

# ***REFLECTIONS***

**A Review  
of the Activities of the**

**NORTHERN CORRIDOR  
EDUCATION PRECINCT**

**March 2003**

## **FOREWORD**

In 1999, Dr Marguerite Nolan conducted a research project, initiated by North Point Institute of TAFE (NPIT) and QUT, to investigate the feasibility of creating an Education Precinct in the Northern Corridor region of South-East Queensland. The corridor was identified as the area from Brisbane's CBD in the south to Caboolture in the north, the D'Aguilar Range in the west to Moreton Bay in the east.

This research resulted in the formation of the Northern Corridor Education Precinct (NCEP) which is an association between Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane and North Point Institute of TAFE (BNPIT) and Education Queensland.

This area is a rapidly growing region with a projected population increase of 416,000 by 2021 which represents a 50% increase to the current population. This statistic raises issues about future infrastructure and resource needs for education and service provision in the corridor.

The research found that the Corridor includes areas that exhibit high youth unemployment, low education retention rates, a large number of families from low socio-economic backgrounds, a significant number of 'at risk' students, and a significant number of families where no member has accessed tertiary education.

A key recommendation made by Dr Nolan was that a full-time Transitions Officer be appointed to manage relationships between secondary schools, and to develop relationships and disseminate information between all partners.

In October 2001 QUT Carseldine and North Point Institute of TAFE jointly funded a Transitions Officer position. The Geebung and Murrumba Education Districts also agreed to co-fund an Education Queensland position to facilitate activities aimed at improving pathways, retention, and employment opportunities.

During 2002 many relationships and networks were established, and as a result, initiatives and projects have developed. This booklet is a *reflection* on what has been achieved and highlights possibilities for future initiatives.

We look forward to the ongoing process of developing seamless pathways in education, promoting strong working relationships both within and between sectors, and catering for the diverse range of student needs, so that ultimately each student will have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

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Head of Department (HOD)  
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Education Queensland

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## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

All NCEP partners are represented on the Steering Committee.

Judi Buckley	NCEP - HOD Education Queensland
Phil Clark	Director BNPIT
Linda Clay	Project Officer – October 2001 to December 2002 QUT/BNPIT
Debbie Collins	NCEP Liaison Officer–March 2003
Wayne Delaforce	Assistant Director–Development QUT Carseldine
Norm Fuller	Principal Caboolture State High School
Jenny Haddrell	Executive Director, Murrumba District Education Queensland
Ian Isaacs	Principal Aspley State High School
Kirsti Kee	Executive Director, Geebung District Education Queensland
Jeff Major	Principal Bracken Ridge State High School

Ruth Matchett      Director, Northern Campuses  
QUT

Francis Rollings      Association of Independent Schools Qld  
also representing Catholic Education

Julie Tapsall      Educational Liaison Officer  
QUT – Faculty of Education

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Northern Corridor Education Precinct has operated to date under the objectives as they had been articulated in the Nolan report. They are to:

- Decrease attrition/drop out rates
- Enhance regional retention
- Maximise cross-sectoral programs and processes
- Better utilise human, physical and virtual infrastructure
- Increase youth employment
- Decrease overall unemployment.

A review by the NCEP of the original Nolan Report Recommendations indicates that the NCEP has exceeded the conceptual framework of the report. The creation of the NCEP with the inclusion from the outset of all education sectors has significantly changed the deliverable outcomes.

In light of this the fundamental aims and structure of the NCEP have now been revisited and the outcomes aligned with the 2003 directions at the sector level, with policy revision at the governance level.

This is a unique occasion when education policy changes are being examined at both the State and national levels. Although this presents challenges, it is also a significant opportunity to continue advances towards cross-sectoral and regional relationships and outcomes.

Particular attention has been paid to the relationships and ideas detailed in two significant papers:

- *Queensland the Smart State - Education and Training Reforms for the Future: A White Paper*. ‘Working together – building new community partnerships’ (p.24)
- *Higher Education at the Crossroads. A Review of Australian Higher Education*. Discussion Paper – ‘Varieties of excellence diversity, specialisation and regional engagement’.

