

## **INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND A GLOBAL SYDNEY**

**Organisation:** Illawarra Forum

**Date received:** 5 June 2017

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1 June 2017

NSW Legislative Council  
Standing Committee on State Development

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### **Regional development and a global Sydney**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment to the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on State Development.

### **About the Illawarra Forum**

The Illawarra Forum is the peak body working for community services organisations and for communities in the Illawarra and the Shoalhaven. We support community organisations, promote expertise and innovation in community development, foster industry development and advocate for social justice.

For more than twenty years, the Illawarra Forum has taken a leadership role in the local community services sector, which is a major employment sector in the region, and currently consists of more than 300 organisations across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas of NSW.

As part of our leadership role, we engage with those organisations, services and individuals engaged in supporting community members aged over 65 to collect their opinion, expertise and recommendations.

The Illawarra Forum works closely with numerous organisations which provide support to vulnerable people across the region including:

- Home Support services;
- Residential services;
- Services for people with disability;
- Services for individuals and families with multiple layers of social and financial disadvantage;
- Support for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault;
- Youth work programs;
- Social housing and homelessness services;
- Community health services, including mental health and drug/alcohol services;
- Community legal centre services
- Community development and community capacity building programs.

## **Response to Terms of Reference item b) Identify the sectors of the economy that can provide the greatest opportunities for regional development, including forecasts for jobs growth**

ABS data indicates the Illawarra region (encompassing Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven) has a higher than average population of people over 65 years of age, particularly in Kiama 18.8% and Shoalhaven 21.2% (NSW 13.8%). By 2031, the population of the region is expected to increase by 65,000, one in four of whom will be aged over 65.<sup>1</sup> The Illawarra Shoalhaven Medicare Local in their *Population Health Profile 2013* estimate that by 2021 there will be a 32% increase in the population 65+ and a 52% increase in the population 85+ (which is higher than the State and Australian averages).<sup>2</sup>

The Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions are particularly attractive to the ageing population as a retirement location due to the natural surroundings, proximity to Sydney and Canberra, and plethora of leisure and lifestyle activities. The region has several respected high quality and innovative aged care providers in the region, as well as access to good healthcare and research institutions which is developing the region into a centre of excellence for aged services.

The Community Services and Health Industry continues to be Australia's largest and fastest growing employer. The Industry is part of the largest employment sector in the Illawarra, and 35% growth is projected over the next ten years due to the needs of the ageing population.

Currently, in the Shoalhaven, 4,784 people are employed in the Health and Community Services Industry (14% of all employed). In Wollongong 11,112, (or 13.4%) and Shellharbour 3,579 (13.1%) are employed in the industry (ABS 2013)<sup>3</sup>. These figures show that not only is this our biggest area of employment, but that we currently exceed the state average of 11.6% (ABS 2013).

Considering the ageing workforce and the growing need for increased number of health and community service workers, the Illawarra needs to attract and retain some 200 to 500 new workers into the industry every year in caring roles alone. Nationally, statistics suggest an increase from 127,000 in 2013 to 167,000 in 2018<sup>4</sup>. The advent of the NDIS from 1 July 2017 is also expected to provide numerous job opportunities for the industry.

Workforce needs for the sector are diverse, providing a multitude of opportunities including administration, managerial, facilities management, caring, and clinical roles.

In addition to workforce opportunities, the innovations emanating from the industry involving technological advances and adaptations are providing numerous opportunities for tech start-ups and entrepreneurs to design, develop and test new products in the region. Some examples of this can be found in the attached prospectus.

### **Recommendation**

That the health and community services industry be clearly identified as a growth sector in the region, and that policy and investment opportunities are targeted in this regard.

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<sup>1</sup> *Your Future Illawarra Draft Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan* NSW Planning & Environment October 2014

<sup>2</sup> Illawarra Shoalhaven Medicare Local

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

<sup>4</sup> ACIWAG Careers Expo Event Outline Rationale

Thank you for the opportunity to comment to the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on State Development. Please feel free to contact this office for further information.

Sincerely,

Nicky Sloan  
CEO



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## Innovation Sandpit

In October 2016, Illawarra Forum, as a member of IWAG (Illawarra Workforce Action Group), hosted an event that showcased the best of current and future **innovations** within the community services industry in our region. The event recorded some of the great initiatives that organisations are doing in partnership with other businesses and explored new **opportunities** that could lead to new innovations.



### Since the sandpit...

**CriticalArc** have been going from strength to strength since the Sandpit.

Their partnership with RAA group already provides lone worker backup to all auto-roadside workers in Australia, and they expect to extend this service to RAA customers in June.

In healthcare overseas, CriticalArc recently launched SafeZone at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus in Denver, and we have interest from several NHS Foundation Trusts in the UK.

In Australia they are exploring ways that SafeZone can support NDIS participants, their families and carers, and NDIS service providers. This includes the release of new functions including a timed Check-In feature which will automatically raise an alert if the timer expires.

