

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Can you believe we are nearly in the last quarter of the year? The countdown to, dare I say it, (shhh... santa time...) - with long summer nights, Aeroguard and sizzling bbqs ahead. My advice is to try to get us much sleep as you can now in readiness for the silly season because before you know it, there'll be invitations to every end of year function in the area and the over-indulgence fairies will wreak havoc on the 'get that summer body' diet you may have just started. I'm sure Councils up and down the coast are already discussing their street Christmas decorations and major supermarkets have chocolate santas ready to line up at the check-out shelves. It is exciting though, summer is definitely something to look forward to, especially in a beautiful region like the mid and north coasts of NSW.

However, there are community members amongst us who are going through such tragic personal circumstances that these simple joys in life are impossible to experience. Where end of year celebrations is just a stark reminder of what is missing. Domestic violence and uprooted families, homelessness, financial ruin—often accompanied with depression, substance abuse and crippling mental despair is no real cause for celebration. NORTEC staff witness community members who are experiencing these tragic circumstances on a daily basis. Real and practical support is essential in helping people through the hard times—because in these cases, it is not just about matching people to a job. A job always helps but without a house, a car, confidence or the will, finding a job is extremely hard to do.

The staff at NORTEC perform wonderful work every day—as evidenced by the many success stories we hear throughout our offices. I recently had the pleasure of interviewing Jenni Davies, Area Manager for the Coffs Harbour region for an article in this newsletter. In just the short time since July 1 when the five Coffs region offices opened, many inspiring stories have transpired of how staff have transformed the lives of clients. It is the real reason staff at NORTEC work in our industry—positively making a difference to personal lives and the community as a whole! Read some of our success stories in the interview with Jenni on page 2 of this newsletter. On page 3, 'are your staff working as a team or as a group?' - how to get the team spirit back in your company. Plus more community news, including results of the 2009 NORTEC Community Grants Initiative on the back page.

Happy reading and may we always look out for each other—because that's what really makes our region a paradise - for the whole community to appreciate and enjoy!

SUCCESS FOR SMALL BUSINESS START-UP

Paul Jameson, NORTEC's Business Incubator Manager, was recently asked by the Northern Star (tabloid paper for the Northern Rivers NSW) what are the 10 simple steps to starting a business.

"That's a lot of steps", he said. "But let me say first that I believe a lot of businesses are about networking. I think it is very important that these businesses build networks. That is one of the most effective things they can do".

"Training and education is vital as well", Paul says. "They need to become experts in all the various technical areas that are required for their business—including business skills. People who are new to business and coming into an area they don't understand or have had no training in are faced with becoming functionally competent. In this environment, people are fearful about being able to cope. Booking is a good example of this, once you know how it really isn't that difficult but people have a lot of fear about this sort of thing.

"The willingness to take risks is a big part of starting up a small business. So too is planning the business—we know that businesses that have business plans succeed much more often than those that don't".

Nurturing local entrepreneurs to recognise opportunity where others see chaos or confusion is Paul's area of expertise. Paul has worked with a vast and continuing number of entrepreneurs in the region, there are three NORTEC Business Incubator sites in the Northern Rivers (Mullumbimby, Ballina and Byron) and early next year NORTEC are expecting to open a further site in Lismore. For sixteen years NORTEC has been operating business incubation programs in the Northern Rivers region. As one of the early adopters of the program in Australia, NORTEC has earned a high reputation among incubator associations worldwide.

The objective of the program is to create wealth in the community through small business success stories and to generally foster small business. Rotating every three years, the incubators are seen as a sensible pathway to successful business and to help early stage business gain traction.

"We provide small flexible spaces that are easy in and easy out; that is, we don't ask people to sign a three-year lease or even a one-year lease", Paul explains. "We don't charge outgoing and we don't charge bonds. We do as much as we can to reduce start-up costs. Capital is one of the problems that start-up businesses have. We also provide business advice, training, networking opportunities and support in various areas of their business. NORTEC is all about economic capacity building in our regions and we're proactive about it!"