Both reviews discuss at length the benefits of partnership. Given the work already underway, the NCEP and our community partners are now well positioned to progress with the reforms advocated in these reviews.

## **THE MISSION**

The NCEP exists to develop and provide cross-sectoral leadership by introducing and maximising a coordinated approach to learning for our community. This is achieved through:

- Creating an integrated approach to education and career opportunities
- Seizing the opportunity to enhance transition options for students
- Engaging the community as unified education sectors.

## **Objectives**

- Identify, communicate and strengthen learning pathways across education sectors, business, industry and the community in the Precinct

- Plan and engage in cross-sectoral collaborative activities designed to maximise learning opportunities and outcomes, to improve education retention rates and to influence employment outcomes
- Develop and enhance curriculum coherence across sectors within the Precinct
- Demonstrate the efficiency and collaborative benefits of pooling and sharing human, physical and intellectual resources amongst the sectors
- Contribute positively to the ongoing development of the community in the Precinct through teaching, research, cultural and social collaboration
- Evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the operations of the Precinct
- Communicate initiatives and curriculum developments to all parties.

## **RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**

The NCEP has emerged at a time of unprecedented systemic and jurisdictional review of all educational sectors at both the national and State level in Australia. Examination of other models of community and cross-sectoral engagement reinforces the unique nature of the process adopted by the NCEP.

The initial concept of the NCEP developed from long-standing and successful interactions between the partners prior to the Precinct's creation. The NCEP has jurisdictional support for the creation of collaborative working relationships at both the national and State level. In many other jurisdictions, however, these sectors are in direct competition or have incompatible core business outcomes, with the result that it is difficult to

share information and resources and create ongoing relationships for the collective benefit of the partners, students and community.

The NCEP has received strong support in a range of forums, attracting interest in ongoing collaboration. Research and discussion show that the NCEP can learn from other models, however, this particular model appears to be at the forefront of overarching cross-sectoral and regional integrated education frameworks.

## **THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

One of the main strengths of the NCEP is the open and representative nature of the NCEP Steering Committee. The collaborative and sectoral outlook of the group opens up dialogue and innovation which is historically difficult to achieve in a traditional model.

## ***REFLECTION 1:***

### **MAPPING**

An initial task of the NCEP was to profile the characteristics and needs of the stakeholders in the corridor.

44 schools were identified in the NCEP and were invited to participate in a process of identifying community needs. Interviews were conducted with key personnel from each school including Principals, Deputy Principals, Senior Schooling/HODs, Vocational Education Coordinators and Guidance/Career Officers.

This mapping exercise revealed that:

- Historical issues affected schools' perception of the TAFE system
- Communication issues and difficulties existed within schools and the schools sector
- Communication issues existed between sectors (schools and TAFE; schools and QUT; TAFE and QUT)
- Accessibility to BNPIT in terms of costs and transport was an issue for students
- Some schools had under-utilised resources
- Some schools were in desperate need of additional resources in specific areas in order to deliver accredited training, eg hospitality facilities.

This mapping exercise set the operational path for the initial 12 months of the NCEP with the need to begin addressing the issues raised.

## ***REFLECTION 2:***

# **NETWORKS**

An outcome of the mapping exercise has been the emergence, under the auspices of the NCEP, of a series of cross-sectoral networks which are designed to work at an operational or geographical level to address identified issues and to progress the vision of the Precinct.

The concept of networking was, in fact, raised by the sector itself during the process of addressing issues of communication and relationships. In these networks historical, professional, resource, process and pathways issues could be addressed, information and resources shared, people identified as contacts, initiatives progressed and joint professional development arrangements investigated and introduced.

The delegation of network management to the networks themselves is a major platform in maintaining the momentum created by the NCEP. The NCEP will support and nurture networks which will be self-sustaining and self-managed. This will allow the limited physical resources of the NCEP to be directed to its strategic role of identifying links, and articulating and developing the Precinct and external partnerships.

