



*Narrogin Tertiary Education Initiative*

*FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT*

*– Stage 2*

*“Key Considerations”*

*February 2007*

*love the life*

*Funded by the Wheatbelt Development Commission*



© Town of Narrogin - 2006

This work is copyright.

Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior permission from the Town of Narrogin.

Requests should be addressed to:

**The Chief Executive Officer  
Town of Narrogin  
89 Earl Street  
Narrogin WA 6312**

### **Disclaimer**

We advise that neither the Town of Narrogin nor iNtelligent Learning Management Systems, including any Councillor, Employee or Officer undertakes responsibility in any way whatsoever to any person in respect of this document, including any errors or omissions therein, arising through negligence or otherwise however caused.

# *Contents*

<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	Report format	
1.2	Findings	
1.3	Feasibility	
<b>2.</b>	<b>KEY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	Universities Centre Access Group Inc	
2.2	Seed funding application	
2.3	University places	
2.4	Undergraduate courses	
2.5	Steering Committee for Nursing	
2.6	Steering Committee for Undergraduate Courses (Excl Nursing)	
2.7	Presentation material – Stage 3	
2.8	Education services summit	
2.9	Partnership	
2.10	Asset condition audit	
2.11	Community consultation	
<b>3.</b>	<b>PROPOSED GOVERNANCE BY THE WDC</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1	Preamble	
3.2	Reasons and rationale	
<b>4.</b>	<b>THE NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>14</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Reporting Format

Stages 1 and 2 of the Study were undertaken during the period July to December 2006. Each stage was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of a project brief prepared by the Town of Narrogin and guiding principles outlined in a methodology approved by NUTEC.

During discussions in January 2007, the Town of Narrogin and the Wheatbelt Development Commission authorized the following reporting format for the Study:

- ✚ **DOCUMENT NO 1** – Feasibility Study Report – Stage 1 (provided under separate cover)
- ✚ **DOCUMENT NO 2** – Feasibility Study Report – Stage 2 – (this document)

#### *Key Considerations to progress the Narrogin Tertiary Education Initiative*

The "**key considerations**" outlined below have been prepared to assist NUTEC, the Town of Narrogin and the Wheatbelt Development Commission to determine a pathway to progress the initiative if a formal approval is given to the above recommendation and as a consequence, a formal determination is made by the parties to proceed.

### 1.2 Findings – Feasibility Study (Extracted from the Stage 1 Report)

The following key findings of the analysis and assessment processes undertaken throughout the Study are outlined below:

- ❖ **NEED** – Based on principles of equity of opportunity, viability and sustainability, the need for a universities centre in Narrogin **is demonstrated** in this document.
- ❖ **JUSTIFICATION** – Based on investigations, information collected and collated and consultations held with interested parties during the Study, there **is justification** for the creation of a local university centre in Narrogin, similar to the Geraldton University Centre (GUC).

However, it should also be stated that a university campus in the traditional sense involving a multi billion investment in infrastructure is not a need that could be justified in Narrogin.

- ❖ **PREFERRED MODEL** – The preferred model for the proposed university centre in Narrogin is a cross sectoral initiative that involves secondary schools, VET, TAFE and universities together in a multi-partnership arrangement with industry, local business and local/regional/state government.

#### ***Principles underpinning the model –***

- ***Equity of Opportunity*** – There is a requirement for students accessing the Narrogin Education District to have access to education and training opportunities equivalent to students residing in WA coastal cities based on the Western Australian Education Framework “Excellence in Education”.
- ***Local Learning Pathways*** – There is a need to enhance ‘*local learning pathways within the district*’ to allow students to progress from primary education to secondary education and then tertiary education services without moving away from home or the district.
- ***Undergraduate course curricula*** – The key pre-requisites are:
  - Courses must meet the needs of local residents, including a significant population of Indigenous Australians;
  - Wherever possible, they will add value to the foundations of learning pathways commenced during secondary and TAFE studies; and,
  - Wherever necessary, they need to be accessible to prospective students via purpose designed enabling programs.

