

supporting e-learning opportunities

Community Engagement

building creative e-learning partnerships

Australians in regional, rural and remote communities face some unique challenges in accessing education and training opportunities due to isolation, distance and a lack of teaching and learning programs.

Technology can, and is, making a difference, enabling more and more people to access education and training regardless of their age, location or background.

In 2006, the national training system's e-learning strategy, the Australian Flexible Learning Framework, funded six projects to foster and embed e-learning in some of these communities.

Online, Intown and Outbush

Aim: To promote the use of, and to demonstrate the delivery of, e-learning as a way of overcoming barriers to education for Indigenous young people, such as limited access to post primary education and the mobile nature of their lives.

Learning model: The Gap Youth Centre, in Alice Springs, Northern Territory, set up an online communication and learning hub with a virtual session room, The Meeting Place, through its established training website – <http://www.deadlyzone.org/meeting>.

It was designed for staff and key personnel in organisations who worked with Indigenous clients. E-learning tools used within The Meeting Place included wikis, e-journals, podcasting, forums and online surveys. More than 10 groups were set up and shown how to use the features in The Meeting Place. Clients were given practice time to build their confidence and skills, such as uploading resources and using templates for quizzes.

Outcomes: More than 70 people from organisations working with Indigenous people were engaged in The Meeting Place plus 25 young people took part in literacy, numeracy and information communication technology skills development. An online program was created to introduce The Meeting Place and a video was made to promote online learning.

Partners: Youth Pathway Project; Institute of Aboriginal Development; Youth Outbush; Deadly Mob; The Desert Knowledge Centre; Reconnect; Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services; and Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training.

"Our clients are all 13-19 year olds that live outbush. We help them look at career options. We would love to physically go out and see them as much as we can but, when it takes a day to get there and another day to get back, this is impossible. The Meeting Place is a fantastic facility to keep in touch with our clients. We arrange a time to meet them, which works better with a facilitator, and show them how to use e-learning tools or go to websites of careers that interest them, such as mining. We've also connected young people to the literacy and numeracy courses accessed via The Meeting Place."

Fiona Madigan, Youth Pathways NT

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