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I do not intend in this short paper to cover all the terms of reference before the committee. I do submit that there is a great opportunity to embrace richer educational partnerships with local communities that indeed will assist in providing for a sustainable future.

- I suggest there is little co-operative, co-ordinated, reviewed or strategic education programs between many government departments.
- There is the opportunity to develop, embrace and deliver educational programs, courses, research and indeed individual training modules that contextualise the specific requirements of various environmental sectors. Many of these programs will indeed already overlap and should not operate in isolation.
- Such programs would be accessible to all community members and be able to be delivered at different educational levels i.e. ‘Day’ courses, accredited Certificate levels, Graduate Certificate level, Bachelor level etc. Whilst this would offer better career paths for all Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry sector employees it would also seek to empower the wider community through the designed accessibility that was provided through such programs. This may additionally be supported through various forms of government funding, so as to assist in this interplay between government and community so that education is indeed inclusive.
- We need to strive for a learning communities rather than sectors.

## **GOVERNMENT SECTORS (Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) - EDUCATING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

“In an age of rapid economic change, increasing technological sophistication, and the growing number of elements proliferating in societies undergoing continual transformation, which have inherent in them the dangers of fragmentation and the emergence of a substantial underclass, fundamental reform in education is a necessity.” *Chapman and Aspin International handbook on lifelong learning pg 10*

There is the opportunity for many organisations to have an impact on the future of our communities, rather than the future just impact upon them. Arguably, we are in an era that not only holds many fears for our young people, but all generations as they struggle to come to grips with the many and increased demands, rules and regulations that are now imposed upon them. These demands come in many different forms and have various level of impact on both the individual and the wider community depending on what might *be* imposed that affects the ‘normality’ of the workplace, social and local community setting. Some of these fears have traditionally included nuclear and economic instability, environmental decline and a rapidly advancing technological society, that also incorporates additional pressures- financial; the development of new skills associated

with this technology; further study time and specific career decisions. In a rapidly changing educational environment endeavouring to respond to societies changes and pressures, given sometimes slowly and reluctantly (proclamation of marine sanctuaries, correct waste disposal, better environmental business practices etc) it is therefore not only the young person and older generations that generally face a multitude of challenges, but also the educator or regulator. In many instances the regulator will also need to be the catalyst for community education projects.

It is my contention that particularly within the community educational arena, there is a need for expanded practical and planned support for educators who are also in many cases regulators who are at the coal face of changing community attitudes in regard to protecting our environment. There is a need for concerted collaboration between all areas of government, regulatory organisations, business, the educational sector and the community so as to assist in better community education in the first instance. This will indeed maximise the protection of the environment, the resources that are within it and help ensure a sustainable future through community partnerships with the regulator.

The challenges posed by this rapidly changing world are many and complex. Perhaps as never before, as we move toward the twenty-first century, has the traditional educational environment been under siege to modernise and keep 'in tune' with the reality of the 'real world'. The societal pressures facing our communities, means that those who have control over curricula, educational programs, grants or budgets need to constantly examine the content of what they are teaching and where they are spending their allocated monies. Undoubtedly, what may be perceived important as a service or need for one sector may differ in its' objectives or part thereof to another sector.

Similarly, as many government regulators, organisations and community members attempt to keep pace with the constant stream of legislative changes, amendments, policy guidelines, environment improvement plans, strategies, undertakings etc the reflection on how the regulator embraces education for its own staff and the wider community needs to be examined.

Longworth and Davies (7:1997 Lifelong Learning) would agree that the understanding of education needs to be more holistic and visionary..a lifelong process. They also contend that

“New paradigms in the evolution of our view of education and training have implications for all parts of the system-schools, higher education, formal and informal systems of adult education, industry and business, teacher education-and society as a whole.”

There is the need to stimulate learning that has a community, holistic approach. This requires shared values and networks that will assist in constructing 'a body' of learning and partnerships within local communities that encompasses all individuals, organisations, educational institutions and sectors. At the moment this 'body' appears ragged, weary and dazed.