Article sourced from the Northern Star, 26th September

For more information regarding NORTEC Business Incubators visit www.nortecld.com.au

Inside This Newsletter:

- Page 1 — Introduction
 - Small Business Start-Up
- Page 2 — Meet the Team—
An introduction to Jenni Davies and NORTEC Coffs Harbour
- Page 3 — Are your staff working together in a *Group* or as a *Team*?
- Page 4 — Community Matters
 - Friendly Dogs and Ferocious Sharks?
 - NORTEC Community Grants
Results of the \$25,000 Grant Initiative



"There is nothing noble in being superior to some other person. The true nobility is in being superior to your previous self".
Indian proverb

MEET THE TEAM—AN INTRODUCTION TO JENNI DAVIES AND THE NORTEC STORY IN COFFS HARBOUR

Jenni Davies is NORTEC's Employment Services Area Manager for the Coffs Harbour region and her enthusiasm and passion for her work is evident in everything she does at NORTEC. We took a moment to ask Jenni a few questions about her work experiences at NORTEC so far.

How are you liking your role as NORTEC Area Manager for the Coffs Harbour region?

I am loving it. Being a part of NORTEC, the vision and values that underpin what we do and why we do it and NORTEC's commitment to our communities through sponsorships and staff volunteering their time speaks volumes and gives me great pride in working for this organisation.

As a veteran in employment services – over thirty years I am confident when I say that the services NORTEC provides in youth, NEIS, business incubators, training and labour hire make us a very marketable service in the local market.

What have been some of the challenges so far?

Probably the biggest one was ensuring that staff maintained the confidence in the management team while we were working through the processes for the new contract (Federal Government Job Services Australia), ensuring the necessary compliance and associated forms where in place, WEX (work experience), Intensive Activity, Account Management. The support has been fantastic. Thanks everyone for hanging in there.!

What have been some of the highlights?

I want to number them:-

1. Getting the job and meeting Merryn, Bruce, Sharon at Ballina and receiving such a warm welcome. From there it was a challenge to remember people's names along the way as we were setting up sites – everyone's commitment at this point will be a treasured memory. Not one complaint only smiles and friendliness when there were tight deadlines and some hiccups to be operational by opening D-Day 1 July.
2. Day one – all sites operational – amazing result – I had my doubts – but all absolutely perfect. This took a lot of time and dedication which many staff did not get the opportunity to see but trust me was done to perfection with many long days spent from those involved.
3. Dedication from staff – you know you are on a winner when in the first week a staff member gives her shoes to a jobseeker (who is on the witness protection program) to attend an interview. The interview done and start the next day! Then we have the opportunity in Ballina and Coffs Harbour to work with an insulation company who offers positions to our most disadvantaged jobseekers – those who are homeless, mental health issues, no vehicles, all the barriers and ... six weeks later one is a leading hand and two have told us this has changed their lives – and it has! This was a joint effort from several staff. Our staff are turning lives around – I love this one – a client housed by a women's refuge – her goal to secure accommodation. Account managers have arranged an immediate position with a laundry. As client has qualifications in drug and alcohol services and youth, a local youth service canvassed with a job offered when client regains their licence in February 2010. She now has a real future to look forward to when everything before was so dark. This is what this work is about.
4. Dorrigo commenced with a jobseeker client base of 4 people. Our staff got together and organised a BBQ Welcome Day. Over 60 business people and potential clients attended. The postal workers delivered our fliers for free. Business continues to grow and we have placed ½ of our current client base. The Chamber of Commerce is behind us and offered us a weekly spot to promote what NORTEC can do for Dorrigo. We even get the weekly newspaper delivered a day early. Now that is a warm country welcome, Dorrigo is a great town!

Belinda Hall (NORTEC's Corporate Services MManager) mentioned to me once her dream of seeing "This is NORTEC country" up in lights. In my opinion that is exactly what it is going to be (without needing the ego or billboard either).

