

# Annual **Report** 2020



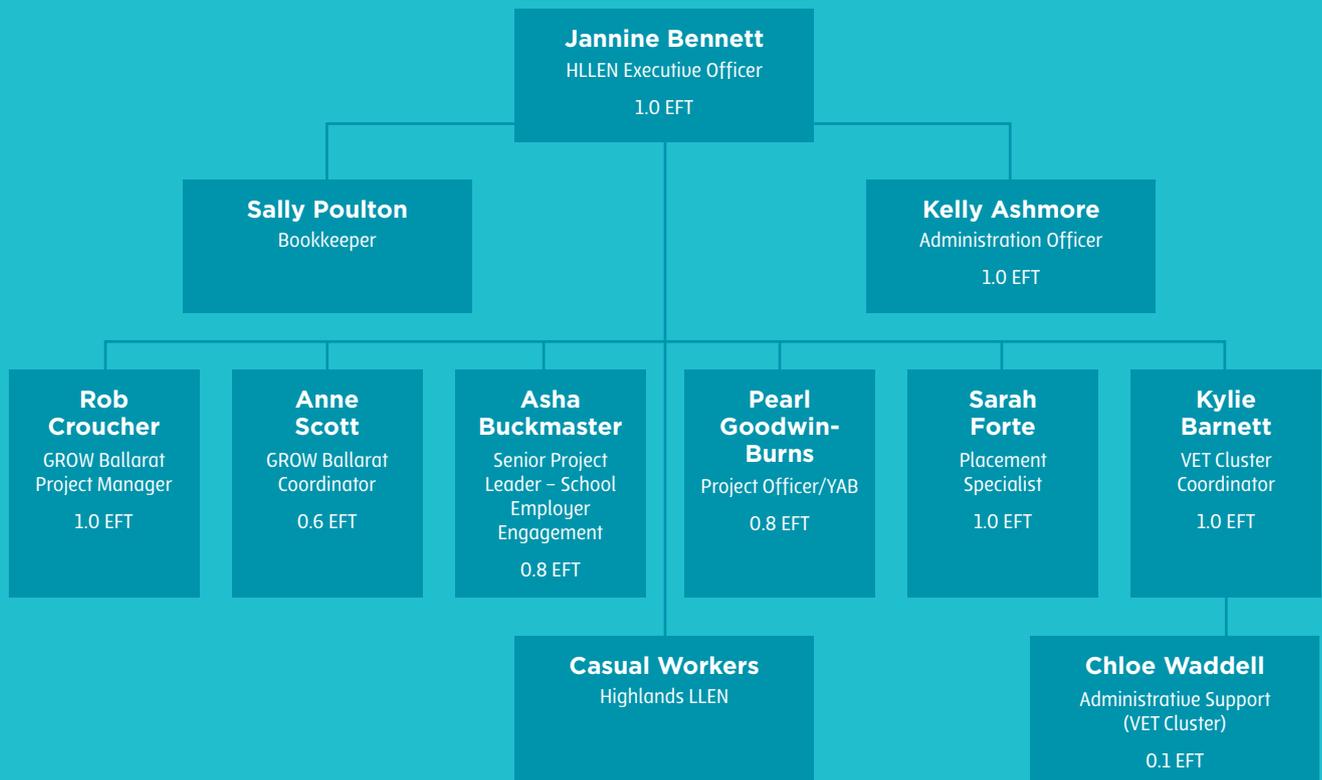
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*Highlands LLEN respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands in which we work and live, the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Wurundjeri people and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community.*



## Highlands LLEN Organisational Structure 2020



# Chairperson's Report

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2020 Highlands LLEN (HLEN) Chairperson's report.

HLEN continued to grow from strength to strength in a year of challenge, change and opportunity as we responded to the impacts of COVID-19. HLEN's ability to remain current, responsive, and relevant was never more tested and more successful than in the past twelve months, demonstrated through the successes of existing and new contracts.

The Executive Officer's report will cover program work undertaken in detail, however I would like to broadly acknowledge all team members and provide some program and project successes.

A robust communication strategy brokering local schools and employer partnerships fostered overwhelming support by key stakeholders. This School-Employer Engagement Contract facilitated by the Senior Project Leader and Placement Specialist was, and will remain, instrumental in determining relevance and currency of the VET, VCAL and VCE Senior Secondary qualifications.

The Ballarat Youth Services Network (BYSN) provided vital networking opportunities and information sharing across a diverse range of topics, using innovative forums to connect sector professionals.

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) has continued to be a highly valuable group of young people who advocate for and support systems change throughout the Ballarat community. Their continued success throughout 2020 is indicative of the dedication and innovation provided by team members during periods of lock down and minimised socialisation.

The HLEN Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) continued to promote the objectives of SWL placements, building relationships and securing valuable, relevant SWL and School-based Apprenticeship and Traineeship (SBAT) opportunities in a period of economic challenge. Achievement of all key performance indicators during this period were exceeded.

VET Cluster enrolments exceeded those of 2019/20 with the introduction of a new VET Cluster database at year end benefiting all stakeholders through ease of access and information flow.

The GROW Ballarat initiative, identifying skill gaps for employers, and providing connection to potential employees continued to 'grow' in line with the Regional Action Plan (RAP). The Beeline Program was borne out of the RAP, with potential employees commencing personal and professional development, through mentor/mentee and work ready training sessions. The potential of this Program was recognised with support from key employers in the Ballarat community.

It is no accident the HLEN continued their success amidst an unprecedented set of challenges, and I must acknowledge and thank the strong leadership afforded by the Executive Officer, Jannine Bennett, supported by a dedicated HLEN team. Collectively, their aim to influence stronger, inclusive, and fair communities focussing on increased opportunities for education, training and employment has remained firm. Well done on your achievements of the past year.



**Leanne Parker**  
Chairperson

In presenting the Chairperson's report I wish to reiterate my acknowledgement of the past and present work of the Executive Officer and all HLEN team members. I thank the Committee of Management for their work in assisting to undertake governance activities and requirements. I thank all parties for their continuing efforts accomplished through ongoing hard work, integrity, and professionalism. 2021 will provide us with challenges and opportunities and I remain optimistic the HLEN is well placed to continue to be influential and successful in the spheres of education, training and employment.

