

SWLLEN Network News

Spring-Summer Edition 2007



“A literate and well educated population is needed for modern economic development.”

**Dr Trevor Hancock,
“Planning Healthy Cities –
Building Community Capital”**

Welcome from the CEO

Welcome to our Spring-Summer 2007 edition of the SWLLEN Network News. Within the next few pages we’ve endeavored to give you a taste of our activities over the last 6 months. As you’ll see, we’ve been covering some interesting ground in projects aimed to re-engage young people in education and training, including the Grass is Greener program, the Rural Skills Project, Keeping Koories Connected, to name a few. A number of other initiatives are also on the go that we haven’t had the space to talk about here, including efforts to develop a state-wide 24 hour information line, 1800 YOUTH, to ensure that young people can attain the information and support they need, when they need it. But more about this and many others in the next edition! I hope you enjoy the read. *Toni Hancock*



Rural Skills Project Broadens Horizons

“It’s more than just milking cows,” says Josh Ailey, describing the main industry of the region where he lives. “There are more jobs in the dairy industry than I thought there were.”

This is just one of many useful things the Year 11 VCAL student from Terang College learnt recently. Josh is a participant in an ambitious project that aims to overcome labour skills shortages in rural Victoria while helping young people from south west Victoria and Melbourne to increase their employment prospects. **The Rural Skills Project** has really opened up his options.

“I had a heap of fun there,” the 16-year old says. “Before I started, I wanted to be a computer technician and if that failed I was going to go into the dairy industry. But now that I’ve learnt that in the dairy industry they need computer technicians, I can combine the two... If I start to really get into the dairy part, I’ll stay here [in the region] and perhaps do share-farming or farming on my own.”

The Rural Skills project is a cross-regional partnership between the South West LLEN and Wyn Bay LLEN which

covers Wyndham and Hobsons Bay in the Western Metropolitan area of Melbourne. It comprises a four-week intensive learning program for up to 20 participants each year at Camp Cooriemungle, near Port Campbell, followed by 11 months of post-program support including work experience and individual mentoring. Most of the participants from south-west Victoria are still enrolled at school but are at risk of disengaging from education. *Continued on page 2. Below: Learning to survive in the bush...so far so good!*



SWLLEN Aim

To facilitate and support collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to improve education, training and employment outcomes for young people in the South West region.

Rural Skills Project Broadens Horizons

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The two LLENs are working in conjunction with *Connectus*, an initiative of the Premier's Drug Prevention Council to train and support 16-20 year-olds to re-engage with education or training, or to become job-ready for entry-level positions in an industry.

The first week comprises "life skills" training – identifying learning and behavioural styles, team building and developing trust. Participants obtain their Certificate I in Food Handling. Week two is spent in the Grampians, applying many of the skills learnt in week one to survive in the bush. In the last two weeks of the program, back at Camp Cooriemungle, they build their employability skills and go on a variety of industry tours. They cover CV/resume preparation, career planning and setting goals, mock job interviews, workplace literacy and numeracy, and occupational health and safety. Participants also learn about Koorie art and culture, and gain their Certificate I in First Aid. Upon completion, all participants gain credits toward Certificate I in Work Education.

Says Toni Hancock, Chief Executive Officer of SWLLEN, "The goal is always the same – to get kids to re-engage or to stay in study – but the way we do it requires being able to reinvent yourself all the time," she says. "It's really worth going through what we've gone through. **If the only outcome is that those kids go forward with a more positive outlook for their future, then it's been worth it. But I think we'll get a lot more out of it than just that. I think it's giving them real skills for their future.**"



DISCOVERING THE GREEN GRASS IN LOCAL PASTURES

"It's about thinking of new ways to stimulate kids' interest and helping them to see a bigger picture", says Jason Beveridge, Local Community Partnership Facilitator for the SWLLEN, Corangamite area. The Grass is Greener project was born out of a desire to introduce years 8 and 9 students to careers in the agricultural sector, but to do so in an entertaining and creative way. The result is a project that involves students developing one hour radio programs featuring interviews with local people employed in the agricultural sector, combined with music and chat, which go to air on local radio station, Otway FM.

