

# STRATEGIC REVIEW

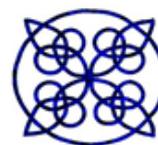
**Gulf Academy**

**March 2021**



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## Gulf Academy Project Reports explanation.

This document is one of three developed in the course of establishing the feasibility of and business case for the Gulf Academy.

The documents are responses to the following questions.

### *Is the broad concept of a Gulf Academy a good idea?*

If the answer to this is “Yes” ....

### *Would the idea be feasible in the current strategic context of the Lower Gulf of Carpentaria?*

If the answer to this is “Yes” ....

### *Is there is a business case for it?*

If the answer to this is “Yes” ....

### *How would it best be implemented?*

.....

**The Strategic Review** document addresses the questions, “Is the concept a good idea and would it be feasible in the strategic context of the Lower Gulf?”

**The Business Case** document continues to address the feasibility question as well as confirming what the business case is.

**The Implementation Plan** focuses, primarily on the final question of implementation, however it does contain elements of the previous documents.

On this point, the reader should note that all three documents, while linked, and designed to stand alone. As such there is some repetition across the documents, particularly in relation to statistics, research, and structures.

The authors of this document would like to recognise the contribution that the project steering committee made to the development of these documents, through their active involvement and guidance into the feasibility of the Gulf Academy project.

The Steering Committee, over the life of the project comprised:

- . Ms Kimberly Chan – Burke Shire Council
- . Troy Fraser – CEO Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council
- . Clare Keenan – CEO Burke Shire Council
- . Phil Keirle – Kierle Co Pty Ltd
- . Fred Pascoe – Bynoe CAC Director
- . Wade Richardson – Bynoe CAC Chair.
- . Sharon Robinson – Bynoe
- . Kyle Yanner – Mayor, Mornington Island Council

# Gulf Academy Strategic Review Report

## Purpose:

This document reports on the outcomes of a Strategic Review associated with the establishment and operation of a Gulf Academy. A version of this review was provided to the Gulf Academy in March 2021. This version has been updated as the project has progressed.

## Background:

In early February 2021 John Robinson Consulting Services Pty Ltd (JRCS) was contracted by Gulf Savannah Development to develop a business case and implementation plan for a Gulf Academy. An important element of this work was to conduct a Strategic Review of the Gulf Academy concept, to surface what is possible and importantly, what is realistic. The Business Planning and Implementation Planning process will progress, based on what is agreed as a realistic Gulf Academy proposition.

So, what is the Gulf Academy?

*“The Gulf Academy is currently described as a community-controlled institution/facility established to nurture young people from across the Gulf region in a culturally appropriate, holistic environment that focuses on their cultural, social, and emotional needs, while at the same time providing them with a quality education and training, to support their transition into adulthood and employment.*

*Our vision is for our communities to thrive by investing in the capabilities and future of our young people.*

*Our goal is to produce self-reliant adults capable of competing equitably for employment, business, educational and cultural opportunities within the region and beyond.*

*To be a centre of excellence that provides high quality holistic support to our young people.”<sup>1</sup>*

*The Gulf Academy would aim to coordinate with existing services where possible and provide the following:*

- . *Outreach programs designed to:*
  - o *Prepare year 6 students for boarding school*
  - o *Provide programs to students to reduce risks of dis-engagement during holidays, after exclusions, after returning to community for sorry business etc.*
- . *Residential education facility/boarding facility sited on a working cattle station (Delta Downs) delivering:*
  - o *A culturally appropriate, safe and secure residential environment;*

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<sup>1</sup> Developed by Geoff Richardson (JRCS) and agreed by the Project Steering Committee 26 February 2021

- *Wrap around health, wellbeing and mental health services;*
- *School-based traineeships and apprenticeships;*
- *Year 11-12 studies;*
- *Job readiness training;*
- *Vocational Education and Training certification;*
- . *A separate facility designed to assist those with drug and alcohol issues:*
  - *To address barriers to re-engaging with education and employment;*
  - *To complement the Normanton Recovery and Community Wellbeing Service*
- . *Dedicated job placements into participating partner businesses (pastoral, mining, tourism, fishing, civil works) in the lower Gulf of Carpentaria and northern Australia.”*

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## How the review was conducted:

The John Robinson Consulting Services (JRCS) team<sup>3</sup> is made up of three consultants, each with skills and knowledge that have informed the Strategic Review. Review activity included:

- . Conversations with the PSC, collectively and as individuals.
- . Analysis of available data relating to the Lower Gulf region. This included material from:
  - Australian Bureau of Statistics.
  - Queensland Government Statistician’s Office.
  - Australian Government Labour Market Information Portal.
  - The National Assessment Program (NAPLAN).
  - Australian Government Department of Industry Science Energy and Resources.
  - Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment.
  - Queensland Department of Employment Small Business and Training.
  - Queensland Government of Youth Justice.
- . Conversations with individuals initially identified as key players by the PSC and identified by JRCS.
- . Face to face engagement with individuals and groups in parts of the Lower Gulf including Burketown, Kowanyama, Mornington Island, Normanton and Doomadgee.
- . Conversations with individuals from government and service provider organisations, identified as having a contribution to make to the project.
- . Consideration of potential models and approaches to a Gulf Academy provided through the conversations listed above.
- . A review of research, policy and strategic statements relating to:

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<sup>2</sup> Project Information release confirmed 12 February 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Geoff Richardson, Chris Chappell, John Robison.

- The nature of social and economic activity in remote Indigenous Australia.
  - Education in remote and Indigenous Australia.
  - Boarding as it relates to remote and Indigenous Australia.
  - Disengagement amongst young people in remote Indigenous communities.
  - Substance misuse, particularly in remote and Indigenous Australia.
- Conversations with individuals who have been involved in the provision of boarding services, including those in remote areas.

It is clear that the Strategic Review and subsequent activity has sparked interest in a number of potential key stakeholders across the Lower Gulf and in parts of government. (We have arrived at the point where we are being contacted by people who have heard of the project and want to have input.)

## Summary of findings:

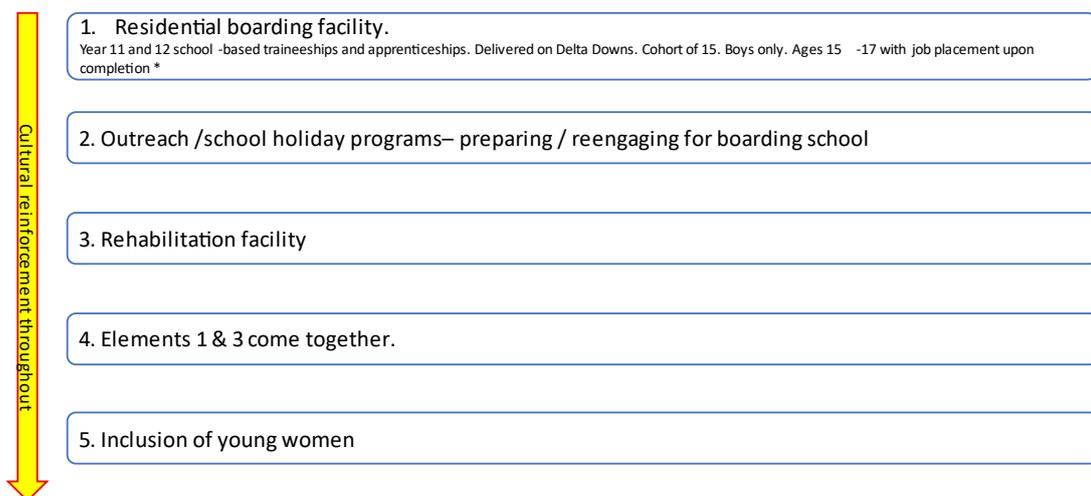
### The need:

The Lower Gulf is one of the most socially and economically challenged regions in Australia. Educational and employment outcomes for young people are significantly below that of other regions. A summary of relevant statistical data appears at Annex 1.

### Headline findings

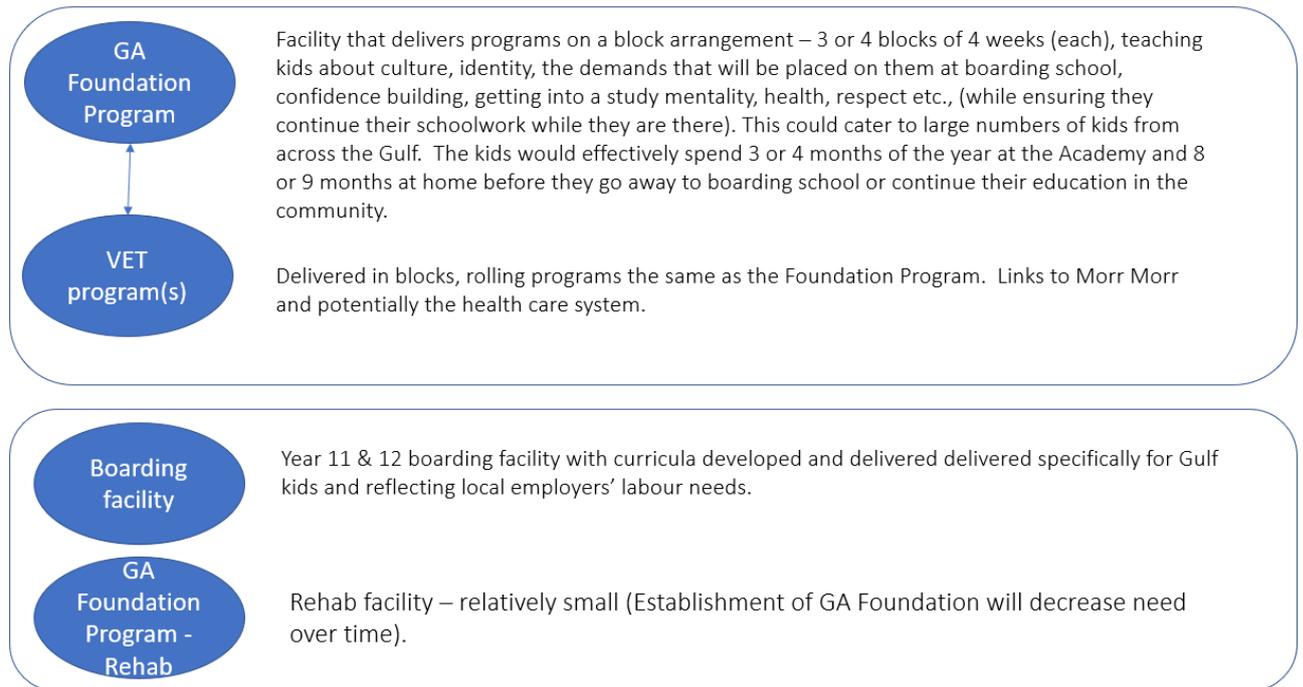
- There clearly is an interest in the Gulf Academy proposition.
- The proposition is composed of a number of elements, as previously described. Conversations with stakeholders have clarified the elements a little further and is expressed graphically below.

#### Gulf Academy - The original concept



\* An aim of the Gulf Academy - to provide a local alternative to completing year 11 -12 at a boarding school, driving higher completion rates by being local and by providing a more technical, trade -focused education; school-based traineeships and apprenticeships that can then be finished off through the job placement phase with employers.

- Conversations at a community level have informed how such an approach could be rolled out. The diagram below summarises this approach.



- There are several things that are crucial to the establishment and sustainability of the Academy. In particular, it will succeed if learnings from the establishment of similar facilities are recognised and responded to. The process of the Strategic Review has assisted in establishing the components of the Gulf Academy at a strategic level. We have a clearer view of what, ideally, would be needed to achieve the goal of “...*producing self-reliant adults capable of competing equitably for employment, business, educational and cultural opportunities within the region and beyond. To be a centre of excellence that provides high quality holistic support to our young people.*”<sup>4</sup>

How the Academy can be approached from tactical and operational perspectives is further addressed in the Business Case and Implementation Plan.

- The Northern Australian Development agenda and Closing the Gap agreements potentially offer significant support for the Gulf Academy concept.
- The proposition, even in its simplest form, sits well within the current policy and strategic framework of governments, and as such should attract support from the relevant government organisations and agencies.

<sup>4</sup> Developed by Geoff Richardson (JRCS) and agreed by the PSC 26 February 2021

- . It appears that, in principle, community support exists for the concept as it stands. The support of parents, families, communities, and young people themselves is crucial to the development and deployment of the Gulf Academy concept.
- . There is a body of research available that provides guidance as to what will support a Gulf Academy. The key messages from the research are relatively clear, emphasising the importance of culture, community, parents, good governance and achievement of real educational and employment outcomes in the design of an initiative such as the Gulf Academy.
- . There are a number of stakeholders who will need to be worked with to make the Gulf Academy a reality and sustain it. Most are on board at the “in principle” stage; we now need to confirm what they are prepared to commit to. This is addressed in the Business and Implementation Plan documents.

## **A little more on the findings**

### **Findings - Interest.**

Conversations with involved stakeholders indicate that people from a range of perspectives are interested in progressing approaches to building educational, employment, social, economic, and cultural opportunities for young people in the lower Gulf. Conversations with people across the Lower Gulf clearly indicate an interest in the further development of engagement, education, and employment pathways for young people.

Organisational levels of interest, demonstrated through a willingness to engage and support the Gulf Academy Business Plan and Implementation project (for example, through information sharing), is generally high. (See attachment 1.) Given the relatively short time that the project has been in operation, this is a positive sign.

In face-to-face engagements some reticence amongst a few meeting participants has been detected, however this may be down to lack of familiarity with the detail of the Gulf Academy at this stage, and the Gulf Academy being seen as a potential threat to some individuals and organisations.

An important point to note is that there is some healthy scepticism in relation to the project, with several people noting that “we have been down this track before”, with the idea not receiving appropriate levels of support from government.

