

[In this edition](#)

- **Founding board member retires**
- **Back in action**
- **New look board**
- **Our new board**
- **Recruitment of EO**



FOUNDING BOARD MEMBER RETIRES

As one of the founding members of South West LLEN, Mike Holland has been a stalwart supporter of the organisation across its history.

Mike retired from the board at this year's annual general meeting, ending a commitment dating back 15 years, including six years as Chair.

He looks back with great pride at an organisation that consistently “punched well above our weight”.

“There have been some stellar successes and it's important to have LLENs to fill a

space not covered by other agencies,” Mike said.

“I’d always been encouraged to stay with the organisation by the quality and commitment of South West LLEN staff over many years.”

South West LLEN could have had a totally different perspective if an early push from Colac had become a reality.

Mike was principal of Colac High School when he became involved in discussions about forming an organisation that eventually became the LLEN.

“Colac is part way between major centres Warrnambool, Geelong and Ballarat but we thought for once we’d try to set up something for ourselves and put up a proposal for a Colac-Otway LLEN,” he said.

“We nearly got it because the bureaucrat at the time was under the impression Colac-Otway was two different councils. It needed a minimum of two local government areas so that didn’t succeed.”

The Colac planning group, which included local government and education officials, then considered which area would best relate to the region.

“It turned out to be the south-west and we were absolutely happy with that decision,” Mike said.

While the demise of some other regional organisations made it more difficult to continue relationships, Mike says South West LLEN always met and exceeded its contractual obligations and fulfilled its role in the community.

“We’ve always been a fairly small organisation based on our funding and contracts, with a small number of staff to cover four local government areas, but there have been some stellar successes,” Mike said.

Some of the highlights included playing a leading role in instigating Beyond the Bell and involvement in programs like Continuum of Need, Rainbow Serpent of the Hopkins River, Nurture Room and Nurture Nest. “We were very successful in brokering arrangements for government initiatives like Hands on Learning, trade training centres, and further education and TAFE training in Colac,” Mike said.

“The changes that have taken place for LLENs demonstrate that small organisations such as ours had to be agile, smart and very capable of forming partnerships and maintaining relationships. That was not always easy but I believe we have done a fantastic job in achieving those goals.”

While the traditional LLEN goal was to improve education and training opportunities for young people and improve Year 12 retention, Mike supported the

shift in focus in recent years to supporting vulnerable children. “I thought that was brilliant because it focuses on the needs of young people before they hit the stage of thinking about dropping out of school or being unemployed,” he said.

“It’s a great pity we lost that with the last change to the LLENs because we lost the capacity to influence some of the causes of disengagement.”

Mike had been planning to retire for the past two years. “It was time for a change. I finished my association with education quite a few years ago and I believe you need to have a good degree of currency,” he said.

Mike leaves with a positive outlook.

“I encourage all of our stakeholders to continue your journey with South West LLEN as we help our local communities grow and learn and work together,” he said.



BACK IN ACTION

Trevor White was happily enjoying retirement when he was asked to return to the workforce as South West LLEN’s acting Executive Officer.

Trevor started in March and is now in his fourth 10-week block, and he’s pleased to be contributing.

“I came out of two and a half years of retirement but it’s a good organisation that does great work so I was happy to help out,” Trevor said.

Trevor’s professional background includes links to education and workforce development.

Originally a primary school teacher and principal between 1978 and 1996, Trevor resigned from teaching in 1996 and then travelled around Australia with his family and later worked in various roles at Warrnambool City Council for 11 years, including community development, Sudanese refugee resettlement, Skilled

Migration, and contract management.

“I understand the background of the LLEN through my previous work in schools and with the city council as manager of the Diversity Unit he said.

Trevor’s last full-time job was as manager of corporate services for Great South Coast Medicare Local. After the Medicare Local was closed by the Federal Government with all staff being made redundant, Trevor retired to care for his late wife Karen.

Trevor said he had been enjoying retirement but was enticed back to help out.

“I had plenty of things to keep me busy and was socially active; I wasn’t actively looking for work but I was asked and the LLEN was something that interested me,” he said.

“I’m impressed by the LLEN’s work with disengaged kids that gives them opportunities to be engaged and to participate in more education and training.” Although initially reluctant, Trevor has adapted nicely in his return to the workforce.

“It’s part-time, three days a week, and we have great staff getting on with what we’re funded to do and more, while I work with the board on governance and covering the EO position.”

NEW LOOK BOARD

South West LLEN has a new-look Board with the election of several new members.

The new Board members to join in 2018 are:

- [Westvic Staffing Solutions chief operating officer Wayne Robertson](#)
- [Deakin University Deakin learning centres coordinator Linda Wilkie-Bell](#)
- [South West TAFE chief executive officer Mark Fidge](#)
- [Wannon Water branch manager customer relations Steven Kearns](#)

- [South West TAFE executive manager education John Flett.](#)

The new appointments were confirmed at the LLEN's annual general meeting.

