



Let's celebrate!

*20 years of the VET Cluster
July 2017*

20 Years of the VET Cluster

In 1993 a Local Industry Education Network was established called the Ballarat Industry Education Network (BIEN) with a commitment to expand vocational education and training (VET) options of Ballarat young people. All Ballarat secondary schools recognised that many students would benefit from studying a VET course and that they may not have sufficient students to make up a complete class to offer a range of programs for their students internally.

The BIEN had representatives of the education sector (Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Office, the School of Mines Institute of TAFE, University of Ballarat and the Ballarat Community Education Office) and industry (Australian Chamber of Manufactures, Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Trades Hall Ballarat and Australian Timken Pty Ltd) as well as Central Highlands Group Training and the City of Ballarat.

In late 1995 three separate applications for an incentive grant were sent to the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTF). Nine Ballarat schools (Daylesford joined later) and the Department of Further Education from the School of Mines Ballarat (SMB) formed a Cluster to progress the applications. The ASTF approved a grant and a Steering Committee for the Cluster met prior to the Easter break to formulate a plan of action with the aim to introduce student workplace learning programs to students entering VCE in 1997. Claire McKenna was appointed as the Project Officer to start negotiations as to what and how the programs would be implemented.



Margaret Stewart, who wrote the funding application, spent many hours negotiating agreements to establish the Cluster. Getting schools to work together collaboratively, at a time when the government of the day thought that competition was the answer to all problems, was a challenge.

Many people were responsible for the establishment of the VET Cluster in the early days: the Ballarat Secondary School principals; Jeff Rootes, Gerard Murphy, Lydia Aitkin and Marilyn Vallance from Ballarat Secondary College; Alan Ford from Ballarat Grammar; Rod Homburg from Ballarat High School; the late Ron Mathews from Damascus College; Gary Taylor from the then Sebastopol Secondary College, now Phoenix P-12 Community College; Ian Simpkin from Mount Clear College; Kevin Caulfield from St Patrick's College; John Porteous from Ballarat Clarendon College; Carmel Hempenstall from Loreto College; Helen Powers from BGT; and Andrew Sullivan; Virginia Fenelon and the Coordinator of the Automotive program from SMB. In addition, Eric McLeod from the Department of Education played a key role in facilitation of the Cluster.

The first programs to be offered by the newly formed Cluster were the vocational areas of **Agriculture, Automotive and Retail**. Some schools offered all three programs, others just one or two. Each program had a working party made up of teachers and employer representatives, ensuring that workplace learning was an integral component of the VET program. Log books were developed for students to record their progress both on and off the job. Many issues were discussed by the working parties and often more questions were raised than answered as the model for delivery of programs was finalised. Such concerns were: how to calculate and meet the off-job training costs; workplace supervision and assessment; engaging the support of industry and on-going coordination arrangements.

It was important the programs were successful, so students were asked to apply and be interviewed before they would be accepted into each VET program. Many employers very kindly gave up their time to conduct the interviews, providing students a “real life” experience.

Cluster Schools Involved in the Three Working Parties

Agriculture/Horticulture	Automotive	Retail
Ballarat & Clarendon College Ballarat Grammar School Ballarat Secondary College Damascus College Daylesford Secondary College	Ballarat & Clarendon College Ballarat High School Ballarat Secondary College Damascus College Daylesford Secondary College St. Patrick's College	Ballarat High School Ballarat Secondary College Damascus College Loreto College Mt. Clear Secondary College St. Patrick's College Sebastopol Secondary College



Cluster Enrolments Begin

Automotive

The Automotive program received support from all major car dealerships, with their workshop managers attending meetings and offering their time to interview students. They also reviewed the curriculum to identify which modules could realistically be delivered in the workplace.



ASTF Project Officer, Claire McKenna speaking with Ballarat & Clarendon College students, (from left) James McLennan, Kain Richardson and Brock Tippet, who had just been interviewed for a place in the Automotive Dual Recognition Program.



In order to promote the wide range of possible careers in Agriculture to Year 10 students, an Open Day was held at the School of Mines Ballarat Farm on Friday, 30th August.

Agriculture

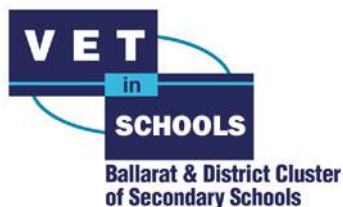
It was fortunate that all but one of the teachers on the Agriculture working party were also experienced farmers. The working party also had great support from the Victorian Farmers' Federation and Dookie College.

Retail

The working party for Retail had support from the local Retail Traders Associations, giving school teachers work placement in the retail sector so they could understand what type of skills the students were required.



David Nolan (centre), Bridge Mall Promotions Manager was on the panel which interviewed Mt Clear Secondary College students, Dale Eppingshall (left) and Kelly Pora for a place in the Retail Dual Recognition Program in 1997.



The first three Cluster programs were heavily marketed through VCE information nights so that parents and students could ask questions and have confidence in the programs.

At the beginning of 1997, 62 students from nine secondary schools were accepted into Cluster VET programs – 16 in Agriculture, 28 in Automotive and 18 in Retail. Secondary school teachers had undertaken workplace assessment training delivered by SMB late in 1996 so that they were sufficiently skilled for program delivery in 1997.

A real highlight for the Project Officer, Claire McKenna was, *“when I was speaking to a parent of a young man who was studying Automotive studies, she said, ‘I don’t know what you are doing there but my son is suddenly doing homework and last week got a “B” for English. He has never got a mark of “B” in his life before. He wants to go to school. It’s just fantastic.’”*

Claire added, *“All these people involved in establishing the Cluster had a passion, an ability to embrace change and their unflinching belief that students would really benefit from this type of learning that make working with all of them a real pleasure.”*

The Cluster Moves to Highlands LLEN

The Highlands LLEN was established in 2001 as an initiative of the Victorian state government to support young people in the areas of education, training and employment. The Chair of the VET Cluster at this time was Bernie Davern, principal at Mount Clear. Bernie felt the Highlands LLEN “needed teeth” and initiated the move of the Cluster to Highlands LLEN where Barry Wright was the Executive Officer. This move occurred in 2004.

