

TLC Project: Marketing & Communications Strategy



TUC
Learning
Community

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Executive Summary

What is the TUC Learning Community Project?

At Taree Universities Campus, we understand that the education journey is influenced by factors beyond access to technology and study support: an individual's relationship with education more broadly is impacted by their personal circumstances and social / cultural influences.

The Taree Universities Campus Learning Community Project (hereafter referred to as the TLC Project) is designed to:

- Cultivate and promote local resilience, wellbeing, and social connectedness.
- Activate a culture and network for higher learning across the Mid Coast LGA.
- Develop a sense of place and community ownership at 2 Pulteney St Taree, TUC's permanent home from 2024.
- Prepare the ground for establishing a dynamic and growing regional centre for a 'learning community' and higher education hub.

The purpose of this Strategy Document

This document has been designed to meet the following key outcomes:

1. To clearly define the core principles of the TLC Project

As with the broader objectives of Taree Universities Campus, the TLC project aims to meet a number of needs across a diverse range of intersecting user groups. There will be great overlap in those who will be involved in the delivery of, as well as those who benefit from, events and initiatives encompassed by the project.

This document aims to make clear the intentions of the project and the importance of the key concepts that underpin it, such as placemaking, community and 'local' culture.

2. To enable all collaborators and contributors to communicate with consistency and clarity

The success of the TLC Project will require intense collaboration with a number of stakeholders. With many voices being responsible for communicating a message that can be, at times, abstract and highly conceptual, it's important all contributing user groups have access to a toolkit of language and terminology.

The diversity of the recipients can also not be overstated. The TLC Project will *mean* different things to different people, and so collaborators must also be equipped with the ability to tailor messaging to the audience they're engaging with.

To return to the core values of the Campus itself, discussion around the TLC Project must always aim to be done so in a manner that is practical, simple, honest and 'jargon lite'. To be truly inclusive it must be a concept made understandable to those from all backgrounds, varying levels of education, etc.

Ultimately, this document will offer ways to 'tell the story of the TLC Project' so our diverse stakeholders can see themselves within it.

3. To facilitate clear action-taking when carrying out the key objectives so as to maximise awareness within the target user groups and optimise for success

This document will also offer a framework for planning, promoting and conducting the events it facilitates to enable simplified execution whilst gaining as broad an interest as possible.

It will outline the platforms it needs to 'own', TUC channels it can leverage and communication channels belonging to collaborators and potential partners it can utilise.

This will be the most effective way to bring various collaborators - and their ideas - together and move efficiently from strategy to implementation.

Part One: The TLC Project Concept

1.1 Why

1.1.1 Why is the TLC Project important?

History and Current Climate

Taree - and the Mid Coast on a wider scale - is home to an array of visionary *individual* creators and collaborators: business owners, creatives, artists, community leaders and more.

However, through anecdotal experience and research undertaken by those involved in the establishment of Taree Universities Campus, it has been identified that our region lacks a sense of this potential on a broader cultural level. As a result, the great capacity in many of our residents often goes uncultivated, leading to the shortages in skilled workers, lack of development of local industry and ultimately - which leads to the purpose of the TLC Project - a lack of an overarching sense of pride in both individuals and the place in which they live.

Our region has also been adversely impacted by the compounding disasters of drought, bushfires, floods and COVID. These events have taken their toll on our residents physically, emotionally and psychologically. We see the TLC Project as a way to reignite a sense of aspiration and future focus for our residents in the wake of so much loss.

It is an opportunity for us to unite across social and cultural lines, collaborate, heal and move forward as a united community.

Our Vision

Our vision is for the residents of Taree - and the greater Mid Coast whom TUC serves - to see themselves as part of a large, vibrant community that celebrates learning, creative expression and engagement with culture.

We hope to initiate cultural change in our region which will then become a self-fulfilling legacy. Our aim is to see our region flourish as one that welcomes innovation, cultivates ideas and celebrates life-long learning.

This will be achieved through two core principles discussed in the following sections - **community** and **place** - bringing together the conceptual and the physical to make such change a reality.