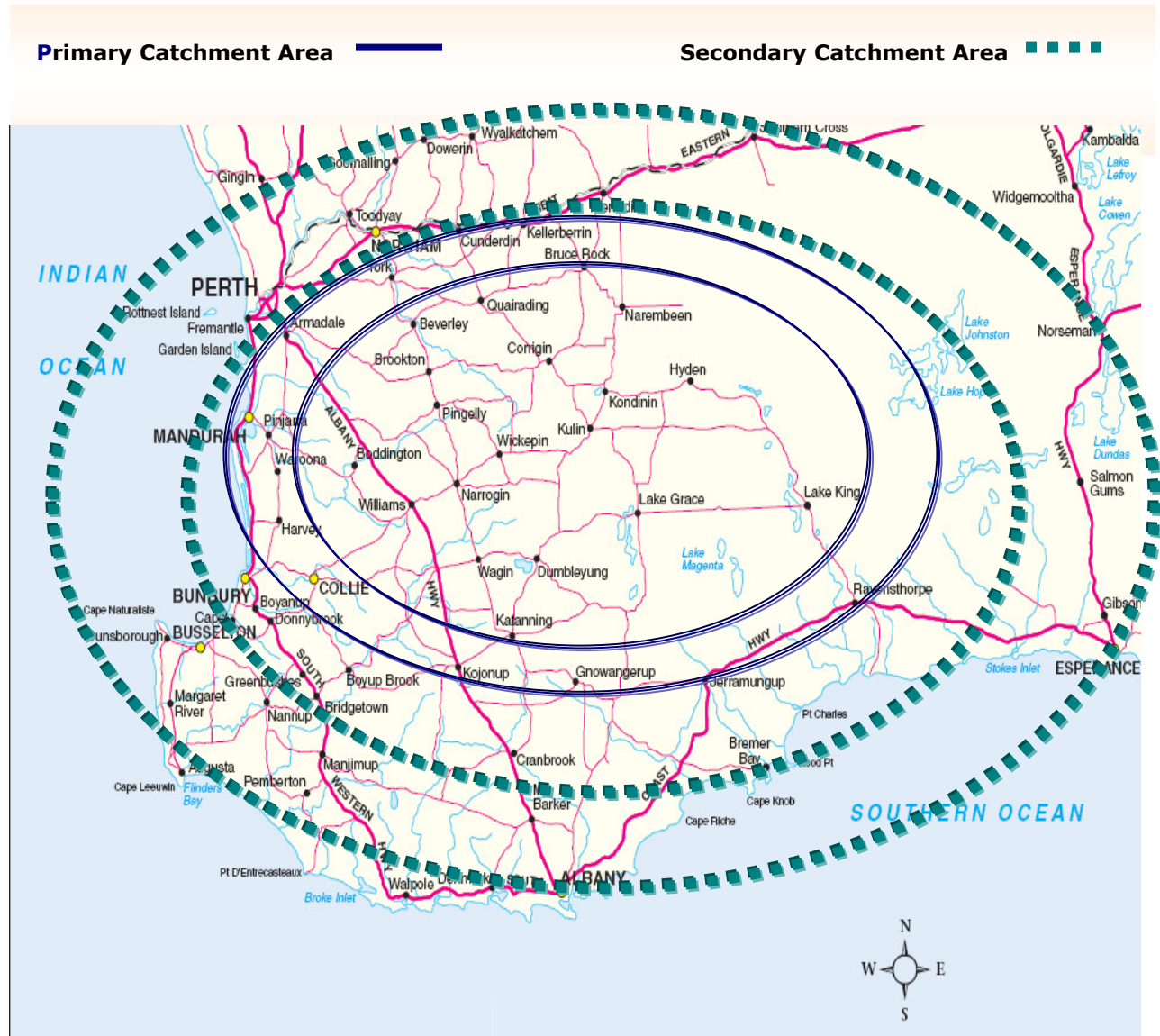
### **1.3 Feasibility**

The analysis and assessment processes undertaken throughout the Feasibility Study have demonstrated the need and justification for the future establishment of a universities centre in Narrogin.

