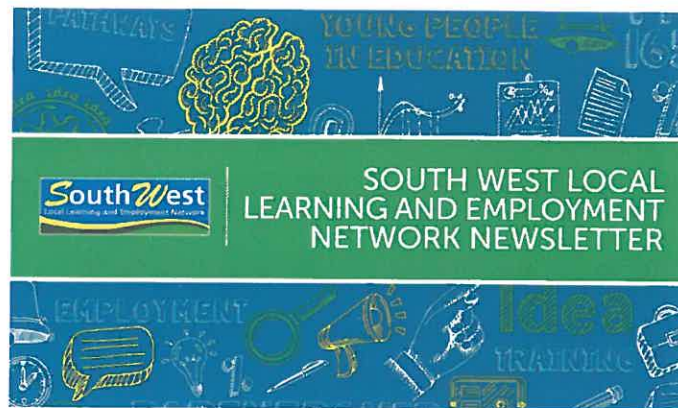


South West LLEN Newsletter - Spring 2018



WELCOME !

- Hands on success in Hawkesdale
- Introducing students to the 'world of work'
- Learning with dogs
- Building confidence and self-esteem: Passport to employment program

HANDS ON SUCCESS IN HAWKESDALE



"It makes you want to come back to school next week."

From shrieks of student laughter at the school's Gah-Gah pit to a handshake from a farmer recovering from fire, Hands on Learning students at Hawkesdale P-12 College enjoy making a difference.

Hands on Learning (HoL) students have done everything from creating the Gah-Gah pit to helping Blaze Aid volunteers replace farm fences destroyed by fire. The positive feedback they receive from the community has been heart-warming and confidence-building.

For these students, the chance to work in a team and learn practical skills is the highlight of their school week. It's a positive reason to attend school and do things they enjoy.

For the school, the opportunity to support students at risk of disengaging has been transformational, especially in an era of significant socio-economic change around Hawkesdale.

South West LLEN played a critical role in establishing HoL at Hawkesdale and three other regional schools and has continued to support the

programs to become sustainable.

Acting Hawkesdale P-12 College principal John Ralph said involvement with Hands on Learning came out of a district examination of student engagement and best practice strategies to keep students in school, engaged in their learning and potentially connecting them to future work opportunities.

With partnership brokerage from South West LLEN, Hawkesdale P-12 College joined with Warrnambool College, Brauer College and Mortlake P-12 College to look at a range of strategies for dealing with disengagement.

"Hands on Learning really stood out because it was very practical, it was well established and there was strong evidence about the positive effects on student behaviour, engagement and retention," John said.

HoL was introduced as a pilot program in 2015 and has been an ongoing part of the school's curriculum since 2016.

Through various grant applications coordinated by South West LLEN, \$20,000 was sourced in the past 18 months. Local windfarm operator AGL has become a long-term sponsor, contributing \$10,000 a year.

The program is now sustainable and its success has prompted the school to launch a primary version this year.

John says that without the support of South West LLEN, HoL might not have happened at Hawkesdale and wouldn't have become such a success.

The LLEN's main contribution has been arranging partnerships and contributing "time and skill", he said.

South West LLEN initially brought the schools together and introduced them to HoL and has subsequently continued to provide useful support and guidance.

"I suspect this would not have happened without the LLEN's involvement. Without the initial and ongoing help of the LLEN I doubt we would be where we are today."

Year 9 students Luke and Sam (not their real names) have reinvigorated their schooling by being part of Hands on Learning.

The students take pride in their work and say it's the best part of their schooling.

"It makes you want to come back to school next week," one student said.

INTRODUCING STUDENTS TO THE 'WORLD OF WORK'

"I discovered many things about handing in a resume to a business. How important it is to make eye contact, to go back again, to try and hand it to the manager and even to handwrite an application to show you can read and write."

"All the businesses told us how important attitude was. To have a willingness to learn and a want to know more about the business. They can teach you the skills but they can't teach attitude."

A program developed by South West LLEN has given students of Warrnambool Alternate Vocational Education (WAVE) a welcome taste of the world of work.

WAVE students have had few experiences of the 'world of work' and to attend a work place learning experience or relevant courses (eg. VET - Vocational Education and Training) designed to prepare them for work can be quite confronting and poses many challenges and barriers, which limit the success experience for the student. South West LLEN devised an industry program tailored to support the students in gaining an understanding of the expectations employers have when engaging any employee or student within their business and to actually give the student a window into the jobs their industries of choice look like or do.

The resulting workplace preparation program and visits to businesses aimed to build students' knowledge about work, expected employability skills, and what is needed for work readiness.

Running one day a week for three weeks in Term 2, the program included excursions to work places and mock job interviews.

The program was capped to 20 students and their strengths and interests were used to identify suitable industries. The top five chosen industries were automotive, agriculture, hospitality, retail and building and construction. South West LLEN enlisted nine workplaces, including a dairy farm, an agriculture retail store, a traditional tyre and servicing work shop, a gym, a joinery workshop, a car yard, a clothing retail store for young people, a hardware store and a hotel.