1.1.2 What is the background context that brought TUC to undertake this initiative?

Funding and initiation of the Project

The TLC Project is proudly funded by the NSW Government, having been awarded a \$300,000 grant under the COVID-19 Community Connection and Wellbeing Program. This is for a creative community development and placemaking project designed to boost wellbeing and community connection in rural and regional communities affected by COVID and compound disasters.

The TLC Project is an extension of the work undertaken by the Taree Universities Campus, focusing on the needs of those prior to engaging in online studies. This is not necessarily with the goal of engaging all participants in the Project initiatives in higher education. Rather, it is through identifying the needs of those who wish to study, but do not, that we have found ways to offer further support for the benefit of the region's inhabitants at large.

Barriers & Beliefs

In order to undertake any activity of self development and improvement, it has been recognised that (among other practical considerations) individuals need:

- Confidence: the ability to acknowledge their own strengths and lean into opportunities
- Self-determination: the ability to envision a prosperous future for themselves and to take proactive steps towards it
- Self-care: the ability to support their own mental wellbeing
- A sense of place and welcome to engage, learn and grow in safety and support.



Barriers in pursuing higher education, or even greater personal prosperity more broadly, can be created by 5 key factors:

1. **Personal:** a lack of confidence, self esteem or self-belief
2. **Interpersonal:** lack of connection with facilitators, mentors, supporters and peers.
3. **Practical:** lack of access to technology, tools and safe spaces
4. **Micro-cultural:** one's immediate circle lacking belief in, or support of, endeavours of self-improvement
5. **Socio cultural:** the overarching belief of one's local area or cultural background which also may lacking in belief in, or support of, endeavours of self-improvement

The TLC Project aims to address these various barriers at both an individual and community level by inviting wide participation and collaboration, moving toward a regional cultural shift with the creation of a dynamic and growing centre for a 'learning community'.

A Place to Belong

The physical requirement of creating a 'place' that emanates a sense of welcome, inclusion, safety and support for those prior to commencing endeavours of personal growth is a crucial component of the project's success.

As TUC plans to move to its long-term home at 2 Pulteney Street, we are presented with an opportunity to create a multi-purpose facility that will also become 'home' for a vibrant learning community.

The former MidCoast Council Administrative Building will be transformed into an education hub, one that plays host to an array of activities, workshops and events designed to cultivate the resilience and confidence of our local residents. It is from this physical location that we aim to nurture the culture of collaborative learning, connection and respectfulness that we envision Taree and the Mid Coast becoming renowned for.

1.2 Who

1.2.1 Target Audiences

Who does the TLC Project aim to serve?

- First Nations People

- Essential workers
- Children and young people
- Those experiencing compound disasters
- Those in direct contact with COVID-19
- Rural and remote communities

Needs, barriers, objections and goals

- Disconnection with place, a lack of ownership of a safe space to learn - having a place to 'go' and be surrounded by like minded advocates of learning and growth
- Inability to envision an alternative, more prosperous future for themselves and their families. They feel restricted to the achievements of those in their immediate circle, those that have gone before them.
- Not surrounded by voices that speak to new ideas, innovation and exploration of alternative pathways to success.
- Have fallen into 'survival mode' in the wake of compounding stress and trauma. Unable to focus on a distant future when their immediate future seems less secure.
- Recovering from loss, illness or displacement and are struggling to 'find their feet' physically, emotionally, socially or physiologically.
- Inhibited from developing close relationships and a sense of space due to physical distance and isolation.

1.2.2 Collaborators & Partners

Who will we seek to collaborate with in delivering the initiatives of the TLC Project?

- Headspace Taree
- Mid North Coast Community College
- Manning Regional Art Gallery
- Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Taree
- Local schools