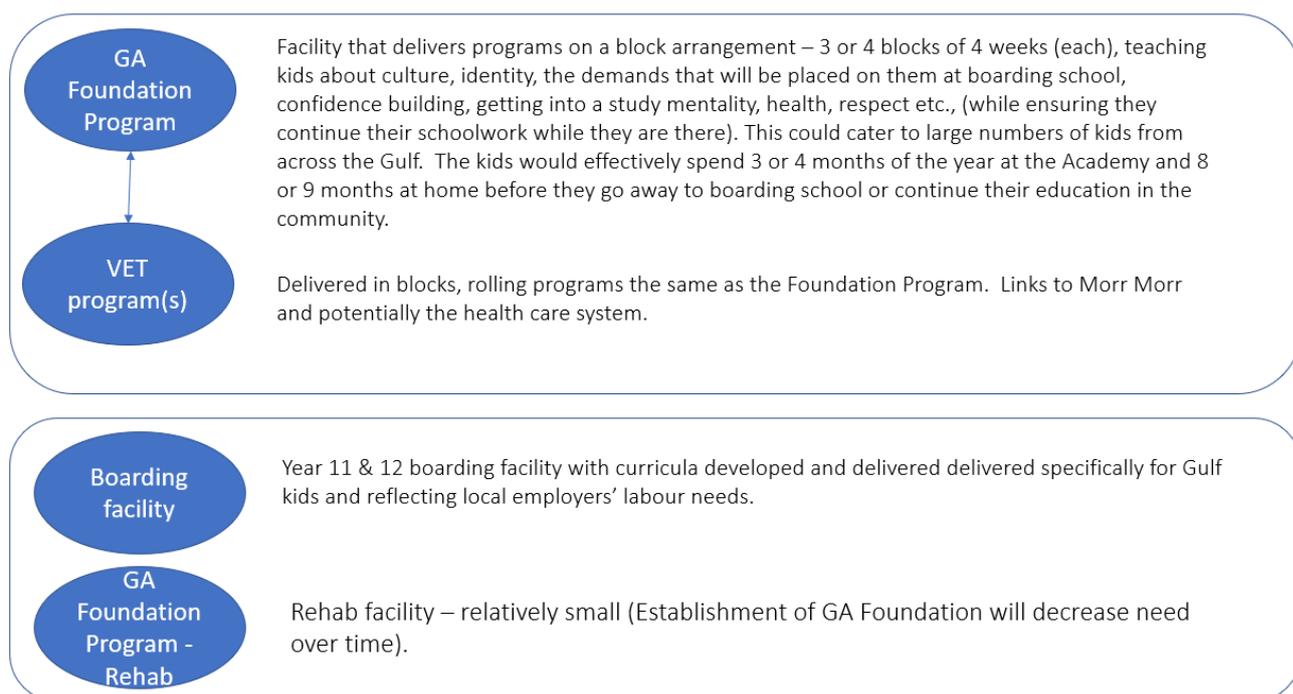
## Findings - What the proposition looks like.

Conversations had as part of the Strategic Review process have consolidated our thinking around what a Gulf Academy could be composed of, as indicated earlier. More importantly, engagement at a community level clearly indicates that there is a strong focus on:

- . Capturing young people before they get into trouble.
- . Providing pathways to employment.

On reflection, these two areas of focus take us back to the context of the original brief for this project which included the recognition of *"...the various barriers that reduce the likelihood that local youth will complete their education and effectively transition into the workforce: childhood trauma, FASD, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of local/regional educational and training facilities,"*.

As such it is important to recognise these barriers and effectively work with them to create sustainable opportunities for young people in the Lower Gulf. The diagram below summarises how the roll out of a Gulf Academy may be achieved, taking into account the needs and circumstances of young people in the Lower Gulf.



The Foundation Program will be:

- . Delivered “off community” in a purpose-built facility.
- . Be housed in a facility that will cater for approximately 40 young people at a time (mixed genders).
- . Be composed of a standard curriculum, integrating a number of streams including:
  - o Culture and identity.
  - o Confidence, resilience, and respect.

## Confidential

- Adopting a study / work mentality.
- Living away from home / boarding preparation.
- . Delivered in blocks of 4 weeks each, 3 to 4 times a year. Some have suggested longer blocks for the Program – up to one school Term.
- . Allow for young people who have regressed to participate again.
- . Fed by and integrated with local schools.
- . Supported by each child entering the Foundation Program will have undergone an initial development assessment and mapped out a plan (with their family) for their education and employment future. The plan may change over the years; the intention is for it to provide some structure for the young person, their family, and educators to work with.

The VET program(s) will:

- . Be linked to the Foundation program and also offer standalone opportunities.
- . Include areas of study relevant to regional job opportunities such as Certificate Level II courses in Agriculture, Conservation and Land Management, Health Support Services and Civil Construction.
- . Be delivered in an integrated manner, both off community and in community.
- . Stream young people, when they are ready, to local (where possible) employers for work experience, part time work (e.g. school holidays) or full time work.

Application of the Foundation and VET programs will have a substantial impact in the Lower Gulf communities. Large numbers of young people will be involved in ongoing programs of cultural, educational, and social development. It is likely that this will boost achievement amongst young people, including educational achievement and individual resilience. In a way the Foundation and VET programs will be a “pipeline “providing engaged and prepared young people to take advantage of opportunities on offer, which may include boarding in the Lower Gulf, boarding externally, ongoing education in their home communities, undertaking work experience, completing a VET qualification, and sustainable employment, either in the Lower Gulf or externally.

The Boarding Facility will:

- . Take time to develop. Other similar, recently established boarding facilities have taken at least two years to build and establish.
- . Evolve from the establishment of the Foundation and VET programs. Establishment and delivery of these programs can run in parallel with the confirmation of boarding facility arrangements. It may be useful to use the establishment of the Foundation and Vet programs as a proof of concept and refinement exercise for the boarding facility.
- . Focus on year 11 – 12 with a curriculum developed and delivered specifically for young people in the Lower Gulf, reflecting local employer labour needs.
- . Have formal links to all schools in the Lower Gulf.

Rehabilitation program – Alcohol and Other Drugs:

- . This will be linked to the Foundation Program. Once a young person has successfully undergone treatment, they will have an opportunity to enter / re-enter the Foundation Program and re-join the development pipeline the Gulf Academy approach offers.
- . It will be linked to established rehabilitation facilities and programs in the region and provide culturally and age-appropriate support to young people.
- . Over time, demand for this element of the Gulf Academy is likely to decrease, with the Foundation Program serving as a preventative for substance misuse.

This approach is supported by a number of observations made during the Strategic Review, including:

- . Research on boarding facilities, including in remote Australia, indicates a viability point of approximately 40 students.
- . These numbers need to remain stable or increase to maintain viability.
- . Some parents in the Gulf will choose to send their children intra and interstate boarding facilities, despite one eventually being available in the Lower Gulf.
- . Education standards and outcomes must be consistently high for boarding facilities to remain viable.
- . Current levels of disengagement from education are likely to compromise education standards and outcomes at the pre year 11 and 12 levels.
- . Linked to the previous two dot points in particular, there is a need to build a “pipeline” of culturally, socially, and educationally developed young people, able to take advantage of the education and employment opportunities that may exist in the Lower Gulf and more broadly.
- . A genuine concern by parents and others about the behaviour of young people generally, outside their concerns about education disengagement.
- . A view expressed in a number of conversations held about the crucial place of culture in the positive development of young people.
- . Our experience of securing funding. On the one hand, the approach suggested does not fit into any neat “funding box”. On the other, a focus on securing a boarding facility as a priority, without the development of the “pipeline” referred to may result in the Gulf Academy being forced into an independent boarding school “box”. While a useful outcome, a boarding facility in itself will not necessarily deliver outcomes for disengaged young people, now or into the future.

### **Findings - Crucial components, learning from others and the past.**

We have identified a number of critical success factors that need to be recognised and responded to if the Gulf Academy is to be successful. This is as a result of considering research and best practice literature and drawing on the experience of those involved in remote education, boarding, employment, and economic development.

The context within which the Academy will be established is complex. There are a number of elements that impact on the wellbeing and success of young people in remote communities. One way of coming to grips with this complexity is to identify those things that are related to

producing self-reliant adults in order to develop an Interrelationship diagram. This is a strategy tool used to identify things that drive change and things that are result of it. A basic interrelationship diagram developed in response to our research and discussions with people appears at attachment 2. It identifies, from the elements that impact the goal of self-reliant adults, the relationship between the things that surround that goal; to what degree does each element drive achievement of the goal, or the degree to which it is an output of activity associated with achieving the goal. The results of this analysis indicate that the key drivers that assist in achieving the goal are:

- . Cultural support
- . Quality secondary schooling
- . Supportive parents
- . Good employment and training providers
- . Localised curricula
- . Flexible learning delivery
- . Supportive community
- . Strong and growing local economy.

During the strategic review process our conversations with people were guided by these headings. Those we spoke with confirmed the importance of the identified elements and expanded on them. Key findings included:

- . Economy and employment:
  - o The importance of regional economic development in the region and the potential contribution of the Gulf Academy to that regional economic development. The Lower Gulf is part of the broader Northern Australia Development agenda (to be covered in a little more detail later). This is one of the major economic and security policies of the last twenty years and, overall, is supported by the major political parties. It will continue to be an important policy focus for some time and is likely to increase in line with the proposed post Covid 19 economic response. Research tells us that while significant employment opportunities are associated with the Northern Australia Development agenda, currently significant skills and employment shortages exist across the region.
  - o Expanding on the point above, there are jobs in the Lower Gulf, some call for high level skills, while others do not, with formal skill sets being at the Certificate II, III and IV levels. Industry sectors predicted to be in demand are the agriculture (and in particular, value add beef production), allied health care and personal support and disability care.
  - o Importantly, people have told us is that what is important is the outcome of education, not education and training for the sake of it. Parents and families want education to lead to sustained employment.

- Research and conversations with researchers and government around the Northern Australian Development agenda indicate the need for Academy to focus on a small number of industry streams (such as the value-added beef industry, allied health care and individuals support and disability care), and yet be flexible enough to pivot to take up other opportunities as they arise.
  - Conversations also indicated potential opportunities in the Australian Defence forces and potential links to the Army through the Regional Force Surveillance Unit in Normanton.
- . In relation to the boarding element, advice noted includes:
- Ensure that you have the right governance structure in place from the outset. This includes external expertise in education, employment, and vocational training.
  - Employ the right people – people who have already managed / worked in a residential education facility, and ideally with experience of remote Indigenous Australia.
  - Involve parents in all aspects of the design and establishment of the facility, including the architecture and security arrangements.
  - If the facility is to have mixed age cohorts, significant work needs to be put into the design and operation of the facility to ensure the complete safety of all young people.
  - Recognise that registration, approval and building are not quick processes, with two years seen as the appropriate time for the development of a facility.
- . Educational requirements:
- Although there have been conversations around year 11 and 12 education being the focus of the educational component of the facility, it is clear that there needs to be a significant, practical vocational training focus, with a direct link to jobs. This was strongly supported by specialist educationalists, who had worked with young people from remote Indigenous communities and towns.
  - Integrating the curricula with local culture, including the concept of “learning on country” is strongly correlated with educational and employment success. Again, experienced educationalists, as well as the academic literature supports this. The combination of a sound academic curricula with a strong vocational training focus, developed and delivered in a culturally appropriate way appears to result in

significant outcomes. (A recent relevant example is Dawurr, a boarding facility attached to Nhulunbuy Highschool with an integrated maritime VET program on site and significant learning opportunities on country.)<sup>5</sup>

- The research literature and conversations with people indicate that actively developing and utilising education and employment pathways must be built into all the elements of the program. It has been suggested (with the suggestion seeing some support) that each young person in the Lower Gulf should be assisted, along with their family and educators, to work up and work to an individual development plan. This plan would be updated and support them into adulthood.
- In the case of working with a local school, (for example having the residential component linked to a local school), the advice we were given was clear and strong. Ensure that the school you are partnering with is sound, has a strong appreciation of culture and has a proven record in educational development. In short, don't partner with an underperforming school.

### **Findings. The Northern Australian Development agenda and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.**

A significant number of policy and strategy frameworks inform the establishment and development of the Gulf Academy; however, the Northern Australian Development agenda provides strong support for the Gulf Academy concept at a strategic level. The agenda has been mentioned a number of times in this document, deliberately to emphasise its importance. Attaching the Gulf Academy to an economic agenda that is likely to last for many years, irrespective of who is in government, presents significant advantages to singular links to Indigenous, education and employment policies and programs.

