

CASE STUDY – FINDING THEIR PLACE

In April 2020, Northwest Tasmania went into one of the country's first COVID-19 community-wide lockdowns. All non-essential services stopped. The Northwest Hospital in Burnie closed. One thousand healthcare workers and their families went into isolation. Education went on-line. The impact of the lockdown was felt across the region for many months, with businesses and community members not returning to their normal activities until late 2020.

Hellyer Regional Collective, a coalition of ten schools across six municipalities in Northwest Tasmania, could see there was a real risk that VET students may not find placements to finish their qualifications. The collective reached out to Burnie Works and its partners for a community wide response.

Work placements provide a significant opportunity for VET students whose courses include an optional placement, to begin building networks with potential employers and an understanding of the workplaces. Work placements create opportunities for businesses to participate in the development of their future workers, ensuring they develop the skills needed by local industry and present opportunities for employees to develop mentoring and teaching skills.

The Burnie Works education working group (the BIG Committee) brought together partners to create '*Finding their Place*', a cross-regional coordinated response to call local businesses and industry to offer placements. Livestreamed on Facebook, the Committee presented a telethon style webinar involving VET students, the local Employment Facilitator, and the Tasmanian Minister for Education. This event highlighted the importance of job placements for VET attainment and the value placements provide to students and workplaces.

The webinar broadcast interviews with the Industry Training Hub, Business Northwest, Ben Sandow Elphinstone Group Pty Ltd, Mayors from across the region, school- based youth workers and past work placement hosts and students. **LOCAL EMPLOYERS PLEDGED FORTY PLACES.** Burnie Works partner Beacon Foundation connected the students with the placement hosts. At



least one student received an offer of employment after completing Year 12 in 2020.

The pledged placements impacted the lives and educational outcomes for young people who were able to experience the workplaces and fields of their choice of study in a year when their education was disrupted. Students had the opportunity to build networks with future employers and demonstrate their skills. The pledges represent forty links with potential employers, who now have a greater understanding of the importance of their role in contributing to the future workforce of the region.

The impact of *'Finding their Place'* is as much about process as it is about tangible outcomes for young people. *'Finding their Place'* demonstrates Burnie Works capacity to bring people together to enable the community to create rapid and innovative responses to address local problems. The community was able to respond rapidly to need, with Burnie Works resources deployed to facilitate the response freeing up partner resources so they could keep attending to their core priorities.

It demonstrates what a community can do together when it is resourced to design and deliver responsive action during social recovery. It demonstrates that, with a connected network between education and business, combined with capacity to stimulate that connection with a purposeful goal, Burnie Works.



IMPACT CASE STUDY

FINDING THEIR PLACE

CHANGE IN THE CONDITIONS OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Movement building	<i>Finding Their Place</i> brought together business, industry, and education for the benefit of students. This built on and consolidates the vision to provide Burnie young people with meaningful pathways to employment.
Community Aspiration	
Strategic Learning and Shared Measurement	Learning from the implementation and outcomes of Finding Their Place are reflected in the Burnie Works education committee (BIG) strategic planning and other education to employment programs delivered in schools by Beacon Foundation.
High leverage and system focus activities	<i>Finding Their Place</i> demonstrated response to current need and connection of partners needed for pathways between education and employment in Burnie.
Authentic community engagement	Participants came from all parts of the system and were committed to deliver the outcome for students.
Container for community change	The Burnie Works team roles were connector of networks and relationships, facilitator and coordinator.

CHANGE IN THE SYSTEMS

Policies	The responsive action was a new way for schools to connect with businesses.
Practices	
Resource Flows	Burnie Works provided the resources needed to make <i>Finding Their Place</i> happen.
Relationships and Connections	Burnie Works connected jobs, training, employment pathways, communities and businesses.
Power Dynamics	<i>Finding Their Place</i> enabled the breakdown of silos.
Mental Models	The responsive action challenged the assumption that many things are not possible due to the impact of COVID.

CHANGE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND THE BROADER POPULATION

Individuals	Up to 40 students could access new placements. There is no data post students leaving school to determine translation of placements to employment. However, anecdotally, one student was offered a position post their placement.
Population	<i>Finding Their Place</i> sets a precedent for innovative engagement between businesses and school-based VET programs. This is a lead indicator for long term population level change.