They join existing Board members Brauer College principal Jane Boyle and Victorian Farmers Federation workplace relations committee member James Dennis.

Mark Fidge, who joined the board earlier in the year, is the new chair and Wayne Robertson the deputy chair. Jane Boyne and James Dennis continue in their roles of treasurer and secretary.

The Board has representatives from all major sectors and stakeholders connected to South West LLEN, including schools, the community, education and training organisations, employer organisations and other community agencies.



Jane Boyle

Jane has extensive experience as a principal and administrator at a number of secondary schools across Victoria. She is currently principal of Brauer College, a role she has held since 2012. Jane was previously principal at Camperdown College.



James Dennis

James has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science from the University of Melbourne and has owned and managed a grazing and cropping property near Birregurra for the past 40

years. He has been involved in education and training bodies representing the Victorian Farmers' Federation at local, state and federal levels. James has recently served four years as a Board member of Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.



Mark Fidge

Mark is the Chief Executive Officer of South West TAFE, a position he has held since 2014 after initially joining the institute as Finance Manager in 2003. He was appointed as Executive Manager of Corporate Services in 2005, incorporating the role of Chief Financial Officer, and was appointed as the Institute Board Secretary in 2013. Prior to joining South West TAFE, Mark gained experience as a financial manager in a range of sectors in Australia and the United Kingdom. He joined the South West LLEN Board on 13 September 2017.



John Flett

John has more than 20 years senior management experience in educational and training design for the vocational and secondary education systems in Australia. He is currently Executive Manager Education at South West TAFE, and former Head of Education Development at Gordon TAFE. These roles have been responsible for educational reform, teaching innovation, online learning and educational delivery services. John's other roles in the TAFE sector include Head of Innovation and Strategy, Manager for Teaching Excellence, Centre Manager for Business Skills, and Regional Manager. John has previously managed and led an enterprise-based Registered Training Organisation in the natural resources sector, and been a member of multiple Industry skills councils and industry training board advisory committees. He is a past board member of the Cohuna-Campaspe and Wynbay Local Learning and Employment Networks, and committee member of several government technical school initiatives.



Steven Kearns

Steven is Branch Manager Retail Services at Wannon Water overseeing the customer relations and development services teams, a position he has held since 2006. He has a background in finance and governance, having fulfilled the position of Board Secretary at Wannon Water between 2007 and 2017 and the position of Manager Finance and Administration at the former Glenelg Water from 1999 to 2005. Steven is a current member of the Warrnambool College School Council and joined the South West LLEN Board on 22 August 2018.



Wayne Robertson

Wayne started his career working in the meat retailing industry. He has since gained formal qualifications in management and human resources and has recently participated in the Victorian Regional Community Leadership Program. Wayne is currently the Chief Operating Officer at Westvic Staffing Solutions and has more than 14 years of experience in the management of apprenticeship employment, and mentoring. He is well known within the industry and the local community for his innovative approaches and commitment to job creation, particularly for young people.



Linda Wilkie Bell

Throughout her long and varied career in education, Linda has worked in the secondary, TAFE, adult education and university sectors. She holds a Masters of Education (Leadership and Management) and is currently a program manager at Deakin University's Warrnambool Campus.

Linda joined Deakin in 2009 to work on the Deakin at Your Doorstep project which provided pathways into higher education for rural and regional students across the state. Before that, she worked at South West TAFE where she was a teacher of communication and management subjects before taking on industry training, business development and campus management roles. During this time, she was also involved in developing partnerships with 30 secondary schools to deliver VET in the VCE programs to rural and regional students.

Linda joined the board of South West LLEN on 13 September 2018 and is looking forward to contributing to projects and strategies that enhance educational opportunities in the south west.

Recruitment of EO

After 15 years Toni Jenkins has ended her employment with South West LLEN.

We thank Toni for her contribution to the LLEN over those years.

We are currently recruiting an ongoing Executive Officer to lead the organisation from January 2019.



Executive Officer

South West Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) is seeking suitable applicants for the position of Executive Officer to provide creative and visionary leadership for all functions of the South West LLEN.

The position includes a partnership brokerage role. The work requires a commitment to the purpose and vision of the South West LLEN and understanding of the importance of 'place' and rurality.

If you are passionate about what you do and committed to making a difference, then this could be the position for you.

This is a full-time, ongoing position (subject to funding)

Applications close 5pm Tuesday 4 December 2018

To obtain more information call 03 55610047

South West Local Learning and Employment Network

Old Police Residence, Gilles Street, Warrnambool, Victoria 3280

P: 61 3 5561 0047 F: 61 3 5561 0048

E: reception@swllen.net.au www.swllen.net.au



Education
and Training



Copyright © 2018 South West Local Learning and Employment Network Newsletter. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

reception@swllen.net.au

www.swllen.net.au