In 2014 the Australian Government identified the development of Northern Australia as a priority; for Northern Australia to “...grasp its full potential and become an economic powerhouse within our great country.”<sup>6</sup> The white paper from which this quotation was taken was not a strategy as such or perhaps even a statement of policy. It made broad (and useful) statements of development need and then identified discrete items of development and assistance. In August 2020 the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources provided a progress update against the white paper measures. It cited fifty-one measures, with forty-six identified as “Delivered”, three “On track” and two “In progress”.<sup>7</sup> While these reported achievements may indicate that the Northern Australia development objective has been achieved, a detailed research summary paper provides a clearer picture.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nhulunbuyhighschool.com/-dawurr>

<sup>6</sup> Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia – Overview. (2015). Pg 2

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.industry.gov.au/news-media/progress-update-meeting-measures-on-the-our-north-our-future-white-paper>

This report entitled “State of the North 2020 “was developed by the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA), an initiative under the Northern Australia Development agenda. The report was the result of extensive research, consultation, and engagement across sectors. It suggests ways of improving productivity and competitiveness in northern Australian, particularly in the agriculture, food, and health sectors. The report also attempts to identify opportunities to dismantle barriers to growth, jobs, and investment in the north. It is also seen as a mechanism for informing policy on economic recovery in the north post Covid. <sup>8</sup>

It is an extensive report. The key elements that relate to a Gulf Academy include:

- . Skill and workforce deficits. The report emphasised a lack of quantity and quality training and skilling opportunities in Northern Australia, to the extent that this is a barrier to existing industries / operations and a threat to future economic development. <sup>9</sup>
- . Weak governance. There is a theme that weaves through the report of weak governance and management across organisations and businesses, which impede cooperation, collaboration, and development.
- . Liveability. The report identified the difficulty in retaining an appropriately skilled workforce in Northern Australia. It noted that to maintain and build a skilled workforce “...northern communities need to be at least as liveable as southern or capital cities”. <sup>10</sup>
- . Communication and digital inclusion. There is a recognition of that liveability and wellbeing in Northern Australian communities could be improved by supporting the link between digital inclusion, wellbeing and social cohesion. The report recommended the promotion of place-based approaches for workforce development through building digital capacity, in the short term through community based digital literacy and mentoring. Longer time support was described as supporting regional businesses and educational institutions to embed digital knowledge and skills development into local programs. <sup>11</sup>
- . The beef industry. A strength of the industry in Northern Australia has been its low input, low-cost approach, however it was noted in the report that the industry is vulnerable to climate extremes (drought). The report also noted the impact of variation of demand of live export buyers and increasing competition from other producer nations, displacing Australian exports. The report suggests several opportunities in relation to beef production including expanding local processing, breed development to improve quality and evolving from breeding enterprises to breeding and fattening enterprises. <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> CRCNA Ibid pg 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid pg 56

<sup>10</sup> Ibid 56.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid pg 39

<sup>12</sup> Ibid pg 22

- . Health and social assistance employs a significant number of people in Northern Australia. In the Queensland Outback North region 8.7% of the population are employed in the health care and social assistance sector. <sup>13</sup> Ongoing health worker shortages and high turnover negatively impact this sector, with a recognised under resourcing of critical prevention services. The report identified:
  - o The opportunity to improve the stability and cultural responsiveness of the health workforce and support local needs-based planning and research.
  - o Changes in technology, such as eHealth and telehealth technology and diagnostics will potentially facilitate considerable improvements in health and wellbeing amongst Northern Australian communities.
  - o A need for investment in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce development, including innovative community roles and leadership positions.
  - o The importance of continuing to expand Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service models of community governance. <sup>14</sup>
  
- . Recognition of the importance of supporting the development of the Indigenous pastoral estate, picking up on its contribution to economic development for local communities on traditional lands. <sup>15</sup>
  
- . The impact of “outsourced” labour in the north, that is people coming in from other regions to work. The report suggests that this is a result of limited efforts to support Indigenous workforce participation, and economic activity. <sup>16</sup>
  
- . In relation to the Indigenous estate, a low level of awareness of economic opportunities. The report notes that Traditional Owners in many cases have only recently had their rights and interests in land and sea country restored, and as such there has been a lack of long-term support for country-based planning. <sup>17</sup> Potential solutions identified include:
  - o Workforce development and training opportunities for local communities, to enable greater development and support better local management of potential biophysical, socio economic and cultural impacts.
  - o Long term capability building to strengthen governance of Traditional Owner Land and Sea organisations.
  - o Exploring better approaches to structuring and financing Indigenous led development.

A new National Agreement on Closing the Gap is in place. According to the Australian Government:

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid pg 12

<sup>14</sup> Ibid pg 37

<sup>15</sup> Ibid pg 23

<sup>16</sup> Ibid pg 34

<sup>17</sup> Ibid pg34

*“This is an unprecedented shift in the way governments have previously worked to close the gap. It acknowledges that to close the gap, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must determine, drive and own the desired outcomes, alongside all governments.*

*This new way of working requires governments to build on the strong foundations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have, through their deep connection to family, community and culture.”* <sup>18</sup>

The new way of working referred to includes *“... shared decision-making on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”* <sup>19</sup>

The agreement specifies four priority reforms, all of which in some way have application to the Gulf Academy concept. The Priority Reforms are:

- . *“Strengthen and establish formal partnerships and shared decision-making*
- . *Build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector*
- . *Transform government organisations so they work better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*
- . *Improve and share access to data and information to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities make informed decisions.”* <sup>20</sup>

Specific targets in the July 2020 National Agreement on Closing the Gap of particular relevance to the development of a Gulf Academy are:

- . By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20–24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.
- . By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.
- . By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15–24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 per cent.
- . By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 who are employed to 62 per cent.

### **Findings. There is support from government policy and strategies.**

A range of policies / strategies and plans support the idea of a Gulf Academy.

#### ***2019 Queensland Monsoon Trough: After the flood: A strategy for long term recovery.***

Much of the Gulf Academy approach is about supporting how parents, families and communities come together to support their children into the future, at community and regional levels. The “After the Flood” strategy was developed in response to the 2019 flood event in Queensland. It has identified five strategic priorities to direct efforts and

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/> accessed 5/3/2021.

<sup>19</sup> National Agreement of Closing the Gap July 2020. Section 7.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement-closing-the-gap> accessed 5/3/2021

investments to achieve the economic, environmental and social prosperity that individuals, communities and businesses want for their future.<sup>21</sup> Priority 4 in the strategy is about “Fostering connected and Cohesive communities”, with three focus areas identified: mental wellbeing, leadership and local capability and the provision of sustainable, flexible and innovative community services.

The strategy also identified a number of interconnected actions to support connected and cohesive communities actions that resonate with the Gulf Academy concept. They include:

- . Encouragement of the delivery of innovative educational opportunities in regional areas.
- . Supporting and investing in local leadership capability.
- . Supporting local infrastructure and events designed to bring individuals, families and communities together.
- . Focusing on preventative health measures.
- . Coordinated health services and cross sector collaboration.<sup>22</sup>

***The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy.***

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy was launched in 2015 and described a set of principles that, when applied, would support *“All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people achieve their full learning potential, are empowered to shape their own futures, and are supported to embrace their culture and identity as Australia’s First Nations peoples.”*<sup>23</sup>

The principles are:

- . **Achieve potential:** High expectations are held for, and by, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- . **Equity:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are able to access the same educational opportunities and achieve the same education outcomes as other Australians.
- . **Accountability:** Education systems and educators are accountable, transparent, and responsive.
- . **Cultural recognition:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s histories, values, languages, and cultures are acknowledged and respected.

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<sup>21</sup> ‘2019 Queensland Monsoon Trough. After the flood: A strategy for long-term recovery, Commonwealth of Australia 2020 pg 2

<sup>22</sup> Ibid pp 31-36

<sup>23</sup>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 pg 2.

- . Relationships: Meaningful relationships value community cultural knowledge, wisdom, and expertise, and demonstrate trust and respect.
- . Partnerships: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are engaged in decision making, planning, delivery and evaluation of early childhood, schooling, and higher education services at local, sector and national levels.
- . Local approaches: Educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are accelerated through local approaches for unique and diverse communities.
- . Quality: Policies, practices, programs, and partnerships are inclusive of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, and their families, and are informed by knowledge, evidence and research. <sup>24</sup>

The principles have direct application to the establishment, operation, and sustainability of a Gulf Academy. The principles mentioned above have also given rise to practical supports for regional and remote schools, including:

- . The provision of a “location loading” for the funding of remote schools, based on a school’s accessibility and remoteness.
- . A program targeting lifting the school leadership in regional and remote schools. <sup>25</sup>

### ***Surviving to Thriving Report.***

Much of the thinking behind Australian Government Indigenous education policy and strategy can be tracked back to what is known as the “Surviving to Thriving Report”. In 2017 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs published a report on educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The “Surviving to Thriving Report” contains a detailed identification of those things that contribute to education and life success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It is an important report as it incorporates formal research and the lived experience of individuals, families and organisations and their perceptions of what works in education and what does not. The overall finding of the report was that:

*“There are significant disadvantages facing many Indigenous students including, but not limited to, food insecurity, overcrowding, exposure to anti-social behaviour, and physical and mental ill-health, that must be addressed in order to allow children to not only survive in the education environment, but to thrive.*

*Whilst governments, schools, health care providers and others work hard to assist disadvantaged students, it is essential that the family of a student is actively engaged*

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<sup>24</sup> Education Strategy 2015 Ibid pg 3

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.dese.gov.au/uncategorised/resources/what-australian-government-doing-support-students-regional-and-remote-schools>  
Accessed 18 March 2021

*with choosing and directing their child's education. This means that it is the family's responsibility to ensure their child is safe, clothed, well fed, can sleep at night without interruption and is at school daily. Furthermore, it is essential that Indigenous students and their families be able to choose from a range of well-supported options for secondary education, public and independent, within their local region as well as further afield.*

*The committee found that the best outcomes for students are achieved at schools where there are strong links with the community and between health and education services.”<sup>26</sup>*

*“The committee found that the common element present in programs that successfully support student attendance and achievement was connection with community—strong relationships with the students, parents and carers, teachers, schools, health services, and communities.”<sup>27</sup>*

The committee made a number of observations that may relate to the establishment of a Gulf Academy including:

- The importance of cultural safety as an integral part of any education system or engagement.

*“Throughout the inquiry, it became clear that cultural safety, fostered by strong connection and engagement with community, is the essential foundation upon which all education and support programs must be built in order to succeed.”<sup>28</sup>*

- The effectiveness of an “Academy” approach, where school-based programs:

*“... combine a wide range of wrap-around support and education elements, presented in a culturally safe environment, with a ‘hook’, such as hairdressing or sport, have proven to be an effective way of engaging and supporting students at school.”<sup>29</sup>*

- The effectiveness of “skilled focused” educational programs, providing students with practical experience and qualifications to prepare them for employment and life after school.<sup>30</sup>
- Linked to the previous points, the effectiveness of “Learning on Country Programs (LoCP)”. Established in 2013 the LoCP was targeted at students from Year 10 to Year 12, with introductory activities for Year 7 to 9. LoCP is an innovative educational approach that brings together Indigenous land and sea Rangers, schools, scientists, and Indigenous

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid xi

<sup>27</sup> Ibid xvii

<sup>28</sup> Ibid xvi

<sup>29</sup> Ibid xvii

<sup>30</sup> Ibid pg 71

landowners 'on country' and in classrooms to learn literacy and numeracy, science and work skills as well as local Indigenous knowledge. It utilises connections with communities, culture, and the land to engage students and improve attendance.<sup>31</sup> LoCP was initially run on four sites in Arnhem Land and has been assessed as being very effective.<sup>32</sup>

- Teachers, educators and staff *“must be able to skilfully deliver the Australian curriculum to students with a broad range of abilities and provide tailored education, and practical support, to students with a wide range of health and wellbeing issues. Teachers must also be culturally responsive; they must reach out, establish, and build strong relationships with students, their families, and the wider community. The committee acknowledges that the task teachers’ face is a challenging one.”*<sup>33</sup>

### *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education.*

In 2017 there was an Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education, with a report finalised in 2018. The review was commissioned by the Australian Government and was conducted by Professor John Halsey of Flinders University. The review sought to consider the key issues, challenges and barriers that impact on the learning, outcomes of regional, rural and remote students and to identify innovative and fresh approaches to support improved access and achievement of these students in school and in their transition to further study, training and employment.<sup>34</sup>

Although not as extensive as the Surviving to Thriving report the Independent Review made many useful observations.

- It highlighted, particularly in the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the need for individuals and communities blend *“...traditional culture, ceremonial; life and western knowledge as represented in the Australian curriculum”*, to create enduring benefits for students.
- There was recognition that *“Elders sought greater opportunity in the curriculum for learning about and valuing home and Homelands knowledge and life skills”*<sup>35</sup>
- “The continuing mismatch between what is fundamentally valued and prioritised by schools in relation to the education of young people and their outcomes, and the more explicit requirements of employers and the world of work, is also a source of tension. It is*

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid pg 72

<sup>32</sup> The progress evaluation report for the program, commissioned by PM&C, recommended that ‘both the NT and Federal governments consider funding a staged rollout of the program beginning in January 2018’, noting that: *“The program has been well designed and early indications are that the model is capable of enduring common setbacks faced in remote circumstances (e.g. exponentially high staff turnover). Anecdotally, there is demand and support for the program in communities outside the trial sites.”*

<sup>33</sup> Ibid Pg xviii

<sup>34</sup> Title: Independent Review into Regional Rural and Remote Education—Final Report, Emeritus Professor Dr John Halsey, Commonwealth of Australia 2018. (RRR Report)

<sup>35</sup> Ibid Pg 32.

*especially acute in relation to literacy and numeracy standards and employment ready attributes like punctuality, reliability, ability to fit into a work culture and loyalty.”*<sup>36</sup>

- . In relation to the relationship between leadership and positive educational outcomes in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the reviewer reported:  
*“...I met with elders, school leaders and senior teachers (as well as parents, members of communities and students) and heard about leadership which is supporting new blends of traditional knowledge and ways with western curriculum that are in turn creating valued pathways beyond school.”*<sup>37</sup>
- . *“Schools in Regional, Rural and Remote communities, and especially small communities as already stated, are central to there being a community. This belief has been reinforced many times over during visits to RRR communities and in discussions with parents, community leaders, businesses, students, teachers and principals. The belief holds true independent of school size, type and location and there were instances of very small schools (say less than twenty enrolments) exhibiting the greatest intensity about it.”*<sup>38</sup>
- . The report briefly explored the idea of “anchor organisations”, referencing work undertaken in the United Kingdom on Community Capacity Building.<sup>39</sup> Anchor organisations are solid and grounded. They are there “for the long haul” with enough presence, respect and openness to working in partnership with others to grow and sustain worthwhile futures for individuals and communities. They are recognised as being vital for community capacity building and helping, over time turn around decline and stagnation. The RRR report went on to note that:  
  
*“A commitment to the key features of the anchors approach will also be very important in building capacities and delivering a range of benefits for individuals and communities. They include a strong focus on localised control, addressing needs in a multi-purpose and holistic way, and a commitment to involving all sections of a community/region including those who are the most frequently marginalised.”*<sup>40</sup>
- . The report identified the importance of preparation to transition from school. It noted that while “one size does not fit all” around Year 9 is seen as being a crucial time in young people considering their futures. The report noted that:

*“For many in Regional Rural and Remote schools however, working through what they would like to do after finishing school is limited by the thinness of advice and information about current and likely employment and careers and how to prepare for them. This is often intensified in situations where there is little employment diversity*

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid Pg 36

<sup>37</sup> Ibid Pg 49.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid Pg 50.

<sup>39</sup> Home Office. Firm foundations: the Government's framework for community capacity building. Home Office, 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid Pg 50 - 51.

*locally or family circumstances are such that on-going conversations about ‘what would you like to do, to be after you finish school’ are rare or do not occur.”<sup>41</sup>*

*“For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, thinking about and planning for employment and a career after completing school can be especially challenging and problematic, primarily due to the complexity as well as the richness of the intersections of their culture and traditions with western concepts and expectations about careers.”<sup>42</sup>*

- An emphasis on Capacity building was a feature of the report. This focus is summarised in the following paragraphs.

