

Project ID No.	CP 106 / 7 / 1 / 07
GOAL	4 SUB-PROGRAM

Effective Networking Communities of Practice

Action plans must be submitted online to www.reframingthefuture.net by COB Tuesday 5 June 2007.

Please select "Submit a Form" on the Home Page Menu and follow the prompts.

All sections must be completed.

Please note: sections 1 – 9 of this document will be uploaded onto the Reframing the Future website. Details of participants in item 11 will be only be used in accordance with our privacy policy and will not be published on the website.

Name of organisation funded by Reframing the Future

COONARA COMMUNITY HOUSE INC.

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3. Project overview (100 words maximum)

What outcomes do you hope to achieve in your project?

Our community of practice (eleven small to medium ACE organisations) will develop a systematic approach to feedback and appraisal that will inform continuous improvement in our organisations. The documentation and processes to support this system will be shared by our organisations online. This system will enable us to meet the requirements of the revised AQTF standards and provide consistency for students and employers engaging in training with our organisations. Furthermore, we aim develop a system that meets the excellence criteria of the new standards.

4. Domain of knowledge

What aspects of the national training system will be addressed by your project?

(e.g. establishing relationships with industry clients; improving workplace assessment or delivery; implementing new Training Packages) (Please add rows as required)

- Compliance with revised AQTF standards
- Improving workplace assessment and delivery of training

5. Facilitating your community of practice

Please describe how you propose to facilitate your group progressing through the stages of growth of a Community of Practice (see Table 4.1 in the report: *The Potential for Communities of Practice to underpin the National Training Framework*):

On the one hand our existing network itself probably equates with a Community Of Practice in the coalescing stage of development in that we (as organisations and individuals) have already identified joint enterprise and have the objective of creating joint resources and formalising partnership arrangements as part of this year's project. However some of this year's participants are new to our group (as new employees in their respective organisations) and therefore the process of building trust and shared understanding will need to be addressed sensitively if we are to be inclusive of these new members. They come from organisations that place a high value on our network and therefore bring a positive attitude and an organisational commitment to the Community of Practice.

To facilitate the process of not only taking the group as a whole from the coalescing stage to the active, but also to ensure that all members remain committed and engaged we will devote a portion of every meeting we hold to general networking and information sharing as well as addressing the expressed domain of knowledge that we have agreed as our focus for this project. This general networking will take place during a shared lunch at each of our face to face meetings. This will enable us to not only meet the objectives of our project but also to remain flexible to the changing and emerging needs of our community of practice. If dedicated time is devoted to both activities then neither should suffer for the sake of the other.

Because key roles (such as convenor, facilitator, technologist) in our group are already established we intend to bring in external expertise in the form of facilitation, expert knowledge, project administration and documentation, etc on an as needs basis. It will be the business of our first face to face meeting to plan and schedule meetings with specific content objectives. At this time we will also decide on what external expertise we need to bring into the group for specific activities.

We intend to employ a range of strategies to maintain commitment and cohesion during the project;

- Approximately 4 face to face meetings
- An online community based on a Wiki for communication and information sharing between meetings
- Regular email updates to CoP members
- A residential two day series of professional conversations towards the end of the project to enable adequate time for reflection and evaluation

6. Structuring your community

Please describe how you propose to support the development of the three components of your community: its domain of knowledge, community and practice (see *Effectively Structuring Communities of Practice in VET*):

Domain of knowledge

The domain of knowledge of our existing group encompasses the implementation of the National Training Framework within the Adult Community Education environment in the outer eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne. For the purposes of this project we will be devoting the majority of this year's activities to the particular domain of knowledge concerning the transition to the new AQTF standards and the improvement of our systems and documentation for conducting workplace training and assessment. To support the development of this domain of knowledge we will;

- Engage industry and knowledge experts in each area to provide information that is not "owned" by the community of practice members
- Share knowledge that exists within our network

