



As the 2015 year moves towards its end, Highlands LLEN prepares for 2016 knowing that we have a 4 year contract. Our focus will return to working in the disengaged youth space but the contents of our new contract are not yet known. The Workplace Learning Coordinator Program ends and we remain hopeful that there will be a replacement program. The latest news suggests there will be something in this space.

In 2015, Highlands LLEN has managed a number of new projects and there are updates included in this newsletter that I hope you will enjoy reading. On a personal level, I have particularly enjoyed and learnt an enormous amount from the Central Highlands Children and Youth Area Partnership project to collect the 'lived experience' for 16 young people through a case study approach. The report that presents their 'voice' will be released shortly.

Please contact us if you would like to learn more about our work or projects. We remain well connected with our community and strive to improve outcomes for our youth through a broad range of initiatives, projects, partnership building, sharing of data, generating ideas and helping others to build their strengths.

**Jannine Bennett**  
Executive Officer | Highlands LLEN

## Coming Up

In the coming months, there is a lot happening...

### WorldSkills Medal Presentation Evening

30 October

### Mock Interviews

with Ballarat Grammar students,  
4 November

### Australian Long Term Unemployment Conference

presentation by Lisa Howlett,  
9–10 November

### Health Taster Program,

12 November

### Well Being Expo

Andrew Fuller, 19 November

### VETIS & Industry Awards

9 December

### Flexible Learning Forum

11 December



## Horticulture Work Inspiration

The Horticulture industry is known as one of the skill shortage areas but for two days, there was an influx of enthusiastic young people wanting to explore this fascinating industry.

The City of Ballarat's Parks and Gardens Department threw its doors open to 13 students from Federation College, Ballarat High School and Mt Clear College for a pilot two-day work experience program. The pilot is a model known as 'Work Inspiration' and is the brain child of Foundation for Young Australians, The Smith Family and NAB Bank. It combines self-reflection with industry tours, personal career stories from employees and hands-on activities to give the students a well-rounded experience.

The students met a panel of experts including an arborist, the groundskeeper from sporting fields, a nursery worker, a landscaper and a new apprentice as well as Q&A with the head of the Parks and Gardens at the City of Ballarat. They potted plants and designed and presented a floral arrangement for the conservatory at the botanical gardens.

The feedback was very positive and the City of Ballarat is already looking into running another Work Inspiration next year and may even expand the program across other departments. A big thank you to Donna and Jodie for driving the project and to Mayor John Philips for dropping in to show his support.

### Contact Highlands LLEN

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## Youth profile – Terrence Curwen-King

At just 17, Terrence already has a long list of volunteering hours and recognition credited to his name. His most recent acknowledgement came in the form of the overall 12–17 years

of age *City of Ballarat Youth Award Winner – 2015*. This has come on the back of his remarkable commitment to the headspace Ballarat Youth Reference Group where he has been a participant come leader over the last two years. This in a period where he is also completing school:

“I’m at SEDA Studying Senior VCAL where I’ve enjoyed school and feel this year has gone really well. I am also completing a work-placement at Myrning Primary School which has helped me choose a Diploma in Sports and Recreation next year and go onto a career as a P.E. teacher or working with youth”

There are his other passions too. Terrence loves sport and is eyeing a start in high level cricket this season and is also a Slam Poet who is about to take his talent to competitions.

“In the future I would love to start a new campaign to reach out to as many young people as possible to empower and connect them. Hopefully my spoken word poetry will be the perfect way to pass on the message to others”.

Terrence is passionate about change – finding a cause and seeing it out and making the life of others around him easier.

“My message is this: to be inspired is great. To inspire others is incredible!!”

“I’d also like to thank the Highlands LLEN and headspace Ballarat, especially Larelle, because without them having opportunities for me to put my hand up for, I wouldn’t have known where to channel my energies.”