*“As stated at the beginning of this report, vibrant, productive RRR communities are integral to the long-term sustainability of Australia. Education and training plays a critical role in building the social fabric of communities, but also in developing social capital for economic prosperity. This view was brought into sharper focus through various submissions and consultations during this review.*

*The success of RRR communities requires sustainable collaborative efforts of governments, the private sector and existing regional bodies and strategies to develop and implement a long-term plan that puts regional, rural, and remote education and development at the centre of the economic agenda for jobs and growth. In other words, what is needed is a roadmap that has government imprimatur and sets out strategic priorities that all parties collectively sign up to.”<sup>43</sup>*

.....

At a state and regional levels there are a raft of policies and strategies that support the development of the Gulf Academy. They include:

***A Blueprint for Queensland's North West Minerals Province.***

Commissioned by the Queensland Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, the Blueprint outlines the Queensland Government's approach to meeting short and medium-term priorities for the development of the Province and the economic opportunities it presents<sup>44</sup>.

Centred around Mount Isa and Cloncurry, the North West Minerals Province includes the Lower Gulf Shires of Doomadgee and Burke and is one of the world's richest mineral-producing regions.

Due to expire at the end of the current 2020/21 year, the Blueprint outlines three investment priorities for the Queensland Government:

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid Pg 57.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid Pg 58.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid 81.

<sup>44</sup> [https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/12231/nwmp-strategic-blueprint.pdf](https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/12231/nwmp-strategic-blueprint.pdf)

- . Facilitating continued resources sector development focusing on large-scale geological programs to help identify the next generation of commercial mineral deposits and to support frontier gas exploration.
- . Diversifying the regional economy and creating employment opportunities including targeted support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other young people, and the development of the North West Queensland Economic Diversification Strategy (see below).
- . Working with businesses and the community to deliver integrated and appropriate services focusing on improving government and collaborative service delivery, maintaining and building community resilience, and engaging with regional stakeholders in blueprint implementation.

As part of this approach, a North West Minerals Province Community Strategy and Action Plan Reference Group was established within the then Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors with the purpose of facilitating *“local input to the development, content and design of the Community Strategy and Action Plans and to support their validation at the local level via established community and stakeholder networks.”*<sup>45</sup>

With the restructuring in Queensland Government Department following the 31 October 2020 State Election, it is not whether this priority is still being pursued.

There is no indication, at the time of writing, that the Blueprint is going to be updated, extended or expanded.

### ***North West Queensland Economic Diversification Strategy***

A key action of A Strategic Blueprint for Queensland’s North West Minerals Province (see previous section) the North West Queensland Economic Diversification Strategy was released in August 2019.<sup>46</sup>

The strategy identifies a range of opportunities across the resources, agriculture, tourism, business and industry sectors that have the potential to support long-term sustainable growth in North West Queensland and outlines a suite of initiatives and actions for implementation by mid-2021. Those initiatives are structured around three key themes:

- . enhanced investment environment;
- . strong supply chains; and
- . sustainable communities.

The Sustainable communities theme had two goals and associated actions:

- . Maximise local economic development outcomes by implementing the Community Strategy proposed in the Strategic Blueprint for Queensland’s North West Minerals Province and focusing on developing action plans for each of the 10 local government

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/industry-partners/stakeholder-engagement/north-west-minerals-province-community-strategy-action-plan-reference-group>

<sup>46</sup> [https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/33306/nw-qld-economic-diversification-strategy.pdf](https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/33306/nw-qld-economic-diversification-strategy.pdf)

area in the Minerals Province to support key projects which contribute to population retention, community capacity building and economic development.

With the restructuring in Queensland Government Departments following the 31 October 2020 State Election, it is not clear whether this priority and the development of community action plans is still being pursued.

- Improve regional employment outcomes through optimised workforce planning. The principal action under this goal involves the Employment Services Manager within the (then) Department of State Development taking an active leadership role in engaging with potential employers and proponents during project development to determine skills requirements, and in facilitating introductions between project proponents, community organisations and registered training organisations.  
Again, with the restructuring in Queensland Government Departments following the 2020 State Election, it is not clear whether this action is still being pursued.

As is the case for the Strategic Blueprint for Queensland's North West Minerals Province, there is no indication, at the time of writing, that the Economic Diversification Strategy is going to be evaluated, updated, extended or expanded.

#### ***North West Queensland Strategic Development Study***

Initiated by MITEZ (Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone) in partnership with Gulf Savannah Development and released in 2014, the Strategy "*...aims to outline development opportunities and priorities in the North West and Gulf region for next 30 years*"

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Working Group Members for the development of the Strategy included representatives from Burke Shire Council & Gulf Savannah Development. Comprising ten Shires, the North West Region includes the Lower Gulf Shires of Doomadgee, Burke and Carpentaria

Four strategic development priorities for the region are identified based on economic potential, available resources, and the major national and international economic trends set to impact the region over the coming decades:

- New Mine Exploration and Development.
- Irrigated and Intensified Agriculture.
- Energy Generation, Security, and Export.
- Supply Chain Productivity, Efficiency, and Reliability.

Local labour initiatives and in particular skills training and local employment programs were identified within the Strategy as one of five keys to creating the environment for investment and economic development in the region.

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<sup>47</sup> [http://www.mitez.com.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/nwq\\_strategic\\_development\\_study\\_final\\_2014.pdf](http://www.mitez.com.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/nwq_strategic_development_study_final_2014.pdf)

*Queensland Government role in Closing the Gap.*

The Queensland Government is committed to a new way of working with First Nations peoples to achieve better life outcomes in health, education, employment and housing. The Closing the Gap Agreement reflects the Queensland Government's commitment to significant reforms to reframe the relationship, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. The Queensland Government states that it is working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People through their representatives, at the National, State and local level, to ensure a focus on achieving long term social and economic outcomes for Queensland's First Nations people. <sup>48</sup>

A relevant example of this partnering approach is the Local Thriving Communities reform, which commits the Queensland government to working with the state's 19 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to establish greater decision-making authority in service delivery and economic development. The reform is described as a long-term process that will embed change, resulting in a visibly different way of working alongside communities across the state to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Independent decision-making bodies will begin providing a representative voice for engaging with Queensland Government to:

- . Make decisions about their own future.
- . Build on their strengths as a community.
- . Invest in the things that will make communities stronger, that will make a difference to people's lives.
- . Create thriving communities.

Community knowledge, research and evidence and lessons learnt over time will inform Local Thriving Communities, with the principles of self-determination, participation, equality and culture underpinning the initiative. Importantly LTC will not replace existing decision-making structures. <sup>49</sup>

*Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education: An action plan for Queensland.*

Queensland Department of Education has identified the factors that contribute to the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including:

- . Giving a child a great start.
- . Engaging Parents.
- . Building capability.
- . Reaching learning potential.
- . Young people equipped for the future. <sup>50</sup>

The graphic below expands on this.

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<sup>48</sup> <https://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/programs-initiatives/closing-gap>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/programs-initiatives/tracks-treaty/local-thriving-communities/about-local-thriving-communities> Accessed 18 March 2021

<sup>50</sup> <https://indigenousportal.education.qld.gov.au/strategies/Documents/action-plan.pdf> Accessed 18 March 2021



Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education

### Cultural Capability Plan

The Queensland Department of Youth Justice has recognised the importance of cultural capability in working with vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Elements of the Cultural Capability Action Plan include:

- . Having culturally responsive services and systems.
- . Leadership and accountability.
- . Build cultural capability to improve economic and social participation.
- . Value culture.
- . Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement and stronger partnerships.

The graphic below expands on this. <sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/resources/dcsyw/about-us/publications/coporate/timeline.pdf>



### Shifting minds: Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018–2023

The health and wellbeing of young people are important elements in the design and operation of the Gulf Academy. The 2018 – 2023 Strategic Plan meshes with the approach of the Gulf Academy, and in particular its guiding principles:

- Being person centred.
- Valuing the lived experience of people, families, and carers.
- Belief in hope and recovery.
- Valuing culture.
- Adopting a social determinants approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Supporting equality.
- Belief in collective responsibility being vital to reform.
- Adopting a joined-up planning approach that reflects population need and evidence.

The strategy's areas of focus also align with the Gulf Academy concept in that both are about ensuring outcomes that are about:

- Supporting better lives through person centred and integrated services.
- Investing to save through early intervention.

- . Creating systemic improvements through a balanced approach and collective action. <sup>52</sup>

.....

At a local government level, strategic and planning documents note priorities and initiatives that mesh with the aims of the Gulf Academy, for example:

- . The Burke Shire Community Plan 2011-2021 describes a number of community themes including, under the heading of “Economy”, having a strong, innovative economy and skills and education for local jobs. Within the plan there are statements that encourage businesses to look at employee retention and succession planning, pre planning for industry expansion and growth not being seen as a threat but an essential component of (economic) longevity. <sup>53</sup>
- . The Doomadgee Shire Corporate Plan, 2020 – 2024 has as its key priorities rebuilding respect in the community, community leadership, diversifying revenue streams through business and other opportunities, developing local employment. All these priorities support the concept of a Gulf Academy. <sup>54</sup>
- . The Carpentaria Shire Council Corporate Plan 2017 – 2021, seeks to achieve outcomes, focused on creating a community that is, creative, well educated, active and healthy, sustainable and resilient, connected and inclusive. These outcomes resonate with the intention of the Gulf Academy. <sup>55</sup>
- . The Mornington Island Corporate and Operational Plan 2019 – 2024, identified a number of outcomes that relate to the establishment of a Gulf Academy, including identifying and implementing strategies to maximise opportunities for sustainable Indigenous employment, the promotion of sustainable economic and community development, and promotion of the enhancement of health and wellbeing through coordinated service delivery. <sup>56</sup>

In short, key local government councils, at a strategic level have plans and policies that align with the intentions of a Gulf Academy.

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.qmhc.qld.gov.au/shifting-minds>

<sup>53</sup> Burke Shire Community Plan 2011-2021, A shared vision – Linking our Future. Pgs 9-17.

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.doomadgee.qld.gov.au/publications/corporate-plan/>

<sup>55</sup>

<https://www.carpentaria.qld.gov.au/edrms/download/MzA5MjkxfHxXZwJzaXRlIC0gTkVXL0NvdW5jaWwvUHVibGliYXRpb25zL0NvcnBvcnF0ZSBQbGFuL0NhcmlhbnRhcmlhIFNoaXJlIEVudW5jaWwvQ29ycG9yYXRlIFBsYW4gMjAxNyAtIDlwMjlucGRm>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.mornington.qld.gov.au/corporate/corporate-documents/>

### **Findings – Community (and other) support.**

As has already been noted in this document, community support for a Gulf Academy, as it has been presented so far, is there. Almost everyone we have spoken to has expressed support for “...*a community-controlled institution/facility established to nurture young people from across the Gulf region in a culturally appropriate, holistic environment that focuses on their cultural, social, and emotional needs, while at the same time providing them with a quality education and training, to support their transition into adulthood and employment.*”

Support has been expressed during individual conversations and group sessions conducted as part of the engagement process. (Importantly, the JRCS team is now receiving enquiries on the Gulf Academy from those that we have not formally targeted for engagement.)

Community support has also been demonstrated through in principle commitment to allocating resources to support the Gulf Academy, at this point, from:

- . Bynoe Community Advancement Cooperative Society – the instigator and primary driver of the Gulf Academy concept.
- . Morr Morr Pastoral Company – land to be used as the site for the proposed residential facility.
- . A Bentinck Island traditional owner - interested in allowing the use of buildings and other facilities on the Island for the rehabilitation / cultural aspects to be offered by the Gulf Academy.

Note that the support demonstrated so far is for the concept of a Gulf Academy. The next part of the Business Case will test a more detailed design(s) with key stakeholders.

### **Findings – Guidance provided by research.**

We have conducted a review of the available research relating to the establishment and sustainability of the Gulf Academy. Review activity will continue into the Business Case component of this project and will be formalised in the Business Case and Implementation Plan report.

In short, research tells us the following:

#### **Education in remote Indigenous Australia.**

- . There is a lot involved in delivering effective education outcomes in remote Australia.
- . All the contributing parts need to be coordinated to deliver effective outcomes.
- . Partnerships, between families, schools, training providers, health and care professionals, employers, government and many more, is what sits behind education success.
- . These partnerships are needed to support active interest and action by all involved is achieving and sustaining educational outcomes.

- . An “Anchor” organisation may be useful to support required coordination and partnering activity.
- . Within education delivery, there needs to be a climate of achievement as well as ensuring cultural safety.
- . To be effective, education needs to link with culture and learning practical skills to support initial and sustained engagement. Linked to the previous point, for many young people, education needs a “hook”; something practical that they aspire to and to work with. This both attracts young people to education and supports their sustained interest.
- . An “Academy” approach appears to support educational, social, and cultural outcomes.
- . Young people need options to flow from education; options as to what they can and want to do on their pathway to adulthood.
- . Finally, there is a net economic benefit to the community, region, and nation in ensuring strong educational outcomes in remote Australia.

#### Boarding.

- . While boarding is an option for some families it has issues outside of financial cost.
- . What works with boarding tells us a lot about the need for real communication and engagement with young people and their families by educational institutions.
- . It will be useful to explore options for “on country” or place-based boarding.
- . Irrespective of on or off country boarding transition to the next stage of education needs to be well coordinated and managed.

#### Engagement of young people in remote communities with education, employment and broadly.

Disengagement of young people in education, and the positive aspects of community life more broadly have been a clear and strong theme in our conversations with people. The available research provides some insight as to what works in engaging / reengaging young people including:

- . In many cases young people do recognise that education leads to a job or the possibility of income, however they do not understand the actual pathway necessary, and how this may occur. Working **with** young people and the broader community to determine appropriate, relevant and achievable pathways in a process that is tailored for the young person is seen to be the most effective strategy: A one size fits all approach will not work.

