

Project ID No.	CP 12 / 6 / 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 Details of participants in item 11 will be only be used in accordance with our privacy policy and will not be published on the website.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

TAFE Tasmania

1. Convenor's details

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3. Project overview (100 words maximum)

What outcomes do you hope to achieve in your project?

A key goal in COAG's National Reform Agenda is the development of "A More Flexible and Responsive Training System".

The TAFE Tasmania Workplace Learning Community of Practice will form part of our Workplace Learning Strategy. Facilitated by members of our Learning Team, we will draw participants from a wide range of our training delivery teams, including from skills shortage areas. Representatives from Industry will also attend.

We will investigate topical issues in workplace learning assessment such as competency based completion of apprenticeships, reporting to employers and Workplace Health and Safety issues, making visits to enterprises and develop workplace learning tools.

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)

In general terms the TAFE Tasmania Workplace Learning Community of Practice will address the improvement of workplace learning and assessment across the Institute. More specifically,

- The Community of Practice will hold meetings at Enterprise sites, so members can interact with industry representatives and employees. We are proposing to hold three such meetings – one at the Cadbury's factory in Claremont (near Hobart), one at the operations of the Federal Group on the West Coast and another with some micro-businesses in the Launceston area
- Guest speakers will be sourced from within TAFE Tasmania (for example our Recognition Centre Manager will provide the group with some case studies of learners and a Human Resources Consultant will discuss the OH&S issues associated with learning and assessment in the workplace) and from our enterprise clients (such as Human Resources Managers or Training Managers)
- The Community of Practice will investigate topical issues in workplace learning and assessment such as competency based completion of apprenticeships, reporting mechanisms to employers and Workplace Health and Safety issues associated with learning and assessment on-the-job
- The Community will be made up of representatives using a wide range of different Training Packages
- We will develop tools and checklists that all teachers at TAFE Tasmania can use when working with their enterprise clients
- We will also document innovative teaching and learning approaches that we observe in the workplaces that we visit
- Money has also been set aside to fund visits of smaller groups of members to document innovations in Tasmania and on the mainland – members will put in expressions of interest and the most valuable will be funded
- We particularly wish to focus on small and medium enterprises as this is such an important part of the business landscape in Tasmania – these enterprises must be engaged in the training process if the human capital and workforce participation of Tasmania is to be improved

As a function of holding part of our meetings at the workplaces of our enterprise clients, we will also develop closer relationships with them.

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*):

The stages of development of Communities of Practice were also set out by Wenger (1998). We believe that our Community of Practice will pass through these stages in the following way:

- **Potential:** as TAFE Tasmania is a large, diverse organisation, there are many teachers who are already using the workplace to its full effect as a rich learning and assessment environment. However, there is no mechanism for them to share their ideas with other interested practitioners outside their own delivery teams. We aim to harness this potential through the establishment of the Workplace Learning Community of Practice
- **Coalescing:** our initial meeting will focus on the establishment of connections between members of the Community of Practice. This will be facilitated through the use of an informal meeting session and providing members of the Community the opportunity to work together to determine how they would like the Community to evolve over the course of 2007
- **Active:** by our second meeting, we aim to be an active Community of Practice, working together to achieve our goals. All members of the Community will be working on certain tasks with the aim of producing tools for use by all staff at TAFE Tasmania. We will also hold our meetings at the work sites of our enterprise clients to maintain interest

- **Dispersed:** once we have held all our planned meetings in 2007, the Community of Practice members will disperse, but they will still be connected by the planned Workplace Learning Strategy at TAFE Tasmania. Members of the Workplace Learning Community of Practice will be called upon to mentor other staff members wishing to improve their own practice with regard to Workplace Learning and assessment
- **Memorable:** the work of the Workplace Learning Community of Practice will remain memorable to the entire TAFE Tasmania workforce through the use of tools produced by Community members as part of the Workplace Learning strategy

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*):

Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) found that all Communities of Practice share a basic structure consisting of a unique combination of the following elements:

- **A domain of knowledge:** we will focus on sharing good practice in workplace learning and assessment in our face-to-face interactions. In addition, members will be encouraged to form sub-groups and visit particular enterprises or education providers to document good practice outside of TAFE Tasmania. The members of the Community of Practice will also be asked to contribute to the development and implementation of TAFE Tasmania's Workplace Learning Strategy for 2007 (this will be a Professional Development structure, developed separately by our Learning Team)
- **A community:** our Community of Practice will have members from all the industry groups at TAFE Tasmania as well as industry representatives. We also aim to involve some sessional staff, where possible. Guest speakers from within and outside TAFE Tasmania will be invited to some meetings. Our meetings will also be engaging because of the contextualisation of holding them at the premises of our enterprise clients. We also value the networking and social aspects of running a Community of Practice and for this reason have factored in funding for overnight meetings and informal interactions to foster relationships based on mutual respect and trust
- **The practice:** the Community of Practice will focus on providing innovative solutions and tools for use by the whole of TAFE Tasmania in the area of workplace learning and assessment. We will explore current practice and produce tools that will be shared with a wider audience. The opportunity for members of the Community of Practice to act as mentors to other teachers at the end of the project will also be developed

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

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

for participating individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to interact with colleagues from different delivery areas • Provision of feedback on TAFE Tasmania's Workplace Learning Strategy • Chance to meet enterprise clients outside of their own industry areas • Opportunity to informally share good practice with many different colleagues
for participating organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger overall relationship with TAFE Tasmania • Knowledge of other delivery areas beyond those that they currently deal with

8. Promotion

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

within your organisation(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Workplace Learning and Assessment newsletter which is issued electronically to all TAFE Tasmania staff • A blog will be established to show the outcomes of our meetings, notes and photographs from the Community
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to industry and other relevant organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some industry sectors will become aware of our Community of Practice as we will hold meetings at their premises
to the broader VET sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We plan to present a poster at the NCVET No Frills conference in 2008

9. Evaluation

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

The Community of Practice members themselves will carry out the formative and summative evaluation of the activities completed.

Evaluations will be carried out mid-way through the project and once all the planned meetings have been completed.

We will adopt the "Evaluation for Workbased Learning" process as articulated in the Reframing the Future brochure "Evaluating Projects":

- **Project Objectives:** both mid-way and at the end of the project, members of the Community of Practice will be reminded of the overall aims of the Community and what we are hoping to achieve
- **Data:** this will be collected verbally at the mid-point of the project by means of informal questioning at the end of the second Community meeting. At the end of the project a written evaluation form will be provided to all participants and guest of the Community of Practice to provide a more formal mechanism for final feedback and reflection
- **Judgement:** the Community facilitator will discuss the findings with senior members of TAFE Tasmania's Learning team to make conclusions about how the actual findings align with the desired outcomes for the Community of Practice
- **Helicopter view of the project and data:** time will be spent at the second and fourth Community of Practice meetings to discuss the findings with members. Further collection of data and analysis will be carried out at this stage
- **Communicate conclusions and recommendations for improvement:** conclusions from the mid-point review will be communicated face-to-face at the third Community of Practice meeting. Results of the final review of the Community of Practice will be disseminated by email to all stakeholders (eg the wider TAFE Tasmania community, industry partners)

10. Project timeframe

Please list project milestones and key dates

(Please add rows as required)

Milestone	Key date
Finalise participants and establish meeting schedule	18 June
Facilitate first meeting	Early August
Facilitate second meeting	Early September
Facilitate third meeting	Early October
Carry out final evaluations via videoconference	Early November
Final report due	27 November