

Goondiwindi State High School

Multiple Pathways

*A School Community
for the 21st Century*

Together We Achieve

- *Lifelong learners*
- *An enriched community*
- *Flexible pathways to the future*



A School at the Centre of the Rural Community
through Industry Partnerships.

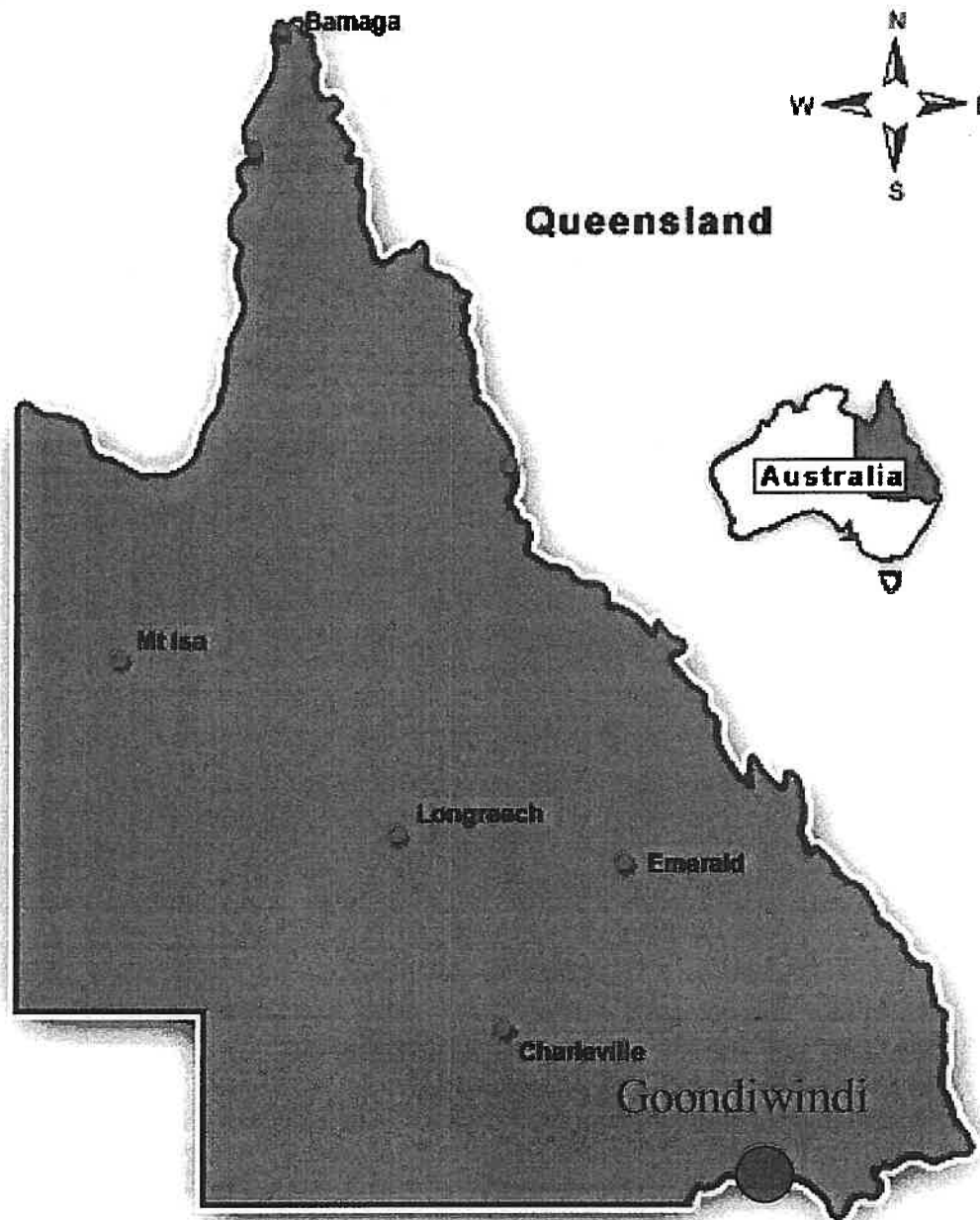
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GOONDIWINDI STATE HIGH SCHOOL