## Central Highlands Children & Youth Area Partnership – ‘Straight Up’ Report

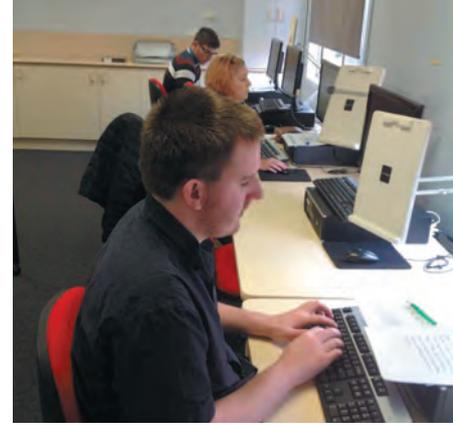
Highlands LLEN was commissioned by the Departments of Health & Human Services to interview young people who have been affected by adversity to get their ‘lived experience’ of interacting with schools, health, Child Protection, justice system or other state departments. The whole experience was very powerful and the young people’s honesty greatly appreciated.

The ‘Straight Up’ report is due for launch in November 2015 so keep an eye out for upcoming notifications.



## Worldskills Australia

WorldSkills Australia Regional Competitions are taking place in 31 regions across the country between March and October 2015, where competitors aged 18-23 years are marked against a rigorous framework aligned to national training packages, standards and benchmarks. There are 52 competition skills on offer from the automotive services, building & construction, computing & business, client services, hospitality services and metal & engineering industries. Ballarat/Wimmera has successfully run 14 open competitions and 4 VET in Schools competitions during August and September. Competitors endured intense competition to prove that they are the Ballarat/Wimmera Region’s best young people in their skill category. The



competitions culminate in a Medal Presentation Evening on Friday 30th October, where winners are announced. This is the time for all competitors to celebrate their success in taking on the WorldSkills opportunity.

We would like to thank the seven RTO’s and over 150 competitors who took part in the Regional Competitions. Our National Competition Team representatives will be announced shortly.

## On Track Connect

The On Track Connect project has been completed by the Highlands LLEN with a total of 63 referrals coming through. On Track interviews year 12s and early school leavers who completed in 2014 and makes referrals to agencies such as Centrelink, Group Training, Apprenticeship Centres, Learn Locals, University and others. The most popular referral was to the [cyba.com.au](http://cyba.com.au) website or to the “Next Steps” Work and Learning Centre. There was an overwhelming want to enter training and/or the workforce with only a couple of young people wanting to stay unemployed and out of training.



## Sending Business Back to School...

was part of the B31 month in Ballarat recently. On Monday 3 August 2015 Phoenix Secondary College Event Management students organised a range of industry representatives to go back to school and gain a taste of learning/education in 2015. Participants shared their education journey and took part in a range of vocational classes. Highlands LLEN assisted with providing advice and sourcing employers for the event.

## You’re the boss of your own future

The message to young entrepreneurs at Ballarat Secondary College Wendouree was simple – ‘You’re the boss of your own future’.

The message was delivered by Dennis Collins, a former Wendouree West resident and now a big business owner. Dennis was addressing 60 year 10 students who are undertaking the \$20 Boss program in partnership with NAB, The Smith Family and Foundation for Young Australians.

As part of the program, the students are gifted \$20 from NAB to start a business of their choosing, guided by curriculum developed by Foundation for Young Australians and delivered by their teachers. Any profits made are then donated at the end of term to the student’s preferred charity and \$1 interest paid back to NAB.

Dennis took the students on a journey from when he was pulled out of school to join the workforce to running a multi-million dollar business – but it wasn’t all a smooth ride. Dennis had to work long hours often at night, travel long distances away from his family and rebuild the business back from nothing when things took a turn for the worse.

The Highlands LLEN would like to thank Dennis for giving his time to share his story and wish all the \$20 bosses the best of luck for their new ventures!





# Jobs and Skills Drive 2015

The 2015 Jobs and Skills Drive aimed to reach a broad audience of secondary schools students and job seekers from the Ballarat region. This was the third year the Drive has been offered by Highlands LLEN. The aims were to build aspiration, provide information, build understanding, link job-seekers to employers and improve understanding of the job-seeking process.

Following each event, evaluations were collected. The evaluations showed that 88.5% of participants were either satisfied or very satisfied with the session they attended, with 79.9% feeling they were better informed and 78.5% more positive about their job prospects.

With more than 200 participants attending sessions over the three days, it was pleasing to see a greater diversity of ages, cultures and different stages along their career journeys. Compared to previous Drives, the 2015 Drive is more closely meeting expectations: 2013 = 84%; 2014 = 89%; and 2015 = 92%.