Over the last few months, 12 students from Timboon P-12, Cobden Technical College, Hampden Specialist School and Terang P-12 developed radio programs - and had a great time doing it. **"It's been quite a blast for some of them, getting behind a microphone as a radio journalist, an opportunity that they didn't perhaps expect to get from school,"** said Adam Box, Principal of Terang P-12. "I've noticed it has switched some of them on to thinking about careers in agriculture, not to mention the media."

As part of the Grass is Greener project, students were provided with an introduction to careers in agriculture and introductory broadcasting training. They conducted visits to two separate workplaces to meet with interviewees, and participated in training on the planning of an interview. This was followed up with the development and recording of a one-hour radio program. (Did students actually do the recording?) A schedule of the programs was widely distributed to all schools prior to the broadcasts to provide opportunities for as many students as possible to hear the interviews.

A wide variety of local agricultural businesses generously provided their time to make the project possible, including a vet, an agronomist, a farmer, a dairy service business and a cheese manufacturer. Over the next few months, students from Derrinalum P-12, Mortlake P-12, Mercy College and Camperdown College will all have the opportunity to participate in the project.

For further information, please contact Jason Beveridge, LCP Facilitator, ph. 5595 1700.

A Taste of Things to Come

More than 200 Year 9 and 10 students from secondary schools in the Barwon West region participated in a day at Gordon TAFE organised by the Local Community Partnership (LCP).

Students from Colac College, Colac High School, Trinity College, Apollo Bay P-12 College and Lavers Hill P-12 College took part in the Vocational Taster program. Students signed up for a first-hand experience and a real 'taste' in trades and career options including automotive, bricklaying, hair dressing and beauty therapy, plumbing, fashion, joinery, carpentry and cooking.

The LCP works with schools, parents, businesses and community organisations to enhance the awareness of career pathways and opportunities for young people.

Colac High School's Maggie McKenzie said the TAFE Taster day opened students' minds to different options available for their careers.

Many thanks to project sponsors Colac Otway Shire, Westvic Workforce and the Australian Industry Group. Pictured (right) trying out her new bricklaying skills is Kerri Bauer, LCP Facilitator and event organiser.



RYANS TRANSPORT & DISTRIBUTION CAREERS EXPO

On Saturday 20th October, Ryans Freight will open their doors, well gates, at their Coghlan Road, Warrnambool site to celebrate 50 years of providing a transport service to the Warrnambool region. The local community will have the opportunity to tour the facilities and learn about the different aspects of transport and logistics in 2007.

The open day will not only showcase Ryans Freight, but will educate people on career opportunities within the industry. To complement this, other providers have been invited including police, CFA, SES, heavy haulage recovery units and transports for wind towers, to mention a few. Some students from local colleges will also participate in a careers forum.

It should be a great day, and is a tremendous initiative from a local business. Expo from 10-4pm. For further information, please contact Paul Atack, SEO, SWLLEN, ph. 5561 0047.

Graduate Diploma of Applied Learning Information Sessions

Better equipping teachers and other educators to provide young people with the knowledge, skills and values for a range of studies and employment pathways, is the aim of the Graduate Diploma of Education (Applied Learning).

The SWLLEN has been working with Deakin University and a range of stakeholders to deliver the graduate diploma in Colac and potentially in Warrnambool, so education institutions within the south west are able to enjoy the benefits of teachers trained in applied learning.

Information sessions on the Graduate Diploma of Education (Applied Learning) are to be held on 31st October in Colac and in Warrnambool during November. Please contact the SWLLEN for further information.

Parents as Careers Transition Supporters

Research has found that around 80% of career choices made by students are significantly influenced by their parents.

Today's education system is so complex that many parents are unsure of what study pathways are available to their children. It may also be unclear to parents how they can approach a school to get the information they want to help their children.

The SWLLEN is hosting a series of Information Sessions around the region for parents and students to help demystify pathways and careers options. To find out when the next session is to be held close to you, contact the SWLLEN, ph. 5561 0047.

A Koorie student who does not complete year 12 is thirteen times more likely to spend time in prison than one who has.

Australian Institute of Criminology, 1995

KEEPING KOORIES CONNECTED

In early 2007, the SWLLEN began to work with the Indigenous communities of south-west Victoria and service providers to gain an understanding of the issues and circumstances surrounding the participation of young Indigenous people in education and training.