GOONDIWINDI POPULATION: 4 000

GOONDIWINDI STATE HIGH SCHOOL POPULATION: 400

Multiple Pathways

Executive Summary

The Multiple Pathways program at Goondiwindi State High School is a lighthouse example for other rural communities to engage in a training agenda. The Goondiwindi State High School has played the role of lead agency in the wider community as it has focused on providing training and skilling opportunities for its students in partnership with local industry. The complexity of meeting formal training requirements in rural remote communities who have no access to either training providers or training facilities deters most stakeholders from pursuing formal quality training.

Destination studies undertaken by Goondiwindi State High School provide detailed analysis of students' employment and training qualifications five years after their completion of Year 12. These studies indicated that the 70% of students who moved to fulltime local employment were being significantly disadvantaged by a lack of formalised training. The results of the first destination studies undertaken in 1994 indicated that of this 70%, only 13% were formally qualified or involved in any post school training. Without access to training these graduates face reduced mobility and limited long-term work prospects. The school embraced the opportunity to formalise qualifications for students through a partnership of training with the business community.

The early stages of Vocational Education in our school involved the delivery of TRAC (Training in Retail and Commerce). Our naivety about the complexity of delivering formal qualifications was only dwarfed by our enthusiasm!

What makes our program outstanding is its diversity and the level of student participation, employer participation, parental support and successfully overcoming the extraordinary difficulties of dealing with the range of stakeholders involved. The program's success has been validated by education (as a recipient of Education Queensland's inaugural 2000 Showcase Award for Excellence) as well as by industry (as recipient of the Queensland Training Award for the McDonald's Australia Vocational Education and Training in Schools Excellence Award).

Strategically it was important to work collaboratively and cooperatively with local employers. The school initiated many information evenings (involving employers, parents and students); business breakfasts; employer training sessions; and door-to-door promotion. Many manhours, personal effort and effective management have culminated in the extraordinary success of the Goondiwindi State High School Vocational Education program in 2000.

The Multiple Pathways Program at Goondiwindi State High School significantly empowers students with a range of skills required for the diversity of employment in the twenty-first century. It enables students to choose a variety of pathways to graduation. These pathways include:

- School Based Traineeships
- Structured Workplacement Learning
- Structured Workplacement Learning - Rural industry specific (The SILO project)
- Industry initiated training opportunities (Pushing the Boundaries – Cottoning onto Careers)
- Formal training qualifications delivered by school
- University entrance combined with any of the aforementioned pathways.

There is a common perception that small rural high schools do not offer opportunities for a comprehensive education that includes employment and training opportunities. By building training links with the community, the school is placed at the centre of the community's learning needs as we work towards upskilling our labour force.

The school reorganised curriculum to provide multiple pathway opportunities for students by:

- Employing a full-time coordinator
- Developing a Vocational Education Learning Program
- Lengthening school days
- Extending curriculum choices
- Activating a mentor program and
- Giving students access to a training classroom for off-the-job training.

