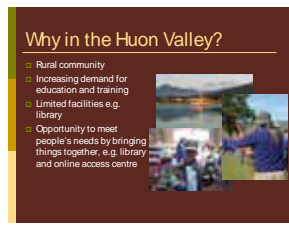
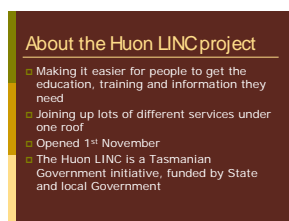


## Ace Conference Notes 2006



### Why in the Huon Valley?

The Huon Valley is a rural community with an estimated residential population as of June 2005 of 14,567, with people with post school qualifications at approximately 38.1% and people employed with medium to high skills at 47%. These figures were indicators that the Huon Valley community had an increased demand for education and training. The Huon Valley in the past had limited facilities, such as the library that was under utilised and offered few programs for the community as a link to education. Now the Huonville library offers the reading together program and story time, as well as rock and rhyme and a place for artists in our community to display their work. The most significant aspect is the partnership with Tasmanian Communities Online, which has offered people in the Huon Valley a chance to have a number of services brought under one roof. For example people that use the library are now able to access computers when doing home work or online courses via providers such as TAFE; it allows the over lapping of services which allows people to have a flexible learning environment. The Huon LINC also offers people a social space, for meeting or for learning circles where they are able to share ideas and common goals together.



A little bit of history.....In 1997 as part of the National Pilot Program, Regional Skill Centre for school students in Tasmania, attracted funding to establish a skill centre in Huonville. A further two skill centres were developed for the North East Coast and Tasman peninsula.

These skill centres were community based centres and were developed on a theme of retention of school students to year 12 and re- engaging early school leavers (youth) up to 24 yrs of age. Managed and directed by the local community and business people in partnership with local schools, it

soon became apparent how influential the skill centres could be in community development.

The model was extended up to 2002 to take a regional development focus based on building strong local communities in developing social and financial sustainability. A state wide network of 18 skill centres now service rural and remote areas in Tasmania.

Through the state wide network and in particular such developments as Circular head education and training skill centre, north east education and training, and Oatlands the Office of Post Compulsory Education and Training gained valuable insights and significant experience in fostering community based learning that supports the development of social and economical sustainable futures.

The Huon LINC projects focus was to build a central geographically located learning and information network centre that would act as a focal point for regional areas. It would encompass education and training information services including a library, business development and community service provisions i.e. employment support, service providers and welfare agencies.

The Huon LINC would comprise of a core building and a technical infrastructure site in a major regional town that is connected to satellite centres in small local communities i.e. Geeveston, Dover and Cygnet. Some of these centres may have already existed such as OAC or skill centres. The LINC would also provide communication links and access to the out of region services and service providers to the Huon Valley.

The LINC has been organised as a one stop shop for education and training, information and community services. Although not all services would be co-located in the LINC building it would provide supported access to ensure effective service delivery to the client.

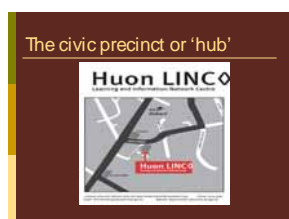
The Huon LINC project has offered a new and innovative service initiative for Tasmania, which reflects a philosophy of life long learning for a regional community. The Huon LINC is succeeding in making it easy for the community to make a low risk step into education and training, or for those more advanced to access training and education. It hopes to be a rounded facility that offers everyone in the community a chance to life long learning.

The Huon LINC project has sought to integrate the services related to education, training and information, with an emphasis on clients beyond the compulsory years of schooling. The underpinning philosophy of the Huon LINC is that it will provide increased opportunities for education and training which is supported through a range of temporary occupants such as TAFE, UTAS, Adult Ed, Mission literacy classes, and other RTOs.

In addition to education, training and information services, there are synergies with Centrelink, Service Tasmania and the business enterprise centre which are co-located in the Huon LINC building. These services have potentially many clients in common with Huon LINC with an aim to capture their attention in an effort to further their education and training.

The Huon LINC opened on the 1st of November. It was opened by the then Education Minister Paula Wriedt.

The Huon LINC is a Tasmanian Government initiative funded by the three tiers of government, commonwealth state and local. The Huon Valley council is supportive of the Huon LINC project and has contributed towards the car park requirements and is developing a plan to improve the roads and street scape.