# Executive Officer's Report

## Program Overview

The **School-Employer Engagement** contract for 2020 and 2021 required HLEN to shift focus to developing partnerships which resulted in an increase in the number and range of School-Employer Engagement activities. This included Structured Workplace Learning, work experience, school community work, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships (SBATs), guest speakers and presenters from industry, workplace visits and industry tours, mock interviews and work-readiness preparation.

*“ Dear HLEN Staff, I, and the students, enjoyed it very much. A great spread of backgrounds and roles that were included. ...I would love to share with students.”*

ANDREW SHERWELL, (PRINCIPAL ARARAT SECONDARY COLLEGE).

*“ ... it was excellent so I have promoted again to other staff, students and parents via Careers News. VCAL staff here plan to view recordings in class in coming weeks... Thanks again.”*

KARIN MILLER, (BALLARAT GRAMMAR).

FEEDBACK FROM SCHOOL STAFF ON THE 'YES YOU CAN' WEBINAR SERIES.

This work was assisted by the expanded SWL State-Wide Portal developed by DET. At the commencement of 2020, strategic consultation occurred with schools, DET regional, staff, employers and other stakeholders. This assisted HLEN to prepare its annual workplan and set priorities for the year. This took into account the needs of schools and the identified local priority and growth industries. *Progression of the School-Employer Engagement Work Plans is outlined by on pages eight and nine of the 2020 Annual Report.*

The HLEN local contribution to exceeding the State-wide targets for **SWL** Opportunities posted on the SWL Portal was significant. The local target of 83 Opportunities consumed was exceeded with 188 actually consumed. Opportunities being posted on the Portal were very high at 255. Both of these were commendable achievements for 2020, especially during COVID-19. *A more detailed outline of Structured Workplace Learning is on pages six and seven of the 2020 Annual Report.*

The new **VET Cluster** Coordinator, Kylie Barnett, began in early 2020 and quickly settled into the role. A key focus for 2020 was the introduction of a new database and managing student transition to online learning due to COVID-19. VET enrolments declined to 469 but by year



**Jannine Bennett**  
Executive Officer

The 2020 year was a challenging year for Highlands LLEN (HLEN) as we adjusted to the impact of the pandemic. However, there were several new opportunities, whilst staff continued to manage our traditional contracts. This included School-Employer Engagement (including Structured Workplace Learning – SWL) and On Track Connect, which were funded by the Department of Education and Training (DET). We also continued coordination of the HLEN VET Cluster, which is funded by local Secondary Schools. GROW Ballarat was fully implemented in 2020 and the Beeline Program became part of the offerings for this contract funded by Regional Development Victoria (RDV). HLEN managed several smaller projects including Due Process, funded by the Department of Justice and Community Safety and the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) plus the Learning Review funded separately.

end, applications for the 2021 intake indicated a significant improvement in participation for the coming year. The VET Cluster **annual student survey** was developed and for 2020 included a number of COVID-19 specific questions. There were approximately 100 responses. Responses to the COVID-19 questions were compiled and circulated. Highlands LLEN engaged consultant Peter Kellock to undertake a **VET Cluster review**. Key documents were provided and a sample of stakeholders selected for interviews. Peter completed the report at the end of 2020, providing recommendations to assist the functioning of the Cluster. *An outline of the achievements of the VET Cluster is on pages ten and eleven of the 2020 Annual Report.*

The **GROW Ballarat** Project Manager supported the continued growth of this initiative through collaboration between the five GROW Programs across Victoria. The development of the GROW Portal was a large body of work that resulted in a bespoke system to track the employment outcomes and local spending from each GROW region. The Portal was utilised throughout the latter half of 2020, providing GROW Ballarat with essential quantitative data on the local businesses involved in the Program. The new GROW Mentoring Program named Beeline was launched in the later part of 2020. *Details of the development of GROW Ballarat is on pages twelve and thirteen of the 2020 Annual Report.*

A range of projects have been managed by HLEN during 2020 and included the **Youth Advisory Board (YAB)** and **On Track Connect**. The twenty-two YAB members worked collaboratively during the year and they provided advice, advocacy and leadership in matters relating to young people. Support and referrals occurred for the thirty-seven young people who were contacted as part of the On Track Connect project. The Due Process and Learning

Review projects were managed by Pearl Goodwin-Burns with the final report for the Learning Review being completed. A variation to the Due Process contract was required as COVID-19 hindered progress with staff not being able to access students as part of the consultation required for the project. *An overview of the activities of the YAB is on pages fourteen and fifteen of the 2020 Annual Report.*

## Governance

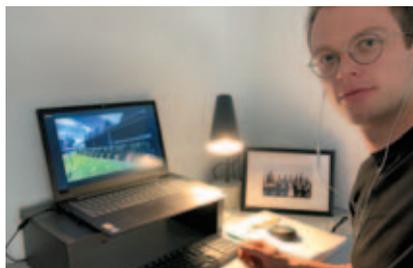
The Committee of Management for 2020 consisted of fifteen members following the AGM. *(Refer to page 18 for the Committee of Management composition).*

At the AGM our Chair, Belinda Coates, notified the Committee of her intention to stand down. We would like to thank Belinda for her service to HLEN for eight years, from April 2011 to May 2019. Belinda was a great support to the Executive Officer and Committee of Management, HLEN thank her for her service.

Leanne Parker was elected to the position of Chairperson and the composition of the Finance and Administration Sub-committee became Cr David Clark, Susan Honeyman, Leanne Parker, Karen Monument and Jim Dannock.

## Presentations and Advocacy

At the request of Department of Education and Training, the Executive Officer presented at a webinar for Victorian educators on the adjustment to VET delivery as a consequence of COVID-19. There were 70 participants in attendance. HLEN sponsored a category in the Ballarat Youth Awards again in 2020. The event was recorded and presented online this year.



## Communication

**The Engagement Express Newsletter (TEE)** produced five newsletters during the year. The April edition of TEE was the most successful issue in 2020 with 448 total opens from the 267 recipients. HLEN was happy with the percentage of people engaging with TEE and positive feedback from other LLENs regarding the content was a bonus.