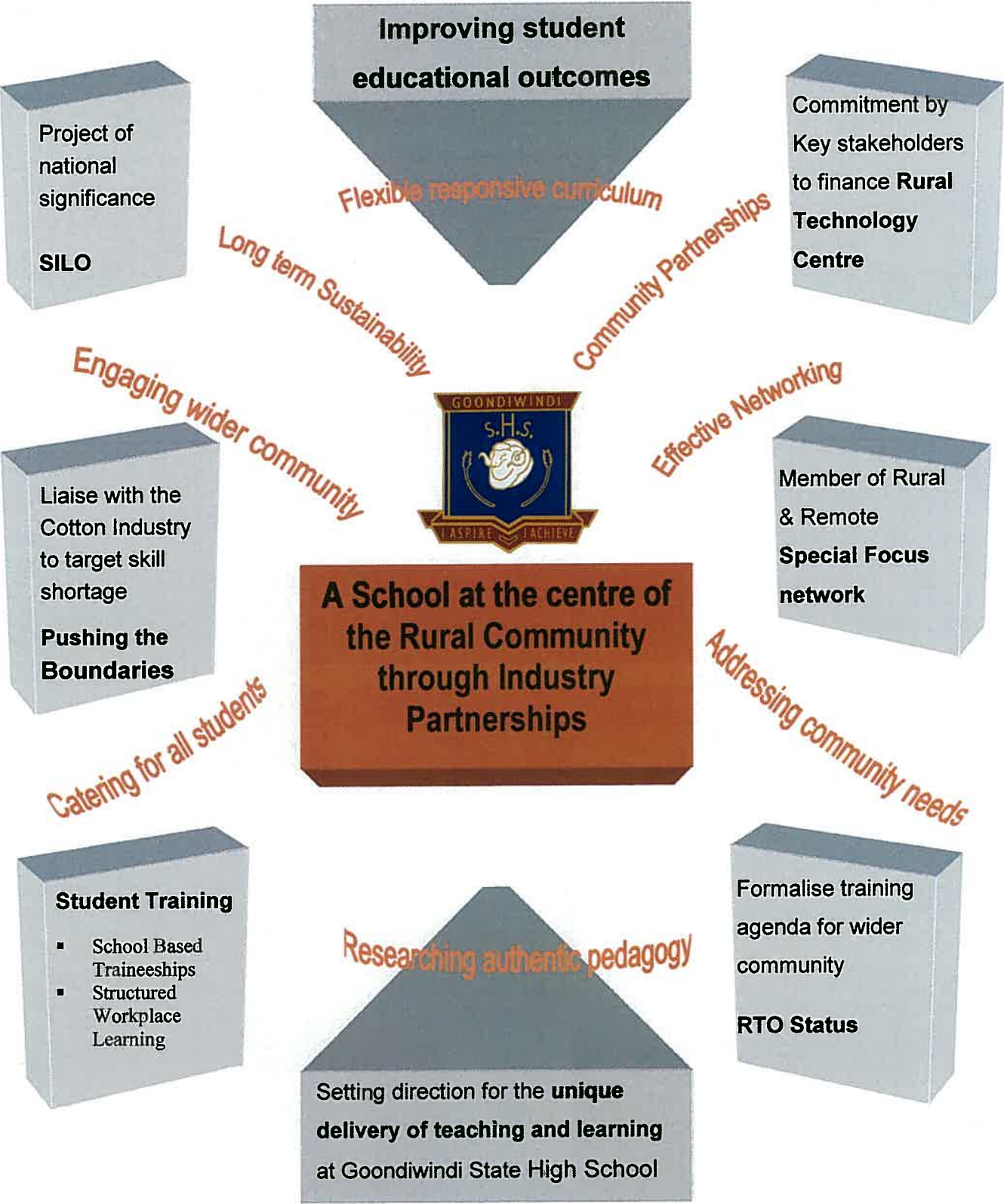
Without access to local training providers or training infrastructure, Goondiwindi State High has overcome its isolation by initiating and actively engaging the business communities to be partners in the provision of training.

The following Strategic Plan outlines the direction of our continued success in the area of workplace learning through industry partnerships.

Our most recent destination study in 1998 substantiates the outcomes of our program. The 70 : 30 ratio still stands but of the 70% who are employed locally, an increased number (from 13% to 26%) now have formal qualifications. We are continually working to introduce and provide a more extensive range of workplace learning opportunities for students at Goondiwindi State High School. This enables our graduates to have a far wider and more flexible approach to the many available career choices.

The Multiple Pathways program and the strong industry partnerships forged within a local rural community has achieved Goondiwindi State High School's vision of being a school for the twenty-first century.

Strategic Plan



Multiple Pathways at Goondiwindi High School

School Based Traineeships

The School Based Traineeship program aims to give post-compulsory students the opportunity to combine their schooling with paid work and nationally recognised training. **On completion of Year 12, successful trainees will achieve a Senior Certificate; a Certificate II in a nationally accredited course and extensive on-the-job training.** The flexible delivery of curriculum at Goondiwindi State High School also enables trainees to select the subjects necessary for tertiary entrance.