"We are expecting SafeZone to be listed soon in the Digital Transformation Agency's Digital Marketplace, which will make it easier for many local, state and federal departments and agencies to acquire SafeZone."

**Warrigal** residents and customers have been enjoying virtual reality for the past few months through the lifestyle team.

Physiotherapists have had success is using the virtual reality device as a distraction tool or as a reward, and this has helped to provide better outcomes for residents.

Now, a more formal assessment of the benefits is being conducted through the physiotherapy team at Warrigal Albion Park Rail. What we are looking at is to see whether there is a link between the use of virtual reality and reducing pain in older people. The trial will begin in 2 weeks' time and last for a duration of 3 months.

"The virtual reality provides an escape from reality and a talking point."

# DISCOVER UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITIES

to expand  
alongside the  
**FASTEST  
GROWING**  
industry  
in NSW





# Why do we need to innovate?

## ABS data indicates the Illawarra region

(encompassing Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven) has a higher than average population of people over 65 years of age, particularly in Kiama 18.8% and Shoalhaven 21.2% (NSW 13.8%). By 2031, the population of the region is expected to increase by 65,000, one in four of whom will be aged over 65.

**By 2021** there will be a **32%** increase in the population 65+ and a 52% increase in the population 85+ (which is higher than the State and Australian averages).

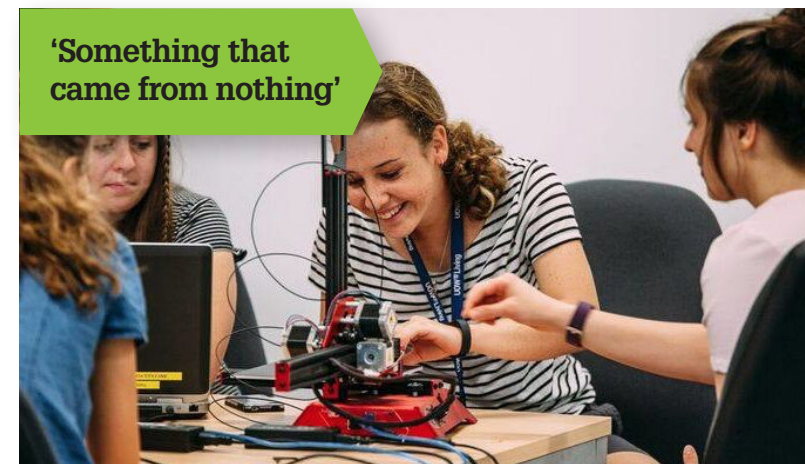
**The Community Services Industry** is part of the largest employment sector in the Illawarra, and 35% growth is projected over the next ten years.

**The projected growth of our sector is 2,418,000** sector workers across Australia in the next five years, and if these projections are correct.... **we will need 7,254,000 new workers** to sustain our health and community services between now and 2036.



## Me3D - bringing 3D printing technology into schools with a social procurement approach.

Me3d co-design and manufacture affordable 3D printing equipment Australian schools. Me3d have strong community commitments and support local disability services. The creation of Seed3D.org and a unique funding model provides education and 3D printers for free to local children in disadvantaged schools across the region. In addition to giving free technology to kids, these programs build a local community hub of expert users able to assist with this technology, benefiting the community as a whole.



**CriticalArc** - A leading technology innovator, designing and developing the distributed command and control solution, **SafeZone** CriticalArc are local entrepreneurs which have developed SafeZone-a high-performance cloud service that delivers and streamlines day-to-day safety and security operations and supports the best incident outcomes via a free downloadable phone app. Critical Arc have collaborated with local aged care and disability organisations, the University of Wollongong and businesses world-wide to pilot and enhance a range of applications. Critical Arc contributes to better solutions for duty of care of lone workers, customers and employers.

**See. Decide. Act.**  
**Do the impossible!**



## Warrigal - using Virtual Reality to improve the life of older people

Warrigal a local aged care provider who are bringing virtual reality experiences to aged care residents, including people living with dementia, triggering memories, positive emotions and enhancing well-being.



## Fibre Optics Design & Construct - bringing non-invasive fibre optic technology into the homes of older people to improve safety.

Fibre Optics Design and Construct use fibre optics to problem solve in innovative ways. Small, non-invasive sensors can be installed in homes to assist people to live safely and independently. These sensors monitor movement, temperature, humidity and light so that one can be alerted to any variation in normal behaviour or conditions.



## Doing things differently

Community services want to work with technology start-ups, in the pursuit of creative solutions.

Collaborative initiatives are driving the application of innovation to human services problems.

The projected growth of the community service industry provides a sound investment climate.

The Innovation Sandpit demonstrated the capacity to further develop relationships with emerging industries.

Conduct of the Sandpit has enabled connections to be made to explore new opportunities for innovation.

## Wicked Problems:

- Affordable housing
- Service delivery in Regional & rural areas
- Need for innovative service & communication methods
- Health & chronic disease management
- Affordable & accessible transport solutions
- Increased consumer expectations of choice and control
- Better Lives for people living with dementia
- Social disconnection & isolation.