The most popular sessions were: Creating a Best Seller Resume, First Impressions Count and the Ballarat LIVE Job Find. These three sessions attracted over 120 participants. This just goes to show that these types of sessions are still extremely valuable and needed.

We would like to thank the 25 employers who willingly committed their time to the Drive. These events would not take place without the generous involvement of the local business community. Delivery of sessions by partners such as BGT, FingerPrint Me, ABBTF and Master Builders Australia is also greatly appreciated.



## Primary Aspirations

The Primary Aspiration initiative has been completed. The project was funded by Regional Development Australia, Grampians, as part of its Human Capital Grants and was managed by the Highlands LLEN.

This was a 12 month pilot that involved early career conversations with Grade 5/6 students from Beaufort and Sebastopol Primary Schools. The project was supported by a curriculum resource developed through the work of School University Liaison Officers (SULO) as part of the Victorian Multilateral Partnership Agreement (VMPPA) in 2014 and involved a number of visits to industry and education facilities.

We would like to recognise the industries that supported this pilot by opening their doors to the students:

- Albins, Steve Nicholson
- Gasons, Wayne Gason and Andrew Kemp
- SEM Fire & Rescue, Mark Fellows and Rebekah Williams
- Ceramet, Stephen Casey
- Ferndale, Jarrod Edward
- McCains, Kimberly Roberts

As hoped, participation in the program significantly increased the aspirations of the students and improved their understanding of the manufacturing industry.

**To quote from teachers:** "Students are now looking higher and wider. They have greater personal awareness of what's available and how to get there" and "One girl just wanted to have a baby and a boyfriend. She'd now like to be a mobile phone salesperson." Also "One adorable question was "Who gets paid the most here?" It's a good age to introduce kids to this experience and information. We emphasised the use of math throughout the factory and made the point that even if you are on the factory floor, you need to know how to do maths. We would absolutely participate again. I could see the kids were engaged by their questions, e.g. How many vehicles do you build here? and What's the most popular model?"



## Neuroscience behind effective youth engagement

The Highlands LLEN was blown away when attending this cutting edge PD in Melbourne. So impressed in fact that we partnered with the Duke of Edinburgh and brought the training to Ballarat!

Tracey Ezard gave a sensational presentation to our local youth organisations such as council, schools, headspace, YMCA, Smith Family and CMY on building on key pillars of learning intelligence by focusing on mindset, environment and dialogue.

The PD was very well received by the 30 participants and there was a strong sense of community in the room. The Highlands LLEN would also like to shout out thanks to Terrence who gave us a young person's perspective through a poem he shared with the group.

## City Kids Experiencing Country Life

**The City Kids Experiencing Country Life (DET funded) initiative continues to be coordinated by Highlands LLEN with 326 primary students from 5 city schools participating at camps in our region during term 3:**

- Mt Hira Primary School
- Valkstone Primary School
- Amsleigh Park Primary School
- Glen Waverly Primary School
- Sirius College

**Students learn about country life, farming, where food comes from and careers in the country. To summarise using the words of one participant – "I think I will like to keep chickens at home ... or just live on a farm".**



## School Leavers Manual

The 2015 School Leavers Manual was delivered to schools in our region during the first 2 weeks of term 4. In total, 2,000 booklets have been distributed. Thanks to the Ballarat Courier for their work in designing and sourcing sponsors for the booklet.



## Staff profile – Stacey Gill

**My earliest memory is...** jumping on my cousin's new trampoline on Christmas Day and not letting him have a go.

**My parents always said...** My dad never gave me a straight answer when I asked him a question, he told me he was always going to the Sandy Creek pub! – Sorry it's probably a South Aussie thing

**How did you come to work with young people?** I've worked in the training industry for numerous years now and enjoy seeing young people succeed in the profession they have a passion for

**My greatest moment in my life was...** Professional moment – was winning the 2013 Victorian Training Award for the VET in School Excellence category for the Highlands LLEN VETiS Cluster and presenting at the 2014 National VETNetwork Australia Conference in Darwin. Personally I'm still waiting

**In four words, I am...** generous, passionate, loyal and driven

**Cat or dog?** Both

**I often wonder...** just why?

**When I want to spoil myself I...** go clothes shopping with a possible overnight stay in Melbourne

**The first thing I reach for on a Sunday morning is...** for my glasses so I can see the world first thing in the morning... wait that's every morning!