School Based Trainees at Goondiwindi State High School spend three days at school and two days in paid employment. The complexity of building effective and sustainable partnerships with all the parties involved in the delivery of training is an enormous task for isolated rural schools as there is no provision for the required training infrastructure.

We are currently working with two Group Training Companies and our students are serviced by eight Registered Training Organisations from across the state who undertake to deliver off-the-job training. Due to our inability to access a training facility, most off-the-job training is delivered via external self-paced booklets. **It is therefore essential that our trainees are highly motivated, able to work independently and have the full support of the school and all other parties involved to successfully complete their traineeship.**

Students are able to undertake a traineeship in any field provided local employment is available. We currently offer traineeships over **seventeen different industry areas.**

Outcomes

- One third of the senior school population have been involved in the School Based Traineeship program.
- All 1999 graduate trainees were offered fulltime apprenticeships as a result of their school based traineeships.
- For two days a week the remaining senior population have a smaller teacher : student ratio which is highly conducive to the more academic subjects. Last year the school received 2 OP1s and this was the first cohort with students involved in school based traineeships.
- An increase in the number of students now receiving formal training opportunities across different areas from hairdressing to automotive, engineering, hospitality, construction and agriculture.

Trainees' opportunities within the school include:

- Students are not restricted in subject choice.
- Trainees are required to study only four subjects.
- The school day has been reorganised to accommodate the needs of students.
- Trainees are given the same opportunities as fulltime students, including access to school leadership positions.
- Traineeship students have phone and computer access and a classroom of their own.

Structured Workplace Learning

Structured Workplace Learning requires strong industry and education links to operate effectively. Goondiwindi State High School currently has 144 employers on its database willing to participate in the school's Structured Workplace Learning program. The program was introduced in 1998 as an improvement to the existing work experience program and 62 students participated. 77 students participated in the program in 1999, and it is anticipated there will be over 80 students in 2000. In 2000, as a direct result of the feedback from students and employers, the school has extended the number of days the students spend in the workplace with the Structured Workplacement program operating in two terms instead of one.

What distinguishes the Structured Workplace Learning program at this school is that the program had no external funding or support (i.e. no ASTF funding) prior to 2000. Due to our geographic isolation, access to a cluster funded and supported program is not an option.

The introduction of Vocational Education through the Board of Senior School Secondary Studies registered Subject Area Specification (SAS) subjects allows the students to gain competency based qualifications for their on-the-job training during Structured Workplacement Learning. Currently 70% of senior students at Goondiwindi State High School have elected to study at least one Vocational Education subject.

However, the Structured Workplace Learning program at Goondiwindi State High School is not restricted to just the students undertaking a Vocational Education subject. The proven outcomes are of intrinsic value to all students and therefore participation in the program is built into all Year 11 students' curriculum.

Outcomes

- An increase in students' access to Structured Workplace Learning with 100% of Year 11 students undertaking a work placement in 1999 and 2000.
- A significant increase in the number of students accessing Structured Workplace Learning in the Rural Industry.
- Local recognition that the Goondiwindi State High School is the first step to providing skilled labour.
- Shared partnership between employers and school for the delivery of training.

A Year 11 SILO student working on a local cattle stud.



Pushing the Boundaries – 'Cottoning onto Careers'

Goondiwindi State High School has been selected as a trial school for a national industry and schools partnership initiative in 2000. This project involves furthering the school's established strategic alliance with the cotton industry to increase employment and alleviate skill shortages within this industry. The success of SILO, our rural workplacement program, enabled our selection as a lighthouse school for this project.

The project involves students following the cotton trail from paddock to wharf. Students will participate in field trips to local cotton farms and agribusinesses; research and development operations in Narrabri and Wee Waa; and visit associated industries in Toowoomba and Brisbane.

