



GROWING OUR PEOPLE TO GROW OUR COMMUNITY™

### Information sheet 3. The Gulf Academy — Questions.

<p>?</p>	<p><b>What is the Gulf Academy?</b> It is a facility to support the cultural, social, education and employment development of young people in the Lower Gulf of Carpentaria.</p> <p>It will be community owned and operated, partnering with organisations and individuals to offer the best possible future for our children.</p> <p>The Academy will provide clear pathways into employment and local industries which will, in the longer term, advance the economy and communities of the Lower Gulf.</p>
<p>??</p>	<p><b>Why do it?</b> The Lower Gulf region is one of the most socially and economically disadvantaged regions in Australia.</p> <p>There is no senior secondary education facility anywhere in the Lower Gulf.</p> <p>Existing approaches and expenditure, particularly in relation to education, training and social welfare are having limited sustained impact.</p>
<p>???</p>	<p><b>So, what's different about this?</b> Community and business leaders from across the region have long signalled their support for such a concept.</p> <p>There is strong evidence that quality education and training linked to opportunities through apprenticeships and traineeships will support student transition into adulthood and employment.</p> <p>The recent findings of a feasibility study demonstrate a Gulf Academy can reset the fabric of the region in a positive and sustainable way.</p>
<p><b>Tell me about this research?</b></p>	<p><b>We used a few different approaches.</b> An extensive desktop research process was undertaken including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education, employment, and socio-economic data for the Lower Gulf</li> <li>• Aust. Early Childhood Development Census</li> <li>• Dept of Social Service payments data</li> <li>• Labour market data (where available)</li> <li>• School attendance data</li> <li>• Youth Offending data</li> </ul>

	<p>In addition to reviewing the available statistics we reviewed recent research and academic studies as well as current government policy.</p> <p>More importantly, we listened to what local people say about their experiences of education, employment, and life in general in the Lower Gulf.</p> <p>Our research resulted in the publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Strategic Review for Gulf Academy</li> <li>• A Business Case for the establishment of the Gulf Academy</li> <li>• An Implementation Plan for the establishment of the Gulf Academy</li> </ul>
<p><b>What did this research say?</b></p>	<p>Firstly, there is a critical need for a facility to support the development of young people across the region. If something is not done, things will not improve for them, their families, communities or the economy.</p> <p>The Lower Gulf is a significant part of Northern Australia and strategically important from both an economic and security perspective.</p> <p>Any facility must be developed, owned, and operated in a culturally appropriate manner, by the people of the Lower Gulf with sustained external investment and business partnerships.</p> <p>A solid economy is supported by a skilled, experienced, agile, and local workforce with skills that local employers need. Targeted education, training, skills development will stimulate the local labour markets, boost the regional economy and provide a pathway for local young people.</p> <p>Retained income at the regional level supports a multiplier effect within regional economies.</p> <p>The research tells us that without these strong education, training, and employment pathways the economic development of the Lower Gulf will be slow and may go backwards</p>
<p><b>So, what will this look like?</b></p>	<p><b>The Gulf Academy will have four major features:</b></p> <p><b>A Foundation program.</b> This will be run residentially for 40 young people in Grades 5 -9 attending 2 x sessions for three weeks per year. The Foundation Program is about strengthening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• culture and language</li> <li>• social and education development</li> <li>• resilience, mental and physical health and how to be valuable members in our community.</li> </ul> <p>This residential facility will be on-country outside of Normanton. It won't be a holiday program. Rather, it is intended to be part of students schooling and within the approved Queensland Education curriculum.</p>

	<p><b>A senior secondary facility</b> for young people to complete year 10, 11-12 and/or vocational education and training that is linked to local work opportunities. The facility will include a dedicated program to prepare those young people and their families who plan to attend a boarding school away from the Gulf. This boarding facility will be in or around Normanton.</p> <p><b>Alcohol and Other Drugs Support (AOD).</b> We know that young people will come to the Academy with a variety of needs, both in nature and severity. Targeted AOD support will be linked to all Gulf Academy’s programs and will respond to the specific treatment needs of the individual.</p> <p><b>The intake process will be done with young people</b> and their families and identify the best path for their development. Individual training and development plans will be regularly checked and adapted as necessary to make sure the pathway is strong and provides the best possible opportunity to get a good education, training, and a job.</p>
<p><b>It sounds complicated.</b></p>	<p><b>It is complex.</b> There are lots of parts to it. The approach is what the research tells us is needed - a strong yet flexible way to meet the variety of needs of the young people of the Lower Gulf and their families.</p> <p>One way we will deal with the complexity is to involve a cross section of people in the development and running of the Gulf Academy - parents, young people, educators and trainers, employers, and the broader community across the Lower Gulf.</p>
<p><b>Sounds great, but how will you get people to work together? There can be a bit of rivalry in the region. 😊</b></p>	<p><b>There is two parts to this.</b></p> <p>Gulf leaders have been thinking on this for many years. It is clear that things need to change and some of this change will take time. There is a common goal for an integrated approach to the development of our young people, linked to an overall economic and social development agenda for the Lower Gulf. The idea has found its time.</p> <p>The second part is working with government/s. The Closing the Gap Agreement includes all levels of governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations. The Agreement highlights shared decision making and Co-design and the Gulf Academy is perfectly poised to work within this agenda.</p>
<p><b>What is Co-design?</b></p>	<p>Co-design is how we will go about making the Gulf Academy real.</p> <p>Co-design is about governments coming together with Aboriginal organisations and communities as equals, working to make positive change. It is not about just asking for funding. It is the building of trust and combining the wisdom of lived experience with the expertise of professionals and testing assumptions with end users.</p>

	<p>It allows people to be involved in shared decision making and a true voice on design, delivery and evaluation of systems and programs that impact them, their families, and communities. Once co-design funding is secured, there will be a range of workshops inviting local families, organisations, services, and Government/s to come together and talk through how they see the Gulf Academy best working.</p>
<p><b>Again, it sounds as if there is a lot to this.</b></p>	<p><b>There is.</b> And it will take time, but it is a worthwhile investment in the future of our young people, their families and communities and the region.</p> <p>The research tells us that good Co-design does change things for the better and most importantly that change sticks, so people have a foundation to build a better future on.</p>
<p><b>“Investment”, tell me more about that.</b></p>	<p><b>The word “investment” is important.</b> It means that you will get something back on what you have spent. The Gulf Academy will need an investment of \$104M over ten years. This figure includes operational costs Capital investment for both residential facilities and potential upgrade of the Normanton TAFE are estimated at \$27.5m</p> <p>The minimum economic benefit back to the region is estimated at \$131M over ten years. This does not include all the social and cultural benefits that will come from the Gulf Academy. Nor does it include the taxation benefits back to government that a growing economy gives.</p>
<p><b>This is a lot of change – won’t we get a lot of opposition to this?</b></p>	<p><b>Yes.</b> You get resistance with most change. Most people resist change when they cannot see anything in the change for them.</p> <p>There is a lot in the Gulf Academy for young people and their families. There is a lot in it for local organisations, employers, and the region. The Gulf Academy will not concern those that have a commitment to young people of the Lower Gulf.</p>

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