Of the 20 students, 13 returned permission forms to participate in the excursions. Of these, nine attended the first week's excursion, with all 13 taking part in the second.

During the visits, employers and some of their younger employees discussed their workplace expectations and the WAVE students had the opportunity to ask questions. The program included mock job interviews with business owners at South west TAFE's Pathfinders facility.

While the mock job interviews created greater anxiety for students, the feedback from students and industry participants was overwhelmingly positive.

WAVE was pleased with the participation results and after the program 5 of the 13 students felt they were prepared enough and ready to try some structured work place learning.

After the second tour, one student returned to a business visited and asked if he could do a work placement, which he is now attending and will potentially gain full time employment on completion of Intermediate VCAL.

LEARNING WITH DOGS



Picture: Kathryn Robertson, student wellbeing officer at Camperdown College, Milo, and Dave Pringuer, Pawfect Partners trainer.

Twelve Brauer College students and their dogs will be 'Leaders of the Pack' after completing a new training program that builds connections between students and dogs.

The students will undergo a full week of animal assisted therapy training with an additional Read to Dog component.

In response to a successful application lodged by South West LLEN, the Department of Education and Training has funded two Leaders of the Pack programs at Brauer.

Six students will start the program in term 4 this year and a further six will undertake the training in term 2 of 2019.

The students will then facilitate the Read to Dog program at Warrnambool West Primary School, spreading the benefits to primary school children.

Brauer College will choose students who will benefit and improve their engagement, confidence and leadership skills from being involved in the program. They will bring their own dog for the training.

South West LLEN was the only LLEN in Victoria to receive funding under this grant stream.

South West LLEN also backed a broader version of Leaders of the Pack for the Pick my Project community grants initiative but it sadly missed funding by nine votes.

Studies have shown that introducing a dog can have wide-ranging benefits and can be used to help students to read, in counselling and social welfare situations and even supporting elderly people who need some company.

South West LLEN also brokered funding from Wannon Water and support from the Naringal Baptist Church to offer the animal assisted therapy training to staff members from Brophy Family and Youth Services, South west TAFE and Camperdown P12 College during the September school holidays.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM: P2E PROGRAM

"He went to the school canteen by himself last week, something he has never been able to do before."

For some students, simple things like going to the school canteen on their own is a big challenge.

The Passport2Employment (P2E) program has given many students more confidence, self-esteem and skills to enter the workforce.

For one student, getting the confidence to step out of his comfort zone, both figuratively and literally, and walk solo to the school canteen was one of the program's big success stories in 2018.

P2E aims to support young people with disability or other learning barriers, who are at risk of disengaging from the education system, to further their knowledge, skills and opportunities for employment, further education and/or training.

This year for the first time, South West LLEN's Structured Workplace Learning team of Denise Madden and Lyn Lanman took on the role of managing P2E.

The LLEN has been part of the South West Transition Action Network (SWTAN) committee, which oversees the program, since 2015.

P2E was developed by the Glenelg Transition Network in 2013 and the first program was successfully delivered in Portland since 2014.

After changes to the previous auspicing body, the Warrnambool City Council Rural Access Program, the LLEN stepped in to make sure this important program continued in 2018.

The LLEN's role included auspicing, raising funds and all backroom support.

There were 23 students enrolled from Brauer College, Camperdown College, Emmanuel College, Hampden Specialist School, Warrnambool College and Warrnambool Special Development School.

Overall feedback from students and parents was extremely positive and for one student participating in P2E it was a special outcome.

A Student Services Team Leader from one of the participating schools has told how one student was encouraged to enter P2E to "step outside his comfort zone", to take some risks and take control of his learning and participation.

His carer was overwhelmingly positive about the impact of the program. The student achieved his goals and his self-confidence had grown as a direct result of the program.

"He went to the school canteen by himself last week, something he has never been able to do before," the carer said.

"He feels more confident and capable of trying new things."

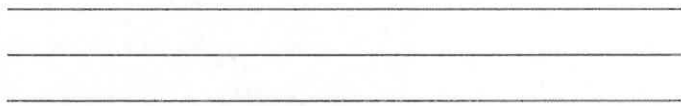
The student usually attends school for just one or two hours a day but made the choice to stay a full day at the P2E program, which was a huge achievement considering his history.

The program was supported financially and in-kind by Warrnambool City Council and South West LLEN. South West LLEN received a \$2500 grant from the Alan Lane Foundation for the program and it received strong in-kind support from South West TAFE.

A parent survey at the end of the program found that all 17 who completed the survey strongly agreed that the P2E program helped to develop their child's communication skills, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

Feedback from students was that the program offered them an opportunity to make different friends, receive an understanding of South West TAFE and what it has to offer, and help them with the transition from school to the next stage of their education.

The graduation ceremony at South West TAFE was well attended and a highlight for many students.



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