The tremendous industry and community support for the Pushing the Boundaries – Cottoning onto Careers project will ensure that it will continue to be another vital link in our Multiple Pathway program at Goondiwindi State High School.

Outcomes

- Students will be given an opportunity to focus on career and employment opportunities within the cotton industry.
- The project will give priority to tertiary bound students who will be encouraged to study in an agricultural field that would take students back to a rural area – *'Stopping the Brain Drain from the Bush'*.

Rural Technology Skills Centre

As facilities and opportunities for vocation training are currently very limited in Goondiwindi, the SILO Committee, chaired by Deputy Principal Catherine O'Sullivan, has determined the need for a training facility in the local area. It is proposed that the Rural Technology Skills Centre be established at Goondiwindi, on school land, to provide a physical training centre and a training infrastructure which will enable vocational education and training in the Goondiwindi region.

The committee was granted \$25 000 to conduct a feasibility study to assess the viability of a centre. Through extensive negotiations with many state and local government departments and local industry groups, the committee has a commitment of over \$750 000 towards the development of the centre. The Premier of Queensland, the Honorable Mr Peter Beattie, has given an undertaking that the Premier's Department will strategically support the project through a cross government coordination role.

Outcomes

- It is anticipated that the Goondiwindi Rural Technology Centre will be open by July 2001.
- The Rural Technology Skills Centre will provide students and the wider community with the latest access to digitised training delivery; technology required to network with other training facilities and a workshop necessary to deliver specialised rural training.

Registered Training Organisation

Goondiwindi State High School is one of five schools selected in Queensland in 2000 to be given the financial assistance required to advance our standing as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). There is currently only one school in Queensland that has Registered Training Organisation status. Our school requires RTO status to deliver training at the Rural Technology Skills Centre. This will enable the wider community access to face-to-face delivery of formal training.

Outcomes

- Delivery of nationally accredited courses in a face-to-face mode for students at Goondiwindi State High School.
- Recognition by employers of the advantages of upskilling their workbase through local training.
- Recognition by employees of the long-term employment opportunities through access to local training facilities.
- The development of the school's leading role in the community as a provider of employment and training opportunities for local students.



Year 11 Agriculture Trainees working with their teacher at the school's horticultural facilities.

The Goondiwindi SILO Project – A Case Study

SILO is a dynamic and innovative project that opens the doors of opportunity for students at Goondiwindi State High School to experience the employment options available within our diverse rural community. This project is a direct result of the destination study identifying under-utilisation of the rural industry as a Structured Workplace Learning experience. In 1998 there were only two out of eighty students electing to participate in rural work placements.

The Goondiwindi area was identified as one that could produce a ***model of national significance*** for Structured Workplace Learning in the rural industry. Through a partnership with education, rural industry and the community, the Goondiwindi and District Rural Workplacements Committee was formed in 1998. Funding was sought through ASTF to develop a pilot project in association with Rural Skills Australia and the National Farmers Federation in an endeavor to attract students into the rural and associated industries. Funding of \$4 000 was approved for the Goondiwindi SILO Project.

The lack of a locally trained and skilled rural workforce has been a long-standing problem in the Goondiwindi district but had not previously been addressed in a collaborative manner between educators, industry and community.

The management committee set out to determine the needs of all stakeholders.

Students

Goondiwindi, unlike other small rural towns, does not have a low retention of school leavers. Many school leavers gain employment locally in unskilled jobs, and as was reflected in the school's destination studies, were not seeking further training or formally recognised qualification.

The school identified a need to:

- educate the students on the multiple career pathways
- enhance Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning and Traineeships
- adapt curriculum to reflect local employment
- partner with local industry and community

The aim of the Goondiwindi SILO Project is to provide students with the experience of the diversification of skills and employment in the rural industry. This experience could lead to their long term employment in a well trained and highly skilled industry.