As a discrete group, many of these young people do not complete year 12 and are prominent in references to teenage pregnancy, substance use, the justice system and other areas of problematic behaviours and outcomes. Retention rates in schools are lower for Indigenous young people than non-Indigenous youth, which decreases their opportunities to attain satisfactory employment in later years.

The aim of the SWLLEN's project is to work out how Indigenous young people can continue to be engaged in schools, training and/or meaningful employment.

The project was a challenging one due to the complexities of cultural differences, the scope of the issues facing Indigenous communities, including the alienation experienced by some Koorie youth in a mainstream school system.

As well as being a significant body of learning for the SWLLEN in understanding the local situations for Indigenous youth, the project has also resulted in a commitment by the SWLLEN to continue to work with the communities to increase the understanding and awareness of Indigenous culture and knowledge in schools.

The "Keeping Koories Connected" Project was undertaken for the SWLLEN by Consultant, Lyn Eales. For further information, contact Toni Hancock on ph. 5561 0047.

Economic Impact of Early School Leaving

Cost to Australia of one year's early school leavers = \$2.6 billion

NATSEM, Dusseldorp, 1999

Halving number of early leavers between 2004 - 2010 = net benefit of \$8.2 billion

Access Economics, 2005

LEADERSHIP AMBASSADORS IN HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Three students from Warrnambool College have been selected to develop a program to promote a new website, which highlights career pathways in the Health and Community Services sector, especially for young people in regional areas.

The program is called the Leadership Ambassador program, where students selected as Leadership Ambassadors deliver workshops to fellow students, on how to use the new website to investigate career pathways in this sector. Prior to delivering the workshops the Leadership Ambassadors undertake training on how to use the site and develop a marketing strategy to promote the workshops to other students.

The students at Warrnambool College have undertaken the training, and are now developing their marketing strategy with the support of Ms Sandra Skilbeck, a health teacher at the College. The students plan to present the workshops in the early part of term four.

The Leadership Ambassador program is part of the Health and Community Services Project, which was developed by the Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE and facilitated by Carole Demirdjian, for the Department of Human Services.

The website can be viewed at www.hcscareers.vic.edu.au.

YOUTH COMMITMENT PLANS UNDERWAY

The Youth Commitment initiative can help businesses to keep their young staff at work, is the verdict of a number of employers interviewed as part of the development of the SWLLEN's Youth Commitment Program Plan.

Sometimes managers or employers are so busy attending to their numerous duties that it's difficult to find the time and resources to help a member of staff who is struggling to attend work or focus on the job because of a major personal challenge. They could be dealing with domestic violence, financial difficulties, or substance addictions, to name a few.

As outlined in the newly produced Youth Commitment Program Plan, businesses who become Signatories to the Youth Commitment will be provided with resources to assist their staff. This includes access to a list of all the social, education and training service providers in the region through an information booklet, 'Out There', which is also on the SWLLEN website. SWLLEN will also provide larger businesses with in-house training on how to effectively implement the Youth Commitment in their workplace.

The Commitment is not just relevant to business. It is a pledge that can be made by agencies, governments or

individuals to support young people to become, or remain, engaged in full-time education, training and/or employment. A Youth Commitment Signatory who comes across a young person who needs assistance to remain at work or in study is asked to take three steps:

- Step 1: Find a service that can help the person, using the SWLLEN website, or the 'Out There' booklet.
- Step 2: Refer the young person to the service and follow up to make sure they have attended the service.
- Step 3: Celebrate that you have helped someone who wanted assistance.

In 2008, as part of a major marketing campaign in the region, people will be asked to sign up to become a Youth Commitment Signatory at their local council office, as well as on the SWLLEN website, www.swllen.net.au. They'll then be sent an Information Pack explaining the initiative in more detail. For further information on Youth Commitment initiatives, contact Toni Hancock on ph. 5561 0047, toni@swllen.net.au.

Barwon South West Regional Youth Commitment

The Barwon South West Department of Education is co-ordinating the implementation of a region-wide Youth Commitment initiative, from Geelong to the South Australian border.