Year	Chairs of HLEN	Year	Executive Officers
2001 - 2002	Wayne Muir	2001 - 2003	Dellice Coultas
2003 - 2004	Margaret Stewart	2003 - 2008	Barry Wright
2005 - 2010	David Haymes	2008 - 2013	Wendy Draayers
2011 - Present	Lindsay Florence	2013 – Present	Jannine Bennett



The Cluster Coordinators

There have been six VET Cluster Coordinators and various support staff over the past twenty years. The position is currently vacant and recruitment is occurring.

Year	VET Coordinator	VET Admin Assistant/staff
1997	Claire McKenna	
1998 - 2004	Lorraine Laurence	Anthony Schreenan
2005 - 2006	Caitlin Jones	
2006 - 2012	Lisa Howlett	Jan Burgess
2012 - 2015	Stacey Gill	Zac Merrit
2016	Stacey Gill, Leah Davis	Zac Merrit
2017	Leah Davis	Zac Merrit



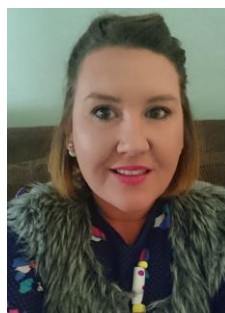
Claire McKenna Coordinator, 1997



Lisa Howlett Coordinator, 2006 - 2012



Stacey Gill 2012 - 2016 and Zac Merrit



Leah Davis 2016 - 2017

The Cluster Principals Management Group

Year	Chairs
1997 - TBC	Loraine Hayes (Ballarat High School)
TBC	Ed Pearce (Ballarat Secondary College)
2003 - 2004	Bernie Davern (Mount Clear College)
2005 - 2006	Peter Casey (St Patrick's College)
2007 - 2008	Judith Potter (Loreto College)
2009 - 2013	Linda Flynn (Mount Clear College)
2014 - 2015	Matt Byrnes (Damascus College)
2016 - 2017	Jess Sargeant (Ballarat High School)

School VET Coordinators and VET Program Teachers

Since 1997, many school staff have supported the VET Cluster. Each school has a designated VET Coordinator who attends the VET Coordinators quarterly meetings and works closely with the VET Cluster Coordinator throughout the year. In addition, Federation University and other Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) allocate staff to coordinate VET delivery. Throughout the past 20 years, many Program Teachers have provided students with a rich and rewarding experience.



Passionate about the equine industry



RECOGNISED: Skillinvest trainer Kim Packer won the Highlands LLEN trainer of the year award for her work with secondary school students. **Picture:** Lachlan Bence

BALLARAT equine trainer Kim Packer has been recognised for her inspiring work with secondary college students.

The Skillinvest trainer won the Highlands LLEN trainer of the year award.

Ms Packer teaches VET in Schools (VETiS) equine students about career pathways within the equine industry, how to care for horses and safe work practices.

"The award had never real-

ly entered my mind, but I was extremely grateful that I had received it. It's always nice to be noticed for the work you do, even though you never expect it," Ms Packer said.

"I work closely with the Highlands LLEN and obviously my employer Skillinvest to always strive to give the students a positive experience."

Ms Packer said she was passionate about the equine industry and passing on her

experience and knowledge.

"It is always rewarding to see students pursue their goals and become successful in their own right. I have such a diverse range of students but they all have one common interest, which is horses, so I can usually relate to them very easily."

"I never stop learning from the students either. It makes getting up and going to work easy," she said.

Ms Packer has been a VET-

is and racing industry trainer for about nine years. She said her love of horses started when she was young.

She became involved in the racing industry and rode track work for leading trainers before deciding to pass on her knowledge to others.

"I had such a good experience working with horses that I feel I have something to offer others if they were willing to work hard."

—ERIN WILLIAMS

Recognition for Cluster Achievements

The Cluster has received numerous awards over the years.

Year	Awards
2004	Excellence in Learning Ballarat Region, Category 4: The Learning Environment
2005	Victorian Training Awards, McDonalds VET in Schools Excellence
2013	Victorian Trainer Awards, VET in Schools Excellence Award
2015	The David Osborne Award for Excellence in Regional Career Development (Stacey Gill)





Cluster Students Recognised

Awards have been presented to VET Cluster students at an annual event held in December each year since 2010. To be nominated for awards, students were assessed on:

- ability to demonstrate initiative in the VET Program or the workplace,
- effective interpersonal skills and awareness of the importance of personal presentation,
- industry and training knowledge, including ability to identify new developments and trends in the industry,
- job skills - including a commitment to quality and/or client service in their training and work environments,
- ability to participate as a team member in the VET Program or the workplace and
- capacity to be an effective ambassador for their school, work place, community and/or Australia.









SKILLED: Back, from left, Jacob Holmes, Alexander Werts and Jake Muscat. Front, Emily Yeoward and Joanna Beswick.

Students to compete

FOUR local VETiS students are on their way to the National WorldSkills Competition held at Sydney Olympic Park.

The students will be competing against other VETiS students across the country over the next three days.

The National WorldSkills competition is the nation's premier showcase of youth trade skills and excellence.

All competitors in these categories are students enrolled in a VETiS subject relevant to the competition.

Local VETiS representatives at the national competition are as follows:

Jake Muscat, St Patrick's College (automotive); Joanna Beswick, Damascus College (administration); Alexander Werts, Damascus College (electrotechnology); Jacob Holmes, Damascus College (engineering).

All representatives attend VETiS classes through the Highlands LLEN VETiS Cluster, which are delivered through Ballarat Secondary College Barkly Campus, BGT and University of Ballarat SMB Campus.