***These findings gave rise to the definition of a recommendation below that a Universities Centre development is feasible in the Town of Narrogin along the lines of the Geraldton Universities Centre (GUC).***

**Based on research and consultations undertaken during the Feasibility Study – detailed below, it is recommended that a Universities Centre be developed in the Town of Narrogin along the lines of the Geraldton Universities Centre (GUC). It is also proposed that the focus for the Centre is the Wheatbelt South Region area shown in Diagram 1 below.**

**Diagram 1 - Proposed Catchment Areas - Proposed Universities Centre, Narrogin**



## **2. KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

The following key considerations have been prepared to assist NUTEC, the Town of Narrogin and the Wheatbelt Development Commission to determine a pathway to progress the initiative if a formal approval is given to the above recommendation and as a consequence, a formal determination is made by the parties to proceed:

### **2.1 UNIVERSITIES CENTRE ACCESS GROUP INC –**

***That a community based Universities Centre Access Group be formed as an incorporated body with a Board of Directors to plan Stage 2 and subsequent stages of the project. The formation of the Group should be undertaken under the auspices of the Wheatbelt Development Commission – refer item 3 below for further details.***

The membership of the Board could include:

- A representative of the Wheatbelt Development Commission;
- A representative of the Town of Narrogin;
- A representative of each University;
- The District Director, Narrogin District Education Office;
- The Regional Manager, Southern Region TAFEWA – Narrogin Campus;
- The Principal, Western Australian College of Agriculture – Narrogin;
- The Principal, Narrogin Senior High School;
- One or more community and industry representatives as deemed appropriate; and,
- The Group should be authorized to appoint a Chair from the membership shown above.

### **2.2 SEED FUNDING APPLICATION –**

***That under the auspices of the Universities Centre Access Group, priority be given to the preparation and submission of funding applications for the Stage 3 project development on the basis that the State Government of Western Australia, via the Wheatbelt Development Commission, provides initial 'seed funding' for the preparation of the funding applications and the establishment and operation of the Group for an initial one year period. The Commonwealth's Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund (CASR) is a primary target for Stage 2 project development funding.***

### **2.3 UNIVERSITY PLACES –**

***That the Universities Centre Access Group negotiates with the Australian Government with the support of the Western Australian Government for thirty (30) Commonwealth places (pipelined) to enable a viable load from the first year of operation in 2008.***

## 2.4 **UNDERGRADUATE COURSES** –

***That the following undergraduate courses be offered through the Universities Centre in Narrogin:***

- (i) **SCIENCE (NURSING)** – utilising the mathematics and science learning pathway provided by the Narrogin Senior High School and offered as an extension of the Nursing Course provided by Southern Region TAFEWA – Narrogin Campus and in partnership with:
  - Wheatbelt Health Region of Western Australia; and,
  - Community, health and aged care providers.
  
- (ii) **CREATIVE INDUSTRIES (INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA)** – to be offered as an extension of the Diploma of Multimedia, Southern Region TAFEWA – Narrogin Campus and the arts, technology and enterprise learning pathway provided by the Narrogin Senior High School.
  
- (iii) **ENGINEERING (BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION)** – to be offered as an extension of the Diploma of Building, Southern Region TAFEWA – Narrogin Campus and in response to local community based survey research, including regional initiatives such as the mining operations in Boddington and Ravensthorpe.
  
- (iv) **COMMERCE (BUSINESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING)** – to be offered in accord with local community based survey research - on the understanding that current facilities and resources of the Southern Region TAFEWA – Narrogin Campus are upgraded to cater for Certificates III, IV and a Diploma in Business Studies. Learning strategies and programs could be planned to take advantage of innovative on-line learning techniques using electronic portals and voice over internet protocol (VoIP) technologies.
  
- (v) **AGRICULTURE** - to be offered as an extension of the Diploma course provided by Southern Region TAFEWA – Narrogin Campus and in conjunction with the Western Australian College of Agriculture – Narrogin. Consideration should also be given to introducing food science and technology programs that involve an understanding of the basic sciences and the application of this knowledge to foods from the point of production, through handling, processing, preservation, distribution and marketing, up to consumption and utilization by consumers. These programs are concerned with food processes, food commodities, food composition and food quality (including sensory properties, safety and nutritional value).

*[Note – food science and technology were identified as priority educational and training areas following research and subsequent consultations with the Honourable Kim Chance Chance, MLC, Minister for Agriculture and Food; Forestry; the Midwest and Wheatbelt and representatives of the Wheatbelt Development Commission].*

**(vi) EDUCATION & TRAINING – to include:**

- Early childhood development;
- Healthy Ageing initiatives, including for example, living longer, living stronger and other exercise in disease and ageing programs that engage older members of the community in healthy living – the program will require support from medical practitioners, health professionals including nurses, allied health and Indigenous health workers, etc, involved in the provision of services to the elderly; and,
- Health and physical education – using existing facilities and infrastructure  
*[To be offered as an extension of the health and physical education learning pathways provided by the Narrogin Senior High School and in response to the current availability of high quality recreational and sporting amenities in the Town of Narrogin].*