The Huon Hub comprises of key services for the community, such as the Huon Valley council, Youth Services, the Community Health Centre, Local businesses, the schools, Steps employment, Centre link, Service Tasmania and Huon LINC. The intention of developing a civic hub was to bring together key services for the public, to increase accessibility of services, to raise the civic and community profile within the town centre, and develop new synergies between existing and new services. The intention is to work together to provide the community with the necessary services that they need.



Philip Lighton Architects designed the Huon LINC as a significant building in the Huonville Township. It is highly visible, designed to be easily accessed and to provide a range of government and non-government related functions all times of the day.

The building is a contemporary design with a blend of transparent and opaque materials such as glass, steel and concrete that has demonstrated new methods and construction techniques in the design. With a floor area in excess of 1700m<sup>2</sup> the building had the potential to appear barn like, however by splitting the roofline and recycling existing building stock such as the magistrates court room, it has a great feel to it and is flexible in its use.

The building floor plan and design was quite in-depth in its development. It was important to make sure that the building was a flexible space and there were many people that were involved to make sure that every aspect of the building had a function and was able to be used in an adaptable manner for the community.

**Let's take a walk through the building now.....**

(Start building slides)

This is the out side of the building....

### **Slide One**

Our Library is a branch library that offers the community many services. Our library works on a floating book system, which means that books float from library to library through orders that clients make. This new system allows flexibility in regional libraries, which has increased our borrowing and allowed our community to have a wider range of books available to them on demand. We have two library technicians on site.

The programs that we run at the Huonville Library are 'reading together', which is a partnership with TAFE Tasmania and the libraries. Reading Together is run in the Huonville Library at the same time each week for 10 weeks during all school terms.

This is then followed by story time that are sessions for 3-4 year olds based around an exciting story telling program and involve parents, grandparents or carers.

We also have the State Library's Rock & Rhyme program for babies and toddlers which involves rhymes, music and fun.

The Huonville library also has a book group that meet once a month throughout the year and do just that! The group borrows books from Book Groups Tasmania, who provide a wide range of books with over 500 titles to choose from. A wide variety of genres and titles are available including fiction, crime, biography, travel and writings on social issues. This brings together people of all ages in the community who just love books.

### **Slide two**

Chess as a social space has been very popular. We have a range of people that enjoy coming into the library to play chess at different parts of the day.

### **Slide three**

The Huonville Library has a new art gallery where local artists are invited to display their work. We have a new hanging system in our library with a total length of 8 mtrs. We have a calendar for local artists to show their work for a two week period and varies in topic and medium.

We are also showing at the moment through out the building the Huonville High schools end of year Grade 9&10 art exhibition. It is a journey of art through the LINC building. We have set up temporary display boards in the corridors and also in the OAC and library to display all the work. The work is photographic, graphic design, drawings paintings, water colours and sculptures.

### **Slide Four**

This is our children's area where children are able to play and read books, and is where story time, rock and rhyme and reading together is held.

As you can see the main aim of our library is to create a social and flexible space for many different people with different needs in our community, it has been very well received since moving into the Huon LINC building, and the usage has increased.

### **Slide Five**

This is a research and home work area designed to be managed by our volunteers to help students between 3.30- 5pm with their homework.

### **Slide Six**

Our online access centre was situated in the corridor room and it had originally 6 computers. We have now moved it to the back room, where it houses 10 computers. We have audio access for training facilities, which we use on a regular basis. The library and online access centre work well as one space and over flow into each other.

Our volunteers at the Huon LINC are what makes our team, their tireless effort and contribution is what makes the service that we provide so great. We now have 25 volunteers in total and around 12 that volunteer in our online access centre.

### **Slide seven**

In the Online access centre we provide e-Learn which is basic training in word and spread sheets. We also offer Certificate II in IT. Clients that opt to do the cert II, do it at no cost but have to volunteer for 60 hrs in the building, which is flexible to their needs and capabilities. We get a wonderful roll over from the e- Learn students that then go into the certificate II, which in turn increases our volunteer numbers. We are also looking at recruiting junior volunteers for the 4pm -5pm slot in our online access centre to help the senior volunteers with games that the students play after school.

We run other free courses such as 'get started with computers' which is a basic course designed to help people that have never touched a mouse or key board before, and a course called web wise which is a beginner's course on using the web and email. Both these courses are self directed and we run them every Wednesday. After the clients have completed these we encourage them to enrol in our next step, which is a beginners in word and excel and then to the e-Learn and the Cert II.

