'Delivering a diploma of community services (alcohol and other drugs and mental health) in the remote town of Katherine (NT): a case study'
Xenia Girdler
Jocelyn Dhu
Overview and Learning

Designing and Delivering VE programs in the Northern Territory
A practitioner perspective
A student experience
About Us

Xenia Girdler - Consultant
- Workforce Development
- Curriculum Development
- Education and Training

Jocelyn Dhu – Community Services Practitioner
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Mental Health
- Corrections
It was 2011 -

I was a Melbourne Based highly urbanised program coordinator

» Coordinating prevocational CIV’s
» Added the Diploma of Community Services (AOD and Mental Health) to scope
» Meet the development needs of existing workers in complex needs field
» Designed over 6 months with Industry based SME’s
» Collection of self-contained clusters, sequentially delivered and assessed
» Melbourne (or urban) informed
And then ….

The power of a conversation …

Can you come to Katherine …
Context and Comparison

A Melbourne based University and a Community Controlled Health Service 3500km away ...

RMIT University
» Dual Sector provider (CI – PHD)
» Based in Melbourne
» Tradition of Industry aligned training
» No presence in the NT

Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corporation
» Health Service providing a range of clinical and non-clinical social and emotional wellbeing services
» Operates in 16 remote communities Eastern Region of Katherine
» Catchment area 750,000 square km
» Community Capacity and self determination underpin service delivery

There was an acute shortage of face-to-face education options in Katherine
A big ask …

Challenges and business cases …

SHS wanted to upskill their staff to meet complex client need

Wanted to access a Nationally Recognised Qualification

BUT …

RMIT had no corporate profile

No government funding
The NT …

The building of a business case and the realities of Australia’s remote

Northern Territory - Twice the size of Texas with 1/10 population
» 1.421 million sq km
» < 300,000 people

Katherine - as big as France
» 4000,000 million sq km
» < 11,000 people

Travel time from Melbourne
» Four Hour Flight and a four hour drive
The Terrible beauty
Reconciling the contrasts

Concealing the realities
The Phone Call, the Flight and everything in between

Organisational Agreements and first steps

» Number crunching and compromises

» Working with what you’ve got and what you don’t

» Corporate responsibilities and leaps of faith
Melbourne to Katherine is not just 8 hrs …

Design flexibility and credibility

» Poor turn out forced reality check

Five days to …

» Establish credibility as an educator
» Meet my market and start to understand
» Re-consider learning needs AND meet training requirements
» Get bums on seats
Special Consideration

Respect your audience ...

Geographic and Population reality

» Worker isolation
» High staff turn over
» Travel time
» A land the internet forgot
» Limited Infrastructure
» Social Emotional Wellbeing
» Highest levels of disadvantage in the world

Two seasons which underpin life

» Dry – beautiful, inundated with tourists and expensive
» Wet – dramatic inaccessible and cheap
## Our students and the results

Second Katherine Co-hort – Labour market funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Results</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOD worker x 9</td>
<td>20 – 30 (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>F (6)</td>
<td>0 – 1,182km</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>30 – 40 (3)</td>
<td>40 – 50 (6)</td>
<td>M 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RJCP worker</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>50 – 60 (1)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOD facility manager</td>
<td>60 + (1)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NCVER 2018 - No Frills
University Graduations, Professors and gowns in country towns

» First University Graduation in Katherine
» First time completion of higher education program
» Higher paid positions
» Further education
Family

A link to the PAST

A bridge to the Future
A student’s journey

The Why, the how and then what ...

» Why did I choose a course 1800km away

» How to get to class on time

» The learning experience

» Why was it different
A graduates experience …

Opportunities and experiences and differences

» International Indigenous Development Research Conference, Auckland NZ 2014
Outcomes and outpourings

2011 - 2015

2012 – Training Initiative of the Year (RMIT University)

80,000 km travelled
Katherine
Ngukurr
Tennant Creek
Alice Springs

90 workers 85% completion
We are not the experts on other people’s lives. Listen, watch and listen some more. Only then might which questions to ask, rather than which answers to give. And together you can explore the possibilities.

Thank You

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