Community

Most organisations have been members of our group for several years and there is a high level of trust and both the organisation and individual level. Because new members of the group come from organisations that strongly support and value this network they come with a strong and positive commitment to membership. Each meeting of our group commences with individual introductions so that everyone knows who else is involved in the meeting and which organisation they represent. The proposed introduction of new members

from organisations outside of ACE will be carefully scheduled to coincide with meetings of the Community of Practice that focus on topics of interest and value to them. These members of the CoP will be considered more as knowledge experts. We envisage that this will ensure stability and relevance of the group for the main ACE members and make participation in the CoP more relevant to non-ACE organisations. Through both face to face meetings and the online Wiki we will actively encourage a reflective environment in which issues and concerns can be openly raised and discussed.

Our practice

Our practice will be main focus of this year’s project. At the end of last year our group reached the decision that they were ready to seriously consider forming some sort of “federation” for the delivery of VET training in our area. It is proposed that this would involve sharing our practice and systems so as to identify exemplars that we can all use to meet AQTF standards. In regards to the delivery and assessment of workplace training we are aiming for a systematic and collaborative delivery approach across all our organisations so that local students and employers recognise our organisations as a single entity “ACE – VET” whilst we still operate independently with our own scope, tutors, etc. This exercise will require a strong analysis of our current practice and series of action and reflection on proposed changes to adopt a standardised, high-quality system common to us all. To facilitate this process we will involve sessional teaching staff in each organisation in a series of meetings within each of their organisations. Each organisation will select an area of practice within our domain of knowledge that they feel they manage well and present it to the main Community of Practice. We will use a range of tools and processes to develop our practice;

- Tapping into existing knowledge within the group
- “importing” expert knowledge as needed
- development of shared resources

7. Anticipated outcomes (see Chapters 6-7 of *The Potential*)

Please describe the outcomes anticipated as a result of your project:

for participating individuals	<input type="checkbox"/> Increased knowledge of the requirements of the revised AQTF standards <input type="checkbox"/> Increased skills in continuous improvement techniques and tools <input type="checkbox"/> Professional peer support (someone who cares and knows what you are going through to bounce ideas off and listen to your problems, etc, etc.)
for participating organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Increased organisational capacity to meet revised AQTF standards

8. Promotion

Please outline how your project’s processes and products will be promoted:

within your organisation(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular reports to Committees of Management <input type="checkbox"/> Wiki site established to communicate and promote processes and outcomes
to industry and other relevant organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Wiki site open for general access <input type="checkbox"/> Via Regional ACFE forums
to the broader VET sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Wiki site open for general access <input type="checkbox"/> Via Reframing the Future forums, etc

9. Evaluation

Please provide an outline of the methods you will use to evaluate the participants’ learning and your project’s efficiency and effectiveness.

1. We will initially establish shared understanding of specific objectives against which we can evaluate our progress
2. Collect and collate regular feedback from all stakeholders via formal minutes of meetings as well as including reflection on our practice as a formal part of the agenda for each meeting
3. We intend to develop a Wiki for an online element to our community. This will be used for information sharing and for reflection and feedback

4. We will hold a residential 2 day series of professional conversations towards the end of our project that will include evaluation as well as knowledge sharing and management.

10. Project timeframe

Please list project milestones and key dates

(Please add rows as required)

Milestone	Key date
Planning and goal setting meeting – collection of data for development of shared documentation and resources commences	June 7th
Online community via wiki established	June 30 th
Consultation with industry and sessional tutors on systems for best practice in delivery and assessment of workplace training	July 28 th
Data collection for development of shared documentation and resources completed	August 14 th
Mid term report due	August 28 th
Residential professional conversations to include finalisation of resources and documentation and evaluation / reflection	Mid September
Feedback sought from industry and sessional tutors	Late September
Standardised documentation and resources developed and commencement of database entry	Early October
Trial of newly developed workplace delivery and assessment documentation with selected employers	Mid-late October
Evaluation of trial and of project as a whole – goal setting for 2008	Early – mid Nov.
Final report due	Nov. 27 th