

/ *Copy 19/11/14*

CCGT's Address to the NSW Planning Assessment Commissions Enquiry

Delivered by Mr Stuart Durie on behalf of the Board of CCGT

Thank you Madam Chair (Robyn Kirk), Committee Members, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Stuart Durie and I am here today speaking on behalf of the Board of Central Coast Group Training, locally known as CCGT.

By way of background, CCGT, an NFP is the Coast's largest employer of apprentices and trainees and has provided thousands of career opportunities to our Coast's youth over its 35 years of operations.

CCGT is proud of its track record and currently employs directly 220 apprentices and trainees across a wide range of local industries. This clearly can only be achieved through the tremendous support of the Central Coast business community and the respective strategic partners we have forged alliances with.

Well may we say, the business community can take a bow for these outstanding achievements? However, in fact the sobering reality is that many Coast kids struggle for many years to get a go.

Madam Chair, this is highlighted when you understand that CCGT today has more than 4,400 young people registered with it seeking a job, looking for a start. This figure is not a typo.

I am sure you will agree this frustrating morale-draining treadmill our young people often have to go on can have a real and lasting affect.

All too often, we see and hear reports around young people "going off the rails" or worse!! Particularly when these young and impressionable kids' feel that their self worth is in question.

Madam Chair, we can all remember our first job. Every one of us here today can recall those life changing words, "you've got the job." At CCGT we believe it is incumbent upon us all to do everything in our power to amplify these words.

To this end, CCGT has over its 35 years of operations developed a comprehensive network of collaborative partnerships with business and industry, ranging through the trades, the technology sector, manufacturing and mineral resources.

It is with this understanding that CCGT in 2013, embarked on a bold strategy to implement the first ever non-government cross-industry scholarship program.

One of the first organisations / corporate citizens to step up was the team at Wallarah 2.

Now, today, 5 years on, Wallarah 2 has provided more than \$430,000 to CCGT's Strategic Scholarship Program. Included in this program are positions as part of the Wyong Coal Guringai Aboriginal Agreement.

Further Wallarah 2 have pledge to continuous this important program into the future.

These important scholarship funds have directly resulted in 24 of our local youth getting a start as an apprentice.

This broad based and innovative scholarship program has encouraged many employers to take on an apprentice, assisting with a wide range of costs such as wage subsidies, trade tools, safety equipment and TAFE fees.

Many of these youth would have never got a go if not for this special industry program courtesy of Wallarah 2.

I know these figures can simply be reduced to numbers, however, when you put a human face on them they become so much more. Young Robbie, a first year apprentice mechanic with local firm Suspension Concepts found it extremely difficult to get a start. He like many others just needed that extra support. His family had limited resources and the Wallarah 2 scholarship simply made all the difference.

Greg Nolan, owner/operator of Suspension Concepts said, "Robbie is a fantastic kid and now given this opportunity through the scholarship program it has changed his whole world."

So Madam Chair, as you can see corporate citizens such as Wallarah 2 can really make all the difference. We only hope that other organisations will step up and take Wallarah 2's lead and become community leaders particularly when it comes to our kids. They are the next generation of tradespeople Australia will rely on to prosper. Madam Chair, on behalf of the Board of CCGT I would like to thank you and your committee members for the opportunity to highlight the critical importance of supporting our youth.

Thank you.

Mr Stuart Durie
Board Member
Central Coast Group Training