**(vii) TERTIARY ENABLING PROGRAMS – to include:**

- Universities Centre Preparation Course
  - Special Tertiary Admissions Test
- [To be purpose designed by the participating universities in association with the Universities Centre Access Group to provide opportunities for individuals including those without a Tertiary Entrance qualification].*

**2.5 STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NURSING –**

***That a representative Steering Committee for Nursing, under the auspices of the Universities Centre Access Group, be formed - its chair will be appointed by Board Members of the Group.***

It is anticipated that, in addition to 'local' representation, the Steering Committee for Nursing will include representative members of the Wheatbelt Health Region, the Department of Health of Western Australia and representatives of Community, health and aged care providers.

**2.6 STEERING COMMITTEE FOR UNDERGRADUATE COURSES (Excluding Nursing) -**

***That a representative Steering Committee for Undergraduate Courses (excluding Nursing) be formed under the auspices of the Universities Centre Access Group - its chair will be appointed by Board Members of the Group.***

**2.7 PRESENTATION MATERIAL – STAGE 3 –**

***That under the auspices of the Universities Centre Access Group, priority is given to the preparation of appropriate material for presentation and submission to interested parties during Stage 3 of the project.***

**2.8 EDUCATION SERVICES SUMMIT –**

*That a number of universities who have a presence in Western Australia and an interest in the Wheatbelt Region of the State be invited to Narrogin to participate in an Education Services Summit prior to becoming partners in the project.*

**2.9 PARTNERSHIP –**

*That an agreement is reached with each university prior joining a partnership with the Universities Centre Access Group for the advancement and implementation of the project.*

**2.10 ASSET CONDITION AUDIT –**

*That the Town of Narrogin undertakes a review of current assets, facilities and infrastructure for prospective inclusion in the development of the project – local amenities could be nominated for academic study, student accommodation, sporting and cultural pursuits, etc.*

**2.11 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT –**

*That the recommendations outlined in this report be endorsed by all stakeholders during processes of community consultation and engagement.*

### **3. PROPOSED GOVERNANCE BY THE WDC**

#### **3.1 Preamble**

The need to consider the future governance of the NUTEC initiative was identified as a priority item for consideration if a formal approval is given to the feasibility of the initiative and as a consequence, a formal determination is made by the parties to proceed.

The need to consider the future governance of the initiative was identified during the research and consultation processes undertaken during the Study. Based on the outcomes of these activities, it is proposed that the future governance of the initiative is transferred from the Town of Narrogin to the Wheatbelt Development Commission. The reasons and rationale for this proposal are addressed below.

**The proposed transfer is offered on the clear and unconditional understanding that the Town of Narrogin is the nominated location for the Universities Centre in the South Wheatbelt Region.**

#### **3.2 Reasons and Rationale**

The need to consider the future governance of the initiative was identified during the research and consultation processes undertaken during the Study. Based on the outcomes of these activities, it is proposed that the future governance of the initiative is transferred from the Town of Narrogin to the Wheatbelt Development Commission. The reasons and rationale for this proposal are addressed below.

##### **(i) ALIGNMENT AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE GERALDTON UNIVERSITIES CENTRE (GUC) MODEL**

Analysis, assessment and consultation activities undertaken during the feasibility study demonstrated the need for the NUTEC initiative to be aligned with the GUC model to ensure optimum opportunities for future progress. The GUC model is an excellent example of a community led endeavour that involves a partnership with three universities. It is widely regarded as a model for replication throughout Australia and it is particularly relevant as the preferred model for the NUTEC initiative.

The Mid West Development Commission (MWDC) has provided governance, leadership and guidance from the outset and continues to have major, on-going contributions to the success of the GUC.

During consultations, representatives of the MWDC and the GUC advised that the leadership role played by the regional government authority (the MWDC) was pivotal to the successful establishment of the GUC during the period 2000 to 2002 and is an integral element of its ongoing success.

***On this basis, it may be reasonable to state that the success of the NUTEC initiative in terms of implementing a project based on a preferred GUC model will only be possible and achievable if the governance of the initiative is transferred from the Town of Narrogin to the Wheatbelt Development Commission.***

**(ii) DEMAND FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION SERVICES - ONLY VALID IN A REGIONAL CONTEXT**

Based on research undertaken during the feasibility study, it is reasonable to state that the demand for tertiary education services (as per the NUTEC initiative) is only valid in a regional context. As a consequence, the proposed geographical catchment for the initiative as outlined **Diagram 1** above, is a designated regional area that is well beyond the influence of the Town and Shire of Narrogin.

