

# Queensland Communities in Transition

Engage & Create Consulting, Goondiwindi – helping create vibrant and viable regional and rural communities

Regional and rural Australia has long been the engine room of Australia's economy. Currently these communities contribute around 40% of the country's annual GDP.<sup>1</sup> There is huge benefit in unlocking the potential of these areas by growing these regional economies.

An increasing number of passionate people in regional communities are dedicating their time to creating an innovative start-up culture. Business and community growth in regional areas however does not just happen organically, but instead requires significant support. Engage and Create have established a successful business model for how to successfully promote:

- champions;
- an entrepreneurial culture;
- access to strong networks ;
- work, meeting or co-working spaces; and
- opportunities to engage with stakeholders and source funding. <sup>2</sup>

Understanding the exciting possibilities but also the support needed to build vibrant and viable businesses and community groups in regional Australia was the catalyst for Julia Telford founding Engage and Create Consulting (E&CC) and the co-founding the Goondiwindi Business



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Grant applications written by E&CC have secured \$1.5 million in funding in 12 months.
- Managed and delivered project value between \$20,000-\$2M
- Delivered projects for Prime Minister and Cabinet, Goondiwindi Regional Council and Agrifood Skills Australia
- Julia was named in the Financial Review's 100 Women of Influence
- Local coordinator for the Communities in Transition project in Goondiwindi

Engage & Create  
CONSULTING

The E&C team work with businesses, community groups and start-ups to improve business performance, outcomes and overall viability.

Julia's work is supported by her E&CC Consulting team.



Natalie Woods



Yasmin Taylor



Lauren Marer

**Champions** act as catalysts to accelerate interest and activity. In particular they encourage economic development that also benefits the broader community. They are leaders that understand local opportunities and hurdles and work collaboratively with businesses, key stakeholders, and service providers.

Goondiwindi local, Julia Telford founded E&CC in 2012 with the aim to support and work with the movers and shakers of regional Australia to help turn ideas into actions.

Clients include land managers, regional councils and local government, Indigenous groups, businesses and community groups.

**An entrepreneurial culture** within a region that extends beyond the businesses themselves is essential. This includes developing skill-sets as well as mind-sets that foster innovation, creativity and confidence to take calculated risks. E&C believe that change typically happens on the edge of discomfort and choose work in that space.

#### **Goondiwindi Region Innovation Network**

E&CC has been instrumental in setting up the Goondiwindi Region Innovation Network. The group was formed to help encourage and promote Ag tech and innovation. E&C facilitated the first meeting of the group, which attracted more than 30 people, including people from the agriculture sector, council representatives and university representatives. Since then E &CC has facilitated an innovation tour to Brisbane, immersed a group of Goondiwindi locals in the Ag Tech world and linked them with key contacts.

Julia is a passionate advocate for sustainable agriculture, regional economic development, women in leadership and mental health awareness.

#### **Women in leadership in regional Australia**

In 2017, Julia was awarded the Queensland Rural Regional and Remote Women's Network Small Business Owner of the Year.

E&C has developed and delivered 'Skilling Her Enterprise' workshops across Australia for Agrifood Skills Australia.

E&CC have worked with Aboriginal women in SW Qld to help build leaders to take roles on traditional owner group boards.

*"A profitable small business can still have a heart and deliver on community needs."*

Julia Telford

**Access to strong networks** that include other businesses, mentors, service providers and investors is crucial. Networks enable the sharing of ideas, access to advice, learning and resources and, very importantly, encouragement. E&CC share their own experiences or connect clients with others in their network who have experienced similar challenges and can offer support and guidance.

#### **Women's business lunch**

E &CC hosts a lunch during Qld Small Business Week to bring businesswomen together, to enjoy a day of networking, learning and supporting each other. The day involved a panel of business women from Goondiwindi and wider region.

**A clear process** to take an idea to commercialization is critical. E&CC provide business growth planning services to help businesses and community groups make the right strategic decisions. This is typically delivered through one-on-one coaching. They have also developed a freely available online business health check for businesses to review key strategic areas of their business.

[www.engageandcreateconsulting.com.au/business-](http://www.engageandcreateconsulting.com.au/business-)

**Opportunities to engage with stakeholders** interested in economic development such as government bodies, service providers, educational and research institutions, other businesses and investors and even the media are critical. This can include assistance acquiring funding. E&CC has been part of initiatives to have key government champions such as Chief Entrepreneurs come and visit communities across the region and connect individuals and community groups with key government agencies and staff. Julia also sits on a number of committees and boards which she believes is an effective way to support economic development in the region.

E&CC also research grant and contract funding opportunities and write grant applications and contract proposals for businesses. They have secured \$1.5 million in funding in 12 months.

#### **A work, meeting or co-working space**

promotes engagement, information sharing and fosters an entrepreneurial culture. Julia is one of four founding partners of the Goondiwindi Business Hub. The Hub provides flexible serviced office solutions for 7 small businesses who have long-term tenancy, as well as providing hot desking and short term accommodation for other businesses. The hub also offers space for local businesses to host meetings. This allows small businesses to reduce the risk of renting an office while allowing them to benefit from professional and social interactions.



This case study is part of a series of case studies that have been developed as part of the Queensland Communities in Transition Program. Prepared by The Ecoefficiency Group as part of Clean Growth Choices Consortium with funding from Queensland Department of Environment and Science, 2019

For further information, visit [www.cleangrowthchoices.org](http://www.cleangrowthchoices.org)

1. [www.regional.gov.au/regional/publications/files/RegionsattheReadyInvestinginAustraliasFuture.pdf](http://www.regional.gov.au/regional/publications/files/RegionsattheReadyInvestinginAustraliasFuture.pdf)
2. <https://timreview.ca/article/994>