What are your strategies for promoting team spirit amongst your staff in the five Coffs region offices?

The main thing is that we do not work in isolation. For example, our Dorrigo site is open one day per week with one staff member but she is never alone. All of our staff work between various sites to get a feel for what happens in a small and large site. The morning huddle is held in Coffs Harbour and minutes are sent to all sites. Monthly meetings are attended by all staff across the region. Contact between staff at all sites happens daily and information is freely shared. On 9 October we are holding a 'best practice' day. All staff will embrace a part of the contract, for example, direct registration, initial assessment – and deliver this to other staff. From there each person will be responsible for providing regular updates on their area of expertise. We hold regular international lunch days where we get to display our culinary talents to others and have a bit of fun. Birthdays are celebrated in a buddy system – the buddy supplies the cake on the day and takes care of making sure it is a fun day. And there is a regular Friday afternoon drink for those who are available, to celebrate the week that was.

Have you always lived in the Coffs region?

No I am a Queenslander – Redcliffe born and a true Broncos supporter. I moved to Coffs when my daughters were very young and now live in Bellingen. For those of you who have visited this area you will know why I choose to live here. Almost a local having lived here for 15 years now.

What do you do to relax, any hobbies or special interests?

Until I became a grandmother 3 years ago my answer would of been slightly more exciting – travel, deep sea fishing, kayaking, anything to do with the water. These days it is anything my oldest granddaughter wants to do (or I think she might like to do) - Circus, parks, feeding the ducks, planting seedlings, cooking cakes.

What has been the most exciting thing to happen to you in your life?

As above – being with Gemma from the moment she was born on 3/7/2006.

If you had the power to change one thing to make the world a better place, what would that be?

The Government's ever changing policies to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal people. It is my opinion that we are going around in circles with no clear developments to make a difference. This is an area I am passionate about.

Jenni Davies, NORTEC Area Manager for the Coffs Harbour region.



The Coffs region has five NORTEC offices—in Nambucca, Bellingen, Dorrigo, Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour. You can call them on 1800 667 832 or visit www.nortecld.com.au for more information on NORTEC.

ARE YOUR STAFF WORKING TOGETHER IN A *GROUP* OR A *TEAM*?

The very best managers are those who can gather together a group of individuals and mould them into a team. There is a distinct difference between pulling together a group of individuals to work on a project and developing a cohesive team. Why?

The reason you pull together a team is to accomplish bigger goals than any that would be possible for the individual working alone.

You aim to build a climate of trust. You want the team to work together, pooling individual experiences, skills, talents and insights to achieve the very best performances, results and victories in the workplace and/or marketplace.

Ten key differentials to mould your people into a pro-active and productive team:

1. Understandings

In a group, members think they are grouped together for administrative purposes only. Individuals can sometimes be at cross purposes with others.

In a team, members recognise their independence and understand both personal and team goals are best accomplished with mutual support. Time is not wasted struggling over "turf" or attempting personal gain at the expense of others.

2. Ownership

In a group, members tend to focus on themselves because they are not sufficiently involved in planning the unit's objectives. They approach their job simply as a hired hand. "Castle building" is common.

In a team, members feel a sense of ownership for their jobs and unit, because they are committed to values-based common goals that they helped establish.

3. Creativity and contribution

In a group, members are told what to do rather than being asked what the best approach would be. Suggestions and creativity are not encouraged.

In a team, members contribute to the organisation's success by applying their unique talents, knowledge and creativity to team objectives.

4. Trust

In a group, members distrust the motives of colleagues because they do not understand the role of other members. Expressions of opinion or disagreement are considered divisive or non-supportive.

In a team, members work in a climate of trust and are encouraged to openly express ideas, opinions, disagreements and feelings. Questions are welcomed.

5. Common understandings

In a group, members are so cautious about what they say that real understanding is not possible. Game playing may occur and communication traps may be set to catch the unwary.