**The hardest thing I've done in my life is...** saying goodbye to loved ones

**My ideal day would be spent...** going for a drive and having a picnic lunch on a nice day

**If I could change one thing in the world it would be...** nothing, we have ups and downs in our life journey

**I love...** my family, friends, my pets & tennis

**In life, I have learned...** lots of things and I still learn every day

**My pet dislike is...** Camp Street car parking on week days

**Before I die I would love to...** visit South Africa, as I want to discover Soweto

**If I could invite any five people to dinner they would be...** grandparents, family and Nelson Mandela

**The meaning of life is...** to be happy and fulfilled in everything I do

**I'm passionate about...** everything I do

**What was your first favourite TV show?** Children's TV show Rumper Room. I wanted to bounce the special balloon then have milk & cookies afterwards

**A book/movie/song that inspires me...** Blaze of Glory – Jon Bon Jovi or Never Tear Us Apart – INXS – drive home songs singing on the top of my voice

**If only I could...** See the future

## VET Network Australia

The Highlands LLEN VETiS cluster was again recognised for its great work with the coordinator Stacey being asked to provide a member profile for their VET Networker Magazine.

Stacey gave a personal recount of her journey as well as what motivates her:

*"What drives me in my role as Cluster Coordinator is 'If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn' quote by Michael J Fox. This quote inspires me as I've always been an applied learner and now I'm able to help provide this type of learning to secondary school students within the Ballarat Community."*

Look out for the VET Networker in the new year for Stacey's article. We are sure it will be a great read!!

## Workplace Learning Coordinator Program

This will be the last report from the Workplace Learning Coordinator Program (WLCP) as the contract ceases on 31st December 2015. At this point in time, we do not know if there will be a replacement service. As such, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the success of the program for the Highlands LLEN. This includes former WLCP staff members Andrew Wallace, Deborah Cutts and Michael Prato and our schools, training providers, local businesses and other stakeholders.

With the Highlands LLEN holding this contract for over 10 years, in one form or another, it will be sad to see the service end. We hope to see a like program replace it as the impact that we have had on young people gaining valuable, quality work placements has been a delight to observe and participate in. We have assisted over 2000 students in obtaining work placements since 2010, with more to be added to this total by the end of 2015.

We are in the process of updating our extensive employer database, with Maree contacting hundreds of businesses who have opened their doors to provide opportunities to recommit to local secondary school students and allow them to gain valuable work experiences.

Thank you to the schools who have allowed us to have an impact on their students and participate in their aspirations and experiences. It is a joy to watch the growth of our youth and enhance their ability to follow their dreams.

## VETiS Cluster Wrap Up

Since our last newsletter, the VETiS Cluster has been hectic creating VETiS opportunities for young people within the Highlands region for 2016.

The VETiS Cluster still has program vacancies in Building & Construction, Agriculture, Engineering and Hairdressing, just to name a few. If you have students that would benefit from undertaking a VET in schools program, ask them to discuss this with either their VET Coordinator or Career Advisor within the school.

In December the VETiS Cluster will be awarding two scholarships worth \$450 each for the first time. The Scholarships will be announced along with Industry & VETiS Awards on the 9th of December at the Mechanics Institute. The Scholarships are designed to offer 1st and a 2nd year students a chance to enhance their opportunities within their chosen vocational studies. If you have a student that you believe is suitable, please encourage them to apply or check out the Highlands LLEN Facebook page for more information.

As the end of year is fast approaching, I would like to thank all of the program teachers for their dedication to training their VETiS Cluster programs. It has been a fantastic year! The Cluster has seen students participate in WorldSkills Regional Competitions, cooking up a storm in Hospitality, visiting an old gaol as part of their Community Services program, creating sport & recreation programs for primary school students, investigating a blimp at the Ballarat Airport (aviation students) and creating voices as part of the multimedia program. Thank you!

If you have questions for the VETiS Cluster don't hesitate to call Stacey on 5336 5017.