- . For those providing services to young people, definitions of what success looks like differ across remote and urban settings. Outcome measures need to be set within the context of particular remote communities.
- . Again, in relation to those providing services to young people, staff turnover and fly in fly out service delivery compromises sustainable engagement with young people.
- . Culture plays an important part in engagement. It is an important element in the mix of factors impacting the lives of young people in remote communities. If young people are disengaged, abuse alcohol or solvents, are unsafe, lack routine and structure and are disconnected from their culture, it is challenging to provide support to them in a way that can be accepted and is effective.
- . Aspirations of many young people (ie what they want to do in the future) tend to be place based, within their local community and region. For many young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from remote areas *"dreams about education and employment attainment are secondary to family and are predominantly seen as a way of enabling access to the basics for themselves and family"*<sup>57</sup>. Putting these points together, effective engagement with young people needs to factor in the family and their role in it and the broader community and their role in it.
- . Initiatives designed for young people in remote communities will only work if the basic health and welfare needs of young people are addressed.<sup>58</sup>

#### Substance misuse and support for young people in remote areas.

Substance misuse in remote Australia and particularly in relation to Indigenous communities has attracted significant research for more than twenty years.

Research tells us that:

- . People living in regional and remote areas are more likely to drink frequently or at levels that are harmful to their health.
- . Overall use of illicit drugs in regional and remote areas is similar to that in cities, however the type and frequency of drug use varies considerably. For example, people in remote and very remote areas are 2.5 times more likely to use meth/amphetamines as those in cities.
- . Cannabis use is also more widespread and frequent in remote and very remote settings.

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<sup>57</sup> Walker, Lyndal Jane. "Giving voice to first nations young people disengaged from education in the northern territory with a specific focus on barriers to education and their aspirations for the future." *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education* 29.1 (2019): 58-71.

<sup>58</sup> Goodrick, Delwyn, Jenny Allen, and Esmeralda Trafford. "Positive pathways for young people in remote communities: What works." (2012).

- . Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also experience a disproportionate amount of harms from alcohol and drug use.
- . People living remotely believe alcohol and drug issues are one of the top health priorities for their local community.
- . Attitudes and beliefs (about alcohol consumption) are copied among adolescents and influenced by widespread supply of alcohol by parents to teenagers in regional and remote areas. In response, adolescents living outside cities are up to 80% more likely to consume alcohol, particularly at levels that are harmful to their health.

Research also tells us that:

- . To adequately address substance misuse in a community a combined approach is needed for prevention, intervention, and treatment.
- . Addressing substance misuse needs responses at all levels, individual, family and community.

Research on the circumstances of young people also emphasises the need to recognise the impact that intergenerational trauma, lack of opportunity and poverty play in their lives. This needs to be factored into creating a supportive context for engaging with young people on issues of substance misuse.

Research specifically, on younger people, identifies a number of characteristics that need to be present for support and treatment to be effective. They include:

- . Assessment and treatment need to be client centred and socio-culturally relevant.
- . The quality of the client relationship is fundamental to success, with the quality of the relationship at times being more important than treatment, particularly in keeping the young person engaged.
- . Any treatment needs to integrate with the range of responses to the complex needs of young people in a community setting.
- . Family needs to be involved.
- . Service provided needs to be of sufficient duration and intensity. Three months has been identified as a minimum time needed for effective treatment, young people with complex needs will take longer.
- . Abstinence is unlikely; therefore, a harm reduction approach is more useful.
- . Engagement and retention must include reliability, respectful attitude, enthusiasm and genuine listening. Treatment needs to include approaches that are behavioural, experiential and skills focused.

- . Treatment needs to identify, reinforce, and build upon the strengths of the young person.<sup>59</sup>

#### Economic development in remote communities.

There has been a flurry of research activity up until the mid-2010s that indicates there is a strong link between economic and social development in remote communities. Important ideas relating of this concept include:

- . The Closing the Gap Clearing House, in its study into what works to overcome Indigenous Disadvantage, identified nine factors that positively impacted both economic participation and social / community cohesion and safety:
  - o Community involvement and engagement.
  - o Adequate resourcing and planned and comprehensive interventions.
  - o Respect for language and culture.
  - o Working together through partnerships, networks and shared leadership.
  - o Development of social capital.
  - o Recognising underlying social determinants of disadvantage.
  - o Commitment to doing projects with, not for, Indigenous people.
  - o Creative collaboration that builds bridges between public agencies and the community and coordination between communities, non-government and government to prevent duplication of effort.
  - o Understanding that issues are complex and contextual.<sup>60</sup>
- . There is a difference in the elements and operation of Indigenous remote economies as compared to mainstream economies. In particular, economic development should be viewed as a process that might enhance Indigenous participation with local, regional, and national economies. At the centre of this view is a proposition that these local and regional economies are 'hybrid economies', with customary (or Aboriginal), market (or private) and state (or public) sectors interacting in different ways.<sup>61</sup>
- . The importance of all elements of Indigenous remote economies being considered and responded in any economic and social development.
- . The previous point is supported by the experience in Indigenous economies in other parts of the world. For example, as far back as 1994 the First Nations Development Institute

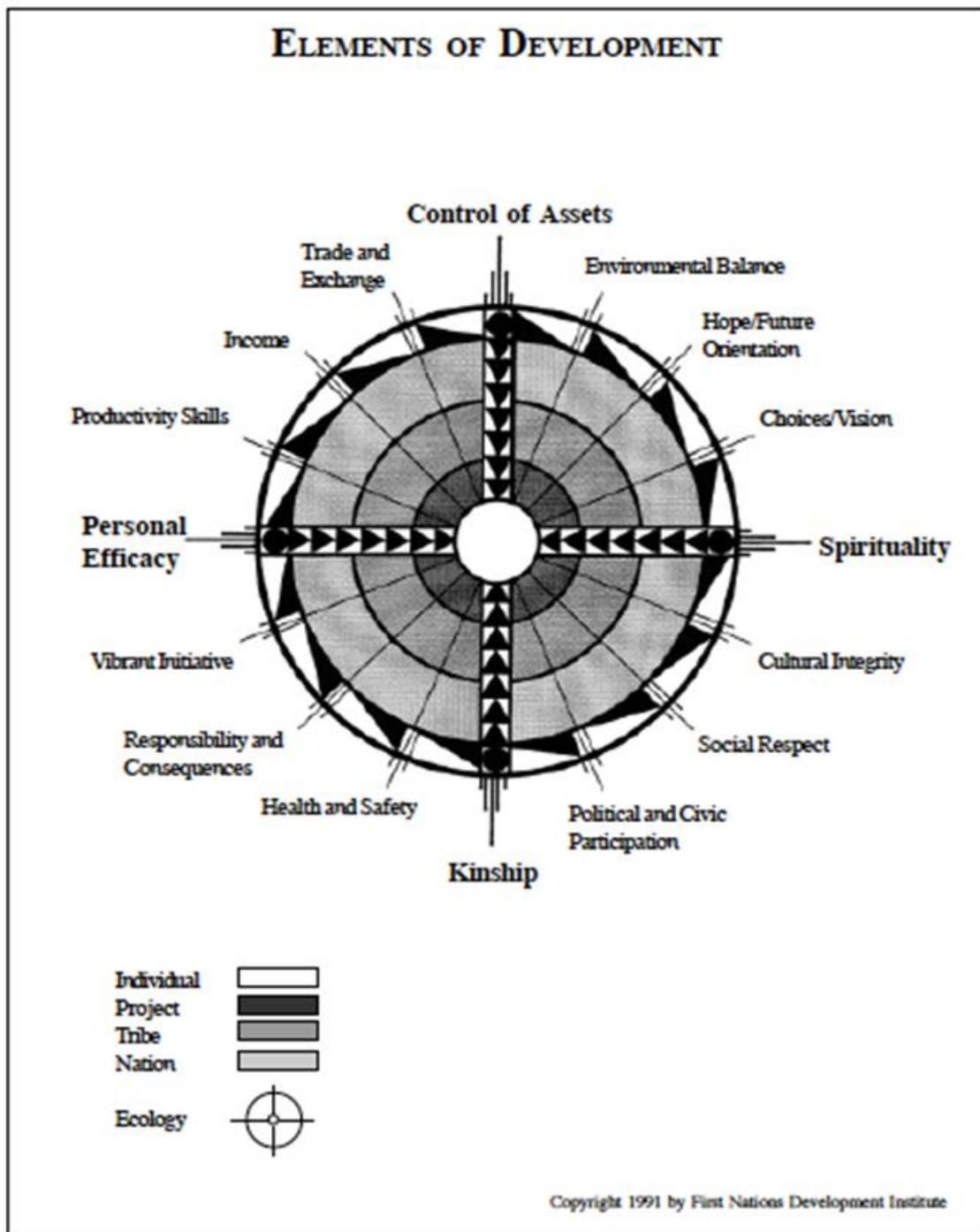
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<sup>59</sup> Martineau, Fred, et al. "Population-level interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm: an overview of systematic reviews." *Preventive medicine* 57.4 (2013): 278-296.

<sup>60</sup> Closing the Gap Clearinghouse (AIHW, AIFS) 2011. What works to overcome Indigenous disadvantage: key learnings and gaps in the evidence. Produced for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare & Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. Pg 2

(FNDI) describes the sixteen elements that First Nations peoples (in the United States of America) consistently identify as important indicators of successful development. <sup>62</sup>



The idea behind this model is that the process for long term development within a community context begins with a collective definition of cultural values, creating the possibility for building social cohesion in the context of personal, social, and institutional

<sup>62</sup> Black, S. (1994). Redefining success in community development. Washington D.C.: Lincoln Filene Ctr., p. 2.  
<https://www.firstnations.org/>

empowerment, which provides the necessary base for economic and social development. actively inclusive. <sup>63</sup>

These observations on economic development are relevant to the establishment and operation of the Gulf Academy.

### **Findings - Who needs to be involved in the Gulf Academy?**

In considering who needs to be involved in the Gulf Academy the Strategic Review has taken a broad perspective of who stakeholders and partners may be. <sup>64</sup> We have identified a number of linked, broad stages that will be needed to develop, implement and sustain the Gulf Academy, identified those who are likely to have an interest and then matched interest against stages. (Note that the list of stakeholders / partners will expand and refine over the life of the project.)

A matrix describing the above appears at attachment 3. What this matrix illustrates is that:

- . There is a need to involve a significant number of players in the initial information sharing stage.
- . Sourcing of resourcing support will need to be clearly established to inform the Implementation Plan to be developed.
- . There are a significant number of players who will be needed to provide non-resourcing support to ensure that the Gulf Academy is a success, pointing to a longer term need for strong governance and relationship management practices within the Gulf Academy.

### **Other considerations.**

While conducting the Strategic Review we have come across a number of other elements that need to be considered and further explored in the feasibility study and implementation planning.

- . Cost: Importantly we have a sense of likely cost for a major component of the Gulf Academy model, a residential facility for, initially, the Foundation and VET programs. Evidence from other similar residential facilities in Queensland and the Northern Territory indicate that:
  - o Relatively small numbers (say 15) may attract lesser levels of support with Abstudy support converting into approximately 1.5 teachers and 1.5 non-teaching staff (including student support). <sup>65</sup>
  - o Higher numbers, such as 40 students, converts into with Abstudy support for 40 students converting into approximately 4.65 teachers and 7.81 non teaching staff (including student support).

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<sup>63</sup> Chatway C. Successful Development in Aboriginal Communities: Does it Depend on a Particular Process? Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development (Canada) Volume 3/No1/2002.

<sup>64</sup> Stakeholders are those the GA will provide value for and partners are those who assist in providing that value.

<sup>65</sup> These are approximate numbers, based on Federal / State government income only.

- The capital build costs for a 40-bed facility will be in excess of \$15M based on like facilities such as Cowboys House (Townsville), Kutta Mulla Gorinna (Mackay), Duwurr (Nhulunbuy) and a proposed facility in Tennant Creek.
- Recurrent costs for a 40-student facility are likely to be in excess of \$1.22M for an education facility, with the boarding component (assuming 5 days / week operations for 40 weeks/year with no specialist staff) estimated to be at least \$0.650M per year.
- Strategic positioning and influencing: As noted previously, the Gulf Academy concept is supported by a raft of policy and strategy initiatives, across all levels of government. Importantly the Coalition of Peaks, a representative body of around fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled peak organisations and members, now exerts significant influence in ensuring the full involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in shared decision making with governments to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There may be an opportunity for Lower Gulf leadership to work in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks to make the Gulf Academy a reality.
- Data collection, monitoring, and research. In conducting the Strategic Review, we noticed that was difficult to collect data, and in some cases information, at a community and regional level. Much of the available data is aggregated and not necessarily aggregated in a consistent way. The implementation establishment and sustainability of the Gulf Academy is a significant venture and needs to be underpinned by data gathering and analysis to support its evolution. Data gathering, review and analysis needs to be built into the Gulf Academy at a community level. This data and the processes around it need to be owned and controlled by the communities involves, with assistance offered by relevant expert organisations.

## Conclusion:

The Strategic Review has established that the Gulf Academy concept has merit. It is an idea, in its present form, that is supported by organisations and communities in the Lower Gulf. There is also evidence of a level of stakeholder support, including at the three levels of government. Academic research and statistical analysis also support the idea.

What has been done to this point so far is to establish *what* needs to be done to improve opportunities for young people in the Lower Gulf. We are now moving to a focus on *how* this can be achieved.

Confirming the detail of the feasibility of the Gulf academy and confirming a case for it, from a business perspective, is addressed in the Business Case document.

Annex 1.

Data Attachment 1. The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) data.

SEIFA by Local Government Area	SEIFA Quintile	SEIFA Percentile
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Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) Distribution - describes the relative level of advantage / disadvantage.

Mornington Island	1	4
Burke Shire	2	23
Carpentaria Shire	1	10
Doomadgee	1	2

Index of Economic Resources (IER) Distribution - Describes the overall access to economic resources of people in the area.

Mornington Island	1	3
Burke Shire	1	9
Carpentaria Shire	1	9
Doomadgee	1	1

**Explanation:**

Quintiles run from 1-5, with 1 being the lowest.

Percentiles run from 1 to 100 with 1 being the lowest

## Data Attachment 2. Labour market data.

Data about the Region’s labour market is somewhat limited. However, Small Area Labour Markets (SALM) estimates produced quarterly by the National Skills Commission provide a useful indicator of key labour market data at the Local Government Area (LGA) level. The table below summarises the latest available estimates for the Region and adjoining Shires for the June quarter 2020<sup>66</sup>.