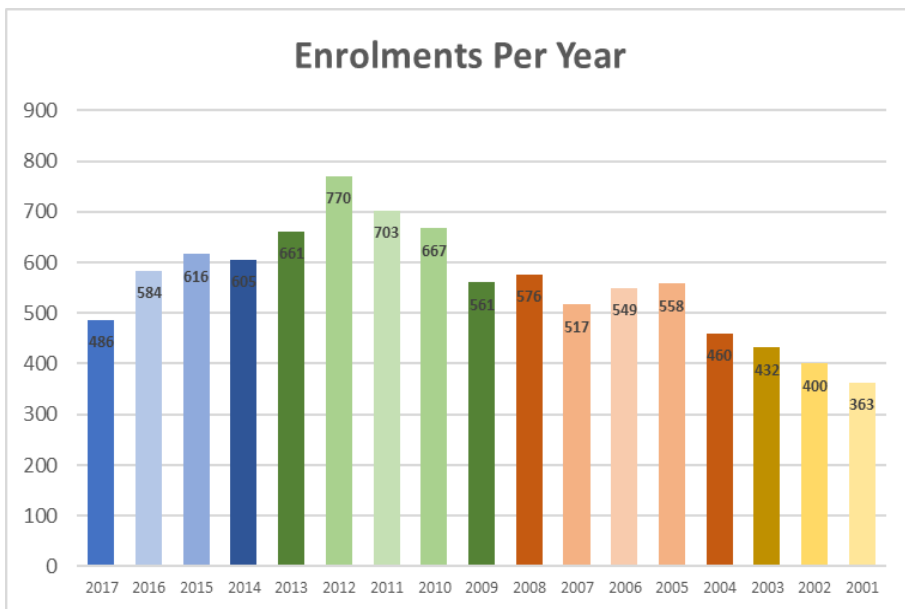
Competitors are judged against national and international benchmarks, training packages and employability competencies.

More than 80,000 visitors will attend the free public event.

Over the duration of the competition, about 25,000 square metres of competition space will include a vast collection of displays, from trucks, machinery and cars, to beauty therapy booths, commercial kitchens and computer labs.

2012 VETiS National WorldSkills Competitors | Below L-R Emily Yeoward and Joanna Beswick
Top L-R Jacob Holmes, Alexander Werts and Jake Muscat





Cluster Participation

The VET Cluster began in 1997 with 62 students from 10 schools in 3 programs. The peak year for participation in the VET Cluster was 2012 with 770 students participating in 21 different programs. In 2001 there were 14 VET programs for students to choose from, and there are now 18 programs running in 2017. In 2018 there will be a larger range, with **27** VET programs on offer.



Cluster Schools and Education Providers

There are currently 19 schools and Education providers who participate in the VET Cluster.

Ararat College	Bacchus Marsh College
Ballarat Christian College	Ballarat Clarendon College
Ballarat Grammar	Ballarat High School
Ballarat Secondary College (Mt Rowan, LinkUp, Woodmans Hill)	Beaufort Secondary College
Damascus College	Daylesford Secondary College
Federation College	Highview College
Lake Bolac College	Loreto College
Maryborough Education Centre	Melton Christian College
Mount Clear College	Phoenix P-12 Community College
St Patrick’s College	



VET Enrolment Data

Year	2017		2016		2015		2014		2013	
Programs Year Level:	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agriculture	16	11	14			9	18	10	15	10
Animal Studies	32	12	24	22	40					
Automotive	16	7	15	11	25	16	30	13	20	16
Aviation	9	11	12	9	10	8	10	8	11	
Building & Construction (Bricklaying)							9			
Building & Construction (Carpentry)	16	12	18	11	17	17	20	9	19	42
Business										
Clothing Concepts, Fashion Design							7	8	12	16
Community Services	29	18	37	20	40	22	48	21	35	31
Conservation & Land Management										
Creative Industries (Multimedia)	25	14	20	14	17	7	12	6	14	9
Dance	11	6	11	1	7	4	8	4	11	2
Engineering	20	3	5	8	14	12	12	5	9	11
Equine	22	19	24	18	25	12	19	11	16	21
Food Technology										
Furniture Making, Furnishing,										
Hair & Beauty			10		23		28		34	
Health Services Assistance (Nursing)	21	18	23	24	25	23	26	19	43	17
Horticulture										
Hospitality	15	10	20	9	15	16	19	12	34	16
Information, Digital Media & Tech			0	15	14	17	21	10	8	19
Electrotechnology			11	12	19	14	16	7	15	5
Music Industry (Sound Production)	8	7	13	7	11	10	14	3	10	5
Music Performance		1	8	4	5	9	17	9	15	8
Plumbing	6	3	13		13		16	10	16	2
Retail Cosmetics (Make Up)	28	18	52	11	35	10	22	11	19	18
Salon Assistant (Hairdressing)	15		16	10	26	8	28	10	21	15
Sport & Recreation,	16	11	17	15	21		12	7	18	3
Totals:	305	181	363	221	402	214	412	193	395	266
	486		584		616		605		661	

Year	2012		2011		2010		2009		2008	
Programs Year Level:	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agriculture	20	16	20	14	22	0	21	14	18	14
Animal Studies										
Automotive	35	16	21	17	40	10		22	14	10
Aviation										
Building & Construction (Bricklaying)										
Building & Construction (Carpentry)	62	22	40	22	40	36	60	40	82	39
Business	9									
Clothing Concepts, Fashion Design	23	7	13	4	13				6	1
Community Services	66	43	66	38	62	9	21	10	22	18
Conservation & Land Management			7	3	11	15	10			
Creative Industries (Multimedia)	18	18	22	9	28	7	20	8	14	8
Dance			6	11	13	6	9	6	19	1
Engineering	23	22	40	18	15	8	16	11	22	10
Equine	25	14	23	21	27	14	15	12	16	7
Food Technology										
Furniture Making, Furnishing,		4	13	6	15			2	11	5
Hair & Beauty	35		36		33		36		34	
Health Services Assistance (Nursing)	24									
Horticulture										
Hospitality	38	12	33	17	39	13	31	19	33	14
Information, Digital Media & Tech	21	15	19	23	20	20	22	23	17	18
Electrotechnology	19	12	18	16	18	12	21	15	19	12
Music Industry (Sound Production)	10	3	8	6	9	6	11	3	10	5
Music Performance	15	14	20	11	18	20	22	12	20	13
Plumbing	12									
Retail Cosmetics (Make Up)	33	9	14		18					
Salon Assistant (Hairdressing)	29	11	16	8	18	5	18			
Sport & Recreation,	10	5	15	9	20	7	21	10	18	6
Totals:	527	243	450	253	479	188	354	207	395	181
	770		703		667		561		576	

