



## WELCOME TO THE INNOVATION CENTRE

**This booklet gives you details about the Innovation Centre and how to apply.**

*We are helping entrepreneurs to start and grow successful businesses*

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## WELCOME

The North Coast is well known for its great lifestyle. The launch of the Innovation Centre in 2001 has further helped to make the North Coast a great place to work and develop your business.

This “*Start Here*” brochure is designed to provide everything that you might want to know about the business incubator, including details on how new ventures can apply to become an Innovation Centre company.

The Innovation Centre provides a high-tech, creative, fun and innovative environment for new start companies, and it works closely with each client company to help accelerate its growth and achieve its potential. So, the incubator is really much more about a dynamic and networked business development ‘experience’, rather than simply an office space.

If you have an ambition to build a successful growth company, and would also like to make the most of life outside work too, then the Coffs Harbour Innovation Centre could be the place for you. This “*Start Here*” brochure will give you more information about what we are all about, and should help you to decide if this is right for you and your particular business. If it is, we encourage you to get in touch and apply yourself.

Remember, our goal is to make you successful!

All the best.

Geoff Piesse  
Manager  
*Coffs Harbour Innovation Centre*



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*Acknowledgements: The Coffs Harbour Technology Park Board that administers the Innovation Centre gratefully acknowledges its funding partners:*

*AusIndustry; the NSW Department of State and Regional Development; Coffs Harbour City Council; Southern Cross University, and TAFE NSW – North Coast Institute for their support both in the past, the present and in the future.*



## WHY LOCATE HERE TO THE INNOVATION CENTRE?

The North Coast is a beautiful place to live, work and enjoy a balanced lifestyle. The Innovation Centre is one of the best places in NSW to start and grow a new business venture. The following are some of the reasons you might want to be here:

1. The Innovation Centre is located at the Coffs Harbour Education Campus in the heart of the north coast, located centrally between Brisbane and Sydney with the local airport a two minute drive away (QANTAS, Virgin and other regional airlines).
2. We provide high quality, fully furnished, affordable office space in an architecturally designed building in a superb location.
3. We provide a very supportive environment. Advice is available from the Centre Manager (located in the Centre), and there are other new ventures in the facility.
4. The Coffs Harbour Education Campus has a prestigious address and has the facilities to help create a professional image for new start companies.
5. The Centre can offer tenants business and marketing planning assistance, grant and funding support and business mentoring.
6. A well developed network of contacts locally and nationally are available to help businesses grow faster and stronger.
7. There is access to a wide range of facilities available at the Coffs Harbour Education Campus.



## **SEEKING POTENTIAL**

The Innovation Centre attracts, selects and develops high potential new ventures with real prospects of growing and creating jobs in technology and knowledge based sectors on the North Coast.

The Innovation Centre has a focus on development of new technology companies but is also happy to look at other businesses.

The Innovation Centre business incubator is continually selecting businesses to ensure it has a 'full house'. Plans have been approved to increase the Centre by a further 162sq m to a new total area of 480 sq m, opening up opportunities for further businesses. Each new business can expect to be based at the Innovation Centre for around two years before graduating. Many of these businesses will then have the opportunity of moving onto the new Technology Park complex as a long term base for their business.

We have developed a straightforward Selection Process to help us pick out the companies that would most benefit from the Innovation Centre experience. To support this selection process we have developed an Entry & Exit Policy which goes into the details of the services we can provide and the expectations the management of the Centre have of its tenants. This policy can be read and down loaded from our website. Details of this Selection Process are set out below.

## **APPLY YOURSELF**

### **Entry Criteria – The Detail**

The table on the next page provides a detailed checklist of the entry criteria, with a list of questions to help you decide if the Centre is right for you, and vice versa. We don't necessarily expect every single applicant to have a 'perfect score', but you will need to measure up well against all or most of these criteria to be successful at the final Selection Panel stage.

### **Pre-Start Assistance**

We realise that not every new venture starts with the perfect team or the perfect bank balance. Hence, if you and your business do not yet quite measure up against the entry criteria today, with a lot of hard work you might be in a better position in three or six months time. The Centre works closely with a small number of selected motivated 'aspiring entrepreneurs' who have the potential to make real progress – aiming to help the entrepreneur to develop themselves and their plans before pitching to the Selection Panel. Our goal is to make you successful.

