



## New Choices

Alternative pathways to positive learning

### The New Choices program

#### Purpose:

To re-engage severely disengaged students in educational pathways in order to improve their literacy, numeracy and social skills.

### Context and Goals

Recent data and studies show that a number of students of compulsory school age are not attending school on a regular basis.

Traditional methods of engaging these young people have proven ineffective in the past and they have tended to become the forgotten people of our communities. The New Choices program provides an alternative to mainstream education with the opportunity to re-engage in education, training and within their community. These pathways reduce the incidence of anti-social and illegal activity in our community, and aim to produce responsible, safe and cooperative young people.

### The Approach

Participation for students is based on a flexible and individual learning plan. Local high schools initially provide students with adjusted education plans in consultation with New Choices. Southern Cross Distance Education provides curriculum support and TAFE NSW provides students with work skills opportunities so they can complete work placements in various fields.

New Choices is staffed with experienced teachers committed to providing alternative pathways for these students. Staff pride themselves on relationship building, positive mentoring and modeling behaviour to develop responsible lifestyle practices.

The site for New Choices is at The Northern Rivers Conservatorium in the heart of Lismore. This base incorporates community services from the Lismore area, to provide individualised support to break down the barriers to positive educational pathways.

### Benefits

- Individualised Learning programs
- Students gain experience in a range of other life skills such as art, business, cooking, gardening and social skills
- Community involvement through work placement and community partnerships
- Staff who have extensive experience dealing with young people at risk
- Parents know their children are receiving a tailored response to their learning
- Students develop confidence and reduce anxiety in structured environments
- The opportunity for NGO's and support services to provide targeted programs in an adult learning environment
- Access to TAFE courses and educators

### Target Students

The program is offered to students between the ages of 14 and 17yrs, who may:-

- display a history of disengagement in class and the community
- be at risk of leaving school due to suspensions for misbehaviour
- benefit from a flexible learning environment with an individualised program

### Transition

Transition out of the program will be done in stages, with an aftercare component, allowing students to revisit and seek support when needed.

Students who complete the New Choices program can receive their ROSA (Year 10 Certificate). They also have opportunities to obtain their OH&S white card, first aid certificates, entry level TAFE requirements and invaluable work experience within their community.

They will leave, having had opportunities to work with understanding adults, community mentors and health and support services all with the common goal of strengthening their ability to remain on a positive pathway.

### Want to know more?

#### Contact the Relieving Head Teacher :

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