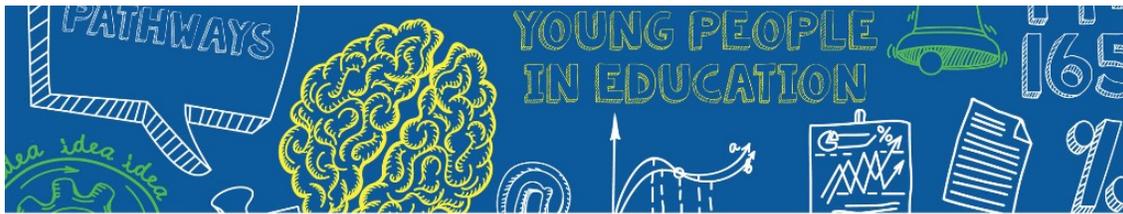


South West LLEN Newsletter - Spring 2017 Edition 14



SOUTH WEST LOCAL LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT NETWORK NEWSLETTER



WELCOME

The South West LLEN's newsletter brings you up-to-date with what is happening locally and further afield in the world of education and training. It also highlights how some of our partnerships are working to change community attitudes towards the importance of education and training.

News Flash !

- **Award Winning Nurture Room at Warrnambool East**

- **Hawkesdale Opens Doors**
- **Basketball Bounce Back**
- **Terang Tastes Success**
- **Small Schools Make an Impact**

SCHOOL NURTURES SUCCESS



Warrnambool East Primary School has won the Victorian Early Years Awards 2017, for the school's Nurture Room in recognition to an organisation that demonstrates outstanding achievement in 'Promoting children's health and wellbeing'.

The room has also won a significant local award, with one of the driving forces behind the project, Robyn Ledin, winning the South West TAFE & Deakin University South West Regional Achiever Award for her work on the nurture room.

The nurturing room is helping vulnerable students manage trauma and get the support they need to reconnect with their classroom.

Warrnambool East Primary School principal Michelle Miller says the nurturing room program gives students experiencing trauma or grief a positive start to each day, building relationships with adult mentors to give them a 'go-to' person.

"They have someone to talk to, someone to listen to them, someone to provide them with structures and strategies to use when they're feeling distressed," she said. The evidence-based program from the United Kingdom targets students experiencing domestic violence, family bereavement, serious family illness, abuse or neglect.

In addition to daily 'check-ins' for wellbeing and health, the program for Prep to Year Two

students includes sensory activities, mindfulness, literacy and numeracy and play based learning. “We’ve skilled up the teacher aides who run the program to be very competent in those skills and strategies. They live and breathe it and we’re very lucky to have their skills and their passion for it.”

The nurturing room is in partnership with South West LLEN, Rotary Club of Warrnambool East, paediatric occupational therapist Kim Ryan and the Read to Dog program.

The awards celebrate the exceptional contributions that individuals and organisations make to improve the learning and development of young children and their families.

HAWKESDALE HELP

A new program is giving Hawkesdale parents the support they need to ensure their children are well prepared for school.

Ready for School is a free program to help parents, grandparents and carers of pre-school aged children to learn more about their children's physical health and wellbeing, communication skills, social and emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills.

Ready for School is part of the Nurture Nest program and is being supported by South West LLEN and Beyond the Bell and funded by State Trustees Australia Foundation.

The program runs for four weeks and includes presentations from a paediatric occupational therapist, speech therapist, literacy educator and an early childhood educator.

It covers topics such as resilience and positive psychology, the importance of literacy and activities to develop fine motor skills.

Project facilitator for South West LLEN, Del Hammond, said it would help parents to develop the skills of their children to ensure they are ready for school.

“It will give practical support and activities that parents can do with their children at home to help get them ready for school,” Mrs Hammond said.

A similar program in Mortlake elicited a positive response from parents.



BASKETBALL BOUNCES BACK

“Are we going to do this again next term?”

