Leongatha Education Precinct Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Geographical Differences in the Rate in Which Victorian Students Participate in Higher Education

Background

In 2005 a proposal for a cross-sectoral Education Precinct development in Leongatha was developed. Since then the following stakeholders many of who were part of proposal development have agreed to be a part of the development:

- Leongatha Secondary College
- Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE - GippsTAFE
- South Gippsland Specialist School
- Monash University
- Department of Education Training and Early Childhood Development
- Leongatha Primary School
- Education Centre Gippsland
- South Gippsland Bass Coast Local learning and Employment Network Inc.
- South Gippsland Shire Council

All of the above have a presence on or near to the LEP.

Overview of development

The aim of the LEP is to produce education and training benefits for students and maximize resources and opportunities for those operating as part of the LEP. The concept of the precinct is taken to mean co-location and collaboration amongst local education providers and stakeholders.

Co-location on one site (Nerrena Road Leongatha) where that is possible, and significant levels of co-operation and collaboration amongst local education providers and stakeholders

The LEP site is located on Neerena Road Leongatha. The site is currently occupied by the Leongatha Secondary College, Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE, Leongatha Specialist School and Education Centre Gippsland.
Progress to date

- Master Plan for redevelopment and relocation of infrastructure developed and approved
- Rebuild of South Gippsland Specialist School commenced
- GippsTAFE campus relocation and rebuild to commence soon as a “5 star green star” facility.
- Relocation and rebuild of Primary School and rebuild of Secondary College planned in readiness for development under the “Building Futures Program” and subject to budget allocations
- Skills Centre funded
- LEP invited to submit EOI for a Trade Training centre facility under new Federal government funding on the strength of existing partnership
- Work commenced on student educational pathways on site from primary school to University
- Monash University in partnership with Gippsland Southern Gippsland Health Services delivering nursing program in Leongatha
- Resource sharing amongst partners planned in to development
- Platform established for broader discussions about education, training and skills development across South Gippsland
- Recognition on Council structure planning

Economic and business impact of LEP - estimated

Students –1,756.
Employment – 176 staff
Turnover - $14m per annum
Proposed Capital development (LEP) - $40m+

Broader impacts:

- Education and training has emerged as the number one priority at both state and federal level because of its importance to training, skills development and future economic prosperity
- Education has shifted to be now a driver of economic policy rather than social policy
- Part of State government policy is shared infrastructure and working with local government to develop planning structures for education development
- Current and planned partners in the LEP provide a substantial part of the education, skills and training base and work force for South Gippsland so necessary for the continued growth of the region
- Education is a major business in terms of employment and investment in Leongatha (and South Gippsland) probably not far behind the Shire and Murray Goulburn Cooperative Limited in size