Year	2007		2006		2005		2004		2003	
Programs Year Level:	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agriculture	20	9	16	10	18	14	18	13	20	14
Animal Studies										
Automotive	19	11	21	13	28	17	28	11	30	18
Aviation										
Building & Construction (Bricklaying)										
Building & Construction (Carpentry)										
Business	66	27	55	17	43	34	38	16	31	10
Clothing Concepts, Fashion Design			15		14		19		19	
Community Services	1	4	13	9	13	9	9	6	7	10
Conservation & Land Management	24	6	25	21	42	4	20	16	22	8
Creative Industries (Multimedia)										
Dance	16	9	14	14	19	21	25	8	7	5
Engineering	2	7	14	10	15	4	18	15	16	
Equine	15	13	25	8	13	4	6	2	5	6
Food Technology	10	4	13	11	15	5	12	1		6
Furniture Making, Furnishing,								1	1	2
Hair & Beauty	9	3	6	2	13	6	10	4	10	5
Health Services Assistance (Nursing)	18									
Horticulture										
Hospitality		3	4							
Information, Digital Media & Tech	36	30	50	19	30	36	43	9	40	33
Electrotechnology	22	19	21	14	22	19	21	9	18	18
Music Industry (Sound Production)	23	8	20	14	22	11	19	8	16	9
Music Performance	12	9	16	10	16	11	16	9	5	
Plumbing	19	14	18	10	16	5	10		18	10
Retail Cosmetics (Make Up)										
Salon Assistant (Hairdressing)										
Sport & Recreation,	20	9	21		19		12		13	
Totals:	332	185	367	182	358	200	324	136	278	154
	517		549		558		460		432	

Year	2002		2001	
Programs Year Level:	1	2	1	2
Agriculture	20	7	8	16
Animal Studies				
Automotive	26	11	24	12
Aviation				
Building & Construction (Bricklaying)				
Building & Construction (Carpentry)	23	15	24	21
Business				
Clothing Concepts, Fashion Design	14	9	19	
Community Services	11	12	19	12
Conservation & Land Management				
Creative Industries (Multimedia)	9	5	14	
Dance				
Engineering	8	5	8	
Equine	12	2	13	
Food Technology	2	3	3	12
Furniture Making, Furnishing,	11	7	14	
Hair & Beauty				
Health Services Assistance (Nursing)				
Horticulture				
Hospitality	49	16	45	24
Information, Digital Media & Tech	19	10	5	11
Electrotechnology	13	19	21	7
Music Industry (Sound Production)	18		11	
Music Performance	16			
Plumbing				
Retail Cosmetics (Make Up)				
Salon Assistant (Hairdressing)				
Sport & Recreation,	28		20	
Totals:	279	121	248	115
	400		363	

Student Profiles

Stories of local students who have studied a VET program over the year.

“VET helped me decide that electrical is the career path I wanted to take and taught me some good work ethics and tips to get a job. I have been at Powercor for 6.5 years and in that time, I have gained an A grade electrical licence. I don't think I would have done this without doing a VET course. A VET course is a good way to teach you basic skills about a trade then to go and do work experience and hopefully get a full-time job.”

Brenton Ward, Electrician
(Mount Clear College)



“VET is a great opportunity to go out and experience the ‘hands on’ side of learning in the real world, while still in school. It gives you the knowledge and skills that are used in the workplace today. Give it a go”

Brendan Thomas, Apprentice Boiler Maker and 2nd place in the WorldSkills Competition
(Ballarat Christian College)



“The VET course has helped me to see what the different options are to become a pilot and the practical flying experience has given me an insight into the aviation world. This has certainly confirmed my passion in aviation and has guided me towards what I would like to do in the future.”

Anna Habel
(Ballarat Grammar School)



“Participating in the VET Automotive course helped me by providing a practical knowledge base for my career path as a mechanical engineer. Working in the mechanical engineering field, with my specialty in Motorsport and Defence, it has shown that becoming a successful engineer requires a balance of a high degree of understanding of engineering principles and also practical experience to be able to successfully apply these principles.”

Ethan Stewart, Mechanical Engineer
(St Patrick's College)



“My VET course really gave me a taste of a wide variety of areas within an industry that I was interested in, including animation, web design and video editing, and from here I could narrow down the specific areas that I wanted to pursue and continue. I was able to gain valuable skills which I still utilise in my studies today, not only in regard to using particular software, but also working effectively in a team and good time management.”

Maddy Merzvinskis, Bachelor of Design
(Ballarat Secondary College)



“VET Animal Studies will give you a good start to your career, it provides a lot of variety of expectations in terms of careers in the animal field. There is a good mix of theory, practical work and excursions to keep this course interesting and it is a good entry point for careers in the animal field.”

Zoe Olsen
(Ballarat Grammar School)



"I learnt how to study independently, to problem solve and work well as a team. I now travel Australia installing and programming robotic and automation machinery. Pay is great and the job is both mentally and physically challenging."

Ben Marshall, Industrial Technician
(Phoenix P-12 Community College)



"I wasn't enjoying school so getting out of the school environment and studying VET Community Services really helped me because it is a more independent learning environment. I ended up staying at school and finishing Year 12."

I continued to study the Diploma of Community Services at Federation Uni. It was great to have the support from teachers that I already knew from my Certificate II. One of the teachers explained how the course is structured and that it would suit my style of learning. I started working in second year of my Diploma and now work in two- part time jobs."

Kayla Ringin, Residential Care Worker and Youth Justice Community Support Officer
(Loreto College)



"I really enjoyed the opportunity to study VET Engineering because I was able to learn how to operate power tools used for metal fabrication. There was just Mum and I growing up and so I never had the opportunity to learn how to use power tools. This program gave me a safe environment to learn the life skills. I really enjoyed that it was a combination of hands on skills and creativity. That experience and working with the Energy Breakthrough team at Damascus really gave me an interest in a career in working with composite materials like Carbon Fibre and Fibreglass... I work for Boeing as a Carbon Composition Fabricator. In my line of work mold making is an essential component. The welding skills I learnt in the VET program helped me to secure a job in this field."