1.3 What

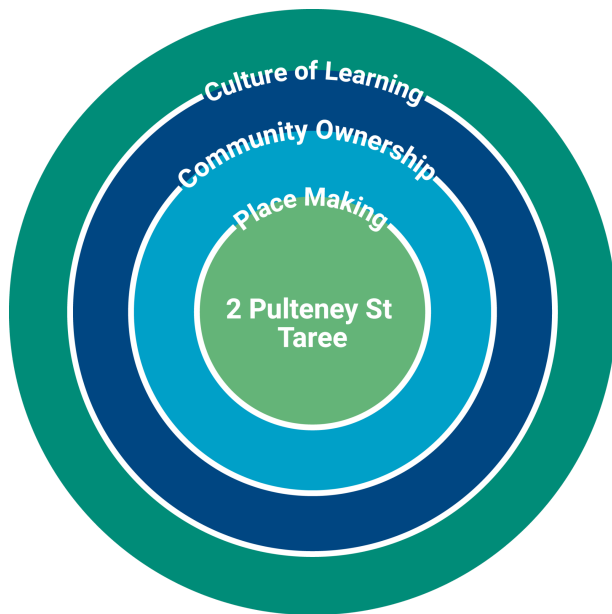
1.3.1 What is the overarching goal of the project?

To develop a vibrant learning community that celebrates collaboration, self improvement and lifelong learning. This community will find its home at 2 Pulteney Street which will cultivate a sense of community ownership: all will feel welcome, safe, respected and supported to explore their own potential.

Where There's Always Space to Grow.

1.3.2 What are we trying to achieve & deliver?

There are 3 compounding outcomes that the TLC Project aims to achieve:



Placemaking at 2 Pulteney Street

This is the notion of creating a ‘place’ where all residents feel welcome, as if there is always ‘enough space’ for them.

This is about creating a physical place where all feel welcome to gather, to engage in activities that stimulate connection, to exchange ideas and share knowledge.

Community Ownership

Integral to the success of the space is the feeling of community ownership it encourages. It has to feel like more than ‘a place’, it needs to feel intrinsically like ‘our place’. This then will encourage us to take ownership of what the place means: that here we can discuss, debate, share, learn and grow together. **“That’s what we do ‘round here.”**

Culture of Learning

With this ownership of space comes the ownership of the larger culture that emanates from it. With the TLC Project initiatives taking place outside the 2 Pulteney Street location, this will indicate that this culture doesn’t have to stop at the doors of the Hub.

Rather, that this culture is one of the region, and can take place anywhere where its inherent values are celebrated.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Another of the key outcomes we are working towards as part of the TLC Project is development of a Reconciliation Action Plan. We pride ourselves on the participation our Campus already enjoys from residents who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. We also welcome the insights of Pastor Russell Saunders OAM, Biripi Elder as a member of our Board.

Developing an RAP is a positive next step we can take as leaders and creators of positive change in our community.

1.3.3 What are the key concepts we need to be mindful of and ensure are clearly explained?

Place & the importance of Placemaking

Placemaking can be defined as:

Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximise shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.¹

The development of 2 Pulteney Street as a true, community-centred education hub will require it to respond to not only the physical needs of learning, but also the social, cultural and emotional aspects of creating a sense of welcome and inclusion.

It will be a celebration of local history, from the local significance of the original Biripi nation (and neighbouring Worimi people whose land is encompassed by the Mid Coast region to the south) to more recent history in the growth and development of Taree.

It will be guided more by what we want users to be able to accomplish whilst in the space, more than just its *functionality*. The physical spaces will respond to the needs of:

- Diverse group spaces that allow for animated discussion and collaboration, both privately and publicly
- Quiet study spaces for individual learning and development
- Workshop environments for sharing knowledge and the development of various practical skills
- Development of a Yarning Circle in consultation with the Biripi community for the sharing of stories, history and culture
- An Elders meeting place to give Indigenous community leaders a practical environment to meet, offering support and guidance.
- Development of an Aboriginal cultural centre and keeping place for local cultural artefacts - a safe space for the physical history of the region.
- Art, murals and sculptural aspects that reflect the diverse creativity of our region, both Indigenous and individual

Community & the significance of Local Culture

It's important to recognise that the project is not aimed at serving a particular segment of the Mid Coast, but rather developing a cultural shift across the region as a whole. **It is about seeing ourselves as a place & people of respect and collaboration; a community who celebrates self development and life-long learning.**

¹ <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

As such, it will be integral to the ongoing success of the Learning Hub and the TLC Project that initiatives don't seek to exclusively serve individual segments of the user group, but that all user groups see something within the concept that speaks to them.