### Key Labour Market Indicators, June Quarter 2020

	Labour Market No.	Unemployed No.	Unemployment Rate (%)
<b>Lower Gulf Shires</b>			
Burke (S)	164	37	22.6
Carpentaria (S)	951	213	22.4
Doomadgee (S)	684	153	22.4
Kowanyama (S)	411	212	51.6
Mornington (S)	555	124	22.3
Porpuraaw (S)	328	169	51.5
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3,093</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>29.4</b>
<b>Outer Shires</b>			
Cloncurry (S)	2,062	104	5.0
Cook (S)	2,276	427	18.8
Croydon (S)	167	7	4.2
Ethridge (S)	461	20	4.3
McKinlay (S)	531	16	3.0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>5,497</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>10.4</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,590</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>17.3</b>

While this SLMA data is not disaggregated by age, it does provide a useful indicator to the levels of unemployment in the Region in particular. As shown, across the Lower Gulf Shires, the unemployment rate for the June Quarter 2020 was 29.4% compared to 10.4% for the Shires adjoining the Region. Within the Region, the highest unemployment rates were in Porpuraaw Shire (51.5%) and Kowanyama (51.6%)

<sup>66</sup> Small Area Labour Markets (SALM), June Quarter 2020, <https://lmip.gov.au/PortalFile.axd?FieldID=3193961&.xlsx>

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An indicator of youth unemployment levels in the Region is the number of young people aged 21 or younger receipt of Youth Allowance (excluding students and apprentices)

The table below shows the number of such recipients by Shire for June 2020<sup>67</sup>

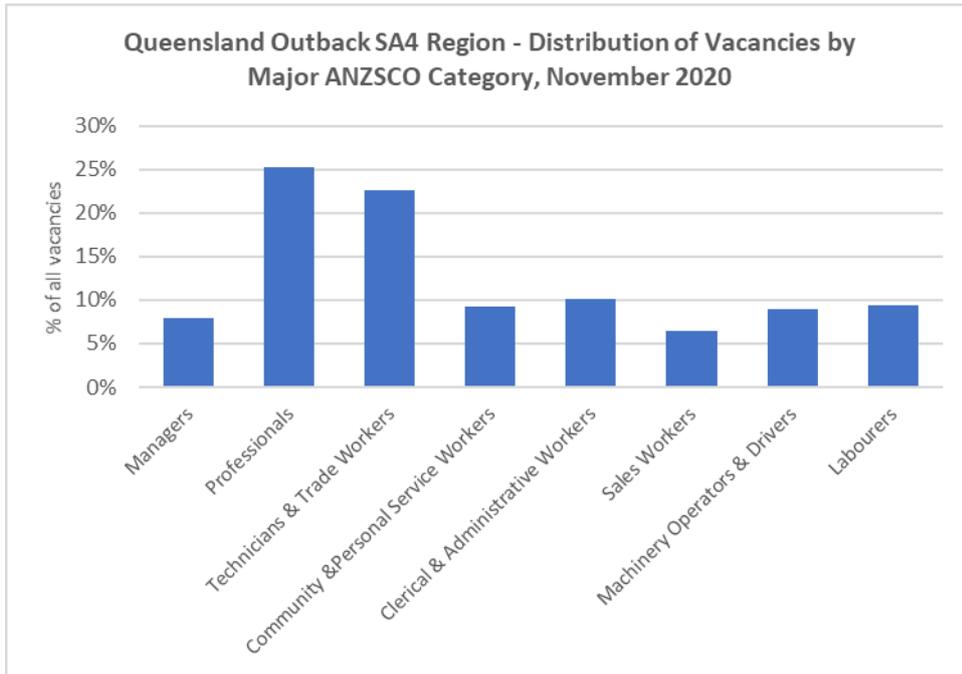
**Youth Allowance Recipients by Shire, June 2020**

<b>Lower Gulf Region</b>	<b>No.</b>
Burke (S)	33
Carpentaria (S)	243
Doomadgee (S)	270
Kowanyama (S)	273
Mornington (S)	219
Pormpuraaw (S)	179
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,217</b>
<b>Outer Shires</b>	
Cloncurry (S)	199
Cook (S)	509
Croydon (S)	25
Ethridge (S)	34
McKinlay (S)	16
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>783</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,000</b>

Public vacancy data for the Region is also significantly limited with the best available recent data provided at the Statistical Area 4 level for Queensland Outback – an area which includes the Gulf Region along with the Cape and all of western Queensland. The graph below shows the distribution of the 448 vacancies advertised in the Region in November 2020 across.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> DSS Payments by 2018 LGA March 2019 - June 2020. <https://data.gov.au/dataset/ds-dga-4a77243b-ab31-4225-b9c1-da13da56c7fc/distribution/dist-dga-e8df5582-2cd2-4e49-898f-8995faaf3a4f/details?q=>

<sup>68</sup> Labour Market Information Portal, Vacancy Report, November 2020. <https://lmip.gov.au/PortalFile.axd?FieldID=2790180&.xlsx>



In addition to covering a Region much bigger than the Lower Gulf, the value of this analysis is further limited by it being based on a count of vacancies advertised online. It is noted that in smaller communities and remote areas such as the Lower Gulf, many vacancies are advertised and promoted locally rather than online.

### Data Attachment 3. Education attainment and year 12 completion

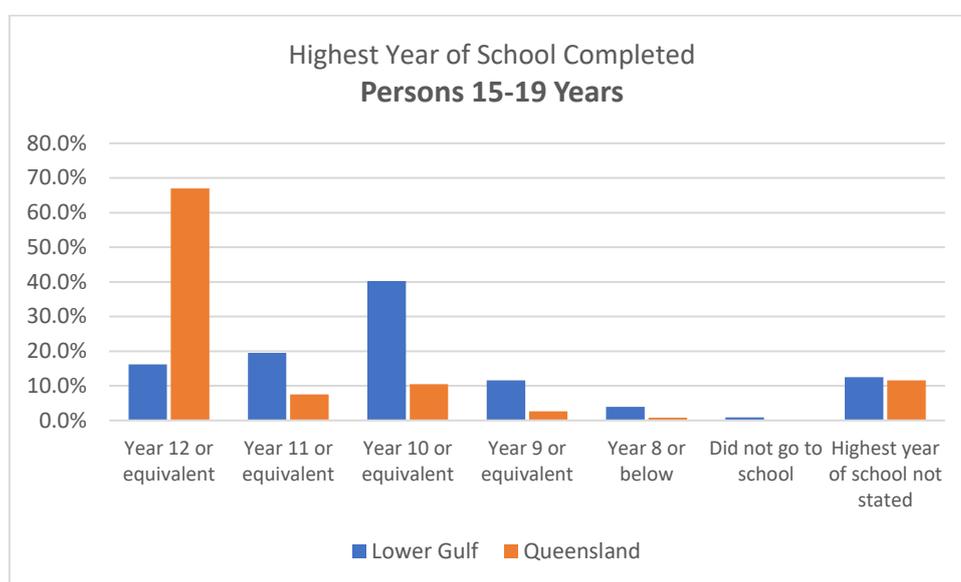
Levels of education attainment across the five Shires in the Lower Gulf are significantly lower than the levels for all of Queensland.

The following figures use aggregated 2016 Census data for the five Shires<sup>69</sup> that comprise the Lower Gulf region and represents the Census night count of persons aged 15 years and over who were no longer attending primary or secondary school.

As illustrated in those figures, young people in the Lower Gulf are far more likely to have low levels of education attainment compared to young people in all of Queensland.

For those aged 15-19 years:

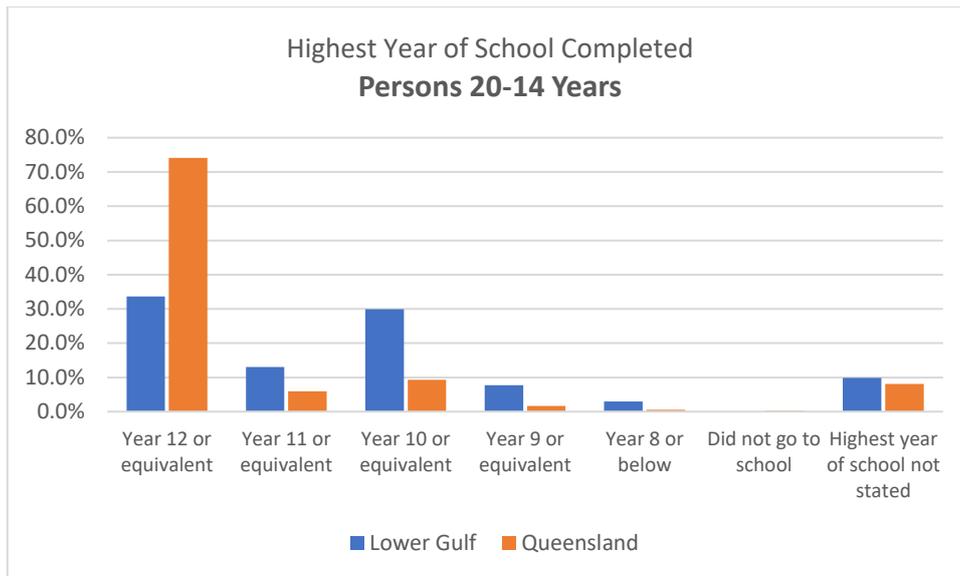
- 16.1% in the region had completed Year-12 compared to 67.0% for all of Queensland – a 51-point deficit;
- 40.2% in the region had completed Year-10 compared to 10.4% for all of Queensland.



Similarly, for those aged 20-14 years:

- 33.7% in the region had completed Year-12 compared to 74.1% for all of Queensland – a 40-point deficit;
- 29.9% in the region had completed Year-10 compared to 9.3% for all of Queensland.

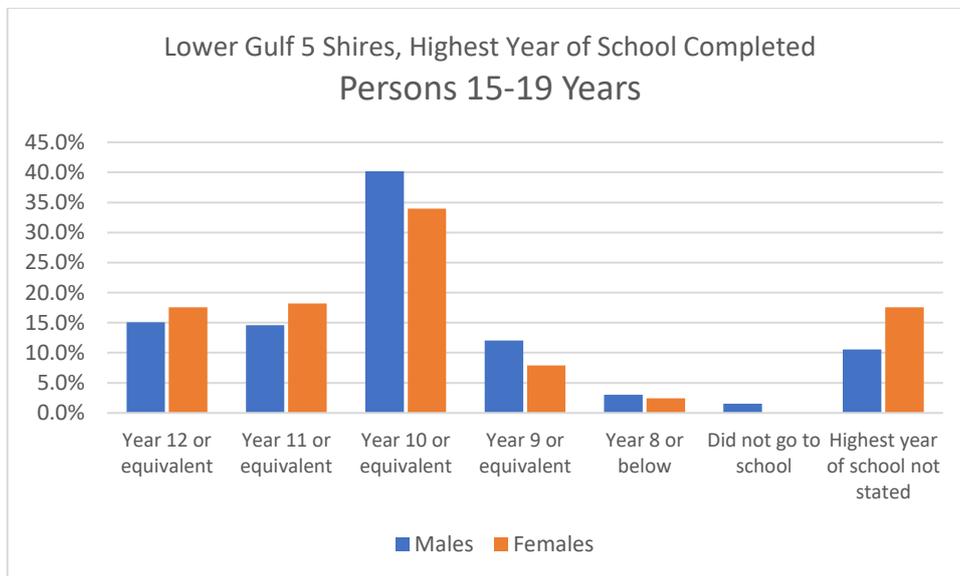
<sup>69</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20Census%20Community%20Profiles>

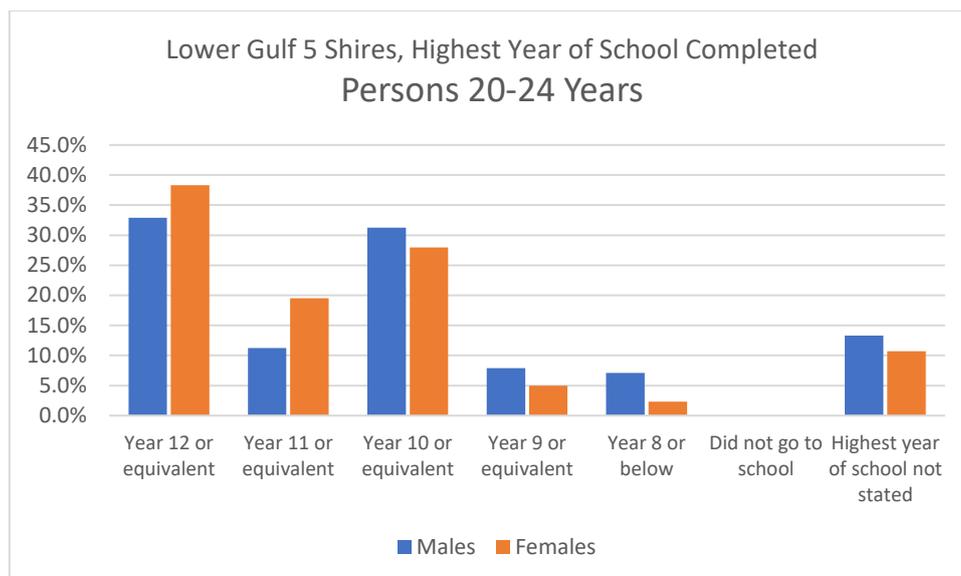


It should also be noted that, in the Region (as is for the State), young men are more likely to exit education and training earlier than young women.

As shown in the following two figures also drawn from 2016 Census data for the five LGAs that comprise the Lower Gulf Region:

- Year 12 or equivalent was the highest level of education achieved by 15.1% of 15-19 year old males in the region compared to 17.6% of females in the region.
- For those in the region aged 20-24 years, Year 12 or equivalent was the highest level of education attained by 38.3% of females compared to 32.9% of males.