Jacob Holms, Carbon Composition Fabricator
(Damascus College)



"Whilst I always did well at school, I was never really very good at studying. I'm an extrovert by nature and always loved learning by experience, rather than quietly sitting by myself absorbing books. I loved the hands-on experience that the VET program gave me. It was never an academic sacrifice, it was a way of studying that allowed me to follow my passion, in a much more tangible real-world way. I still got the ATAR I needed to get into the university degree I wanted."

**Izzy Mckenna, Senior Strategy Consultant
(Loreto College)**



"Certificate III in Engineering Studies helped me to understand what working as an engineer involves; to effectively and efficiently solve a practical problem based on theoretical understanding and experience in a team environment. I am grateful that I took the chance to learn and apply so many useful skills during my VET studies, many of which have helped me in my career to date."

Take the chance to learn practical and applicable skills with like-minded students. Certificate III in Engineering Studies was one of the most hands-on and exciting aspects of my education and training."

**David Ranger
FEA (Finite Element Analysis) Engineering, Scania In Sweden
(St Patrick's College)**

Reflections

Looking back over the records we have collected for the past 17 years of VET Cluster enrolments, a total of 9,508 enrolments have occurred through the Cluster. Why is this significant? The importance of the work undertaken by everyone involved with the VET Cluster is what it has brought to our local students. The benefits of participation in VET are extensive, the student profiles included in this booklet say it all. In summary, some of the key benefits of VET are:

- gaining a full or partial VET qualification
- broadens VCE/VCAL options and improves engagement in school
- provides the opportunity to trial a career
- helps students explore possible areas of interest and interaction with like-minded students
- develops capacity to make decisions and solve problems
- helps to develop confidence, improve communication and interpersonal skills through learning in an adult environment
- enables students to demonstrate/apply specific skills and competencies
- enhances career pathways and post-school opportunities
- develops strong links with industry and local community employers
- improves employment prospects and transition from school to work
- enhances knowledge of employers' expectations and real working conditions
- develops capacity for cooperation, teamwork and leadership

There are many people to acknowledge - their passion and commitment to Cluster students and VET programs is commendable. Individual names can be found throughout this booklet but they fall into the following:

- the Cluster establishment team
- local Principals and Cluster Principal Management Group chairs
- school Business Managers
- school VET Coordinators
- Highlands LLEN management and staff, including Structured Workplace Learning
- RTO and TAFE staff and managers
- VET Program Teachers
- DET Regional staff and VCAA staff
- local businesses and employer organisations

And most importantly, our VET Cluster students and their parents/carers for supporting them to participate in VET.

VET in the Media

There have been many success stories over the past 20 years of the VET Cluster and significant coverage in the media. Here is a selection from the media:

jobs for youth

PH: (03) 5336 5020 www.highlandslen.org

Highlands **ll**en Working together to create opportunities for youth through science, technology, and innovation.

Highlands **careerhub** explore your options



Robert's cooking up a great career

ROBERT Marlow, 19, is lucky because he knows his career passion. He was even lucky enough to be given the opportunity to advance his career in the industry, when the Red Peppa restaurant on Sturt Street offered him an apprenticeship as a chef.

Also, Robert studied home economics and a Certificate II in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations).

Although he will tell you that he was "alright at it", it seems he was a bit better than just alright and received the Highlands LLEN VETIS Cluster Hospitality award in 2010 for his efforts in hospitality studies.

Robert is now six months into his apprenticeship and really enjoys both the people he works with and the opportunity to work in an industry that he loves.

On the job, Robert says that he gets the chance to do "a lot" – and that diversity is one of the reasons he loves what he does.

He is able to be involved in everything from doing dishes and keeping the work area clean, to making entrees, desserts, food presentation and whatever else he is asked to do.

Robert enjoys being given the chance to prepare dishes that his head chef knows he is capable of doing.

Robert attends SMB for the schooling and structured training components of his apprenticeship.

Once he has completed his apprenticeship and has some experience behind him, Robert would like to travel and learn as much about the industry as possible so that he can, one day, own his own business.

Robert said he wanted to pass a message along to other young people.

"It's hard to pick a career," he said.

"There are heaps of options but if you try something and it's not what you want, then you can change."

LUCKY OPPORTUNITY: Nineteen-year-old Robert Marlow has been working as an apprentice chef at Red Peppa restaurant.

Jobs for Youth

Highlands
llen
Creating learning opportunities for
youth through genuine partnerships

HIGHLANDS LLEN
careernhub
explore your options

PH: (03) 5336 5020 www.highlandslen.org/



INFORMATIVE: VETIS cluster coordinator Stacey Gill with Ballarat High School student Taylah Mathieson.

Information night for students

IT'S that time of year again when schools, universities and training organisations are providing a plethora of information on pathway opportunities available to young people.

So for young people it is the perfect time to explore their future.

The Highlands LLEN VETIS Cluster is holding a free VETIS programs information evening on June 20 at Bray Raceway from 5.30pm.

It will be a perfect opportunity for parents and students to discuss their future pathways with program teachers.

VETIS Cluster programs are available for students in year 10, 11 and 12.

The information night has traditionally helped young students make their best decisions in the future.

There are 30 VETIS programs available for students to undertake as

part of their senior years of schooling and they cover a wide variety of areas.

New to the list of programs for 2013 are aviation and bricklaying.

Each secondary school nominates a VETIS Coordinator to assist students with their choice of program, and the Highlands LLEN VETIS Cluster works with the coordinators to enable students to join a program of their choice.

Young people are urged not to miss out on the chance to find out the options available to them.