A number of NCEP networks have now been established as detailed below:

## ❖ *Pathways*

The Pathways network involves staff who assist students in career decision-making or who perform a counselling role within their educational sector. All three sectors are represented and members include counsellors, guidance officers, career advisers, school nurses, school chaplains, youth workers, ATSI liaison officers, disability support persons, Jobs Pathways officers.

To date, transition and attrition issues between and within sectors have been explored and strategies are being developed to assist students in their movement from school to TAFE or university.

This network is currently documenting cross-sectoral pathways linking educational outcomes, employment and training information. This initiative will ensure that students and the community have access to accurate and relevant information that allows informed decisions to be made.

## ❖ *Business HODs*

Murrumba and Geebung District Business HODs have participated in information sharing and networking at Bracken Ridge campus of BNPIT. This has allowed the TAFE and school teachers to consider cross-sectoral possibilities and to examine barriers that traditionally were not understood by either sector. In 2003, this network will progress the school-TAFE relationship and link with QUT Carseldine staff to explore the school-university relationship.

## ❖ *Industrial Skills*

The Industrial Skills network comprises Industrial Skills teachers from Geebung, Murrumba and Stafford Districts who will link with BNPIT teachers and QUT staff. BNPIT Trades areas are concerned about the lack of numbers of students flowing through from the school sector and the level of ability of many of the students who enrol. The school sector is also concerned about the profile of the Industrial Skills subject area and the type of student that is generally attracted to it. Concerns have also been raised by the University Engineering faculty regarding school students' lack of ability to perform practical applications.

In order to address these issues through the network, the sectors will work cooperatively to market the value of the Industrial Skills subjects in schools. Career pathways and employment opportunities will be promoted to students, parents and career advisers. Mentoring programs for teachers will be investigated, and possibilities for resource sharing both within and between sectors will be examined.

## ❖ *Librarians*

An initiative has commenced in which Librarians and Teacher Librarians across the education sector and local government will have the opportunity to form, within the Corridor, a network which is designed to create additional opportunities for communication and support within the profession.

### ***REFLECTION 3:***

## **AGED CARE**

The Aged Care Project is an initiative established in response to an identified skills shortage, and the forecast growth, in aged care facilities in the region. It involves schools, Enterprise Career Education Foundation (ECEF), QUT, TAFE, industry, Department of Employment and Training (DET), Industry Training Advisory Board (ITAB), Redcliffe Hospital and Schools Industry links groups.

Aged care delivery is currently not available to Queensland students as a curriculum option unless a student undertakes a school-based traineeship. The potential for the program is not only to open pathways into the aged care industry for school students, but also to provide a platform for pathways into associated industries.

The initiative involves the development of Certificate III in Aged Care Online by Brisbane and North Point Institute of TAFE. A pilot program to begin in 2003 will involve a cohort of students from across Geebung and Murrumba Districts enrolling in the online course. The course will involve regular workshops conducted by TAFE, industry visits, industry placement and industry mentors.

An industry model is also being developed that will offer studies in aged care from work placement and certificate level studies in secondary school to tertiary qualifications, including employment and service delivery outcomes at each exit point. If this is successful, the pilot could be offered State-wide to meet the needs of rural communities where students would otherwise have to leave if they wished to access training in this industry.

## ***REFLECTION 4:***

### **CABBAGE TREE CREEK**

The Cabbage Tree Creek Project involves integrating enterprise education concepts into the school curriculum to provide 'real-life' learning opportunities for our students. The schools are all in the Cabbage Tree Creek Catchment and have chosen to integrate aspects of the Creek into different curriculum areas. The schools and current focus areas are:

Aspley Special School	Horticulture
Aspley State High School	Chemistry, Biology
Taigum State School	SOSE
Sandgate District State High School	Geography
Bracken Ridge State High School	Science (Yr 8)
St Patrick's College	SOSE, Transition (Yr 7 and 8)

The project has attracted support from a variety of sources, namely: Erebus, QUT Community Service Grant Scheme, Quality Teaching Program funds, Envirofund; and with potential for RAP, Water Watch and Council community development funding.