**THE ENTRY CRITERIA DETAILS ARE OUTLINED IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE:**

Entry Criteria	Issues to Consider
1. Business product information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is your business innovative?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are you a new business, or a business which is currently small but established, and wishes to grow?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What is your business?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What is your product?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is your product a commercial produce that will generate income?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Why do you need the services of the Innovation Centre?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When do you anticipate your product reaching the market?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will your product create jobs?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is your product technically feasible – will it work?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do you see your business developing in terms of employment, export, investment, innovation and growth revenue? And if so, how?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does your business have any synergies with the CHEC community?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you identified your potential market?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a Business Plan?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What date was/will your business be established?</li> </ul>
2. The financial viability of your business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do you have the ability to pay rent and utility charges (telephone and electricity)?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can you pay your business operating costs?</li> </ul>
3. Business entrepreneurial skills and abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do you believe you have the basic skills to make the proposed business a success?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do you have any gaps in your skills? If so, what are they?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are you clear why you want to locate at the incubator?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What are your expectations of the Innovation Centre?</li> </ul>
4. Business strategies commitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Would you be open to taking advice and participating in the incubator community?</li> </ul>

## STEPS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The process – assuming successful progression at each stage – is as follows:

1. **Is it for me?** Familiarise yourself with the selection criteria and the contents of this brochure and the Exit & Entry Policy.
2. **Contact the Innovation Centre**, by phone or email, for a brief initial discussion.
3. **Send us a one page summary** with basic details of the new venture and management.
4. **Applicants invited to meet the Centre Manager** for exploratory meeting(s) to find out more about the venture, to answer any queries, determine if suitable space in the facility is available, and to gauge if the proposed business is a good match for the incubator program.
5. **Applicants are invited to complete** the attached Application Form.
6. **Presentation** to a final selection panel, made up of the Centre Manager and selected members of the Technology Park Board.
7. **Successful candidates** offered space and incubation contract.

***Other supporting material (for example, a business plan and market researching findings) can be presented if available.***

## NOTES ON THE PROCESS

- *Before admitting companies, personal references and a credit check may be sought.*
- *A basic 'due diligence' process will run alongside the selection process. This will particularly seek to assess the viability of the proposed business or technology, and may call upon expert advice.*
- *Finally, the selection process aims to assist with the identification of the clients' development needs, and to establish milestones for key actions.*
- *The Coffs Harbour Technology Park Board in considering applications will assess the 'fit' of the proposed business in the educational environment of the Campus.*

## SPACE MATTERS

The Innovation Centre has been custom built and is designed with flexibility and growth in mind. Two further buildings totalling 162m<sup>2</sup> of office space have been Council approved and will be built as the Technology Park grows.

We are pleased to discuss specific space requirements of individual companies and create a space to meet their needs within the framework the building provides.

## OFFICE SUITES

The Incubator includes flexible space from 10m<sup>2</sup> up to 61m<sup>2</sup>. This floor space is sufficient for many new companies and can accommodate 2 to 4 people, and their workstations, comfortably. All offices are air-conditioned with their own electrical and telecommunication points. Each office unit has fixed walls, its own centrally monitored alarm system, and is secure with its own lockable door.

Office units are furnished with modern workstations and chairs.

## SHARED FACILITIES

The Centre includes the following shared resources:

- A formal Board Room.
- Kitchen bar area, with a large fridge, sink, dishwasher, tea and coffee facilities, and informal meeting place.
- Access to café and on-site catering service (for that special function).

## ANCHOR TENANTS

The Centre always has an Anchor Tenant who provides the following services:

- Reception service – acts as the first point of contact for enquiries.
- Provide a Board Room booking service.
- Provide photocopying services (at cost).
- Provided facsimile services (at cost).
- Provide general management, administrative and secretarial services.
- Assist the Centre Manager with the provision of basic mentoring services.
- Provide support for tenants, including the reporting and rectification of defects.
- Assist the Centre Manager with managing tenant electrical power accounting.



## CAMPUS LOCATION BENEFITS

Additionally, client companies can access many services and facilities offered on campus by the partners of the Coffs Harbour Education Campus.

## **GROW HERE – SUPPORT TO HELP YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS SUCCEED**

The best business incubators are not just about square metres and flexible office space, rather they are all about selecting high potential companies and then working to help those companies, and the people behind them, achieve their potential.

At the Innovation Centre, the client development process begins at the selection stage. The Selection Panel, consisting of the Centre Manager and three members of the Technology Park Board, assess each company against the seven selection criteria. The Selection Panel then establishes a view of the company's development needs. These are fed back to the company and a more detailed Client Needs Analysis Checklist helps to complete the development needs picture, and forms the basis of the development and services proposal made to each company offered a place in the incubator.