The **School Leavers Manual 2020** was completed by the end of Term 3 with 1,240 copies delivered to schools and organisations across the Central Highlands Region.

During 2020 HLEN increased its focus across all **social media** platforms with a steadily increasing follower base and more interactions from the other LLENs across the State. Both the HLEN and GROW Ballarat LinkedIn pages have reached over 300 Connections. This growth has been significant and staff were pleased with the engagement they are getting from stakeholders on both pages.

**DET Contract** — The Executive Officer took a hands-on approach to some elements of the Department of Education and Training contract during 2020.

**Learning from Locals** – This concept was developed due to the lack of access to schools and students during COVID-19. A competition was established where students were invited to record an interview with an adult they knew, prompting them to talk about their career and/or job. This involved each student developing, then asking, a series of questions that would be of interest to other students. The plan was that the best videos would be displayed online and attract a prize. One school trialled this activity which assisted with the development of the concept for 2021. The Learning from Locals project was further enhanced with the employment of a Federation University pre-service teaching student, Georgia Devenish, employed to map the project to the VCAL curriculum.

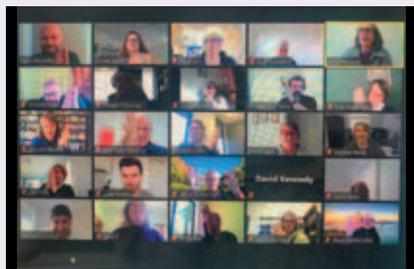
**School to Industry Online Resource** – a booklet was adapted from the Goulburn Murray LLEN resource and provides teachers and students with an extensive range of online resources around career transition and support. A number of careers are also profiled. Part A of this resource was released to relevant stakeholders in 2020.

Highlands LLEN surveying local principals regarding their views on **the impact of COVID-19**. There was a pleasing 63% response rate and comments were sent for collation with the collective response from all Victorian LLENs provided to DET and ultimately the Minister for Education.

## COVID Adjustments

With lack of access to schools and students as a result of COVID-19, the Department of Education issued a Variation to the LLEN contract to allow for alternative activities during 2020. Many proposed projects could not progress and alternatives were therefore developed.

Most Highlands LLEN staff left the office by 20 March with all completing an OHS assessment and workstation plan in preparation for working at home. Time was spent preparing for the office close, supporting staff to meet their KPIs and monitoring adjustment to the new way of working plus the digital platforms we were required to master. Face-to-face meetings were minimal initially but began to occur a little more frequently from mid-June. Generally, staff managed the changed working arrangements but disconnection and isolation were sometimes a challenge. Staff introduced a weekly trivia competition to connect on a social level and this has been beneficial to staff wellbeing.



## Connecting

A key function of HLEN is to be informed and inform others of developments in education and employment as it relates to young people and GROW Ballarat stakeholders. The Executive Officer attended briefings and conferences during 2020 although many were online rather than face-to-face: VCAA briefings, VET Cluster meetings including with Principals, Business Managers and VET Coordinators. The Executive Officer continued as a member of the Victorian LLEN Executive. This involved agenda setting for the Executive Officer Network Meetings and providing leadership on a range of matters during the year.

In addition, contribution to and participation in a range of networks and committees is an important function of the Executive Officer. Most notably:

- LLEN Executive Group
- Victorian GROW Network
- LLEN representative on the Vocational Education Reference Group
- Ballarat Tech School Committee
- Adult, Community and Further Education Grampians Regional Council
- Ballarat Youth Crime Prevention Project's Project Accountability and Governance Group and Multi Agency Support Team
- CHCYAP Research Collaboration Advisory Group
- Ballarat Foundation Board including Chatham House Project Working Group and Governance Committee
- Co-Chair of the Student Engagement Network
- Judge in the Commerce Ballarat Business Excellence Awards
- Worldskills Committee
- UniMelb Zoom meeting – ARC Linkage proposal discussion re pathway in Agriculture and horticulture for young people



### THE FOLLOWING STAFFING CHANGES OCCURRED DURING 2020:

- Induction of the new **VET Cluster Coordinator**, Kylie Barnett, occurred at the beginning of 2020 when Kylie was appointed to this role.
- Anne Scott began as the **Beeline Coordinator** in August as an initiative of GROW Ballarat.
- Employment of Deb Robertson as a **Project Officer** to prepare four industry panels featuring local young people presenting online to secondary students
- Asha Buckmaster resigned from the role of **Senior Project Leader, School-Employer Engagement** and departed in December.
- Pearl Goodwin-Burnes resigned from the role of **YAB Coordinator and Project Officer** and departed at the end of 2020.
- Rob Croucher resigned from the role of **GROW Ballarat Project Manager** and departed at the end of 2020.



**Sarah Forte**  
Placement Specialist

# Structured Workplace Learning

Structured Workplace Learning is a dynamic program which offers students aged fifteen to nineteen the opportunity to gain placement in local businesses or industry.

The goal of this Program is to increase on-the-job experience for young people who are considering different career pathways and connect them with local employers. By using the SWL Portal, which lists available SWL Placements throughout Ballarat, students can see the range of options they can undertake with local employers. Sourcing appropriate placements for students that relate to their educational goals allows the SWL Program to benefit VCE and VCAL students and businesses across the Highlands Region.

In 2020, funding was provided to the Highlands Local Learning & Employment Network (HLLLEN) to develop partnerships which resulted in an increase in the number and range of School-Employer Engagement activities, by facilitating access to these activities through an expanded Statewide SWL Portal. Opportunities will include but will not be limited to:

- Structured Workplace Learning
- School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs)
- Guest Speakers and Presenters from Industry
- Workplace Visits and Industry Tours
- Mock Interviews and Work-Readiness Preparation

At the commencement of 2020, HLLLEN undertook a strategic consultation process with schools, Department of Education and Training Regional Area staff, employers, the community sector and other stakeholders to agree to priorities and actions that would result in achieving key performance indicators of the current contract. This strategic planning process included identification of priority and growth industries in the local area and the needs of schools.