6. Personal development

In a group, members receive good training but are limited in applying it to the job by their manager or other group members.

In a team, members are encouraged to continually develop skills and apply what they learn on the job. They perceive they have the support of the team.

7. Conflict resolution

In a group, members find themselves in conflict situations they don't know how to resolve. Their supervisor/leader may put off intervention until serious damage is done, i.e. a crisis situation.

In a team, members realise conflict is a normal aspect of human interaction but they view such situations as an opportunity for new ideas and creativity. They work to resolve conflict quickly and constructively.

8. Participative decision making

In a group, members may or may not participate in decisions affecting the team. Conformity often appears more important than positive results. Win/lose situations are common.

In a team, members participate in decisions affecting the team but understand their leader must make a final ruling whenever the team can't decide, or an emergency exists. Positive win/win results are the goal at all times.

9. Clear leadership

In a group, members tend to work in an unstructured environment with undetermined standards of performance. Leaders don't walk the talk and tend to lead from behind a desk.

In a team, members work in a structured environment. They know what boundaries exist and who has final authority. The leader sets agreed high standards of performance and he/she is respected via active, willing participation.

10. Commitment

In a group, members are uncommitted towards excellence and personal pride. Performance levels tend to be mediocre. Staff turnover is high because talented individuals quickly see that:

- (a) personal expectations are not being fulfilled;
- (b) they are not learning and growing from others; and
- (c) they are not working with the best people.

In a team, only those committed to excellence are hired. Prospective team members are queuing at the door to be recruited on the basis of their high levels of hard and soft skill sets.

Everyone works together in a harmonious environment.

(article sourced from nswbusinesschamber.com.au)

NORTEC can deliver team workplace personality profile workshops (DISC profile) to encourage harmonious work teams in your company. For more information email eliot.cooper@nortecld.com.au or call Eliot on 07 5506 3000

Please note—NORTEC provides this information for reference only, sourced from relevant websites and publications.

Waggin' the tail for Disability Employment Services

As part of NORTEC's strict compliance with the Federal Government funded Disability Employment Services program—a program that helps jobseekers with disabilities find work—NORTEC underwent a recent audit against the 12 Standards of Disability Services.

Mary Echberg the assessor and Paul Larcombe the Consumer Technical Expert from NCS International, visited the NORTEC offices for two days to assess our delivery of the program. Paul Larcombe is sight challenged so the office was also visited by his seeing-eye dog, Fletcher. Being a guide dog, staff were not allowed to pat him while on his lead, which was hard — Fletcher had real furry charm! Paul was lovely enough though to allow Fletcher off his lead for five minutes before leaving on the second day and he had a right royal time frolicking between enthusiastic pats and “aaaaw, you're such a good doggie aren't you Fletcher?” He left in a flurry of fur and a wagging tail.



Fletcher with his owner, Paul Larcombe

NORTEC provide employment placement support services for job-seekers who have minor disabilities. Financial incentives and workplace support is provided to both the business and their new employee to ensure new employees are able to carry out their work to workplace standards. For more information contact Sophie Ellis at NORTEC on 0408 682 571

NORTEC are proud of our Labour Hire Employee, Syb Mundy

Syb Mundy is a Labour Hire employee at NORTEC currently working on construction projects at Tweed River High School.

NORTEC Labour Hire Senior Recruitment Consultant, Vaughan Penfold was chuffed to read in the Gold Coast Bulletin that Syb had received a Gold Coast Honours Award for Courage.

Awards for courage don't come easy either! Syb received his for pulling out his 13-year old cousin from the jaws of a 5m white pointer shark at a popular Tasmanian surf beach last January. After pulling Hannah on to his surfboard, Syb punched the shark in the head, forcing it to let go of her leg. He then manoeuvred the board to keep the shark in sight, while a perfect wave began building behind them. As the pair caught the wave to shore, onlookers said the shark stayed right on their tail until it could go no further. After reaching the shore Syb then carried Hannah onto the beach where a doctor rushed to her aid.