The initiative involves government, non-government schools in the primary and secondary sectors, a Special School, Environment Education Centre, QUT and BNPIT, Brisbane City Council (BCC), Indigenous community, Wildlife Preservation Society and Water Watch.

Representative students from the primary and secondary schools have been collaboratively involved in the planning of the concept. The teachers, who meet regularly, are also

exploring issues such as primary–secondary transitions and the issues surrounding the curriculum flow across sectors.

### ❖ *Kids Congress*

Under the Cabbage Tree Creek Project it has been agreed to conduct a Kids Congress to review and showcase the achievements of the students in the project. This will allow students to present and showcase their work to their peers, and to promote their successes to the community.

Participation will be supported by the Cabbage Tree Creek Catchment Group. It is envisaged that on completion of this activity there will be an opportunity for participants to obtain an insight into other similar projects and to continue to develop Cabbage Tree Creek as a learning precinct.

## ***REFLECTION 5:***

### **SHARING RESOURCES**

A significant finding to emerge from the NCEP process has been the identification of resources that, through a coordinated approach, can be shared and maximised to ensure service delivery as broadly as possible. These include:

- Certificate 1 in Automotive will be delivered in 2003 at an under-utilised facility at Pine Rivers State High School in Murrumba District by a Geebung District teacher to Geebung District students.
- The Taigum State School Indigenous Learn Scape, which is identified as part of Cabbage Tree Creek Project, is now being accessed across the sector and district and integrated into the curricula of the other schools.
- Redcliffe State High School and BNPIT Redcliffe campus are investigating resource sharing across campuses for 2003.
- QUT and TAFE resources are being used to support NCEP networks and to provide professional development opportunities across the sectors.
- Sports afternoons in secondary schools traditionally result in low usage of valuable resources such as ITC labs. To increase the use of ITC labs at Sandgate State High School, Boondall State School is negotiating for the use of these facilities.

## ***REFLECTION 6:***

### **FUNDING**

To date the majority of the resourcing, both financial and in kind, of the NCEP initiative has come from Education Queensland, Brisbane and North Point Institute of TAFE, and QUT. A small amount, nominally for individual projects, has been obtained through the successful application to external funding sources.

It now seems opportune that a discussion around the nature and cost of partnership participation on the NCEP be considered.

Sources of funding and opportunities for the collaborative cross-sectoral development of teaching staff are being investigated. This has begun with:

- QUT staff providing professional development to the Cabbage Tree Creek network on the integration of technology and delivery methods to students in the SOSE curriculum
- In-service training in relation to the new chemistry syllabus to be delivered at Carseldine during May.

## ***REFLECTION 7:***

### **INDUSTRY LINKS**

The individual partners of the NCEP have already made links with industry on many different levels. The role of the Precinct is not to duplicate these links but to support, enhance and broaden the nature of the information and communication flow across and between the existing networks.

Involvement in the Northern Bayside Schools' Industry Links (NBSIL), for example, has been useful in promoting the NCEP role.

The strategic direction of the Precinct could then include the development of peak bodies at a regional level that discuss and lobby for strategic and planning outcomes on behalf of the regional education sector in their respective areas of expertise.

This may well emerge from the network and cluster groups established across the NCEP, for example, Pathways, Structured Workplace Learning, Librarians, Schools Industry Links, Business HODs, Cabbage Tree Creek, Industrial Skills, History Teachers, etc.

In collaboration with the support of these peak representative bodies of the regional education sectors, the partners in the NCEP could actively seek to influence and support the development of similar regional industry and business groups under the stewardship of local government, Department of State Development and Commerce Queensland.

The potential is then for the peak bodies to share, communicate and advise each other on issues of joint concern

at the regional strategic and planning level. This information and advice could then be reported back to the various areas of interest, or used to inform curriculum development, employment outcomes or cross sectoral funding activities.

This concept has grown from the existing Northern Bayside Schools' Industry Links (NBSIL), Caboolture Area Schools Industry Links Scheme (CASILS), Youth Works, and non-aligned 'cluster' (schools not currently in an industry link cluster). In 2003 it is envisaged that further links and resourcing will extend to non-government schools.