In 2020, HLLLEN exceeded all Placement targets. KPI Target One (Schools tagged on the SWL Portal as participating in work experience) concluded the year at 100%, KPI Target Two (Increasing the number of SWL Opportunities consumed on the SWL Portal) concluded the year at 222%, and KPI Target Three (Supporting access to quality SBATs) concluded the year at 500%. A total of 53 New Host Employers were added to the Portal in 2020, therefore increasing placement opportunities for current and future students.

## SWL HOSTS BY INDUSTRY



No industry entered 31

As the Placement Specialist, my role is primarily undertaking the management of the Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) Program and the SWL Statewide Portal, collaborating with Secondary Schools, service providers and employers, to facilitate SWL Placements, together with sourcing accurate information about placement opportunities.

An important element of the Placement Specialist role is to develop and broker relationships between relevant staff members in schools and employers in the community. This has resulted in the expansion of the regularly committed SWL Placement Opportunities by employers each year, and Career and VET/VCAL Coordinator staff having an increased knowledge of industry placements across the Highlands region.

Furthermore, connections to the region's schools and industry has assisted in delivering an update to the Ballarat Careers Education Network (BCEN) group and Vocational Education and Training Delivered to Secondary Students (VETDSS) Cluster's quarterly meetings.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, HLEN was limited in its delivery of programs to audiences in the Highlands Region.

The **Berry Street School Pathways Event** was developed in partnership with Berry Street School. Students and their families/carers were invited to an afternoon focused on pathways. This event was facilitated by current Berry Street School students, where those in attendance had the opportunity to hear about Vocational Education and Training (VET) Programs, Structured Workplace Learning (SWL), and School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships. Special Guests included Kim Halbert-Pere, Founder and Chief Handy Girl at Handy Girl Australia, and Allyson Dovaston from VECCI Apprenticeship Services.

*“ Dear Sarah,*

*Thank you very much for attending and presenting at the Pathways Information Session yesterday at Berry Street School. It was so encouraging to have your enthusiastic and fresh approach to pathways information and particularly the sense of hope and optimism you both [Asha and Sarah] engendered in your presentations. Your practical approaches, tips and stories on how students can develop their own networks was helpful. I liked how you created a ‘we can do this’ attitude which will influence staff, students and carers in their pathways work with young people. I already have students asking when you are coming back again.”*

MEREDITH BARCLAY (LEAD TEACHER, BERRY STREET SCHOOL)

It was most unfortunate that the annual **Ballarat Get into Games expo (GIG)** was postponed in 2020, due to COVID-19. However, HLEN were active members of the steering committee and continued to assist with the preparation of the 2021 event. For the future Ballarat GIG will take place over two days at the Ballarat Tech School, a centre for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) excellence that engages students in a high-tech learning environment.

Students will be given the opportunity to listen to a range of ICT/Gaming/Interactive Voice Response (IVR) industry speakers, engage in gaming, as well as having the opportunity to speak one on one with industry experts, game developers, studio owners and employers.

HLEN would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the many students and stakeholders who have contributed their time and efforts throughout the challenging year that was 2020, and look forward to a positive and productive 2021.



**53**

Hosts added  
in 2020



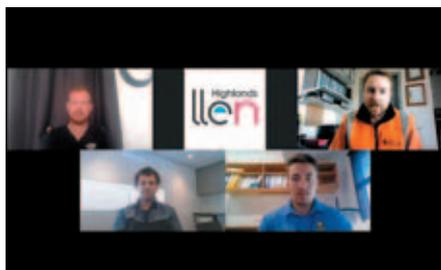
**255**

Opportunities  
advertised on  
the portal



**188**

Opportunities  
consumed by  
students



**SWL.**  
Structured Workplace Learning

# School-Employer Engagement

## Professional Development

The Senior Project Leader: School-Employer Engagement attended several professional development sessions including a webinar on The Impact of COVID-19 on national and state labour markets and the implications for young people as well as the National Youth Commission's Youth Futures Summit.

HLEN was proud to contribute as a judge in the STEM Award category for the 2020 City of Ballarat Youth Awards. The Ballarat Youth Services Network (BYSN) sponsored the Adult Ally – Worker Award and HLEN was thrilled to be able to present this award at the event.

## Engagement and Partnerships with Stakeholders

Understandably throughout 2020, engagement with stakeholders was drastically different, irrevocably changed by COVID-19 with significant disruptions to systems, industry and most importantly young people, however the following engagement has occurred through the work of HLEN.

BYSN held its initial meeting in February 2020. The meeting focused on young people and the legal system and was delivered by YouthLaw. Later in May, BYSN supported YouthLaw to hold a Zoom Webinar on young people and legal issues specifically relating to COVID-19.

HLEN and City of Ballarat Youth Services co-funded a guest speaker for an online BYSN meeting via Zoom. BYSN engaged Ellen Jackson, psychologist, executive coach and now Program Leader for Leadership Ballarat and Western Region. Ellen presented on the topic of Beyond the Lockdown, examining the emotional and psychological process we are going through and how to conceptualise and manage these processes effectively. The session was attended by almost 60 professionals from across Ballarat in the youth work and community services sectors who gave very positive feedback on Ellen's engaging presentation.

Support was offered to sectors through the establishment and moderation of closed Facebook groups for both BYSN and the Secondary School Wellbeing Network, now in its seventh year. Additionally, there have been new Networks formed that HLEN are active participants in and others that continue via Zoom such as the Flexible Learning Network (FLN), Ballarat Careers Educators Network (BCEN) and Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST). This is in addition to one on one stakeholder communication and emails to individuals and groups.

There has been ongoing development of activities throughout 2020 in consultation with stakeholders and partners acknowledging of the shifting landscapes for everyone involved. Significant time has been spent adjusting and redesigning these activities, assessing their ability to progress and being mindful of the organisational directives of partners. HLEN have endeavoured to be an asset stakeholders and assist with a cohesive and well networked youth focussed space across multiple sectors, including education and training.