While no more recent data on education attainment is available at the LGA level, the Closing The Gap Report 2020<sup>70</sup> does show improvement in recent years in rates of Year 12 attainment or equivalent for Indigenous Australians aged 20–24:

- Between 2008 and 2018–19, the proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 20–24 years attaining Year 12 or equivalent increased by around 21 percentage points. The gap has narrowed by around 15 percentage points, as non-Indigenous attainment rates have improved at a slower pace.
- The proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 20–24 years attaining Year 12 or equivalent level of education decreases with remoteness. The Year 12 attainment rate is 85 per cent in Major Cities compared with 38 per cent in Very Remote areas (including the Lower Gulf region).

<sup>70</sup> <https://ctgreport.niaa.gov.au/year-12-attainment>

### Data Attachment 3. Population data.

#### Population of the Lower Gulf

At the 2016 Census, the six Shires of the Lower Gulf had a total resident population of 6,527 persons while the surrounding Shires of Cloncurry, Cook, Croydon, Ethridge, and McKinlay had a total resident population of 9,147.<sup>71</sup>

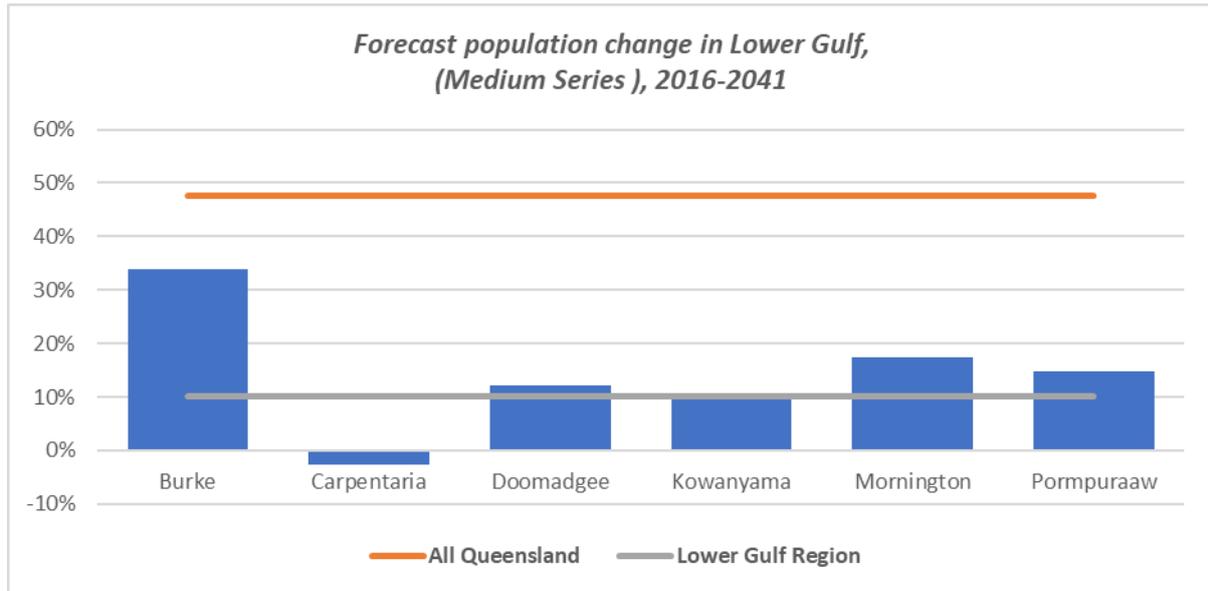
#### Resident Population by LGA, 2016 Census

Lower Gulf Shires	Persons	Outer Shires	Persons
Burke (S)	328	Cloncurry (S)	3,032
Carpentaria (S)	1,958	Cook (S)	4,226
Doomadgee (S)	1,405	Croydon (S)	294
Kowanyama (S)	944	Ethridge (S)	799
Mornington (S)	1,143	McKinlay (S)	796
Pormpuraaw (S)	749	<b>Outer Shires Total</b>	<b>9,147</b>
<b>Lower Gulf Total</b>	<b>6,527</b>		

Population growth in the Lower Gulf is projected to be well below that of Queensland as a whole. Forecasts prepared by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office predict a 10% increase in the Region's population between 2016 and 2041 compared with a forecast 46% increase for all of Queensland. As shown below, Burke Shire has the highest growth within the Region at 34% while Carpentaria Shire is forecast to experience a 3% population decline over the period.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> ABS Census Community Profiles <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20Census%20Community%20Profiles>

<sup>72</sup> Queensland Government population projections, 2018 edition, Queensland Regional Database, Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Queensland Treasury



Burke (S)	Carpentaria (S)	Doomadgee (S)	Kowanyama (S)	Mornington (S)	Pormpuraaw (S)	Lower Gulf Region Total	All Queensland
34%	-3%	12%	11%	17%	15%	10%	48%

### Young people in the Lower Gulf

Table 2 shows the 2016 Census count of three cohorts of young persons in the Lower Gulf Region and the surrounding Shires, along with total population count for each Shire<sup>73</sup>.

#### Resident Population by LGA, 2016 Census

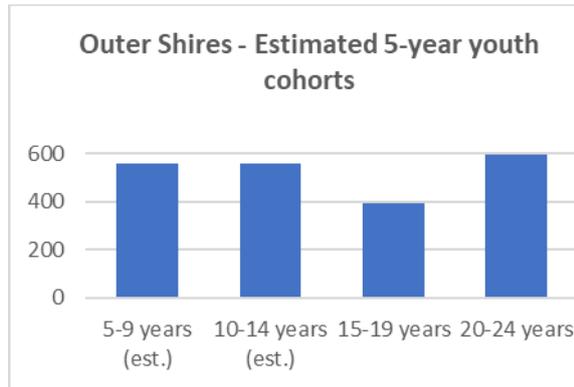
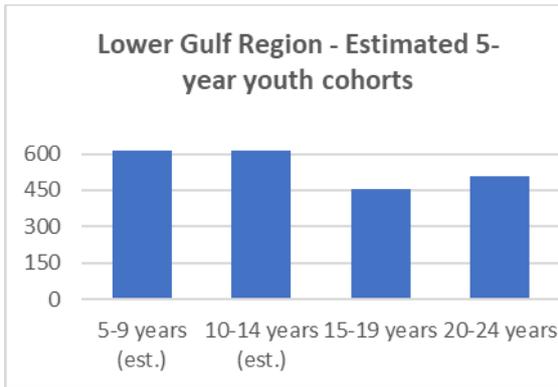
	Total Persons	5-14 years	15-19 years	20-24 years
<b>Lower Gulf Shires</b>				
Burke (S)	328	38	15	29
Carpentaria (S)	1958	273	97	135
Doomadgee (S)	1405	369	119	126
Kowanyama (S)	944	167	69	82
Mornington (S)	1143	251	105	83
Pormpuraaw (S)	749	132	50	53
Sub Total	6527	1230	455	508
<b>Outer Shires</b>				
Cloncurry (S)	3032	374	145	202
Cook (S)	4226	526	194	291
Croydon (S)	294	43	4	24

<sup>73</sup> Census Community Profiles <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20Census%20Community%20Profiles>

**Confidential**

Ethridge (S)	799	94	32	27
McKinlay (S)	796	79	21	50
Sub Total	9147	1116	396	594
TOTAL	15674	2346	851	1102

The movement of young people out of the Region to boarding high schools elsewhere is partly evident in the lower count of 15-19 year old's compared to that for 20-24 year old's – a movement that is made more pronounced if the Census count of 5-14 year olds is split evenly into two 5-year cohorts of 5-9 year olds and 10-14 year olds, as shown in the graphs below.



## Data Attachment 4. Young people's engagement in education

### Young people's engagement in education

A significant limitation in the publicly available data in the education domain is the absence of statistics relating to young people from the Lower Gulf participating in education out of the Region. This is a particularly limiting given that many attend boarding schools out-of-Region for their secondary education and all who want to complete their senior secondary education have no choice but to do so at such boarding schools.

The table below shows the number of enrolments in 2019 at each school within the Lower Gulf as well as in the schools in Shires adjacent to the Region. Also shown is the proportion of students at each of those schools who are Indigenous<sup>74</sup>.

#### Enrolments by School, 2019

	Primary School	Middle School	Total Enrolments	% Indigenous
<b>Lower Gulf Shires</b>				
Doomadgee State School	✓	✓	308	99%
Burketown State School	✓		25	80%
Mornington Island State School	✓	✓	247	97%
Normanton State School	✓	✓	125	87%
Karumba State School	✓		38	32%
Gulf Christian College	✓	✓	104	63%
Kowanyama State School	✓	✓	203	99%
			<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,050</b>
<b>Outer Shires</b>				
Croydon State School	✓		28	46%
Georgetown State School	✓		29	10%
Mount Isa School of the Air	✓	✓	155	9%
			<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>212</b>

The table below shows the Semester 1 attendance rates in each of those schools along with the proportion of students with an attendance rate of 90% or more<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.myschool.edu.au/>

<sup>75</sup> Idib

### School Attendance, Semester 1, 2019

	Primary	Middle School	Attendance Rate		% of students attending 90% or more of the time	
			Non-Indigenous	Indigenous Students	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous Students
<b>Lower Gulf Shires</b>						
Doomadgee State School	✓	✓		57%		14%
Burketown State School	✓			79%		57%
Mornington Island State School	✓	✓	49%	91%	12%	49%
Normanton State School	✓	✓	67%	81%	24%	75%
Karumba State School	✓		91%	92%	59%	74%
Gulf Christian College	✓	✓	82%	91%	45%	68%
Kowanyama State School	✓	✓		65%		18%
<b>Outer Shires</b>						
Croydon State School	✓		92%	81%	85%	36%
Georgetown State School	✓			93%		80%
Mount Isa School of the Air	✓	✓		100%		100%

The table below shows for each local school, the disciplinary absences recorded in 2019, as reported by the Queensland Department of Education<sup>76</sup>

### School Disciplinary Absences by school, 2019

	Primary	Middle School	Short	Long	Exclusions	Cancellation
			Suspensions	Suspensions		
<b>Lower Gulf Region</b>						
Doomadgee State School	✓	✓	18	0	0	0
Burketown State School	✓		0	0	0	0
Mornington Island State School	✓	✓	98	0	0	0
Normanton State School	✓	✓	88	0	0	0
Karumba State School	✓		2	0	0	0
Gulf Christian College	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kowanyama State School	✓	✓	18	0	0	0
<b>Outer catchment</b>						
Croydon State School	✓		0	0	0	0
Georgetown State School	✓		0	0	0	0
Mount Isa School of the Air	✓	✓	0	0	0	0

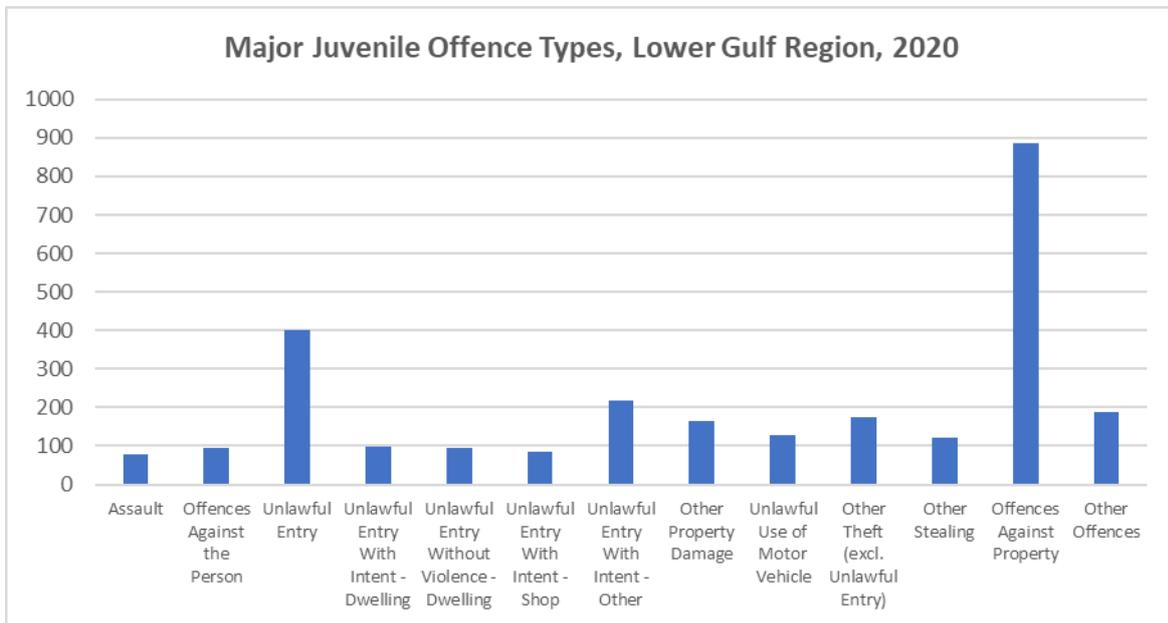
<sup>76</sup> <https://qed.qld.gov.au/our-publications/reports/statistics/Documents/sda-by-school.pdf>

## Data Attachment 5. Juvenile crime

Anecdotally, many within the Lower Gulf identify high youth crime rates as one of the key indicators of local young people’s boredom and disengagement from their community.

While far from being a complete picture, Table 4 below shows the number of offences in each Shire in the Region cleared or solved through an action against a juvenile offender by local police in 2020. It should be noted that the data counts offences and does not refer to individuals – an offender may have committed more than one offence<sup>77</sup>.

The graph below shows the most common offence types for the Region for this juvenile offender cohort.



Juvenile offenders are those persons aged between 10 and 17 years (inclusive).

Unfortunately, offences data for those aged 18 or over is not disaggregated by age and as such we are unable to provide comparable data for the young adult cohort (18-19 years old) who are also a key focus for this project.

<sup>77</sup> Queensland Police Service, LGA Reported Offender Data, 2020. [https://open-crime-data.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/Crime%20Statistics/LGA\\_Reported\\_Offenders\\_Number.csv](https://open-crime-data.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/Crime%20Statistics/LGA_Reported_Offenders_Number.csv)

**Total Juvenile Offences by Shire, Offences 2020**

Burke (S)	12
Carpentaria (S)	849
Doomadgee (S)	695
Kowanyama (S)	127
Mornington (S)	1,438
Pormpuraaw (S)	101
Total	3,222

## Data Attachment 6. Labour market

### The Region's Labour Market

Data about the Region's labour market is somewhat limited. However, Small Area Labour Markets (SALM) estimates produced quarterly by the National Skills Commission provide a useful indicator of key labour market data at the Local Government Area (LGA) level. The table below summarises the latest available estimates for the Region and adjoining Shires for the June quarter 2020<sup>78</sup>.

