



People power the economy

WEA Hunter's participation in regional
economic development

WEA Hunter

- ▶ Large Not for Profit Community Based Organisation specialising in education provision –
 - ❖ Secondary Education
 - ❖ Vocational and Community Education
- ▶ Lower Hunter and some Upper Hunter
- ▶ Some of the Mid North Coast
- ▶ Actively participates in areas of Community Development
- ▶ Contributes to the economic development of our regions

Social Capital is our 'product'

- ▶ WEA's greatest contribution is through the growth of Social Capital.
- ▶ Social capital can reach far and wide: it can occur within existing networks (bonding), or across groups (bridging), and on different levels of society.
- ▶ Mutual support and trust develop in a society with social capital. In fact, most definitions of social capital emphasise 'the greater good', and point to four themes:
 - ❖ trust,
 - ❖ reciprocity,
 - ❖ collective action, and
 - ❖ networking.
- ▶ The end result of social capital is the potential increase in each individual's physical health and social-emotional well-being, as well as potential increases in civic engagement and employment in the community in which they are a part; both can contribute to a healthier and most effectively functioning society.

- ▶ The ‘knowledge economy’ puts a premium on human capital and can worsen the job prospects of people with limited education, who are also often the least well off in our societies.
- ▶ Some analysts speak of the emergence of an “underclass” in developed countries, a group that is outside the mainstream of society and has little chance of re-entering it, both because of a lack of human capital and, arguably, the “right” sort of social capital.
 - ▶ **WEA Hunter seeks to correct these social imbalances**

**Strong social capital promotes the
development of human capital at the pace at
which it is required by the society in which the
need exists**



Other strategies of economic development WEA is a part of...

- ▶ **Encourage entrepreneurship** – niche markets and work in qualifications outside of the ‘skills shortages’ – courses where people primarily become sole traders.
- ▶ **Improve the talent base** – identified pathways from prevocational and through to employment and then increased skills in employments areas (CIII – CIV and beyond)

- ▶ **create larger pools of venture capital** – WEA Hunter is committed to decentralisation of learning for people who struggle to connect with learning by decreasing barriers. We offer outreach training and have in the last 3yrs established 3 new campuses in areas where access is particularly difficult.
- ▶ **Connected to greater momentum** – Stay connected with each areas individual LGA LEP and any other identified strategic plans to ensure we remain with the momentum of the area/s. As well as this, we stay a strong part of the local ‘coal face’ within the community sector to ensure we stay ahead of trends or emerging issues regarding reducing barriers.

And in simple measurable outcomes...

- ▶ We employ over 70 permanent staff across more than 6 LGA's. These are employees who live and spend in the regions.
 - ▶ Increased employment outcomes by students follows the same trajectory – increases the spend per capita in any given area.
 - ▶ Our facilities use local providers of services to ensure we participate in local economies where possible.
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