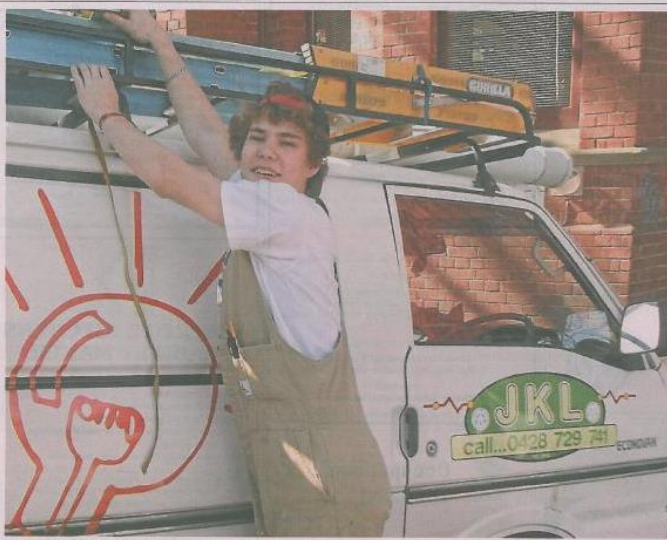
Further details regarding the information evening can be obtained by phoning Stacey Gill at the cluster office on 5336 5017, or contacting the VETIS coordinator or careers advisor at your secondary school.

jobs for youth

PH: (03) 5336 5020 www.highlandslen.org

Highlands
llen
Creating learning opportunities for
youth through genuine partnerships

HIGHLANDS LLEN
careernhub
explore your options



LOVING HIS WORK: Corey Thomas always wanted to be a "sparky", and now he is on his way to fulfilling his dream.

Corey gets spark from his work

COREY Thomas always wanted to be a "sparky". So when the opportunity arrived to gain an electrical apprenticeship, he grabbed it with both hands.

Corey is part of the Link Up program – a fourth campus of Ballarat Secondary College, based at the Ballarat Learning Exchange building in Camp Street.

With the support and assistance of the Link Up staff, Corey started to consider his future, and what he would like to do. The 16-year-old commenced a VETIS program relating to the electrical industry and obtained a structured work placement as part of his studies with JKL Electrical. This reinforced his decision to pursue a career within the industry and raised the possibility of starting a school-based apprenticeship.

Corey has been working as an apprentice at JKL Electrical for a month

now and during that short time he has gone from getting the ladder off the truck to fitting powerpoints and fixing conduit for cables.

He says he is really enjoying the opportunity provided by his job and learning hands-on skills.

He would like to complete his school-based apprenticeship, transfer to a full-time apprenticeship and gain work in the electrical field so that in the future, he may be able to start his own business.

Kayaking and outriggering are a big passion of Corey's and he is still able to maintain his outside interest and hang out with his friends while holding down his job.

Corey encouraged anybody who had an interest in any given field to try their hand at an apprenticeship.

"If you want to do it, just give it a shot," he said.

Highlands
llen

VET
Cluster

**Celebrating
Twenty Years
1997-2017**



HANDS-ON: From left are Bailey Fienley, Year 11, Ebony Tucker, Year 10 and agricultural teacher Mark Daffey.

Agriculture students are going high-tech

GAV MCGRATH

THERE is little point in teaching modern farming practices while using less-than-modern equipment to learn on.

The students at Federation University's Mt Rowan campus have leapt forward two decades with the arrival of a new Case tractor.

Federation Uni took charge

of the Case IH Puma 140 from Agrimac Ballarat last week.

Agriculture teacher Mark Daffey said the new tractor would allow students to sample farming as it is done in the 21st century.

"The technology within the tractor itself is aligned to the most modern farming practices," Mr Daffey said. "There is so much more

information that goes into it and it makes farming far more efficient if they learn it."

It is powered by a 6.7-litre turbo-diesel inline-six with 104kW (140 horsepower) peak power.

Agrimac Ballarat sales manager Rod Male described the IH Puma 140 as state-of-the-art.

"It is replacing a tractor

which is 20 years old," Mr Male said. "It has a lot of new technology such as GPS and auto-steer, along with performance monitors for maximum efficiency."

"It is as up-to-date as we have so the students will be using the most up-to-date equipment."

The tractor was purchased with the help of a federal government grant.

Tradies earn gold in competition

KARA IRVING

BALLARAT tradies cleaned up at the National WorldSkills competition in Perth at the weekend.

Fitter Kelvin Marquand won gold, automotive mechanic Karl Davies and plumber Sam Glisson each won silver and joiner Ben Curtis and plasterer Chris Just each won bronze in the open category.

VET in Schools students Lucas Hammond and Zak Biggin each won gold.

Gold medal winners now have a chance to be selected for Australia's team in the international competition, held in Brazil next year.

WorldSkills pits the nation's best trainees, apprentices and students against each other in 50 different skill and trade areas.

Plumbers, hairdressers, carpenters, cabinet makers, bricklayers and beauticians were assessed on their abilities to complete timed projects.

The Ballarat and Wimmera



TRADIES: Plasterer Chris Just, joiner Ben Curtis, plumber Sam Glisson, VETIS construction worker Lucas Hammond, auto mechanic Karl Davies and VETIS metal engineer Zak Biggin took home medals in the National WorldSkills competition in Perth at the weekend. **PICTURE:** JUSTIN WHITELOCK

national team saw 19 members compete in 19 different categories.

Team leaders Lisa Howlett and Stephen Creelman were proud of the efforts.

"We are very proud. They did a fantastic job," Ms Howlett said.

Gold medal winner Lucas Hammond said he was happy with his result.

"I did not know what to expect, but I am pretty happy," he said.

"I didn't think I'd get into the national competition."

Combine study with vocational training



WORK EXPERIENCE: Program teacher Shona Maloney with hospitality student Paige Romeo.

VETIS stands for Vocational Education & Training in Schools.

It is vocational training undertaken with a registered training organisation while a student is completing their secondary school certificate.

VETIS can be completed while doing either Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

At the successful completion of a program, participants gain a nationally-recognised qualification, having undertaken industry-approved training.

The Highlands LLEN VETIS Cluster is a partnership between the Highlands Local Learning and Employment Network Incorporated (Highlands LLEN) and 17 secondary schools within Ballarat and surrounding areas.

