

Sutherland Shire Council (SSC) would like to bring to the attention of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Science and Innovation, the results of our successful and innovative Economic Development (ED) Model.

The ED Model evolved from council's long term strategic planning process known as *Shape the Shire – Our Guide for Shaping the Shire to 2030*.

The *Shape the Shire* was an ambitious program of research and community consultation aimed at developing a comprehensive long term whole-of-Shire strategic plan.

In 1997, council created the Economic Development Committee (EDC) with members drawn from the local business community and council representatives. The aim was to create an ED model from the ground up – a model designed by the local business community to help drive economic growth and create jobs in our region.

Following consultation and research, the ED Model was finalised in 2000. Highlights included:

- Establishment of a business incubator/ accelerator
- Need for a one-stop-shop business advisory and export centre for SME's
- Establishment of a university presence in the Shire
- Strengthen links with TAFE, community colleges and high schools
- Facilitate and promote tourism
- Develop a newsletter for the Shire's business community
- Create a life long learning culture
- Build a business database for research and communication purposes
- Identify and nurture business clusters

In five short years, Sutherland Shire Council has achieved all of these initiatives.

Why was the ED Model developed?

Sutherland Shire is seen by many as primarily a residential area and a place where people live, but residents travel elsewhere to work. The Shire has only a handful of large-scale employers with the vast majority on the remainder being small businesses, with 75% employing less than five people.

On a typical workday in the Shire, more than 65,000 people (two thirds of the working residents) leave by car and public transport to go to their place of work. This mass exodus takes money out of the local economy and has detrimental environmental and social impacts.

Council saw the need to arrest this trend and the hence the EDC was established and a strategic and integrated ED model was developed.

A snapshot of our initiatives

\$5M training, education and business development precinct	<p>On Monday 17 November 2003, a new \$5M education, training and business development precinct was opened in southern Sydney.</p> <p>Strong three-way partnership between Sutherland Shire Council, TAFE and the University of Wollongong (UOW).</p> <p>First university presence in southern Sydney and a world-class business accelerator for small and medium sized enterprises, in new premises located at the LOFTUS TAFE campus.</p> <p>The SSHED has linked with TAFE and local high schools on student and work experience programs.</p>
SSHED Business Accelerator	<p>Newly created \$2.4M SSHED Business Accelerator. 22 fully provisioned offices including sophisticated IT platform.</p> <p>18 entrepreneurs have set up in the SSHED and 50 new jobs have been created.</p> <p>Tenants benefit from workshops, networking, mentoring and coaching programs.</p>
Southern Sydney Business Development Centre	<p>“One-stop-shop” brings together, under one roof, various local, state and federal government agencies including Austrade and DSRD. 25 local businesses join Austrade’s TradeStart program each year.</p> <p>Also houses Business Enterprise Centre, a community owned company, helping local businesses to grow. Assist 11,000 southern Sydney businesses every year. 60 businesses so far have graduated from the “Growing Business” mentor program.</p>

Clusters	<p>SSC's business cluster program has been running for two years and is making a difference to the firms and sectors involved.</p> <p>The program is currently focusing on the local marine services and the IT sector. Programs are in development for other sectors.</p>
Marine Cluster	<p>In response to the gradual shut-down of marine businesses in Sydney Harbour, an opportunity emerged for the industry in the southern Sydney region.</p> <p>SSC in cooperation with NSW state government (DSRD and Waterways NSW), identified through the <i>SSC Business Database</i>, 180 local marine-based businesses.</p> <p>Council facilitated and encouraged the formation of an association called the "Sutherland Shire Marine Association Inc." Current membership 60 and a comprehensive directory has just been printed.</p> <p>Aims of the marine cluster are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve communications between the marine sector and the government • preserve and grow the local marine services sector • to work towards EPA best practice for waterfront industry • promote collaborative marketing activities, and • encourage next-generation jobs growth through group training and apprenticeships. <p>The SSMA received a DoTARS grant to conduct a jobs assessment and training needs study. TAFE, NSW DSRD and Waterways NSW were partners in the study.</p>
IT Cluster	<p>The Shire has around 200 IT businesses, the majority being small and home-based businesses, with a smattering of larger employers and firms trading internationally.</p> <p>In response to this sector's stated needs for networking and marketing assistance, council has facilitated several "networking" and marketing development workshops. The sector's direction is being guided by a steering committee with support from council.</p>