Each company has the opportunity to access mentors from the Innovation Centre Advisory Network. An initial business review session is scheduled three months after the Selection Panel, bringing the Centre Manager and the Advisory Network members back together with the company. Significant progress is expected by this stage. These business review sessions act as a focal point in the development process, supplemented with day-to-day interactions with the Centre Manager and others.

The delivery of the business development support is coordinated by the Centre Manager and supported by the company itself, Innovation Centre Advisory Network members, and other key network members. Companies must also be proactive and make the most of the Innovation Centre reputation, network and events.

The Innovation Centre provides focused support to assist start-ups to raise investment, including client education on capital raising, assistance with developing business models, and identifying initial financial requirements, and introductions to contracts in the investment community.

Many Innovation Centre companies are also successful in gaining targeted business support, including grants from Government initiatives and development program places.

The best way for entrepreneurs who are starting a new company to learn is by doing, and then to make some sense out of this experience. Other start-up and early stage companies are also good groups of people to learn from. The incubator adds to these learning opportunities by an annual program of business events, including the *Meet the Entrepreneur* seminar series, giving client companies the opportunity to learn from the business presenters, and to network with other participants.

The Centre's dynamic environment facilitates interaction between companies to grow faster and stronger and, after about two years, to move on to a new office space with solid foundations for business success in place.