### ***❖ Brisbane Middle North Local Economic Development Strategy (BMNLEDS)***

The NCEP is participating with the Brisbane City Council, Department of State Development and the Brisbane North Chamber of Commerce in a strategy designed to develop Brisbane's middle north. With specific regard to education and training, a website will be developed on OurBrisbane.com to make available to the general public a neutral venue which uses portal access to already available information about education and training opportunities in Brisbane's northern corridor.

Other initiatives from BMNLEDS in 2003 will contribute to the ongoing sustainability of economic growth in our region. These will be achieved through the involvement of the community and industry as partners, and benefits will flow through to the education sector in this region.

## ***REFLECTION 8:***

### **YOUTH ACCESS PROGRAM**

In 2002 Brisbane and North Point Institute of TAFE secured, under the auspices of NCEP, a grant of \$245,000 for the Youth Access Program (YAP). The funding targeted disengaged youth in Years 9-12 in schools in communities such as Deception Bay, Redcliffe, Caboolture and Sandgate which experience high youth unemployment and low retention rates.

The grant will offer affected youth in these areas training opportunities provided by TAFE where such training is unavailable to them in their local school. Qualifications or part-qualifications may be obtained in areas such as hairdressing, automotive, building and construction, and vocational access.

An additional grant has now been secured to continue this program for 2003 with similar outcomes expected.

## ***REFLECTION 9:***

### **TRANSITION TO TERTIARY STUDY**

As an example of the cross-sectoral collaboration that has emerged in the northern corridor, schemes have been negotiated between education providers that give students the opportunity to access tertiary education in alternative and innovative ways.

#### ***❖ START QUT***

Gifted students from local high schools may apply, with the endorsement of their school and parents, for a visiting student scholarship under the auspices of the START QUT (initially known as Capable) Program. The students attend real lectures and tutorials and complete all assessment in their chosen unit. This very popular program opens new and wider fields of study to Year 12 students who will gain credit for units passed at QUT in any QUT degree where there is scope for direct credit.

#### ***❖ Dual TAFE/QUT Awards***

Students may apply on completion of secondary school studies for a range of courses which provide a stepped pathway to university study. Under this scheme students apply just once through QTAC for a dual TAFE/QUT Award. They first complete a TAFE Diploma then automatically progress to QUT to complete the linked degree. A number of TAFE Institutes now participate with QUT in this scheme.

## ***REFLECTION 10:***

### **THE FUTURE**

#### ***Where to from here?***

The NCEP Steering Committee has been working towards defining a shared future direction for the Corridor and this is detailed in the Mission and Objectives set out earlier in this document. In order to achieve the stated objectives, the Precinct must continue to work at both a strategic and operational level towards completion of the tasks listed below.

- Aged Care initiative
  - Progress Aged Care Online initiative/pilot for Semester 2 start
  - Continue investigation by QUT into the introduction of course units from Human Services into the START QUT program for 2004
- Cabbage Tree Creek
  - Examine Queensland Training Pathways (QTP) funding initiatives
  - Maintain and expand the network
  - Involve geography and history staff from QUT
  - Conduct a 'Kids Congress' later in 2003
- Progress TAFE/School IT initiative – integration of IT into school curriculum
- Continue automotive pilot at Pine Rivers State High School
- Continue Youth Access Programs (YAP)

- Commence Technical Studies pilot (links to Cabbage Tree Creek program)
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) Queensland Training Pathways (QTP) funds – further explore VET in schools and offer workshop on assessment
- Examine TAFE course options for secondary students
- Support marketing and information sharing across sector
- Promote participation in the Worldskills Competition (Business, Industrial Skills, Hospitality and IT)
- Progress Business HODs/Teachers Network
- Promote Industrial Skills HODs/Teachers Network
- Continue to assist schools with AQTF compliance
- Source funding opportunities
- Encourage sharing of school resources
- Work with School Industry Links Groups
- Assist in formation of strategic partnerships
- Pursue curriculum development network across sectors
- Develop strategies to raise the awareness in teachers, parents and students of industry and discipline pathways
- **Keep looking outside the box!**