### Asha Buckmaster

Senior Project Leader:  
School-Employer Engagement

There is much to reflect on as we begin a new School-Employer Engagement contract with the Department of Education and Training (DET). Highlands LLEN (HLEN) would like to recognise the difficulty of engaging schools, stakeholders and industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the hardships experienced by students, parents and teachers throughout 2020. With acknowledgement of the challenges that were experienced in 2020, we would like to celebrate the achievements of the School-Employer Engagement contract.

## Activities

**The Cook, The Chef and Us**, a School-Industry Partnership program facilitated by Central Highlands Rural Health, with students from Daylesford College was unfortunately postponed due to COVID-19 but will hopefully commence in 2021 with HLLen's continued support.

There has been significant progression of the **Your Ballarat, Your Future** presentation [previously titled City Projects, Future Jobs]. This presentation has been structured to be delivered according to the needs of schools and their students in either one session or four smaller sessions. The reviewing of content and updating of the format was developed in collaboration with Amelia Ryan from the City of Ballarat's Economic Development team. The presentation had its first delivery in October 2020 to 162 students and staff at Bacchus Marsh Grammar.

The **Berry Street School Pathways** event was designed as an interactive workshop focusing on school to employment pathways. Throughout an afternoon session, the Pathways event focused on the opportunities available to students while at school that could support them to gaining important experience and skills in their chosen industry. The event was facilitated by current students and delivered in partnership with special guests Kim Halbert-Pere, Founder and Chief Handy Girl at Handy Girl Australia, and Allyson Dovaston from VECCI Apprenticeship Services. HLLen arranged this interactive workshop for students to think deeply about their interests and strengths, reviewing their interest groups and preferred job clusters, unpacking what this means about their future career and exploring possible pathways.

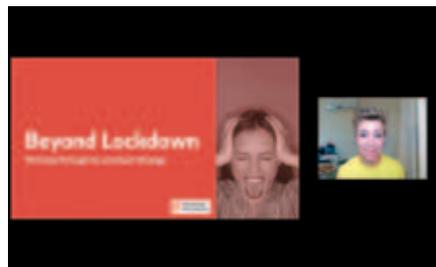
An online **Employment Webinar** for Year 12 students from Bacchus Marsh Grammar heard from speakers about the world of work beyond secondary school, including: the future of work in a post-pandemic world, Employment support services and How to get help with problems at work. Guest speaker presentations were followed by Q and A sessions, allowing students to ask the questions that are important to them.

**Yes You Can!: A Webinar Series**, showcased young people who are thriving in their careers following a vocational pathway. This provided reassurance and inspiration to current school students, as they were able to see vocational training as a worthwhile and rewarding option after school. This event was open to any student or group of students with an interest in a vocational pathway. Students were able to view the webinars as a large group, with projection onto a screen, or alternatively, they could view individually on their own devices. Staff and students were encouraged to submit questions for the panellists before the event.

**Work Inspirations** was designed in 2020 to be an engaging and interactive session available for Year 11 VCAL students to learn how Workplace Health and Safety is managed within the manufacturing industry. The visit was aiming to include: A presentation from a Work Health and Safety Officer, a Tour of the Rinnai facility and a mock 'unsafe' site for students to undertake a practice risk assessment. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, this event was cancelled with an aim to reinstate it in 2021.



Courtesy: Commerce Ballarat



# BYSN

## BALLARAT YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

HLLen would like to sincerely thank all of the school staff, youth workers, sector professionals, organisations, local businesses and most importantly young people for their continuous support and enthusiasm throughout the duration of 2020. The year has proven to be a very challenging time for the School-Employer Engagement contract but we are certain that the innovation and creativity that was fostered throughout the year in response to these challenges will spur us on to further successes in 2021.

*Kelly Ashmore with respect to  
Asha Buckmaster*



**Kylie Barnett**  
VET Cluster Coordinator

# VET Cluster

The HLLLEN VET Cluster enrolled a total of 469 students in 2020, engaging eight RTO's to deliver twenty qualifications.

The student enrolment numbers were down on the previous year, due to numerous factors including a change in VET Cluster Coordinators and an increase in students engaging in School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs). The retention rate of first year students into second year Programs increased from 52% in 2019 to 56% in 2020.

COVID-19 impacted greatly on many aspects of the HLLLEN VET Cluster including:

- Moving VET Programs to online learning in a very short period of time
- Program Teachers and students adapting to online learning
- Child safety issues arising from the move to online learning
- Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) requirements for online learning
- Scored Assessed Programs
- Marketing to students and parents, including attending school subject selection information sessions
- Student orientation sessions.

## HLLLEN VET CLUSTER PROGRAMS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF STUDENT ENROLMENTS FOR 2020

Program	First year enrolments	Second year enrolments	Total enrolments
Certificate II in Animal Studies	34	18	52
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care *	29	-	29
Certificate II in Automotive Vocational Preparation	27	19	46
Certificate II in Equine Studies (partial completion)	20	14	34
Certificate III in Health Services Assistance	20	13	33

\*New program delivered in 2020



The Highlands LLEN (HLLLEN) Vocational Education and Training (VET) Cluster has seen many changes over the last twelve months, including the research and implementation of the new HLLLEN VET Cluster Database. This database will assist the role of the VET Coordinator by automating many of the previous administrative functions of the role and allow the various stakeholders better access to student and Program information as well as attendance and academic reporting. This new database was a substantial investment and will see the HLLLEN VET Cluster through the next eight to ten years.

The implementation of the database will allow the VET Coordinator to spend more time at schools, liaising with students about VET Cluster pathways and to develop better, more sophisticated ways to market VET Cluster Programs. It will also allow the VET Cluster Coordinator to work on research, process improvement and documenting the requirements of the role as well as creating database guides and learning materials.

School	Total enrolments
Damascus College	79
Ballarat High School	78
Bacchus Marsh College	44
Mount Clear College	39
Phoenix P-12 Community College	26

### SCHOOLS WITH THE GREATEST NUMBERS OF STUDENT ENROLMENTS IN HLEN VET CLUSTER PROGRAMS FOR 2020



In March, 2020, when the first lockdown occurred, most of our VET Programs were moved to online learning within two to three weeks and the remainder by the start of Term Two. The VET Coordinator was responsible for keeping stakeholders up to date with media releases and correspondence from the Department of Education and Training Victoria (DET), Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and other relevant organisations. A Protocol Document was created for online delivery of VET Cluster Programs as was the same for returning to face to face delivery. Information disseminated in these documents highlighted requirements for online delivery, including child safety considerations, information for parents, Program Teachers, students and schools. These documents were created in consultation with stakeholders.

