



Committee Secretary
Inquiry into regional development and decentralisation
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Federal Government's Inquiry into Regional Development and Decentralisation

Submission from Wodonga Institute of TAFE

Wodonga Institute of TAFE in recognition of the need to provide innovative training solutions for the purpose of increasing tertiary participation and in turn labour force participation, has embarked on a new partnership with Latrobe University. The diploma2degree dual enrolment program provides students with a seamless pathway from Wodonga TAFE to La Trobe University. Students can expect to experience a holistic approach to both their academic and social development. Strategies have been adopted that empower learners to grow, contribute, challenge and make a difference in the local and wider communities. Multiple exit points have been built into the curriculum to ensure that employers have access to skilled graduates, and learners will have access to meaningful employment and career pathways. It is anticipated that this innovative approach to skills development in the region will lead to meaningful career-based employment for individuals and strengthen community wellbeing.

However, our desire to grow tertiary participation in our region needs to be linked to new employment opportunities. Wodonga TAFE welcomes the review into the decentralisation of government entities or functions to the regions, and firmly believes that such a move will facilitate strong linkages between government, business and the tertiary sector for the benefit of the community. Wodonga TAFE is keen to enter into discussions regarding a model of decentralisation where government entities or functions occupy either TAFE facilities or land for the direct purpose of meeting current and future workforce training needs.

Benefits obtained through a decentralised model include:

- The establishment of partnerships between government, business and the tertiary sector that act to close the skills gaps currently experienced by employers and industry in northern Victoria
- An increase in regional workforce skills and capability
- Improved linkages between students and employment opportunities
- Encouraging participation in the regional workforce and training
- Growing and sustaining the rural and regional population base through growing and diversifying of the regional economic and employment base
- The creation of vibrant, more cohesive and engaged regional communities that leads to improvements in quality of life for regional citizens.

Wodonga TAFE has first rate training facilities to support new government entities or functions moving into our region. As winner of the Victorian Large Training Provider of the Year and a finalist in the Australian Training Awards in 2015, our reputation as a provider of high quality educational outcomes is well recognised throughout the region and beyond. We are proud of our strong partnerships with industry in our region, and our ability to be agile, innovative, and collaborate with relevant stakeholders in order to strengthen our communities and industries through learning.

We therefore fully support the Federal Government's Inquiry into Regional Development and Decentralisation (Case Ref: CM44436). The relocation of government entities to Wodonga will drive participation in education, productivity, growth in our local economy, jobs and opportunities in our region.

Regards

Mark Dixon
Chief Executive Office
25 August 2017