Rural Employers

Rural practices vary from district to district depending on factors such as soil, rainfall, temperature and industry organisations. Because of these and other factors, rural industry employers, particularly farmers, see the need to employ locally trained and skilled workers. Due to school leavers lack of awareness of rural career paths and the

use of ad-hoc training methods, most farmers have had to import employees from other districts. This requires extensive retraining by employers and causes short-term employment due to the mobility of imported workers. The impact of technology on the rural industry requires a comprehensive formal training program to meet the current high industry standards. These needs were successfully addressed through the collaborative SILO program.

Strategic Plan

The management committee works to set a direction for the rural work placement program. The main goal for 1999 was to attract 20 out of 80 Year 11 students into the program. The following strategic plan was developed to achieve this outcome.

Employment of a liaison officer

- The role of the liaison officer was to attend grower and industry led meetings in the surrounding district to educate employers on workplacements and the benefits of training as a long-term outcome of the project.
- The liaison officer was to determine the employment needs of employers in the grain, grazing, irrigation and associated rural industries and compile a comprehensive database of employers willing to participate in the project. The goal of 50 rural employers willing to work with students has expanded to 80 now listed in the database.

Marketing and Promotion

The committee was determined to use strong marketing and promotional techniques to increase awareness of the project to the community, industry employers and students. This was achieved through:

- Designing and printing of information brochures
- Logo design: ***SILO Our Youth, Our Farms, Our Future*** (This has since been adapted nationally by Rural Skills Australia)
- Car sticker design
- Project media releases
- Continued media contact
- Project information sheets for employer mail-outs
- Compilation of SILO information folders

Project Launch

The Goondiwindi SILO Project was launched by the then Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon. John Anderson on April 23, 1999. Guest speakers included:

- Education Queensland Deputy Director-General Mr Bob McHugh
- ASTF Chief Executive Officer Mr Harris van Beek
- Cotton Australia Chairman and NFF Council member Mr Peter Corish
- Goondiwindi SILO Chair and Goondiwindi State High School Deputy Principal, Mrs Catherine O'Sullivan.

Approximately 150 farmers, rural industry representatives and dignitaries, parents and students attended the launch at the Goondiwindi State High School. The launch was preceded and followed by extensive media coverage which created further community awareness of the project with more students signing up for rural workplacements.

Student Awareness

A key strategy in the success of SILO has been to engage the students' awareness, understanding and interest in the rural industry. Many of our high school students live in the town area and have limited exposure to work associated with the rural industry. Two priorities were a student Information Day and a student Field Trip.

- **Student Information Day** - The Information Day involved a range of speakers representing key industry groups and a diversification of employment modes. Evaluation by students demonstrated the success of this strategy. In 1998 and 1999 a number of extra students enrolled in the SILO program as a direct result of the Information Day.
- **Student Field Trip** - The student Field Trip involved visits to several diverse agricultural properties and production centres to observe current practices. The field trip enhanced the students' interest in the rural industry by giving them a practical and hands-on look at different sectors of the industry.

Ongoing involvement in field trips is a key strategy in engaging the students' interest in the SILO project. The field trips in 2000 again resulted in increasing the number of students participating in the program. For many students this was their first real experience with the agricultural industry. It has heightened their sense of rural community identity.



Year 11 Trainees undertaking a Chemical Accreditation course on a cotton farm.

Employer Education

Prior to the commencement of the rural workplacements, participating employers were invited to an information seminar on the requirements of Structured Workplace Learning: their participation, competency standards, perceived outcomes and on-the-job training. This workshop was conducted at the Goondiwindi State High School by our expert teaching staff. It was well received and highly regarded by employers.

Implementation Process

The school's workplacement coordinator was able to make a collaborative decision to match student needs, skills and interest with employer opportunities.

On-the-job work placements were conducted for one day per week over ten weeks. The goal of 20 structured rural workplacements was exceeded with 26 students participating.

Both students and employers completed detailed evaluation forms and were contacted regularly during the project. Participating employers and students were presented with Goondiwindi SILO certificates.

Sustainability Measures

Awareness of the project has continued throughout the year with media releases, and an Information Day and Field Trip for Year 10 students continuing into Year 11. **A testimonial brochure featuring students and employers has been designed and produced and contact with employers is being maintained to ensure their participation in rural Structured Workplace Learning in 2000.** A promotional video has been developed in liaison with Open Access to be used as a continuing marketing strategy.