Return to face-to-face learning was not as streamlined as moving to online learning, due mainly to our RTO's having differing management structures and requirements for students returning to campus. However, students and Program Teachers alike, were very happy to finally see the return of face-to-face learning later in the year.

The new HLEN VET Cluster database was due to be launched in time for student applications in August, however a rather untimely oversight was recognised in late July. In communication with the DET Knowledge, Privacy and Records, Integrity, Assurance and Executive Services Division we discovered issues surrounding privacy, data storage and consent that needed to be addressed. In consultation with a lawyer, an Enrolment Information Collection Notice and Parent Consent and Medical Information forms were created. This gave us the confidence to proceed with the database knowing that it was compliant in every sense for its users.

The new database was 80% operational in late 2020 with student data transferred to the new system and users utilising its functions in time for the 2021 delivery period.

In 2021, the HLEN VET Cluster aims to focus on improving marketing strategies and working on process improvement for the benefit of all stakeholders. The HLEN VET Cluster is committed to promoting pathways for young people to employment, through VETDSS. VET Programs have the unique capacity to provide students with industry specific knowledge, skills and networks, support students to improve their job readiness and provide an industry recognised qualification; all whilst contributing to VCE or VCAL studies.





**Rob Croucher**  
GROW Ballarat Project Manager

# GROW Ballarat

2020 was a particularly challenging year for our business community and local job seekers, due to the effects of COVID-19. Given this, GROW Ballarat's interventions became even more relevant due to the sudden increase in unemployment and the impact this had on the employment opportunities of the long-term and disadvantaged unemployed.

As in all areas across Victoria, unemployment rates are rising in Ballarat (Dec.2019 3.7% to Sept.2020 4.9%). This trend is expected to increase as COVID-19 Government stimulus supports are withdrawn, particularly with the youth sector. The growth in unemployment as well as a decline in business, will increase the need and importance of the initiatives the GROW Ballarat Program provides to the region.

COVID-19 impacted on the ability to increase the number of GROW Signatories, therefore 2020 was an important time to assist businesses and develop additional services to support them during this challenging period.

During 2020, nine employment outcomes were captured on the GROW Portal:

- Five outcomes for People with a Disability
- Two outcomes for Disengaged Youth
- One outcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- One outcome for Mature Aged Women

Contract and procurement of local goods and services, including social procurement, provide an essential platform for employment and regional business growth. The following figures outline the activity of GROW Ballarat Signatories in 2020:

- Local Procurement captured in the GROW Portal for our region totalled 60 Million Dollars
- Social Procurement captured in the GROW Portal for our region totalled 5 Thousand Dollars

During 2020, GROW Ballarat Signatories progressed to populating their individual Portals, updating their Action Plans and providing important data and evidence of the GROW Ballarat Program's impact on the Ballarat region. At the end of 2020 GROW Ballarat had 25 Signatories.

The GROW Ballarat Program also includes co-operation with committed Partner organisations, who provide specialist skills, advice, resources and expertise. We thank them for this important support. At the end of 2020 GROW Ballarat had 16 Partners.

Source: City of Ballarat



GROW Ballarat has grown and developed considerably throughout 2020 with support being provided in a myriad of ways to our local business community and disadvantaged job seekers throughout Ballarat. The effect of the global pandemic throughout the year caused significant concern in both unemployment rates and damage to businesses, and in turn GROW Ballarat was proud to increase its efforts to advocate for and work with our business community and local job seekers. We would particularly like to thank our Steering Committee for their dedication, support and insights throughout 2020. GROW Ballarat is committed to a strong future in the Highlands region and expects a favourable continuation of its current three-year funding contract beyond August 2021. Its important representational and advocacy role is well documented in this Annual report, supporting a favourable outcome in the May 2021 Budget allocations.

## Significant Achievements

### THE GROW REGIONAL PORTAL

GROW Ballarat collaborated with the four other GROW Regions to develop a contemporary reporting Portal. The state-wide GROW Portal was refined and launched in 2020 providing a range of reporting fields and inclusive employment resources for Signatories. The secure platform enabled Signatories to record and monitor their GROW Action Plans, demonstrating their contributions to social and local procurement and inclusive employment. The Portal enables the GROW Ballarat Program to gain an overall perspective of the contribution the Program is having on regional economic growth.

### THE BEELINE PROGRAM

A key initiative during 2020 was the design and delivery of the Beeline Program. Beeline is an innovative and flexible learning journey, supporting the attainment of real jobs for unemployed people from disadvantaged groups. A feature of the Program is a partnership with a business or industry sector and the identification of genuine jobs needs and skills deficits. The learning journey uses a range of methods that are specified for the industry, resulting in workers who are job ready and can potentially transition into job vacancies. Learning methods are integrated and include a comprehensive mentoring strategy to support individuals and maximise learning into the workplace.

The Beeline Program supported 13 Mature Age Women through the Program with the goal being to secure traineeships with Ballarat Health Services in 2021.

## Additional Achievements

GROW Ballarat has undertaken a diverse range and number of important initiatives during 2020 to support economic growth across the region. The following were undertaken during 2020:

- Designed Match-fit pre-employment program with MatchWorks and Ballarat Basketball targeting fifteen 17-24-year olds.
- Partnered with the other GROW Regions to develop a state-wide GROW glossary resulting in increased consistency across the regions.
- Partnered with Commerce Ballarat to improve the digital marketing capabilities in the Tourism, Retail, Hospitality and Fitness industries.
- Explored options with Ballarat Foundation and Uniting to expand existing L2P and Meals for Change, with additional pathways to employment.
- Commenced a partnership model with Industry Capability Network (ICN) to support organisations in expanding their social procurement.