That’s what the young participants of a new Warrnambool West Primary School after-school program wanted to know as the successful basketball sessions came to an end. The good news is that the program will continue; the even better news is that an extra after-school arts program will also be piloted during term four.

Twenty six students signed on for the basketball pilot led by Seahawks coach Matt Alexander. The eight-week program built not only their sporting skills but also their self-esteem. The final night provided a good illustration of its success, as the students responded positively and showed great cooperation and teamwork.

Teachers reported that its popularity became a positive topic of conversation among students.

The program was introduced in partnership with South West LLEN, which sourced funding from a local benefactor.

The basketball pilot was very successful and will continue in term four, but sport is not for everyone so next term an extra program will be added to the mix.

The school was interested in fostering arts and culture to give another group of children an opportunity to participate in an after-school activity.

Xavier Lane, who has a degree in fine arts, is volunteering to run the program.

The programs are an example of how South West LLEN works intensely with schools. At Warrnambool West, the LLEN has also brokered the introduction of Hands-on Learning, a Nurture Room and other interventions.

Assistant Principal Siobhan Lilley said the basketball program was a great opportunity to introduce students to a new sport and to encourage healthy lifestyles.

“Not many of our children have participated in basketball,” Mrs Lilley said. “This was a great springboard that could lead students to playing basketball at school or in

competition.”

“The children were very excited about participating.”

TERANG STUDENTS GET A TASTE OF WORK

Terang and district students are getting their first taste of the workforce thanks to a new coordinated approach taken by the town’s biggest employer.

South West LLEN is working with the Terang Co-op across its five businesses to place local students into Structured Workplace Learning opportunities.

The initiative is having great outcomes for students, local schools and the Co-op.

South West LLEN Structured Workplace Learning partnership broker Denise Madden said the coordinated approach was working well.

The students are generally placed in retail roles. The Co-op has an IGA supermarket, CRT rural store, HOME Hardware stores in Terang and Camperdown and a dairy services operation.

All of the Co-op’s student placements are organised and managed by South West LLEN, replacing previous ad-hoc arrangements.

Denise said the success of the partnership reflected the culture of the Co-op.

“They recognise that in their small community there are limited opportunities for students so they are making places available,” she said. “They have a strong understanding that they are owned by community and want to give back to the community.”

“South West LLEN’s role is to be a filter of information about the students and their needs and be the go-between for the schools and the Co-op.”

The program has been particularly beneficial for students who have found it hard to find suitable placement opportunities in the small community.

“It gives students experience of working in the industry and dealing with the work culture and we’re getting some great reports about how well they are doing,” Denise said.

The program will be ongoing and five students are expected to take up roles in the various Co-op stores at the start of the 2018 school year.

SMALL SCHOOLS, BIG SUCCESSES

South West LLEN has been working intensively with three rural schools in a ground-breaking program that creates positive individual and shared outcomes.

The Communities of Practice Rural Schools Pilot Project brings together Nullawarre, Cudjee and Panmure primary schools and is making significant progress.

It aims to develop and pilot a model to build the capacity of the three schools to effectively respond to students presenting with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

The model aims to provide a consistent approach for vulnerable children while supporting all students to have the skills to solve problems and cope.

It's a whole-of-school approach that supports the health, wellbeing, inclusion and engagement of all students, but particularly vulnerable students.

A longer-term aim is to make this model sustainable for the Cudjee, Panmure and Nullawarre primary schools, and to determine if the model can be replicated for other rural schools.

The schools are doing things together, such as a joint personal development day, but they are also working on individual successes and looking at economies of scale through the use of collective learning and mutual support.

The model has been embraced by the schools which recognise that working in the same space with a similar culture can be mutually beneficial.

They also recognise that one-off programs aren't the complete story so they want ongoing personal development support. The existing PD days have been well received and will continue in 2018 with a curriculum-free day to look at how different support programs can be adapted or merged to ensure children don't fall through the gaps.

