than focusing on the written word so much

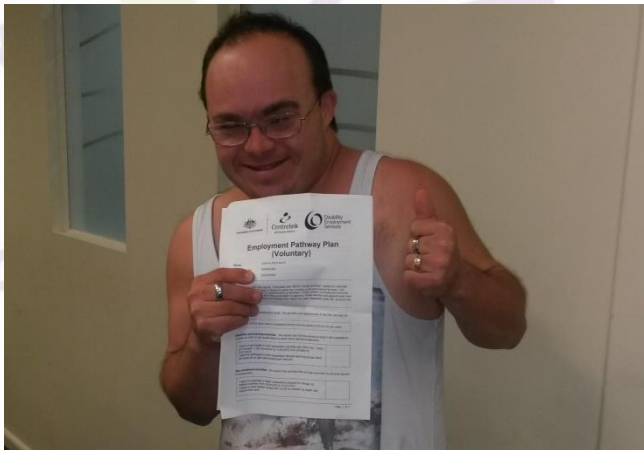
How can ACE work better in the Youth, Mental Health and Disability field?

- Working more flexibly with State Training and the NSW Health System to offer diverse paths for learning and life development
- Building a network of Recovery Colleges (as at St George and Inner City) with 50:50 Lived Experience and Clinical Contributions to the Design and Delivery of all Courses
- Run Stepping Up and Life Skills Express type experiential & project based learning programs



Combining forces in experiential learning

- Learning new skills, developing confidence and becoming part of new entrepreneurial community ventures can bring isolated people into new life paths. So can joining the Absolutely Everybody Choir of the SOHK.



- By respecting people's different learning styles and speeds, adult learning approaches can help people to gain confidence and take risks.

Taking small steps to new ventures



- Developing whole-of-life learning programs, where creative classroom activities combine with hands-on experience in community ventures.
- Personal confidence & skills for employment strengthened.

- Exploring new skills & opportunities for developing their own small businesses by people with disabilities.



- Providing a Business Incubator support service helps people to run their own businesses and still have a place to belong and share socially while working on their business.

Working with local community allies

- **Moving Forward With Confidence – 6 wk small group sharing sessions to rebuild confidence & belonging**
- **A House of Many Stories – Older people's MH & AOD & Gambling project with Panthers RSL**
- **SPICE Stroke Recovery groups**



Community Ventures with diverse abilities:

- Companionship in nursing homes and retirement villages; and Animal Companionship



- Catering for community group gatherings
- Community Gardening, horticulture and permaculture
- Creative arts & crafts

Port Macquarie Hastings School of Hard Knocks

- PMCC established the Absolutely Everybody Choir, a branch of the national School of Hard Knocks network, with Dr Jonathon Welch in early 2016
- This Creative Arts for Recovery Program provides a range of activities: from choir activity to musical performances, creative writing to percussion groups.



Research & Development

- Consumers and Carers being their own Peer Workers and Researchers – and getting paid for it.
- Collecting a “real time” continual Evidence Base for Health authorities & funding bodies
- Saving money for the health budget by keeping people away from hospitals, GPs, and decreasing their critical incidents & AOD use

Cooperative Research Centre

- Working with the MNC Human Services Alliance and various Universities and Private Companies we are piloting new approaches to delivering better health & human services
- The aim is to find the sustainability factors for community-based, people valuing NGOs, and build exports of service models
- Research is also an empowering activity in itself for vulnerable people to be running

CONCLUSIONS

- Partnerships for development among local individuals, families, carers, NGOs and businesses share the community & business benefits more widely.
- True sustainability will come when the community is deliberately choosing to employ people of diverse abilities and to use their small businesses as part of improving everyone's quality of life
- Building export business from such innovations can help to sustain our own businesses and keep providing for the Common Good.



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