Courtesy: Lachlan Bence, The Courier Newspaper



**Anne Scott**

GROW Ballarat Coordinator



**24**

GROW Ballarat  
Signatories



**16**

GROW Ballarat  
Partners



**13**

Beeline Program  
Participants

**GROW**  
BALLARAT 

**BEELINE**   
a GROW BALLARAT program



**Pearl Goodwin-Burns**  
YAB Coordinator & Project Officer

# Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

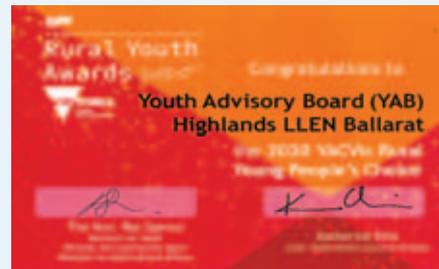
## Highlights of 2020

2020 has been a complex and challenging year for the YAB. However, the team has continued to maintain and expand on its community presence with several initiatives and communication strategies put in place to ensure continued connection between the group and its community partners.

Some of the highlights for 2020 included:

- The YAB Coordinator delivered the Coaching Young People for Success (CYPFS) training (careers module) to the YAB in January. The YAB explored how their personality traits, interests and skills can shape and bolster their careers.
- The YAB were successful in applying for a 'Local Matters' community jar at the Ballarat Grill'd restaurant. Each month, in every restaurant the jars promote three community groups for patrons to support. Community groups are then awarded a small donation.
- The Ballarat Foundation awarded the YAB \$5,000 of funding which has been used to deliver careers focused training and upskilling activities to the YAB members.
- The YAB met with the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Liana Buchanan to discuss the issues surrounding and experiences of young people during COVID-19.
- The YAB were very excited to be awarded the Young People's Choice award at the 2020 YACVic Rural Youth Awards for their advocacy work. The YAB were awarded \$1,000 in prize money and have voted to allocate these funds to projects in 2021.
- The YAB represented Ballarat and surrounding areas in the 2020 YMCA Youth Parliament.
- Working closely with the Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee (CHIFVC), the YAB developed a suite of Family Violence resources for young people and their families experiencing Family Violence during COVID-19. The YAB and CHIFVC co-designed the resources which were shared widely on social media.
- Other key advocacy work includes: the development of a submission to the Victorian Government for the whole-of-government LGBTQIA+ Strategy, the development of a written advocacy piece regarding the Free the Flag movement and a submission to the Victorian Government for the whole-of-government Youth Strategy.

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) has maintained momentum throughout 2020 as the group celebrated its 2nd anniversary in August of 2020. We are pleased to see this diverse and talented group of young advocates continue to work for positive change for young people throughout the Highlands Region. This year has been difficult for the YAB with COVID-19 causing immense changes to the groups ability to meet and work within the community to achieve their goals. Despite these challenges, the YAB continued to succeed with several notable achievements including: successfully submitting a Bill to Youth Parliament, meeting with the Commissioner for Children and Young People and excitingly, the YAB were also the recipients of the Young People's Choice Award at the 2020 YAC Vic Rural Youth Awards! The work that has been achieved in 2020 has been significant despite the changed landscape for advocacy and we are excited to see where the group places its efforts in 2021.



## Key Projects and Advocacy

Throughout 2020 there were a variety of projects and advocacy work that the YAB completed, several in partnership with community groups and organisations. The work of the group stretched across a large range of focuses, demonstrating the flexibility and ingenuity of the YAB's goals and vision.

The **Family Violence resources for young people by young people** was a project that involved the YAB developing a suite of five videos about Family Violence with the support of the Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee (CHIFVC). These videos have been shared widely by youth-focused organisations including Child and Family Services Ballarat (CAFS), Berry Street and Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC).

The YAB conducted a successful and productive **meeting with the Commissioner for Children and Young People**, Liana Buchanan. The focus of the meeting was to explore the experiences, issues and idea of young people living regionally during the COVID-19 pandemic. The YAB engaged the Commissioner on several large issues and discussed the complexities of experiences across the different cohorts of young people. As a result of this meeting, the YAB were invited to be a part of a suite of media opportunities with the Commissioner and her team, including being featured in an ABC article and news segment highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on at risk students.

The **Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DEWLP)** met with the YAB multiple times in 2020 to discuss the Grampians Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. The YAB provided valuable feedback about the accessibility of the Strategy. As a result, DEWLP have committed to funding the YAB in 2021 to complete project/s relating to the Grampians Climate Change strategy.

The **2020 YMCA Youth Parliament** final ceremony was held on 29th September. The YAB drafted and submitted a comprehensive Bill to the Parliament that proposes to substantially increase support for acute mental health patients who are discharged from hospital. The Bill has also been distributed to local Members of Parliament and other influential members of the Victorian community.

Moving into 2021, the YAB is looking forward to continuing their important advocacy work within our community and beyond.

*Kelly Ashmore with respect to Pearl Goodwin-Burns*



22

Members and growing



11

Meetings, including external meetings



Courtesy: Commerce Ballarat



Courtesy: The Courier Newspaper

youth advisory board  
**yab**

# Highlands LLEN Partnerships

## World Skills Committee

- Victorian chamber
- Federation University
- City of Ballarat
- WestVic Staffing Solutions
- Vic TAFE Association

## Learning Review

- CAFS
- Berry Street
- Federation University
- CHCYAP
- Women's Health Grampians
- Centacare
- DHHS
- Pyrenees Shire

## Family Violence Response Project

- Youth Advisory Board
- Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee

## Tech School Committee

- City of Ballarat
- DET
- Industry
- Secondary Schools
- Federation University
- DJPR

## Beeline

- Ballarat Health Services
- Participants
- Matchworks
- Centacare
- Inspire HQ
- Ellen Jackson

## Community Safety Grant (DOJ) Due Process

- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Ballarat Specialist School

## Youth Advisory Board

- Young People

## Education Providers

- Government Secondary Schools
- Catholic Secondary Schools
- Independent Secondary Schools
- Flexible Learning programs
- RTOs
- TAFEs
- Universities

## The Cook, The Chef & Us

- Hepburn Health Service
- Alcohol & Drug Foundation
- Daylesford College
- SFYS
- Hospitality Industry