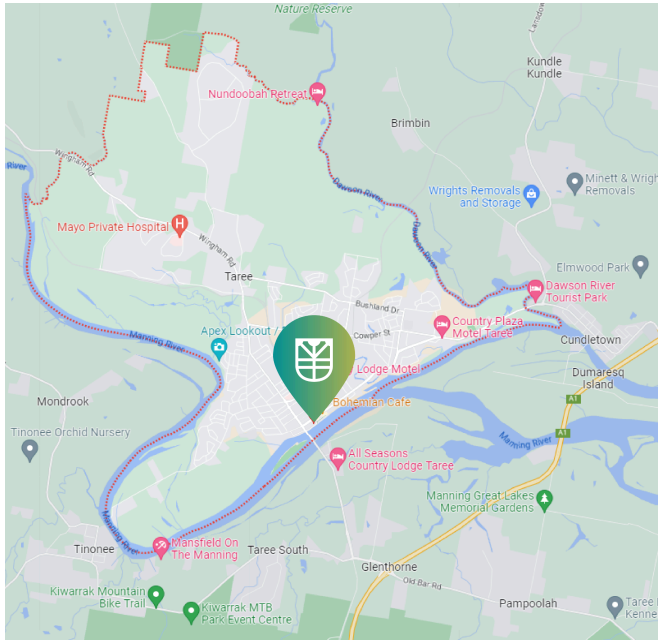
In this case, 'Local' has several meanings that need to be incorporated:

- The **local landscape** - places of significance and our local environment
- The **local nation** - the Indigenous peoples of the Biripi and Worimi nations, what the local area means to them and what we can all learn from shared language, values and culture.
- The **local community** - the diverse collective of community leaders, elders, teachers, business owners, families and residents who can all call the Learning Hub their own.

By taking an *inclusive approach* (all are welcome) rather than an *exclusive approach* (for specific users only), the project will achieve the outcomes of the developing sense of community, unifying through development, education and growth.

Part Two: Execution of the TLC Project Initiatives

2.1 Where



2.1.1 Where are our target user groups located?

With the Learning Hub being a key component of the overall project, the physical aspects of placemaking will take place at 2 Pulteney Street.

This is a central place within Taree CBD that will allow for ease of access for a number of the user groups identified (see 1.2.1 Target Audiences).

The repurposing of what was previously a MidCoast Council building is also significant. Transforming it from a place of governance to a place of collaboration, community and growth will be a significant step forward for many community members.

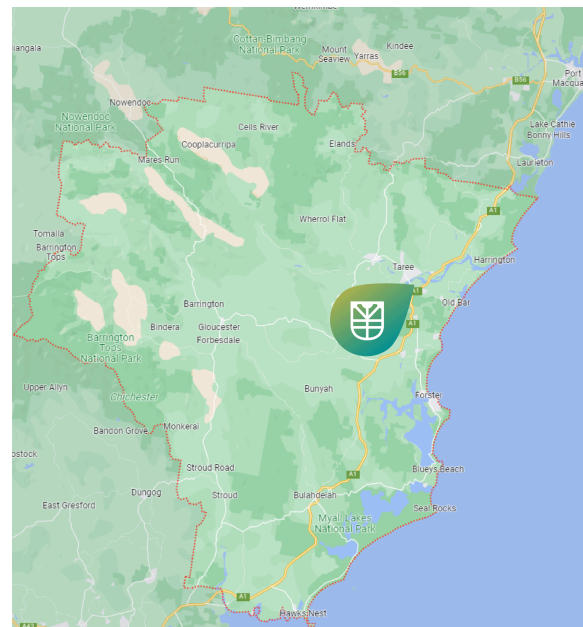
2.1.2 Where is geographically relevant to the project?

As part of creating a sense of welcome and community ownership, Project initiatives will appeal to all residents of the wider MidCoast Local Government area.

Collaborating businesses, artists, educators and elders from across the region will be invited to contribute knowledge at the many events.

With regard to the Hub itself, service providers in the areas of wellbeing, personal development and resilience will be welcome to host workshops and training from across the region.

Events will also be promoted region-wide to generate broad interest and participation.