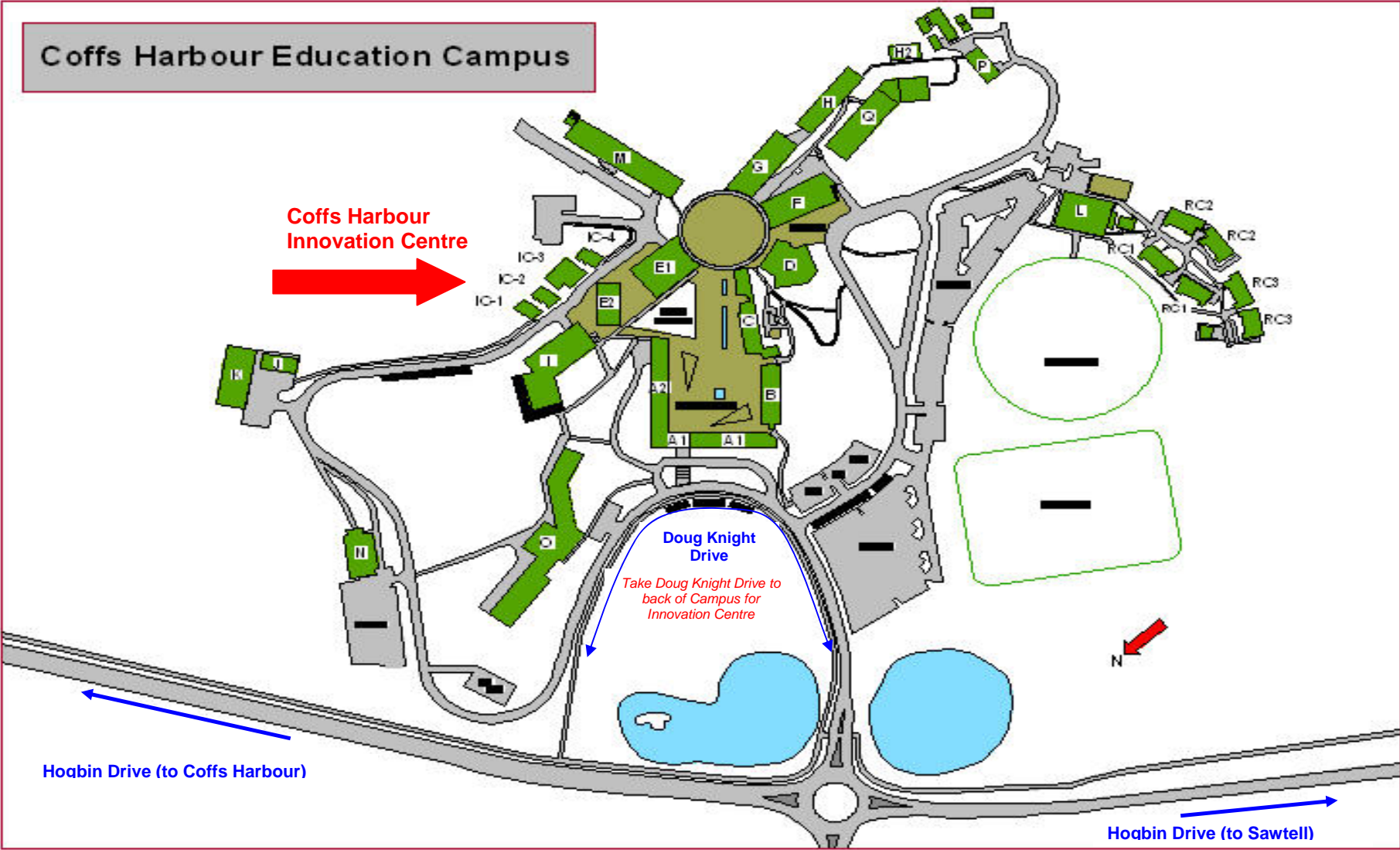
## **MONEY MATTERS**

Client companies pay two costs on an ongoing basis:

1. Monthly rental – covering office space and use of shared facilities.
2. Service costs – electricity, telephone, network access, photocopying, fax etc.

**WHERE ARE WE?**

The Innovation Centre is located in buildings IC-1 to IC-4, with all rooms enjoying bushland views.



## CENTRE MANAGER'S PROFILE

### Geoff Piesse

Born in Melbourne, Geoff has tertiary qualifications in management and engineering. He has spent six years in local government in two senior positions (General Manager) where his proven economic development skills were further honed. Geoff was singly responsible for the creation, planning and implementation of the Holbrook Submariners Memorial – HMAS Otway – that is now one of the regions (southern NSW) most successful tourist attractions. This achievement has been recognised in Tim Fishers latest book titled 'Outback Heroes'.

Following local government, Geoff was instrumental in developing and implementing a program for the South Australian State Government which has greatly increased the number of skilled migrants moving to that state.

Further consultancy work followed this successful project, with particular emphasis being on developing small businesses through the use of quality management principles.

Geoff is very much a 'people person' who has a real understanding of the practicalities of regional economic development, and his job now is to help you get established.



### Interested?

If you would like to find out more about the Innovation Centre, please visit our website at:

[www.coffsinnovation.com.au](http://www.coffsinnovation.com.au)

Or get in touch with Geoff Piesse  
(see details on front cover)



## TENANT APPLICATION FORM

### Application to Become a Tenant at the Coffs Harbour Innovation Centre

*Applicants are requested to complete all sections/questions and return the completed form to the address on the front cover.*

<b>YOUR NAME:</b>
<b>BUSINESS NAME:</b>
<b>SOLE TRADER/PARTNERSHIP/COMPANY:</b>
<b>ABN/ACN:</b>
<b>ENTRY CRITERIA</b>
<b>1. <u>Business Product and Information:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Is your business innovative? Please describe.</li><li>b. Are you a new business, or a business which is small, but established and wishes to grow?</li><li>c. What is your business?</li><li>d. What is your product?</li><li>e. Is your product a commercial product that will generate an income?</li><li>f. Why do you need the services of the Innovation Centre?</li><li>g. When do you anticipate your product reaching the market?</li><li>h. Will your product create jobs?</li><li>i. Is your product technically feasible – will it work?</li><li>j. Do you see your business developing in terms of employment, export, investment, innovation and growth revenue?</li></ul>

k. Do you see any possible synergies with the CHEC community?

**2. The Financial Viability of Your Business**

- a. Do you have the ability to pay rent and utility charges (telephone/electricity)?
- b. Can you pay for your business operating costs?

**3. Business Entrepreneurial Skills and Abilities**

- a. Do you believe you have the basic skills to make the proposed business a success?
- b. Do you have any gaps in your skills? If so, what are they?
- c. Are you clear why you wish to locate at the Innovation Centre?
- d. What are your expectations of the Innovation Centre?

**4. Business Strategies Commitment**

Would you be open to taking advice and participating in the Innovation Centre's community?

**5. Any other relevant information about your business**

**AMENDMENT STATUS**

Date	Revision	Remarks
24 October 2005	Rev 00	Original only
15 November 2005	Rev 01	New Photo added to page 12
12 December 2005	Rev 02	Changes to the entry criteria and the addition of a Tenant Application Form
19 December 2005	Rev 03	Acknowledgement added on Page 3
29 <sup>th</sup> September 2006	Rev 04	Addition of Entry & Exit Policy details. Addition of new photos
21 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2007	Rev 05	Minor changes to enhance entry criteria
5 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2007	Rev 06	Updated location map added