As a part of the regional approach, the Smart Geelong LLEN and Glenelg Grampians LLEN will roll out the Youth Commitment program in their local areas, including spreading awareness about the initiative, and working with business and agencies to encourage a 'Youth Commitment' culture and practice in their organisations.

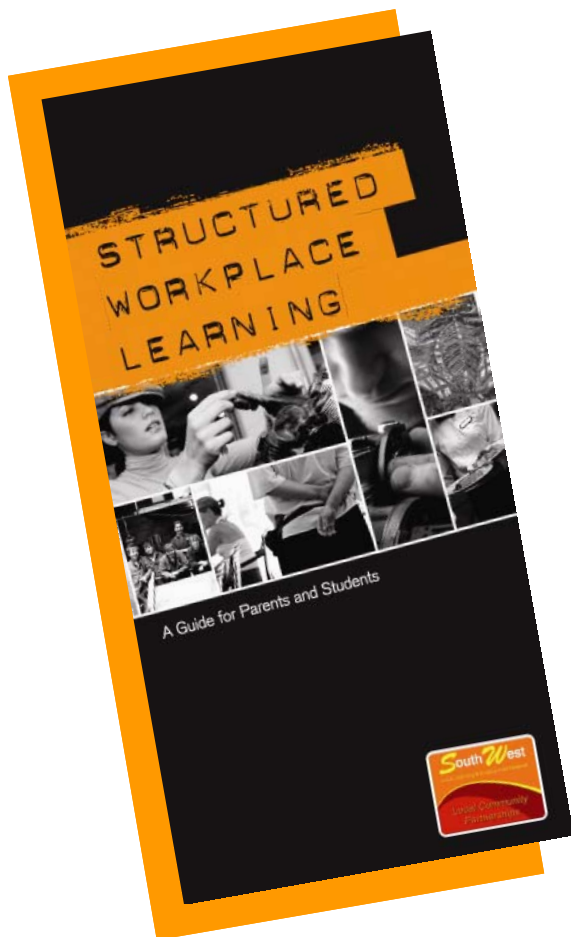
The BSW Department of Education has identified its focus as

securing the Commitment of government departments, and improving the integration of service delivery to young people, to ensure that appropriate supports are in place wherever they are needed to keep young people in training, education or employment.

The involvement of the Department and the other LLENs in the south-west region has expanded the potential of the program to reach and support an even greater number of young people. The BSW Youth Commitment will be launched on Friday 23rd November 2007 in Lorne.

For further information, contact Scott Ware, BSW Dept of Education, phone: 5225 1029.





NEW STRUCTURED WORKPLACE LEARNING BROCHURE

Copies of the new Structured Workplace Learning brochure are now available. Relevant to employers, parents and students, it clearly explains how the SWL program works, its benefits and the requirements of participation.

To date it has been distributed to schools to use in course counseling and as part of the SWL pack that is given to students prior to their placement. It will also be distributed at SWL information sessions to be held at the start of 2008.

A further publication is currently being developed specifically for employers, which differentiates between the three forms of workplace participation for students, ie. Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning and School Based Apprenticeships.

For further information on either publication, please contact Paul Atack, Senior Executive Officer, SWLLEN, ph. 5561 0047.

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Events Calendar

October

- 19 October Cobden Try-A-Career Expo, Cobden Technical College, 9.30-3pm. All welcome.
- 20 October Ryans Transport & Distribution Careers Showcase, 10-4pm at Ryans Freight, Warrnambool. For further information, contact Paul Atack, ph. 5561 0047.
- 31 October Graduate Diploma of Applied Learning Information Session, Colac
- October onwards Parents as Careers Transition Supporters (PACTS) Information Sessions throughout the region. Contact the SWLLEN for further info., ph. 5561 0047.

November

- November Graduate Diploma of Applied Learning Information Session, Warrnambool. Contact the SWLLEN for further information, ph. 5561 0047.
- 23 November Barwon South West Regional Youth Commitment Launch, Lorne. For further information contact Scott Ware, ph. 5225 1029.



DON'T FORGET THE COBDEN TRY-A-CAREER EXPO FRIDAY 19th OCTOBER

Featuring speakers on
traditional trades & skills shortages

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