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<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3,093</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>29.4</b>
<b>Outer Shires</b>			
Cloncurry (S)	2,062	104	5.0
Cook (S)	2,276	427	18.8
Croydon (S)	167	7	4.2
Ethridge (S)	461	20	4.3
McKinlay (S)	531	16	3.0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>5,497</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>10.4</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,590</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>17.3</b>

While this SLMA data is not disaggregated by age, it does provide a useful indicator to the levels of unemployment in the Region in particular. As shown, across the Lower Gulf Shires, the unemployment rate for the June Quarter 2020 was 29.4% compared to 10.4% for the Shires adjoining the Region. Within the Region, the highest unemployment rates were in Porpuraaw Shire (51.5%) and Kowanyama (51.6%)

<sup>78</sup> Small Area Labour Markets (SALM), June Quarter 2020, <https://lmip.gov.au/PortalFile.axd?FieldID=3193961&.xlsx>

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An indicator of youth unemployment levels in the Region is the number of young people aged 21 or younger receipt of Youth Allowance (excluding students and apprentices)

The table below shows the number of such recipients by Shire for June 2020<sup>79</sup>

**Youth Allowance Recipients by Shire, June 2020**

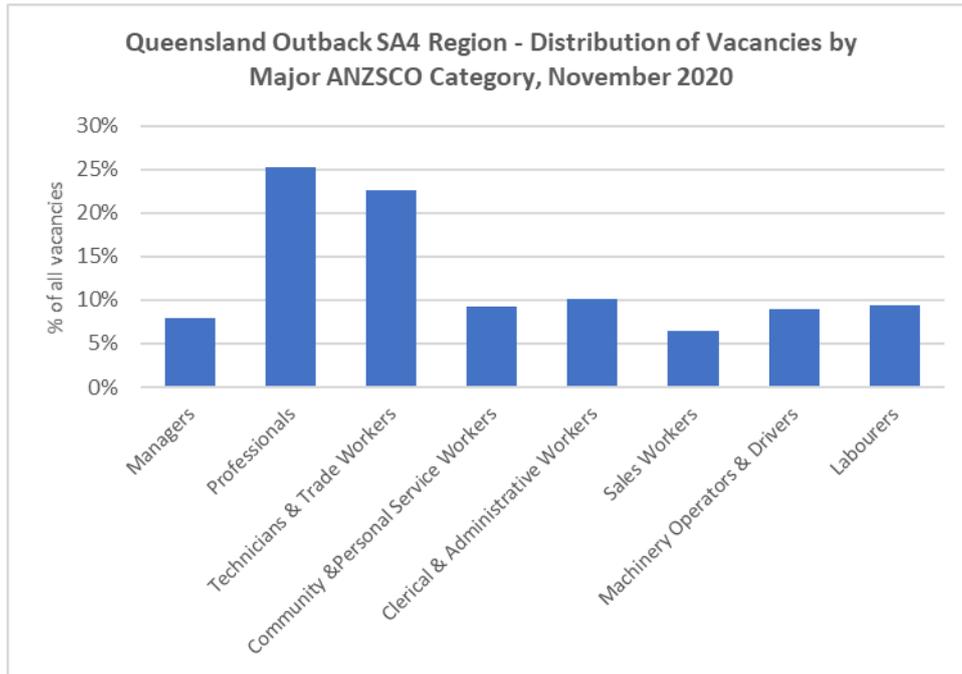
<b>Lower Gulf Region</b>	<b>No.</b>
Burke (S)	33
Carpentaria (S)	243
Doomadgee (S)	270
Kowanyama (S)	273
Mornington (S)	219
Pormpuraaw (S)	179
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,217</b>

<b>Outer Shires</b>	
Cloncurry (S)	199
Cook (S)	509
Croydon (S)	25
Ethridge (S)	34
McKinlay (S)	16
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>783</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,000</b>

Public vacancy data for the Region is also significantly limited with the best available recent data provided at the Statistical Area 4 level for Queensland Outback – an area which includes the Gulf Region along with the Cape and all of western Queensland. Figure 5 below shows the distribution of the 448 vacancies advertised in the Region in November 2020 across.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> DSS Payments by 2018 LGA March 2019 - June 2020. <https://data.gov.au/dataset/ds-dga-4a77243b-ab31-4225-b9c1-da13da56c7fc/distribution/dist-dga-e8df5582-2cd2-4e49-898f-8995faaf3a4f/details?q=>

<sup>80</sup> Labour Market Information Portal, Vacancy Report, November 2020. <https://lmip.gov.au/PortalFile.axd?FieldID=2790180&.xlsx>



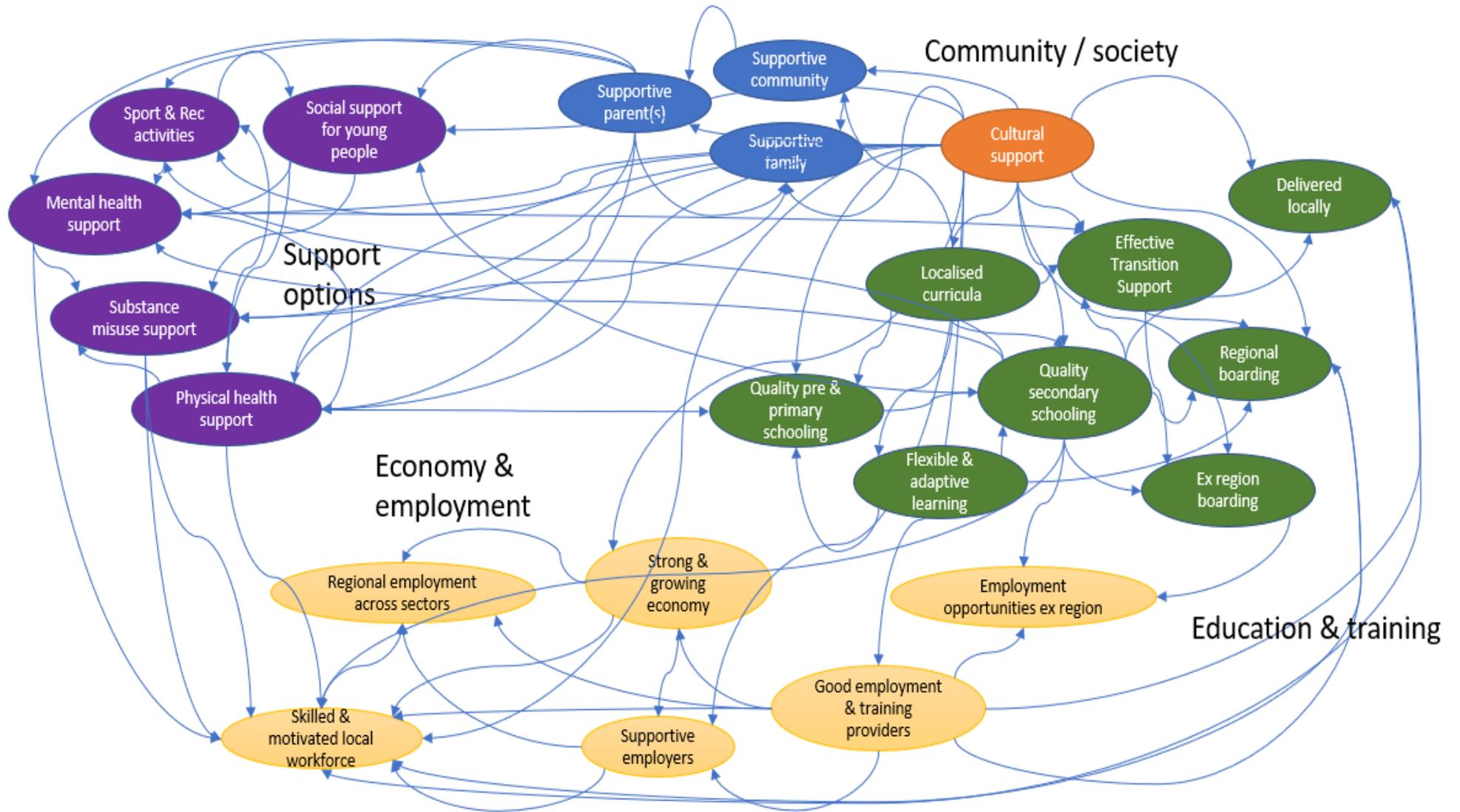
In addition to covering a Region much bigger than the Lower Gulf, the value of this analysis is further limited by it being based on a count of vacancies advertised online. It is noted that in smaller communities and remote areas such as the Lower Gulf, many vacancies are advertised and promoted locally rather than online.

## Attachments:

### Attachment 1. Level of interest.

Organisation	Level of interest, through engagement and support.
Gulf Savannah Development	Very High
Bynoe Community Advancement Cooperative Society	Very High
Morr Morr Pastoral Company Pty Ltd	
Carpentaria Shire Council	Very High
Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council	Very High
Mornington Shire Council	Very High
Aboriginal Development Benefits Trust	Very High
Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training	Very High
Australian Government Education Employment and Science	Very High
Gidgee Healing	Very High
Queensland Government Transition Support Services	Very High
Queensland Police	
Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	High
Gulf Christian College	
Normanton Shire Council	High
James Cook University – Northern Australia Development	High
Etheridge Shire Council / Gulf Cattlemen’s Association	High
Carpentaria Land Council	High
National Indigenous Australians Agency	High
Burke Shire Council	High

Attachment 2: Interrelationship diagram.



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Item	In	Out	Driver or outcome
Quality pre & primary schooling	3	1	Outcome
Quality secondary schooling	4	9	Driver
Flexible & adaptive learning delivery	2	4	Driver
Localised curricula	1	5	Driver
Delivered locally	3	0	Outcome
Regional boarding	6	0	Outcome
Ex regional boarding	3	1	Outcome
Transition support	3	3	Neutral
Strong & growing economy	2	3	Driver
Regional employment across sectors	3	1	Outcome
Skilled local workforce	10	1	Outcome
Supportive employers	3	2	Outcome
Good employment and training providers	1	6	Driver
Employment opportunities ex region	3	0	Outcome
Cultural support	0	18	Driver
Supportive community	1	3	Driver
Supportive family	2	1	Outcome
Supportive parents	3	6	Driver
Social support for young people	4	3	Outcome
Sport and Rec activities	5	1	Outcome
Substance misuse support	4	1	Outcome
Physical health support	3	4	Outcome
Mental health support	4	2	Outcome

Driver = Out  
Output = in

**Key drivers:**

- Cultural support
- Quality secondary schooling
- Supportive parents
- Good employment and training providers
- Localised curricula
- Flexible learning delivery
- Physical health support
- Strong and growing local economy

Attachment 3. Stakeholders and partners. – initial identification.

Who	Stages of involvement						Comment
	Information sharing	Project scoping	Implementation - Support	Implementation - Resourcing	Sustaining	Monitoring & Evaluating	
Burke Shire Council	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment
Carpentaria Shire Council	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment
Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment
Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment
Mornington Shire Council	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment
Etheridge Shire Council	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment

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Croydon Shire Council	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment
Aboriginal Development Benefit Trust	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
Bynoe Community Advancement Co-operative Society	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	Bynoe will be a key player in all elements of the GA
Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment.
Gkuthaarn and Kukatj Aboriginal Corporation	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
Waanyi Aboriginal Corporation PBC	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
New Century	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment
Qld. Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
Queensland Health	IS	PS	* SP	** \$	S	ME	* To be further explored. ** Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment
Qld. Department of Employment Small Business and Training	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	

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Qld. Department of State Development Local Government and Planning	IS	PS	SP			ME	
Qld. Department of Education	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	Work with regional level representatives
Qld. Department of Education Transition Support Services	IS	PS	SP	\$			
Queensland Police	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
Croydon State School	IS	PS	SP	\$			
Doomadgee State School	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Burketown State School	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Mornington Island State School	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Normanton State School	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Karumba State School	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Gulf Christian College	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Kowanyama State School	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	

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Georgetown State School	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Mt Isa School of the Air	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Department of Youth Justice Queensland	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	To be further explored
Queensland Police Service	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Local probation and parole services	IS	PS	SP			ME	
Australian Government National Indigenous Australians Agency	IS	PS	SP	*	S	ME	Advised that no funding available currently
Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
Australian Government Department of Health	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
Australian Government Department of Health	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	For both Indigenous / remote Health and aged care. * To be further explored.
National Disability Insurance Agency	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	To be further explored
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	IS				S	ME	Potentially useful to partner with for data collection and analysis.

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Australian Institute of Family Studies. Footprints in Time study	IS					ME	Potentially useful to partner with for data collection and analysis.
Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources	IS		SP			ME	
Office of Northern Development (Cairns & Townsville)	IS		SP	* \$		ME	
Gidgee Healing	IS	PS	SP	* \$	S	ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment
PCYC	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
Alcohol Tobacco Other Drugs Substance (ATODS)	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
Deadly Choices Doomadgee	IS		SP			ME	
Doomadgee Family Responsibilities Commission	IS		SP				
My Pathway	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Night Patrol	IS	PS	SP		S	ME	
Normanton Recovery and Wellbeing Service	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
North West Remote Health	IS		SP	* \$		ME	* Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment.

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Other to be identified service providers	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
James Cook University (Cairns)	IS		SP			ME	Northern Australia Cooperative Research Centre Support around information provision, data analysis and research.
James Cook University (Townsville)	IS					ME	
Tech NQ							Yet to be explored - potential opportunity for partnering to provide information, advice and VET services.
New Century Resources	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	
Pastoral companies	IS	PS	* SP	\$	S	ME	Primary focus - training and employment support.
Myuma Group	IS			* \$			* Potential placement support
Rex Airlines	IS		SP	* \$			Travel costs are an important factor in resourcing the GA. * Potentially for work placement, traineeships, employment.
Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak organisations.	IS	PS	SP	\$	S	ME	The strategic involvement of the Coalition of Peaks is key for the establishment of the Gulf Academy
Australian Defence Forces	IS			*			* Potential placement support