The Central Coast Challenge of Turning Broken Dreams into a New Reality

Presented by Dr Anton Kriz
Chair of Central Coast Innovation Strategy

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Supported by CCRDA
Destination Central Coast

- 70km North of Sydney (God’s Own Country)
  - Originally rural backdrop and holiday village
  - Gosford, Wyong, The Entrance, Avoca, Terrigal
- Icons
  - Hawkesbury, Broken Bay, Mariners, Bryce Courtney, Ken Duncan, Country Music, Reptile Park
- 315,000 people plus and growing
  - Estimated 40,000 commuters daily
- Enterprise Connect Innovative Region Centre
  - Mixture of SMEs, youth unemployment, aging pop., low tertiary education levels
  - Broad cross-section of industry
What has stimulated change?

- Central Coast has experienced major agglomeration
  - Flat (modern communication) and spikey (Sydney’s doorstep)
- Finally been recognised by the ABS as a distinct region
- State Government:
  - Development of Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy (REDES)
  - Gosford Landing Project
- Federal Government
  - The Innovative Regions Centre has been a catalyst – Graham Baker (Political entrepreneur/champion) – momentum and tipping point
- University of Newcastle and CCRDA
  - Central Coast Campus linkage a key - 50 metre walk - number of PhDs
The CC Innovation Strategy

Component 1 - An Innovation Champion/Broker Program
Component 2 - A High-Growth Entrepreneur or Gazelle Program
Component 3 - A Cluster Development Program
Component 4 - An Expanded Innovation Research Program

CC Vision and Plan Informed by REDES

Purpose

Pillar 1 - regional innovation
Broadband
More jobs

Pillar 2 - people
Sustainable
A region

Pillar 3 - key logic

Several key sources

Mega 1 - More from less
Mega 2 - A personal touch
Mega 3 - Diverse demographics
Mega 4 - On the move
Mega 5 - i World

Social and Business Ecosystem
Conscious of Broken Dreams

• Boulevard of Broken Dreams (Lerner 2009) suggests that transforming regions is an unenviable challenge

• Key differences here:
  – Facilitate rather than interventionist
  – Knowledge rather than simply finance
  – Targeted programs for specific needs (entrepreneurs need management and reverse)
  – Greater role for University (S&T - R&D)
  – Collaboration, connectors and champions

• No “silver bullet”:
  – Central Coast has looked at multiple programs
  – Four key innovation initiatives identified and developed (as identified in the Map)
Major stakeholder support

Newcastle Innovation (NI)

Wyong Council

Gosford Council

RDA Central Coast

Enterprise Connect (IRC)

Trade and Invest.

Innovation Champions

Gazelles (HGEs)

Summit & Workshops

Central Coast Innovation (CCI)

Manufact Connect

Creative Indust.

Social Enterprise

Cluster Four

Cluster (n)

RHDs

Scholarships

Research

Education

HVRF CCRF

Newcastle University
An Innovation Champions Program

• Background research:
  – Innovation Champions (Howell & Higgins, 1990)
    • ‘Boundary spanning individuals’ or ‘stars’ (Tushman & Scanlan 1981) - bring ideas and spread
    • Shane (1995, p. 49) referred to four champions: network facilitator, transformational leader, organizational maverick and organizational buffer
  • Corporate entrepreneurs (often informal) also start up/development entrepreneurs (definitional issues)

• Program
  – Innovation Summit (Steven Lundin), innovation circles and workshops (3*10 Champions), stimulate company innovation and champion network
Innovation Champions

“Just imagine if you could capture all of the hidden wealth that sits inside your organization in the form of latent imagination-all that passion and energy that was never turned on…”

Skarzynski and Gibson (2008)
A High-growth (Gazelle) Entrepreneur program

- Background research: (Dr David Cunneen)
  - The term “gazelle” was coined by David Birch in the late 1980s (Mice & Elephants)
  - Compound annual sales growth after startup above 40% (Cunneen and Mankelow, 2010).
  - Most potent force in economic development with 4% of firms contributing over 70% of new jobs

- Program:
  - Define and identify potential gazelles
  - Workshops around management skills and lean, not simply innovation (gazelles have innovation in their DNA)
In search of Central Coast gazelles
A Cluster (Sector) Development Program

• Background research:
  – Enterprise Connect priority for Innovative Regions Centres (Map clusters)
  – Michael Porter’s notion of the importance of clusters and Alfred Marshall’s late 1800 idea of agglomeration

• Clusters have major benefits
  – Silicon Valley, Cambridge University in the UK
  – Australia has important clusters
    • Hunter Valley, Barossa/ Mining (Central Queensland, WA)/ Melbourne sporting cluster

• Sectors could be a more accurate description
  – Inclusive of Government and industry bodies
Clusters underway

• Central Coast Manufacturing Connect (Frank Sammut)
  – Already operational
  – Appointed a Program Coordinator
  – Over 70 participants and major manufacturers

• Social Enterprise Connect
  – Building momentum
  – Strategy development

• Creative Industries Connect
  – Commenced

• Others targeted over the next 5 years
  – Tourism, IT, Telecommuting, Health and Aging, Green Building, Retail and Education
An Innovation Monitoring Program

• Background research: (Caroline Veldhuizen)
  – Working with Central Coast Research Foundation
  – OECD study of innovation and other relevant instruments
  – Aware of the impact of improving productivity through application of technology to smarter people
  – PhD around analysing key elements of the ecosystem
• Program
  – Important to show policy makers and key stakeholders what innovation is doing to the region
  – Annual survey on innovation plus a mapping exercise of the connections
Social and Business Ecosystem

• The aim overall of the map and its components is to build a more innovative community
• The region is a complex system built on social and business needs
• Working closely with social enterprises and community
• Not simply “It’s the Economy Stupid”
  – But a community stimulated by economics, social enterprise, the arts and a growing creative class
  – Starting to “steal” back our professionals from Sydney
    • Home based start ups/capture telecommuters
    • Lifestyle but commercial options close to Sydney
Thank you

Dr Anton Kriz
Senior Management Consultant
Newcastle Innovation
Chair: Central Coast Innovation Project

Senior Lecturer in
Marketing/Entrepreneurship/Innovation
University of Newcastle
Tel: +61 2 4348 4107
Email: anton.kriz@newcastle.edu.au