



<b>Project ID No.</b>	<b>CP</b> 56 / 4 / 1 /07 V2
<b>GOAL</b> 4	<b>SUB-PROGRAM</b>

**Effective Networking  
Communities of Practice**

Action plans must be submitted online to [www.reframingthefuture.net](http://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 Details of participants in item 11 will be only be used in accordance with our privacy policy and will not be published on the website.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**

Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE
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**1. Convenor's details**

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**2. Facilitators' details**

Name: To be determined		
Address:		
City/Suburb:	Postcode:	
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**3. Project overview (100 words maximum)**

What outcomes do you hope to achieve in your project?

This project will support the creation of a Community of Practice (COP) for Heads of Faculty of all 12 Queensland TAFE Institutes who have to develop networks and strategies to implement the changes resulting from the restructure of TAFE Queensland and the implementation of a Lead Institute model

The key outcome of this project will be the establishment of an effective network of Heads of Faculty working together to ensure that TAFE Queensland is positioned to provide Queensland students and industry with positive training outcomes and consistent higher quality products. A face-to-face meeting of Heads of Faculty will be an essential element in the establishment of a future successful network.

#### 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)

The COP established for Faculty Directors will address the issue of fast and effective change implementation. Current changes included new training packages, accessible and user friendly RPL, industry consultation processes, AQTF 2007, and in the Qld context, Lead Institute establishment. This project is aimed at increasing the capacity of individuals and organisations to address increasing levels of change through collaboration and shared practice.

However, in many cases the level of knowledge and awareness of issues will vary significantly between individuals. Therefore, exploratory processes will be needed to determine the common issues and questions and help to define the direction of the COP and in the process start to build the community.

#### 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*):

##### Potential

1. A focus group will be formed made up of Faculty Directors from Sunshine Coast TAFE and three other Faculty Directors who can represent regional and metropolitan Institutes. The purpose of this focus group will be to determine likely topics for discussion during the forum; promotion of the COP to other interested parties; and promote possible outcomes.

##### Coalescing

As many of the attendees have never met or even spoken, much effort will go into the Coalescing stage of development.

1. Focus group agrees to common goals. A letter which includes these goals will be sent to each Institute Director within Qld requesting their personal support for the COP and the attendance of their Faculty Directors at the forum. Institutes will be requested to supply a current list of Faculty Heads including contact details.
2. An email will be sent to all identified individuals requesting their feedback on the topics identified by the focus group. In addition, those who anticipate attending will be requested to fill out a profile sheet and to provide a photo. Additionally attendees will be encouraged to identify one or two areas of good practice that they could share at the forum.
3. Based on feedback the format and topics for the forum will be confirmed and shared with all institute representatives.
4. In the lead up to the forum, a daily email will be sent to the entire group. The purpose of this email will be to introduce and profile an attendee. Aside from qualifications and experience, the profile will identify areas of passion and expertise along with areas of good practice they plan to personally share at the forum.
5. A short amount of time will be given to 'getting to know you' activities at the commencement of the forum.

##### Active

1. Attendees will be broken into groups and encouraged to share their passion, views and experiences.
2. Lunch time, dinner and drinks time will be used to get the group working on an informal level.
3. The group will be encouraged to produce one 'thing' eg. A piece of good practice, a process, a networked activity.

##### Dispersed

1. Share photos from the forum
2. Share and maintain a live contacts register
3. Establish an online forum where participants are encouraged to share better practice ideas with a particular focus on Lead Institute accountability.

As there is considerable emphasis on Lead Institutes across TAFE Queensland these initial communications with participants will be vital to start to build the trust and sense of community that will be essential to the process. It may be the case that some Faculty Directors are feeling isolated from the Lead Institute process or uninformed, and therefore it may take some time and discussion before they are comfortable in expressing their reservations and fears either privately or publicly.

During the forum, the role of the facilitator will be crucial to the process of defining and exploring the domain and allowing it to evolve. The facilitator will need to use a range of techniques to encourage collaboration and trust and to ensure open discussions occur. The Lead Institute environment has caused considerable discussion across Queensland TAFE's and is also creating some anxiety. It will be the role of the facilitator to create a climate that enables the open discussion required to enable the COP to move to deeper levels. This is also really the first time there has been a state wide community established for Faculty Directors and therefore there may be many other burning issues that at some point may need to be at least acknowledged. This process may also assist in determining the future life of this COP beyond this project.