***On this basis, it may be reasonable to state that:***

- ***The feasibility of the NUTEC initiative (as with any other initiative involving the provision of services) is dependent on the presence of a valid demand for the services.***
- ***In the case of the NUTEC initiative, demand is only valid in a regional context (as set out in the Stage 1 Report).***
- ***The regional context and its' associated geographical catchment area are beyond the direct influence, governance and operations of the Town and Shire of Narrogin.***

**NOTE**

The capacity to demonstrate a valid demand for services is one of the items defined in the Shoemaker et al study's twelve point scale for testing the feasibility for a multi-partner campus – refer section 3.3 - item [12] of the Stage 1 Report.

**(iii) INCREASED SCOPE TO SECURE PROJECT FUNDING**

It is proposed that under the auspices of a proposed Universities Centre Access Group, priority be given to the preparation and submission of funding applications for the Stage 3 project development on the basis that the State Government of Western Australia, via the Wheatbelt Development Commission, provides initial 'seed funding' for the preparation of the funding applications and the establishment and operation of the Group for an initial one year period.

***Based on discussions with the Town of Narrogin, it is reasonable to state that funding for an initial period to cover the cost of preparing 'seed funding' applications is beyond the scope of the operating budget of the Town of Narrogin.***

**(iv) STATE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED TRANSFER**

In November 2006 the transfer of the NUTEC initiative from the Town of Narrogin to the Wheatbelt Development Commission was canvassed with the Honourable Kim Chance, MLC, Minister for Agriculture and Food; Forestry; the Mid West and Wheatbelt and Mr David Singe, Director (Chief Executive Officer) Wheatbelt Development Commission.

Comments offered in terms of the State Government's support for the NUTEC initiative and the proposed transfer of the project to the Commission. The CEO of the WDC advised that additional resources will need to be identified or changes made to the Commission strategic priorities in order for the NUTEC initiative to proceed to the next stage – that is post feasibility. Mr Singe also advised that he is willing to make representations to the Minister in respect of this matter. The Minister acknowledged the situation and the need for additional resources to be made available.

***On this basis, it may be reasonable to conclude that there is support for the transfer of the NUTEC initiative from the Town of Narrogin to the Wheatbelt Development Commission.***

**(v) FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY**

The last decade has seen a strong move to improve access to and participation in higher education across Australia and, in particular, in regional Australia through new campus development. The emphasis within Federal Government policy is that:

***...<sup>1</sup> regional communities will have the opportunity to propose their own plans for dealing with the challenges and opportunities confronting them. The government will stand by as a partner to help communities realise these plans.....***

***On this basis, it may be reasonable to state that the transfer of the NUTEC initiative from the Town of Narrogin to the WDC is a consequential outcome of basing the feasibility of the project on a regional context to create a regional community as referred to above.***

---

<sup>1</sup> Reference – Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training – Specialisation and Regional Development 2002

#### 4. THE NEXT STEPS

This document will be presented with the Stage 1 Report to Councillor Don Ennis, NUTEC Chairperson and representatives of the Town of Narrogin and the WDC in the first instance.

As a result of these discussions, it may be agreed that the following '*next steps*' could be taken to progress the project:

##### **STEP 1 –**

Presentation of the documents, including findings relative to the feasibility of the initiative as outlined in Document No 1 and the key considerations outlined in Document No 2, to **NUTEC Members**.

##### **STEP 2 –**

Presentation of the documents, including findings relative to the feasibility of the initiative as outlined in Document No 1 and the key considerations outlined in Document No 2, to **Members of the WDC Education Committee**.

##### **STEP 3 –**

Presentation of the documents, including findings relative to the feasibility of the initiative as outlined in Document No 1 and the "**key considerations**" outlined in Document No 2, to **Councillors of the Town and Shire of Narrogin**.

Subject to advice and guidance offered by the parties nominated in Steps 1 to 3, it is anticipated that plans will be made to undertake a consultation plan to:

- Seek comments from the communities within the designated catchment area during a period of Public Comment.
- Seek further endorsement from political and government representatives