2.1.3 Where will we be delivering the in-person initiatives of the project?

As outlined in further detail in 2.2.1 TLC Project Timeline, the initiatives will take place in a number of socially relevant spaces throughout the Taree area. Places such as the Manning Entertainment Centre and the Manning River Foreshore already play host to events that generate excitement and unity through creative arts, community events and festivals.

As well as the practical aspects of the locations, they already have the inherent sense of ownership and belonging that we seek to emulate in the development of 2 Pulteney Street.

2.2 When

2.2.1 TLC Project Timeline

When does the TLC Project officially start and finish?

The TLC Project initiatives will be developed and implemented between **August 2022 and May 2024**.

What kinds of events will be run as part of the TLC Project?

We have already hosted a number of events under the TLC Project banner that are set to being exciting regular fixtures in our Campus Calendar.

- **April | Youth Week**
 - As young people comprise a large portion of our target market, hosting an event to coincide with Youth Week has already proved successful. In 2023, our inaugural Youth Arts Festival presented opportunities for emerging young artists and performers to explore, develop and showcase their talent and perform in front of a live audience.
- **July | NAIDOC**
 - In alignment with our mission to ensure our First Nations residents are warmly included in the education experience, we participate in local NAIDOC week events to give potential students the chance to ask questions and engage with our team.
- **July - August | CareerQuip**
 - This one-day event is a transformative experience for young minds and those looking for a career change, offering a dynamic platform to interact with professionals, industry experts, and representatives from various educational institutions. This unique occasion is designed to empower the future workforce and set them on the path to success.
- **October | Mental Health & Wellbeing**
 - With October being Mental Health Month, we are working towards building an event during this time directly related to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of registered and potential students.
- **December - February | Celebration of Success**

- With many of our students being unable to attend graduations, or distance meaning friends and family cannot celebrate with them, this is an annual event we hold to replicate the graduation experience, coming together with graduands and Campus staff to congratulate students on their successful completion.
- **December | Live & Loud event with local music students, aged from 12 - 18**
 - To celebrate the end of Term 4, Taree Universities Campus will invite young musicians and performance artists to be involved in Live & Loud. This event, once held regularly in our library and presented by the Youth Action Team at MidCoast Council, is being reintroduced to the youth community following an enthusiastic response for students to again be granted an event to cater for a public performance of their original music compositions.

2.3 How

2.3.1 Regular Communications

Platforms & Outputs

- **Project-specific infrastructure**
 - Landing Page on the TUC website
 - Outline what the project is
 - How to get involved
 - Show upcoming & past events
 - Sign up form for email updates
 - Credit & link to partners
 - Acknowledgement of NSW Funding
 - Segments within the email database for those with specific interest
 - Personal emails to key collaborators and user group representatives
- **TUC Communication channels to leverage**
 - Publishing media releases regarding milestones and achievements on the [TUC Website News Section](#)
 - Promotion of key achievements via the TUC monthly e-newsletter
 - Promotion of key achievements via the TUC social media platforms, with graphics & logos linked specifically to the TLC Project
- **External Platforms to Leverage**
 - Media releases to local news outlets regarding milestones and achievements (TV & newspaper)
 - Interviews on local radio milestones and achievements

2.3.3 Event-Based Communications

Platforms

- **Project-specific infrastructure**
 - Promoting events on Project landing page on TUC website
 - Emailing interested parties who have signed up for updates
 - Personal emails to key collaborators and user group representatives
- **TUC Communication channels to leverage**
 - Publishing media releases on the [TUC Website News Section](#)
 - Promoting events on the [Campus Events](#) page of the TUC Website
 - Promotion of upcoming events via the TUC monthly e-newsletter
 - Promotion of upcoming events via the TUC social media platforms, with graphics & logos linked specifically to the TLC Project
- **External Platforms to Leverage**
 - Partner social media platforms, by providing graphics, captions and links to key contacts
 - Media releases for upcoming events to local news outlets (TV & newspaper)
 - Radio advertising via community switch (free) regarding upcoming events
 - Print material that can be distributed through partner organisations

2.3.4 Visual Application

Whilst closely linked to the overarching TUC brand, the TLC Project has its own sub-brand and specific visual devices, as well as the inclusion of the 'Proudly Supported by the NSW Government' logo where appropriate:

