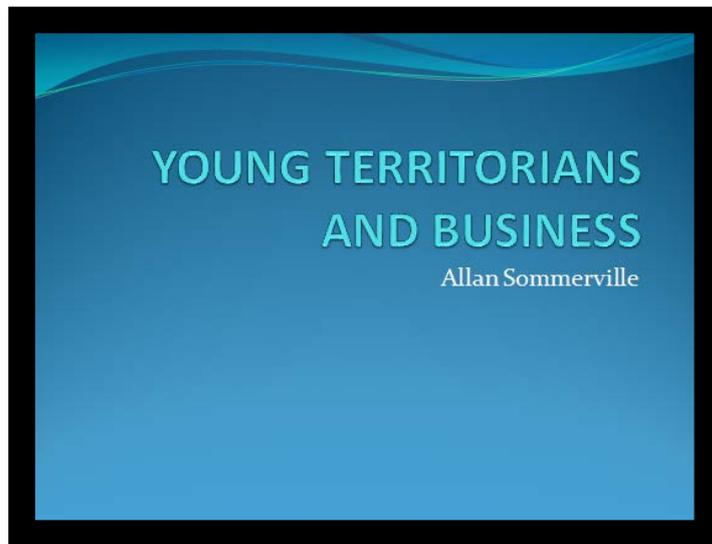


Young Territorians and Business
Allan Sommerville 2013 Project Transcript



My name is Allan as you all already know. Today I am here to talk about my project that I have spent the better part of this year working on and is Young Territorians in Business.

It's a topic that is quite passionate to me, everyone is thinking it is nearly lunch time not breakfast time, why pancakes on the screen? How does it relate?



It's my inspiration for this topic, ok. Pancakes, alright.

The Inspiration... Cont.

- Pancake Café
 - Family Support



In 2008, I finished Year 12 at Casuarina Senior College and early 2009 I turned 18 and my friends were going off on trips around the world and buying their first cars and what not. I bought a food van. I called it the Pancake Café and started a business. That's my inspiration around this topic; I am a young person who has been involved in business from a young age. This business lead to other business ventures over the last four or five years and probably prepped me for what my primary role at the moment is as the Operations Manager for a regional airline. Even though it's not my business I have a very vested interest in the running of that business and a lot of control in that business.

The big thing about this project and what I wanted to investigate is what support services and recourses are available to young people leaving school if they want to start their own business. I was quite lucky, I had a mum and dad who had been in business before, particularly my father, he runs his own businesses.

When we saw this [pointing at the photo of the pancake van] and emptied my life savings and got a bit of a loan off him [dad] and his business partner I had the support at home that I needed to understand how to run a business. What I have looked at is the opportunities available for young people who might not have that support. That don't have friends or family that have been in that world I guess, because it is a very different world.



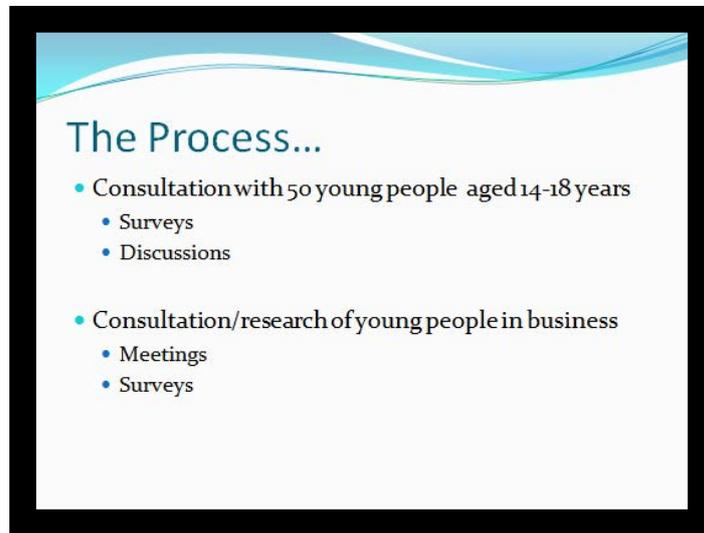
My other inspiration is the current Northern Territory situation. We all know we are going through a period of massive growth. We have got major projects, everyone has heard of INPEX unless you have been living in a cave.

Major infrastructure investment in the Northern Territory to support the external investments coming into the Territory. I suppose my inspiration for this project is that it relates directly to Framing the Future document in terms of a Prosperous Economy and people within the Northern Territory being able to invest their time and money into the Northern Territory and get in on the big action that is happening.



My other inspiration is my passion, obviously I am on the Round Table for a reason I've got a bit of a passion for young people and the part in which they play in the community. Grace Tozer, a person before Thursday I had no idea who she was. I was invited to present an award at Palmerston Senior College, just the Thursday gone. It was an award for entrepreneurial spirit. It was an award my father actually sponsored but he couldn't be there so he asked me to go. Grace won a number of awards on that day and this award was particularly shaped around her commitment and enthusiasm throughout her Year 11 studies in registering a business name and building a business while at school, which I thought was pretty amazing.

It's people like Grace that this topic focusses on. How can we support her when she gets to the end of Year 12? We have spent all of this money investing in educating her in the Northern Territory, we all know the cost of living here isn't the lowest, how can we get her investment of time and money back into the Territory and what support services can we provide? That's my last bit of inspiration for this project.

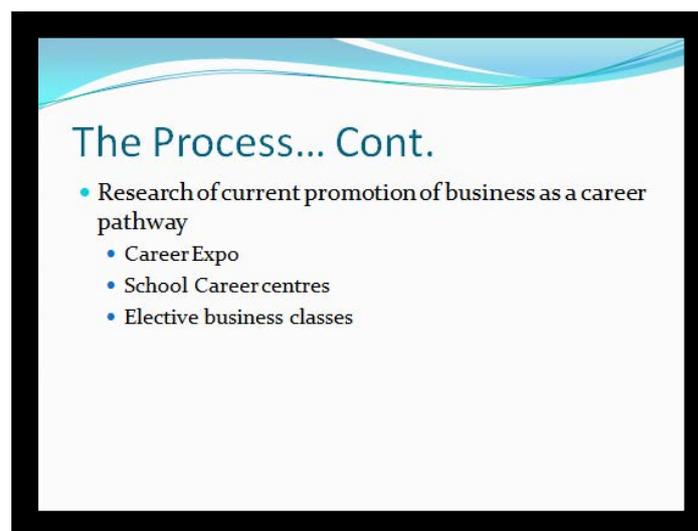


The Process: throughout this year I have consulted with around 50 young people, not as many as I had hoped, but not too bad. Through surveys and discussions with people still at school. I have talked to them about two things, firstly if they are interested in business and secondly if they are not why aren't they.

I have also consulted with young people, me being one of them, but other young people I know in business through meetings and surveys and discussed how did they get into business, how did they come across the concept and did they use the resources that are out there because as I am about to explain there are heaps, it's just about are people using them? How can we better shape them? And how can we direct them to the right avenues?

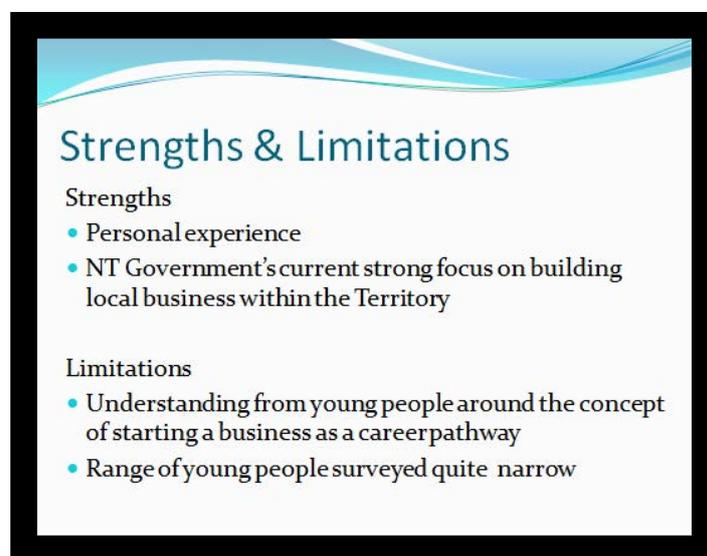


I did a lot of research into those current processes resources and what not that are available. There's heaps and heaps to note, it would take ages to note them all. But here's some of the key ones that I found: the Business Enterprise Center, I am sure everyone has heard of. The Department of Business has a number of resources: the Business Growth Program, Business Up skills Program, which I have sent a number of my staff along to within the business I work in now and I have also attended some. The Youth in Business on the Department of Business website I though was good but I think we can tweak the way in which we direct that to young Territorians. How we can look at getting the business consultants we have got within the Department of Business out to Territory schools to explain this whole concept of 'you don't have to have 30-40 years of experience in your chosen skill before you chose to start a business and have employees. It's something that, if you're a qualified electrician, you can own an electrical business. The Australian Government initiative, the Apprentice to Business Owner Business Skills and Mentoring Program, which is run in conjunction with a couple of different organisations – I thought that was worth mentioning because I just mentioned electrical apprentices. That's [the program] aimed at trade apprentices completing their trade and there is Australian Government funding supporting small business certificates and what not to enable them to go and start their own business. I thought that's a great initiative and I think we need to be looking at other initiatives like that and looking to support them or continuing to support them if they are there.