The vision of the VETIS Cluster is to expand high quality, engaging vocational learning opportunities for all secondary students across all secondary school providers.

This is achieved by offering programs that schools are unable to deliver internally, due to either lack of numbers, facilities, equipment or qualified staff.

The Highlands LLEN VETIS Cluster is holding a free VETIS programs information evening on Wednesday, June 19, at Bray Raceway from 6pm until 8pm.

This is a perfect opportunity

for parents and students to discuss their VETIS Pathways with program teachers.

VETIS Cluster programs are available for students in years 10, 11 and 12.

This makes it easier to make an informed decision about the best career option for students.

Cluster staff, along with program teachers, will be available to speak to about the benefits of vocational education and training in schools.

There are more than 25 VETIS programs available for students to undertake as part of their senior years of schooling and they cover a wide variety of industries available in the Ballarat region.

A number of new programs will be offered in 2014, including joinery/shop fitting and horticulture.

Seventeen secondary education providers (government, independent and catholic schools) participate in the Highlands LLEN VETIS Cluster.

Each school nominates a VETIS co-ordinator to assist students with their choice of program and the cluster works with the co-ordinators to enable students to join a program of their choice.

For more information, call Stacey Gill at the Highlands LLEN Cluster office on 5336 5017, or contact the VETIS co-ordinator or careers advisor at your school.

Professional dancer adds to students' experience

SARAH MUSCHAMP

NOTHING can inspire those with a passion for dance quite like learning the moves from experts.

Professional dancer Darren Tyler, who has worked on Australian productions including musicals *Legally Blonde* and *Amie*, has taught local students some of his trade.

Every Thursday afternoon, the students visit Mt Clear College to study VET dance as part of the Highlands LLEN cluster program.

But they have had an exciting few weeks with Melbourne-based Tyler teaching their last two classes.

A dance captain and performer in a range of musicals, Tyler is preparing the girls for their end of year assessment and the Australian dance industry.

"I am teaching performance, rather than just dance," Tyler said.

"I teach a lot of full-time classes where their dance is amazing but their performance would not get them into an audition. It is that extra bit to help them further on if they want to perform, rather than just dance."

Tyler taught the girls a medley of dances used last year in *Legally Blonde* for their final performances.

"It's that time of year when they are thinking of VCE," Mt Clear VET/VCE dance teacher Sue Broadway said.

"They are just loving working with professionals."

Mt Clear student Catherine Pettie hopes to work for the Victoria Opera Company, and "do musicals like Darren".

"It's a serious course, but a relaxed environment," she said.

"People are from different backgrounds and everyone's learning from each other."



LIKE THIS: Darren Tyler is teaching dance performance to local students. **PICTURE:** LACHLAN BENCE

June 13 2014

VET steers youth on new course

By Simon Gladman

THE popularity of Vocational Education and Training courses has grown to a new height among youth, according to Highlands LLEN executive officer Barry Wright.

With almost 400 first-year VET students beginning a course in the Ballarat region this month, Mr Wright said the extra VCE option now provided a foremost pathway into the workforce.

"I understand the participating numbers have significantly increased on last year," he said.

"I think the young people are voting with their feet and saying VET does offer a good option."

Two of the new VET multimedia students are Jarrod Stokes and Seb Borys of Ballarat Secondary College, Barkly St campus.

Both said they were hopeful the course would kick-start their careers.

"I want to develop my skills on the journalism side of things," said Jarrod, 16.

"I knew it would be the right thing to do... because the course seemed more practical than usual VCE classes."

A recent VET success story is Mark Smith, an employee of Ballarat company Wiltronics Research.

Mr Smith said current students

should make the most of their opportunity.

"It really is a stepping stone; I wouldn't have a job otherwise," he said.

"Everything is done hands on and you get to meet people in your field of interest, which I found really important."

Careers advisory agency Highlands LLEN coordinates VET, which is available to year 11 and 12 secondary school students.

Course areas available for study include agriculture, building and construction, business, community services, dance and hospitality.

Mr Wright said only a handful of students were enrolled when courses began in 1996.

He said VET brought secondary students closer to the real-life industry environment.

"They get to experience work first hand and that's a good thing," he said.

"Importantly, it gives them a broad range of options and, if they want to make a career in their area of choice, it will be a good stepping stone."

"We use some tools and surveys to track the careers of students who complete the program and the data has shown it to be quite successful."



ON THE JOB: Seb Borys, left, and Jarrod Stokes take part in VET multimedia classes.

10/0001-025

thecourier.com.au

NEWS

VET students to gain pilot licences

ALEX HAMER

SOME lucky Ballarat students are flying solo even before they can drive solo, thanks to a VET program that finished up this week.

After two years of the VET commercial pilot course, eight students from schools are on their way to becoming qualified pilots.

Ballarat Grammar year 11 student Alister Coad is

going for his licence this weekend.

"If I get my licence this weekend, I'll be able to fly before I can drive," he said.

The course is run out of Ballarat Aero Club and is one of only three in the state.

Alister said while he wasn't looking at flying as a career, it fitted in with his aspirations.

"I mainly have an interest in the engineering

field, so aviation works pretty well with that," he said.

As well as learning how to take off and land planes, the course covers in depth the theory and mechanics behind flying.

Ballarat Aero Club instructor Anton Wilson said it was great teaching them as a group.

"They're very dedicated, but it's been a lot of fun," he said. "The good thing

is they do get to actually fly an aeroplane, while contributing to their VCE."

Alister would face a rigorous test, with hours of the oral segment before practising in-air flight procedures, he said.

Mr Wilson said it was a good time to be a pilot in Australia for the students who did go on to further study, because many pilots were heading overseas and leaving jobs available here.



READY FOR TAKE-OFF: Instructor Anton Wilson and Ballarat Grammar year 11 student Alister Coad.

Placement leads Hugh to dream job

NOVEMBER 20 was a special day for Hugh Dickson, a year 11 student from St Patrick's College. This year during June and September, Hugh undertook structured work placement at R & J Sobeys to learn about a potential career as a diesel mechanic.