<p>Business Database</p>	<p>The SSC Business Database is a purpose-built application for EDC information management. Developed using in-house resources and is sourced from the Yellow Pages, other proprietorial databases and is supplemented by local research.</p> <p>This invaluable tool allows SSC to effectively identify and communicate directly with segments of the local business community. Also used to qualify and target the distribution of council's business newsletters (Business News) and other business information.</p> <p>The database is currently being used to develop directories for the Marine cluster, IT cluster and the Tourism sector, and exploratory research into other clusters. Council has now employed a Research Officer to manage and grow the Business Database.</p>
<p>Tourism</p>	<p>SSC has employed a Tourism Officer to promote Sutherland Shire as a tourism destination and to assist develop the local tourism industry.</p> <p>Tourism partners have an active voice in strategy and direction through council's Tourism sub-committee. The aim is to foster tourism in Sutherland Shire and create a vibrant local lifestyle for residents and visitors alike.</p> <p>Council has built strong working relationships with Tourism NSW and National Parks and Wildlife, as well as other councils in Greater Sydney. Since council has been more actively involved in the tourism industry Sutherland Shire, (also known as the "Cronulla Coast"), has begun to <i>muscle in</i> on Sydney's tourism scene.</p>

The SSHED

The SSHED Business Accelerator supports businesses wanting to grow. Our aim is to fast track the pace of business growth and increase the possibility of success through workshops, networking, mentoring and coaching.

Since opening the doors, 18 entrepreneurs have set up businesses in the SSHED. Most of these businesses were either working from home or in grossly inadequate accommodation that was counter productive in a business growth phase. Today, more than 50 new jobs have been created, many of which have required new skills.

A number of our current tenants are in the science/technology/innovation area, including;

Business Name	Description
BANGitUP.com www.bangitup.com	Finding tradespeople and materials faster, smarter and easier – online.
GetData Software Development Company www.getdata.com	Data recovery software. Recently won Consensus Software Award for their product “Recover my files”.
Pacific Teleports www.pacificteleports.com	Delivers high quality, fully customised, satellite-based telecommunications solutions to the Pacific region.
Pure Hacking www.purehacking.com.au	A leading internet security firm that conducts permission-based hacking and assists corporations build safer and more secure online systems.
Switch IT www.switchit.com	A team of software developers specialising in web, intranet and extranet design and implementation

Three businesses have graduated from the SSHED program including Mobile Messenger, specialising in SMS and MMS services, which experienced a 2000% increase, while Supermodels Pty Ltd, specialists in 3D architecture modelling, saw staff grow 300%.

The SSHED is in the “innovation” business. As part of our role, we help tenants commercialise ideas and products and ensure sustainability.

The networking and first-class SSHED facilities allow businesses to grow from an idea through to development of a business plan, all within an environment which encourages business success.

At the higher level, SSC has been encouraging interrelationships and networking with some of our bigger businesses, some of which have R&D as part of their business. In particular, council and the SSHED are establishing stronger relationships and exchange of ideas with ANSTO and CSIRO. Both organisations reside in the Shire and have a large workforce. We are exploring a commercialisation link and creating the opportunity for their spin-off businesses to join the SSHED.

SSHEDx – the next step

The next step for the SSHED is to deliver our model of growth to other businesses in the region. For businesses that can not locate in the SSHED (eg retailers, manufacturers), the SSHEDx program could extend the reach of the SSHED infrastructure, business mentoring and networking.

SSHEDx members could access the SSHED intranet allowing them to reserve meeting rooms and equipment, backup and recover important files and use the “Hot Desk” facilities 24 hours a day. An online mentoring program (similar to distance learning) could take them through the business acceleration process.

Online documentation would provide supplementary support. Members could access videos of in-house seminars and conferences, as well as access to business mentors using web-based videoconferencing.

As a member of the SSHED business community, information sharing and lead generation play an important role in networking activities.

We are currently exploring funding opportunities to pilot the SSHEDx program.

Conclusion

This submission has been prepared for the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Science and Innovation. It is an overview of our ED Model – why it was developed, how it was created and the impact it is having in our region. Innovation is one thing and business development is another. We believe our ED Model brings these two areas together.

Sutherland Shire Council extends an invitation for the Committee to convene one of its meetings at the SSHED (1 Pitt Street, Loftus). We would be pleased to present at this meeting and provide more detailed information on our ED Model and results achieved to date.

Attachments:

- Appendix A History of the SSHED**
- Appendix B SSMA Directory**
- Appendix C Business News**
- Appendix D SSHED brochure**
- Appendix E SSHED Tenant Directory**
- Appendix F Cronulla Coast Tourism Brochure**