I also researched, I suppose, how young people are exposed to this concept of business, I was exposed because I grew up with it. There is a lot of talk in Year 11 and Year 12 getting the best marks so you can go to uni, or going off and doing a trade or an apprenticeship or a traineeship and what not. That's all fine, I have got nothing against that, but I think there should be discussions around the future career pathways to that. As I said, complete your qualification, complete your degree, go and get into a business and what not, learn your stuff but look at that future pathway of being able to build and grow your own business. Once again, it comes back to something I am quite passionate about, we spend a lot of money training people here, all over Australia, but I am talking about the Northern Territory. How can we retain that investment within the Northern Territory? How can we then have those people then invest their time back into the Territory and helping growth?

Things I looked at were things like Career Expos and school career centres trying to promote that concept of business a bit more and also the elective business classes. Many of the schools around the Territory I found, almost all of them, offer small business electives or business workshops and what not as a class. They offer it in the senior years and some offer it in the middle school years and from personal experience and talking to other young business owners is we need to be directing those resources and electives more to the middles schooling years. I think that's when we need to get people more exposed to it because I can talk from personal opinion that I never took those classes in senior school for the sole reason that in Year 11 and 12 you are taking subjects most of the time specifically to achieve the best marks to get into university and those subjects don't necessarily achieve those: your high level maths and your high level English and what not do. So if we are leaving them [business subjects] to senior schooling we would potentially miss out, people don't get exposed to them because they are not looking at those avenues they are looking at the Chemistries and the Sciences and what not.



Strengths throughout this: my personal experience, as you have already heard about, and as I said also the NT Government's current strong focus on building the economy, local business, prosperous economy then leading to fixing a few of the other issues we have around here.

Limitations was the understanding of young people around the concept of going into business, as I said I found, as we will see on the next slide, the percentage of people I found were interested in the concept wasn't too bad, but of the people that weren't a lot of them, the common theme was because it hadn't been put in front of them. They knew they could go to uni, they knew they could become an apprentice or a trainee, they didn't think any further forward. This concept of going into business was for people with 20 or 30 years of experience, it's kind of like the concept of teaching I guess, older professors and what not – it wasn't right in front of them. Also the range of young people I got to speak to [limitation] I will admit wasn't the best range it could have been better, but it was enough to get some relevant information.

The Important Stuff

- Nearly 30 % of the approximately 50 young people in school I spoke with were interested in some way in business.
- Of the 70% who were not, a common theme that emerged was a lack of exposure to the concept.
- Majority of our schools are offering subjects focused on preparing or exposing young people to business however I feel this should be directed in the middle years rather than senior years in order to capture more interest.

So I guess the important stuff I would like you guys to think about today, as I spoke before, we have got reports coming out that will detail more information. But about 30 per cent of the 50 young people I spoke to were interested about the concept of going into business – not too bad.

The 70 per cent that weren't [interested in going into business] when I spoke to them about why, as I have already said, the common theme was the lack of exposure to the concept and I think that's the issue I probably found out of this topic. It's not so much the resources that are available, they are there, and I think we can do some tweaking into refine them and direct them into the right method and they will sort of gel together with this concept of making the concept more readily available to young Territorians. I think we just need to address putting it in front of them.

The fact that the majority of schools are offering these subjects but I think we need to expose people to them in the younger years because every Year 11 or 12 student will tell you that they are still there at school to get the best mark to enable them to get into university if that's what they want to do. Even myself, I had no desire to go to university at the end of Year 12 but I was there for Year 12, the focus was to get the best mark in case I decided to.

My thoughts to you

- Consider encouraging Northern Territory Schools to offer subjects that focus on small business and elements of starting a business in middle school rather than the current model of predominantly high school.
- Continue to provide support to current initiatives aimed at assisting young Territorians to start and grow their own businesses.
- Investigate ways to promote more awareness to young people of options available to start and grow a business in the Northern Territory as a subsequent step to normal career pathways.

My final thoughts:

- Consider encouraging Northern Territory schools to focus on small business in the middle years, as I have already spoken about – through the Department of Education I guess.
- Continue to provide support to the current initiatives like that A to B program. Look what initiatives other states around Australia might be looking at, which I will look at in detail in my report and try and support those.
- Investigate ways to promote more awareness – your school career centres, your career expos and what not, have it in the back of everyone’s mind of trying to get these people to invest long-term in the Northern Territory through the potential of starting their own business.

Thank you

Once again thank you everyone for their time today.