Each of the schools piloted one program: Nullawarre has chosen a Nurture Room, Panmure a buddy program and Cudjee a personal support program.

They have also learnt about other programs such as Peaceful Kids that can be incorporated into their routine.

To facilitate this project, South West LLEN brought the schools together to discuss their interest, provided planning and organisational support, worked with the schools to determine the aim and goals of the model they wished to develop, developed the

project, sourced funding and organised the professional development program, sourced a suitable buddy and developed an evaluation plan and collected data. South West LLEN covers 59 schools, including 18 with less than 100 students. It is hoped this type of Communities of Practice program can extend to other small schools.

Quote from a principal: "This pilot project is something we wouldn't have been able to get off the ground without the support of LLEN".

ACTING EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Helen Bayne has been appointed South West LLEN's acting Executive Officer after CEO Toni Jenkins went on extended leave earlier this year.

Toni has been CEO of South West LLEN since 2003.

Helen started with the LLEN at the start of 2014 as Senior Partnership Broker. She is continuing in that role as well as taking on the acting EO duties.

"If anyone would like to discuss matters in relation to the LLEN and the changes that are happening, I would be happy to make time," she said. The LLEN's phone number is 03 55 610047.

ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

LLENS were created in 2002 with a strong focus on employment and transitions to employment. The 31 LLENS covered a broad background with up to 20 members on the board under different categories.

In more recent times the direction has changed, with a new focus on supporting vulnerable young people and working more in the early years.

In 2016, LLENs transferred to the newly created Vulnerable Children Branch, which sits within the Department of Education and Training (DET), and is jointly funded by DET and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

South West LLEN is now changing to reflect this new direction.

South West LLEN is a legal entity governed by rules of association, which were set up in 2002.

The Board has initiated a review of our governance and our rules of association to make sure they are more aligned to the government-mandated change in direction.

The Board started the process of reviewing South West LLEN at the governance level in 2016 and that is continuing in 2017 with a review at the organisational review.

The review is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

This review will look at the staffing structure, roles and responsibilities, and potential efficiencies and economies of scale.

South West LLEN has two primary sources of funding – Partnership Brokerage and Structured Workplace Learning. Under the existing South West LLEN model these are kept separate, however, the organisational review will look at a more blended approach to our work with the potential for savings.

The reality is that South West LLEN's funding was cut a few years ago and isn't increasing today. At the same time our new direction means the age group we are working with has expanded and we have gone from working with 14 schools across our four local government areas to 59.

It is essential that South West LLEN looks at efficiencies and economies and adopt a structure that reflects our new direction and funding.

MAKING THE MOST OF EVALUATION

South West LLEN is reviewing its evaluation processes to make sure all partnerships are hitting their targets.

The need for improved evaluations was highlighted at a recent LLEN network EO and board conference.

Evaluation specialist and consultant Jeanette Pope addressed the conference and was later contracted to run a two-day training session for all South West LLEN staff.

Acting Executive Officer Helen Bayne said it was clear that the Department wanted LLENs to improve their evaluation systems.

“We broker partnerships that create great projects but what difference are they making?” Helen said.

“Anecdotally we think they are working, the schools tell us they are great; but we need to absolutely know what the impact is at a staff level, a school level and for the students.”

“We need to demonstrate how partnerships provide solutions.”

Helen said the training had been invaluable for staff who emerged with a better understanding of the evaluation process and an appreciation of the need to adequately report on projects and partnerships.

“This built the capacity of our staff and will help us to determine what works well for our vulnerable young people and their schools,” Helen said.

<p>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</p>	  Education and Training
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



Copyright © 2017 South West Local Learning and Employment Network Newsletter. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
reception@swllen.net.au

www.swllen.net.au

South West Local Learning & Employment Network Inc · PO Box 1060 · 7 Gilles St · Warrnambool, Vic 3280 · Australia