We have also developing a summer holiday program for people of all ages. We will run 2 hour short courses, subjects being eBay-get started, Photoshop- get started, internet get started, ms word get started, pc house keeping, art attack, Google-more than it seems, calligraphy just to name a few. We envisage that this will be run through each term and be ever changing depending on what the community needs are.

We are also working on programs linked with the satellite centres, Dover Geeveston and Cygnet to combine resources to run courses in each online access centre for the community. This will involve working together to apply for grants that will aid us in running the courses for the public and bring the communities closer together.

### **Slide eight**

‘Hot desking space’

This is a room that we encourage use of by Youth learning officers, Colony 47 and other providers to access as a place for ½ hour to 1 hour sessions, to see clients or students regarding issues that relate to their learning or social welfare.

We also envisage being involved in adult learning pathways in the future, which will be situated in this room and will involve one on one guidance to adults in regards to training and education courses with different providers such as TAFE, UTAS, Adult Ed and so on. It will also be a resource room where all our training and education information will be available at the touch of a hand. We will also have all the relevant information on line and be able to print our course guides and call RTO’s in regards to options that the client, may want to explore. We hope this service will act as a safe first step for furthering people’s education and training needs.

### **Slide Nine**

This is where the Vocational Education and Training teachers are located in the building. Next year the VET program will change hands from Huonville High school to Hobart College, with more emphasis on the Huon LINC being an off site campus where students can study if Hobart is not suitable for them. The Huon LINC campus will offer a place to study for a smaller number of students, it will reduce travel to College, be a local supportive environment, offer study programs better tailored to their needs, offer a library and an on-line centre in the same building and be close to bus stops and shops. This program will offer work ready students a flexible learning environment.

### **Slide Ten**

These are paintings by local Tasmanian Aboriginal students in our foyer, which have been hung for 12 months. The paintings are exploring aspects of Aboriginality, created by students from local schools working with local artist/teacher Leigh Oates, who is the Aboriginal Education Officer in the Huon Valley. We have also sponsored the students to do another set of paintings for next year which will be hung early February.

In the Apple and Pear room the magistrates court resides every third Friday of the month. The VET in schools room acts as the waiting area and we set up the court in this room. The Huon LINC was built around this room with the understanding the magistrates court would use this space ongoing. This is again another example of being able to share education and training options and perhaps influence a different part of the community to engage with education and training. We have two dedicated volunteers that are friends of the court, they offer support to people with minor offences during court day.

### **Slide Eleven**

This is the room of Liz Webster who is our TAFE adult literacy and numeracy teacher here at the LINC two days a week, she delivers the reading together program and manages volunteers that help those with numbers and literacy needs. She is also hoping to run next year a grammar class for Australian citizens. This course will be designed to aid people that are not from an English speaking background to develop their skills in the English language. We hope to deliver this course in term 1 and 2 next year.

### **Slide Twelve**

This is the co ordination office where the executive office and my self reside.

### **Slide Thirteen**

This is the business enterprise centre that is one of the 14 funded organisations State wide, offering free confidential business assistance, mainly targeted at micro and small businesses. Stuart Thorne who is the business manager works with clients on issues such as business planning, finance applications and marketing. The business enterprise centre is also involved in community development work with an economic outcome, such as casual seasonal labour study, funding applications for Dover community and Geeveston and has been directly involved in establishment of the community Bank.

And our community notice board that we encourage the community to use.

### **Slide Fourteen**

We now enter into Service Tasmania and Centre link. This is where the model of the LINC really does shine, as we are able to catch a lot of the population that otherwise may have not come into a venue to investigate

education and learning.

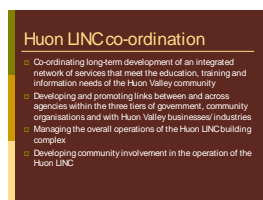
### **Slide Fifteen**

This is the VET in schools class room which also is a room that is available to businesses and the general public to hire our when in is not in use by VET.

### **Slide Sixteen**

This is our kitchen that is shared by those that use the building in particular our volunteers and staff. It is a great social space for people to sit and eat their lunch and meet for meetings. We also have the court yard which we hope to purchase a Bbq for next year in an attempt to create a closer gap with the VET students in particular. We are also considering having a breakfast club, where students will be responsible in turn, to organise breakfast for other students. The centre will be open at 8am on those days and be a place for students to eat a healthy breakfast that they might otherwise not have.