His boss Robert Sobey was so impressed by Hugh's work that he nominated him for an Outstanding Performance Award.

At the end of the award ceremony on Wednesday evening, Robert approached Hugh and offered him a full-time apprenticeship as a diesel mechanic. Hugh starts work in the next few weeks.

As part of the inaugural Jobs and Skills Drive held this week, Highlands Local Learning and Employment Network wanted to recognise the contribution of business and industry in supporting young people by offering them placement opportunities.

The award ceremony held on Wednesday evening recognised seven students for outstanding performance on placement, eight employers for their support to young people while on placement and one teacher for outstanding contribution to VET training.

"It's important that we recognise the time and effort by employers in giving young people a go," said Highlands LLEN executive officer Fannine Bennett.

"By providing the opportunity of a placement, employers are able to check out the performance and attitude of a young person, which hopefully leads to employment."



SUCCESS: Robert Sobey with Hugh Dickson, who received an Outstanding Performance Award and the offer of an apprenticeship.

Robert Sobey watched Hugh receive his award knowing that he was about to make Hugh's day even better.

He shared his plan with Jenny Sheriff, a partnership broker with Highlands LLEN, telling her "he's going to be my employee after tonight".

In the nomination, Robert described Hugh on placement as

"Work ready and showed a great aptitude for the vocation of diesel mechanic."

"He was keen and conscientious and fitted in well. He was able to complete the required tasks and got on well with all staff."

"He was able to mount an air reel to the wall of the workshop then designed and built a cover for the reel."

Robert has taken multiple students on placement over a number of years. His Napoleons-based business specialises in truck servicing and repairs and provides spare parts.

Once most employers spot a talented student with the right attitude, they are more than willing to offer them an apprenticeship to retain that talent within their

business. Hugh has been a dedicated VET student; this year he completes a Certificate II in Automotive Studies plus half of a Certificate II in Engineering while studying year 11 at St Patrick's.

His parents Tim and Monica are very proud of Hugh's achievement and happy that he has achieved his goal of gaining an apprenticeship.

Hugh found his dream job, and was very grateful that the placement led to ongoing employment as an apprentice.

"I'm keen and excited," Hugh said. "I wanted to get a job there from when I did my first placement as they were great people to work for."

"They set high standards and Robert is a good mentor to learn from."

Other student award-winners announced on Wednesday evening were Zac Biggin, Beaufort Secondary College; Alison Birch, Ballarat High School; Steven Robinson, Ballarat Specialist School; Hayley Wright, Phoenix P-12 Community College; Tom Arntz, St Patrick's College; and Connor Price, Bacchus Marsh College.

In addition to R & J Sobeys, other businesses recognised at the awards ceremony were: Laser Electrical, UGL Rail, Myer Ballarat, Subway - Creswick Road, Albins Performance Transmissions, Safeway Wendouree Village, Findlay Machining and Havilah Hostel.

Thea Burns from the University of Ballarat was recognised as the outstanding trainer for 2013.

VET trio's skills to be tested

MATTHEW DIXON

THREE local students will compete in Perth next month in the national WorldSkills competition.

Samantha Lees, of Ballarat Clarendon College; Lucas Hammond, of Phoenix P-12 Community College; and Zak Biggin, of Beaufort Secondary College, will compete at the event.

The three-day event will showcase the skills of Australia's best trainees, apprentices and students. Highlands LLEN VETIS Cluster co-ordinator Stacey Gill



CHALLENGING: WorldSkills competitors Lucas Hammond, Samantha Lees and Zak Biggin.

said the VET programs appealed to a wide range of students.

"Not all students want to go to university. This way they can get their pre-apprenticeship

while still studying their secondary schooling."

Ms Lees said the trio would depart on September 17.

"I just thought it would be a great

experience to show off some of the skills I have," she said.

"I love doing agriculture."

"I have a passion for it and wanted to excel."

student is top in state

NICOLE CAIRNS

UNIVERSITY of Ballarat graduate Patrick Janes was named Apprentice of the Year at the 2013 Victoria Training Awards on Friday night.

Also recognised from Ballarat, Highlands LLEN won the Victoria Vet in Schools Excellence Award, and Laser Electrical Ballarat won the Victorian Employer Award for Apprentice Development.

Longerenong College student Kate Cross also received the Victorian Vocational Student of the Year Award.

Mr Janes completed his certificate III in engineering – fabrication in February this year.

"It was a bit of a surprise – I didn't think I'd done anything too out of the ordinary," he said.

He was placed sixth at the national World Skills competition in Sydney last year, competing in the welding category.

Mr Janes started working at WR & RJ Hunter about three years ago and continues to work there.

With his boss retiring, he is working to take over the business by the end of the year.

Mr Janes said he loved his job and looked forward to using his skills to run the business.

Highlands LLEN VETis Cluster



WINNER: Apprentice of the Year Patrick Janes.

co-ordinator Stacey Gill said it was extremely rewarding to be recognised in the field.

The Highlands LLEN VETis Cluster program is a collection of 21 hands-on VET programs, where students from 17 schools in the region come together to learn.

"It gives the students a great sense of community – a lot of them would never meet each other if it weren't for the programs."

Examples of the programs include aviation, certificate II in equine and building construction.

nicole.cairns@fairfaxmedia.com.au



CREAM OF THE CROP: The region's outstanding VET in Schools students received their due recognition. **Picture:** Luka Kauzlaric

Bright futures for students

HIGH achievers in the Highlands LLEN Vocational Education and Training Cluster were acknowledged for their outstanding VET in Schools accomplishments on Monday.

The night, held at Ballarat Technology Park Central, offered the latest batch a

chance to celebrate their year, while several local businesses and organisations were also awarded for their involvement in the Structured Workplace Learning program.

Local businesses to receive awards included Sovereign Hill, Albins Per-

formance Transmissions, Beechworth Bakery and GUF Games, while David Johnson was named VET teacher of the year.

A full list of the winners is available at the <http://www.thecourier.com.au/story/4351780/vet-achievers-acknowledged/> website.