The forum itself will aim to undertake the activities as listed below but will be guided by the group. The skilled facilitator will be sufficiently nimble to allow movement and shift depending on the responses of the group and the concerns, thoughts and ideas that are expressed.

- o Development of shared COP purpose and common domain of knowledge
- o Sharing of experiences, common issues and concerns. This will help define the future focus of the COP
- o Problem solving of existing processes through analysis of causes and contributory forces
- o Building of individual and systemic skills to improve common practices
- o Brainstorming to capture new knowledge, evaluate actions, effects and learnings
- o Determination of the future of the COP and the expanded domain of knowledge – where to from here
- o Communication channels for further activities of the COP – eg technology based forums etc

**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*):

Having determined its domain of knowledge the COP will enable the development of a shared understanding of the current practice of Faculty Directors in relation to Lead Institute responsibilities. It is at this point that there is likely to be considerable variance. In some Institutes the responsibility for Lead Institute activities will sit within the responsibilities of the Faculty Directors. In others the Faculty Directors will be quite separate from this process. Determining the common ground as well as the variations in their practice will therefore be a critical part of the process. The facilitator will again need to use considerable skill in ensuring that the COP moves forward and achieves agreed outcomes in relation to aspects of common practice. Allowing participants to share their practice within the COP's safe environment will be the start of this process. From here the participants will determine which aspects of their practice they need to focus on to achieve shared and individual objective. Again it is obvious that the facilitator's skills will be critical.

The participants will also establish before they leave the one day forum how they wish to move the COP forward and what areas of their Lead Institute practice they particularly need to focus on for the greatest benefit to all. The follow on activities of the COP are likely to include mechanisms for ongoing communications (formal and informal) as well as specific developmental activities. However the nature of these activities will need to have ownership from the COP members as their geographic dispersal will make further face to face opportunities a rare occurrence.

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

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

for participating individuals	Individuals will establish working networks which could normally take years to identify. Once fostered, these networks will enable individuals to address the challenges that lay ahead of TAFE Institutes in a collaborative manner. For example, implementation of new training packages, sharing of resources, and the successful establishment of Lead Institutes.
for participating organisations	The individuals attending this forum, and who become a part of the COP, will enhance the organisation's ability and capacity to implement change.

## 8. Promotion

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

within your organisation(s)	A register of 'good practice' which was shared at the forum will be provided to all Institutes across Qld. A central repository will be used to store and access these resources.  A report will be written up at the conclusion of the forum which outlines how systems and processes have been enhanced.
to industry and other relevant organisations	Not applicable
to the broader VET sector	A register of 'good practice' which was shared at the forum will be provided to all Institutes across Qld. A central repository will be used to store and access these resources.  A report will be written up at the conclusion of the forum which outlines how systems and processes have been enhanced.

## 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. An audit/survey of current capacity in the proposed training and support areas to establish the current performance benchmark ie. Level of current knowledge re key national reform agendas
2. Discussions with key project stakeholders including staff, management, and funding body representatives to confirm project objectives and performance measures
3. Clear articulation of project key performance indicators
4. An informal mid-term project evaluation, in consultation with key stakeholders, to determine the project's ongoing capacity to meet effectiveness and efficiency indicators; and,
5. A formal end of project evaluation, which will extend to consultation with all project stakeholders, to determine success against key project performance requirements
6. A final audit/survey of capacity in the proposed training and support areas to establish performance improvements at the individual level ie. Level of current knowledge re key national reform agendas

Sunshine Coast TAFE is committed to evaluating the outcomes of the project to drive continuous improvement processes within this organization and to contribute the partnering organisations.

## 10. Project timeframe

Please list project milestones and key dates

(Please add rows as required)

Milestone	Key date
Introductory letter to all Institute Directors seeking support and current contacts list	29 June
Focus group established to identify topics for discussion	29 June
Facilitator/s identified	29 June
Events manager engaged to coordinate venue management, accommodation, and catering	29 June
Focus group meetings help to determine possible topics, forum processes used, etc...	Middle two weeks in July
Email sent to all Institute Faculty Heads outlining possible topics and outlining good practice sharing processes. Feedback invited.	23 July
Feedback received and adjustments made to forum content	17 August
Accommodation arrangements etc... communicated to all prospective attendees with RSVP requirements, along with Forum Agenda.	17 August
Focus group continue to work on ensuring that participants gain from the forum and that social experiences are included to enhance the connectedness of the COP	August – October

Email to all participants a profile and photo of one new participant each day in the lead up to the forum	
Forum is held	Early November
Evaluation and report is written up	Late November
Share information with all attendees	December