SILO Launch at Goondiwindi State High School April 23, 1999

Mr Harris van Beek, the Hon John Anderson, Mrs Catherine O'Sullivan, Mr Bob McHugh and Mr Peter Corish

Multiple Pathways Program Outcomes

- The major outcome and defining measure of success for the SILO program has been the fact that almost double the number of students have volunteered to be part of the program for 2000 – 26 students in 1999 and 45 in 2000.
- An awareness among the rural community that ad-hoc training is no longer good enough and employees need to be properly trained and qualified.
- Continued support from the rural community with a comprehensive database compiled of employers willing to participate in workplacements in the future.
- Rural employers are now contacting the Goondiwindi State High School for references and information regarding potential employees and trainees.
- Recognition of the local training and labour infrastructure which has influenced employers to look locally for employees.
- The logo developed by the SILO project "*Our Youth, Our Farm, Our Future*" is being promoted nationally by ASTF.
- There is a continuing interest and demand for publication of our work. The school's Multiple Pathways program has recently been documented in:
 - *Principal Matters* – the Official Journal of the Secondary Principal's Associations of Australia
 - *Models of Delivery of Vocational Education and Training in Schools in Rural and Remote Areas* – a project under the strategic component of the Commonwealth School to Work Program
 - The work with indigenous students at Goondiwindi has been documented for a Queensland publication on Access and Equity issues for VET in schools.
- Mrs O'Sullivan has been asked to speak at a range of state and national conferences including:
 - *Australasian Association of Distance Education School / Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia Inc* - Cairns
 - *Rural and Remote Network, Australian Student Traineeship Foundation* – Adelaide
 - *Positive Rural Futures Conference* – Goondiwindi
 - *Queensland Secondary Principals Conference* – Brisbane
 - *National Planning Day for Schools at the Centre Initiative* – York, Western Australia
 - *Darling Downs VET Network Conference* – Stanthorpe
 - *Charles Handy, Education and Globalisation* – Sydney
 - *South-West Principals Conference* – Roma
 - *National Planning Day for Structured Workplace Learning in Schools* – Sydney.
 - *Catherine was also a guest on a national website tailored to Vocation Education initiatives.*
- Mrs O'Sullivan was awarded a Churchill Fellowship for 2000 to study rural training and school / community enterprise initiatives in Britain, Europe, Canada and the United States of America.
- The rationale and procedures of the Multiple Pathways program are highly transferable to other rural communities and easily adapted to many other industry areas.
 - The school is involved in mentoring other rural high schools who are attempting to transfer the concept of our work. These include Kalkadoon, Charters Towers, St George, Emerald and Charleville State High Schools.
 - Goondiwindi State High School recently hosted an information day on the Multiple Pathways program for representatives from Emerald, St George, Boggabilla, Moree, Inglewood and Toogoolawah State High Schools.
 - Students in these areas will benefit from the work done at Goondiwindi State High School.

Substantive Evidence

The successful outcomes of the Goondiwindi Multiple Pathways project can be measured intrinsically and globally through extensive data collection from

- Destination studies
- Employer evaluation forms
- Parent involvement
- Information evenings
- Student evaluation forms
- Teacher monitoring
- Management committee
- School led 'Train the Trainer' sessions

The staff at Goondiwindi State High School has worked to ensure that VET (now known as Multiple Pathways) has been central to the development of a comprehensive curriculum.

The school's administration has worked hard to ensure this is not a 'BOLT ON' program by ensuring that Multiple Pathways ensures multiple lifelong choices for all students.

The Multiple Pathways project has received state and national recognition as a lighthouse best practice initiative in a rural community.

Multiple Pathways Team

Team Coordinator	Catherine O'Sullivan
Senior Schooling Head of Department	Marilyn Sinclair
Industry Placement Coordinator	Esme Cairns
SILO Project Officer	Nicki White
Workplace Administration Assistant	Tania Ryan