We also hire our rooms out at a commercial and non for profit rate to different organisations.



The Huon LINC coordination is made up of two roles. One being the executive officer and one being the Co-ordinator. The executive officers role is like that of an online access centre co-ordinator. They are responsible for the management of the online access centre, and training within it. Their role is to also support policy and operations of the Huon LINC building, to undertake administration financial and clerical duties and to recruit train and manage a pool of volunteers.

The role of co-ordinator is the bigger picture, my role is to essentially co-ordinate the long term planning development implementation and provision of a network of service programs that meet the education, training and information needs of the Huon Valley community. This includes liaising with the satellite centres such as Dover, Geeveston and Cygnet to build on a learning community. My role is to develop and

promote links between agencies both in government and non government to provide the Huon valley with the best possible options to education and training. I also manage the everyday management of the building and provide assistance to clients accessing a range of education, training and information services.

Our roles work very closely together to make sure that we are addressing all the educational and training needs within the community.

Other projects that the LINC co-ordination has been involved in recently is the Women on wheels expo and launch in Huonville and the Huon Show. The women on wheels expo brought together services like

- Women's Health
- Women Tasmania
- TAFE Tasmania
- Family Planning Tasmania
- U3A
- CWA
- Women's get active program
- Cancer screening and control
- Youth Services
- Huon Valley Small Business Enterprise Centre

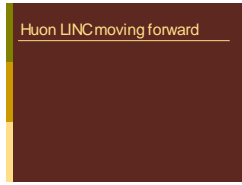
This was a great way to reach women in a rural area and to bring to them services and information that they may not usually be able to access easily.

One of our biggest goals is to reach those that are almost unreachable within our community. As a way of doing this we are also getting involved in local events such as the Huon Show.

We are also involved in Living writers week, Adult learners week, People with Disabilities day, Youth week and Seniors week to name a few.

In addition to the co-ordination team we have a Huon LINC advisory board which is a board of community members that meet every quarter. Member ship is drawn from a wide range of back grounds, interests, involvements in the Huon Valley communities and comprises of a mix of age and gender. Members are encouraged to contribute their particular expertise and experience the discussions of the board. Emphasis on community consultation is a feature of the board and members are encouraged to bring community interests related to learning and information services to the attention of the board so that it can make

recommendations to the department of education, on the provision of services that meet the needs of the Huon Valley communities.



Our vision for moving forward is to work with the satellite centres such as Geeveston Dover and Cygnet to create a closer community network in developing a learning community. My focus will be to liaise with these centres to create a balanced flow of education and information for each centre and community, and to help them to access courses from different RTO's and providers.

Another is adult pathways. Our goal is to develop a place where adults can come and feel comfortable to talk to some one about making a first step toward developing new or existing skills and learning needs. Even for a highly competent individual, the sea of options of courses and education is often over whelming and can for some, just seem too hard to access or even contemplate. We hope to develop a model that may be able to be delivered in other centres around Tasmania, as a method in giving adults easy and supported options to education and training.

For Lucy my predecessor getting the building built and having it operational was the focus, now we have to move it to the next level by making sure the courses that are run are accessible to all parts of the community and applicable to their needs. We have been in partnership with TAFE this term in delivering the TAFE connect course, which is a great example of bringing together a group of diverse people and giving them a first step in increasing their chance of employment. The beauty of this course is that it gathered together people of different ages and back grounds, which in turn helped them with social acceptance and social skills.

We also have Mission Australia in the building two days a week that deliver basic literacy and numeracy.

We also hold community forums once a year which acts in consultation with the community in regards to the direction we are taking and what we are doing is valid. We also hold training providers forums, where all the training providers come together to discuss what will be on offer in the

Huon Valley, as well as holding Huon Valley Employers Business forums also.

Client satisfaction is at the end of the day what we are here for and I believe that having a team of people that encourage and promote a welcoming and supportive environment, and that we are knowledgeable about the issues that we are promoting will be what makes the Huon LINC succeed. The building and infrastructure has been built for the community, so they need to feel that they are free to access it and its facilities and we are here to do them a service.

In summing up our vision is to build an acceptance of a learning community within the Huon valley and to make education, training and information services available and applicable to all.

Thankyou for listening.