A humble hero and a hard working employee at NORTEC Labour Hire— according to Vaughan you couldn't find a nicer bloke either. Being a passionate board rider himself, Vaughan might want to take Syb with him next time he heads to the surf, just in case!



Syb: Humble hero

The \$25,000 Community Grants Initiative that NORTEC Launched in July this year has now been finalised. From the 'flood' of applications assessed the final decision was with the community organisations that could utilise the funding to benefit the community the most. The following community organisations across our regions received funding from the 2009 NORTEC Community Grants Initiative:

Coffs Harbour (Panel members – Leonie Kennedy Regional Industry Career Advisor NSW Business Chamber, Wayne Lowe Nambucca Shire Council, Paul Bennett NORTEC CEO and Jenni Davies NORTEC Area Manager)

Coffs Harbour Women's Health Centre - \$3000 for a Domestic Violence Educational DVD aimed at helping new immigrants and indigenous women.

Nambucca Valley Youth Services – \$2000 awarded for a 'Creative Design' project – Operating every Tuesday from Nambucca Youth Centre, for disadvantaged young persons (16-20yrs) career/creative skills and social/life support with links to Psychologists, GPs, Youth workers etc.

Clarence (Panel Members – Sue Hughes, Local Business Representative, John Warden, Editor Clarence Valley Review Newspaper, Paul Bennett and Shane Hogan NORTEC Area Manager)

North Coast Computer Project - \$4,000 to regenerate the Ehub at Ngaru Village, Pippi Beach Yamba by installing up to date computers with VOIP capability to allow residents to access Internet and make telephone calls.

Grafton Showgrounds Recreation and Reserve Trust - \$1,000 to help provide a facelift to the Grafton Showgrounds for ongoing community events.

Richmond (Panel Members - Jenny Dowell Lismore Mayor, Kieran O'Grady Local Business Representative, Richard Hughes NORTEC Board and Shane Hogan from NORTEC)

Lismore Neighbourhood Centre - \$4,100 in endeavours with the distribution of food parcels to economically disadvantaged families.

Windara Communities Ltd – \$900 for development of a garden maintenance service and engaging people with disabilities.

North Coast (Panel Members - Phil Silver Mayor of Ballina, Louise Owen President Lennox Heads Chamber of Commerce, Don Haines NORTEC Board and Steve Moore NORTEC Area Manager).

Byron Bay Youth Services - \$3,000 towards the establishment of Friday Night YAC – entertainment and events for 12-17 year olds.

St Andrews Ballina - \$1,000 towards a mural project, run in conjunction with three local schools, at their Aged Care facility.

Mullumbimby Community Garden - \$1,000 for a Cob Oven to be installed in the Community Garden for shared local community events.

Tweed (Panel Members – Maggie Anne Leybourne Secretary Tweed Chamber of Commerce, Leslie Buckley Cultural Officer Tweed Shire, Henk Owerling NORTEC Chair and Steve Moore).

Tweed Palliative Support - \$1,000 to assist with Governance training required to strengthen the ability of the organisation to provide required care.

Interaction Adventure Based Counselling - \$1500 towards giving young people who have suffered trauma an opportunity to develop skills and develop a new outlook on life through group adventure based activities.

Things2do – \$1,000 for the purchase of music equipment for the Banora Point Community Centre Youth Program, for youth events and activities on the Tweed.

Friends of Wollumbin Landcare – \$1,000 To assist with the purchase of equipment for the land care on the Tweed River between Byangum and Uki. Hastings Point Dune Care- \$500 to assist with purchase of labels that will be made from logs to identify the local plants.

As you can see the \$25,000 was spread between diverse organisations and the community benefits will be ongoing in all the regions. NORTEC will be in close contact with all of the above organisations regarding their worthwhile projects.

NORTEC Business Incubators, NORTEC Youth Services and NORTEC Volunteering are initiatives of NORTEC Employment and Training Ltd—as part of our commitment to building stronger regional communities.