# Highlands LLEN Networks

## Central Highlands Mental Health Network

- Community Organisations
- CHPCP
- DJ&CS
- DHHS
- Victoria Police
- Western PHN
- GPIR
- CHC&YAP
- NDIS Providers

## Ballarat Careers Educators Network

- Secondary Schools
- Universities

## Secondary School Wellbeing Network

- SFYS
- Secondary Schools
- Flexible Learning programs

## Vocational Education Reference Group

- CECV
- DET
- Secondary Schools
- Independent Schools Victoria
- Universities
- VRQA
- VCAA
- TAFEs
- LLENs

## Hepburn Engaging Youth

- SFYS
- Daylesford College
- Hepburn Primary Schools
- Central Highlands Rural Health
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Neighbourhood Centres
- DHHS
- DET
- Community Organisations

## GROW Initiative Network Group

- GROW Ballarat
- G21 GROW
- GROW Bendigo
- GROW Shepparton
- GROW Gippsland
- RDV

## Youth Mental Health Community of Practice

- Practitioners
- Community Organisations

### **HLEN VET Cluster**

- Principals
- Business Managers
- VET Coordinators
- VASS Coordinators
- Secondary Schools
- RTOs
- VCAA

### **GROW Ballarat**

- Steering Committee
- Signatories
- Partners
- RDV
- Localised
- ARC Blue

### **Hepburn Shire Strategic Partnership**

- SFYS
- Daylesford College
- Central Highlands Rural Health
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Neighbourhood Centres
- Hospitality Industry

### **Get Into Games**

- City of Ballarat
- Federation University
- Game Developers Association of Australia
- Guf
- Education Providers

### **Youth Crime Prevention Program: MAST & PAGG**

- Ballarat Community Health
- City of Ballarat
- Berry Street
- Centacare
- CHC&YAP
- CAFS
- Uniting
- Victoria Police
- DHHS
- DJ&CS
- headspace Ballarat
- YMCA

### **GROW Steering Committee**

- Federation University
- ICN
- Camerons
- RDV
- Centacare
- City of Ballarat

### **On Track Connect**

- DET
- Community Organisations
- Training Providers
- Young People

### **Careers for Youth Ballarat Area**

- Business & Industry
- Young People

### **Career Voyage**

- Education Providers

### **Your Ballarat, Your Future**

- City of Ballarat
- Education Providers

### **Research Collaboration (HDR)**

- Federation University
- DET

### **SWL Portal**

- Secondary Schools
- Employers

Date of publication: April 2021 for the 2020 year.

### **Federation Business School Commerce Ballarat Business Excellence Awards**

- Federation University
- Commerce Ballarat
- Businesses
- Community Organisations
- Business Leaders

### **Work & Learning Centre: Local Advisory Panel**

- GROW Ballarat
- Commerce Ballarat
- Committee for Ballarat
- DJPR
- RDV
- DHHS
- Employment Agencies
- Community Organisations
- Federation University
- RTOs
- GTOs
- Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre
- Skills & Jobs Centre

### **Flexible Learning Network**

- Flexible Learning Providers
- Community based education reengagement programs

### **GROW Operational Team**

- GROW Ballarat
- G21 GROW
- GROW Bendigo
- GROW Shepparton
- GROW Gippsland

### **Ballarat Youth Services Network**

- Community Organisations
- Education Providers

### **Student Engagement Network**

- Ballarat Community Health
- SFYS
- Berry Street
- DET
- LOOKOUT
- Government Secondary Schools
- Navigator
- Better Futures

### **Moorabool Agencies & Schools Together**

- Community Organisations
- Education Providers
- Local Government

### **Grampians ACFE Regional Council**

- DET
- Learn Locals
- Industry
- LLENs
- Community Organisations

### **LLEN Executive**

- Elected Executive Officers

### **LLEN Executive Officer Network**

- All LLENs

# Committee of Management 2020 (At year end)

**Leanne Parker**

**CHAIRPERSON**

SUB-COMMITTEE: FASC

ORGANISATION: Westvic Staffing Solutions

**Karen Monument**

**DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON**

SUB-COMMITTEE: FASC

ORGANISATION: Department of Health & Human Services

**Cr David Clark**

**TREASURER**

SUB-COMMITTEE: FASC

ORGANISATION: Pyrenees Shire

**Susan Honeyman**

**SECRETARY**

SUB-COMMITTEE: FASC

ORGANISATION: ESTA, Regional Partnership

**Jim Dannock**

SUB-COMMITTEE: FASC

ORGANISATION: AiGroup

**Alice Christie**

ORGANISATION: Business Services Training

**Phonse Crawford**

ORGANISATION: Department of Education and Training

**Stephen Fields**

ORGANISATION: Woodmans Hill Secondary College

**Cr Joanne Gilbert**

ORGANISATION: Golden Plains Shire,  
Department of Justice and  
Community Safety

**Cr Peter Eddy**

ORGANISATION: City of Ballarat

**Janelle Johnson**

ORGANISATION: headspace Ballarat

**Robert Lewers**

ORGANISATION: Phoenix P-12 College

**Jennifer McCrabb**

ORGANISATION: Department of Education and Training

**Liam Sloan**

ORGANISATION: Federation University TAFE

# Treasurer's Report

## Treasurer's Report 2020 – Highlands LLEN

2020 has been another successful year for Highlands LLEN (HLEN), the focus was on its two core programs of School-Employer Engagement and Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) (funded by the Department of Education and Training) alongside the implementation of the second year of the GROW Ballarat Program. The Federal Government's COVID-19 cashflow boost of \$100,000 has provided a significant opportunity for HLEN to undertake a range of program works with most expenditure occurring in the 2021 year to support its key activities.

Employee costs increased to 71% of HLEN's operating expenditure at \$560,000. Program delivery remains the core emphasis of Highlands LLEN as demonstrated through the employment and project costs in the accounts, the GROW Ballarat Project also works on the methodology. Other significant costs included consultancy fees associated with GROW Ballarat of \$45,985 a reduction of 35% from last year, rent \$22,842, motor vehicle costs of \$39,531 and publications of \$13,402.

The very healthy surplus recorded this year of \$54,314 reflects a number of deliverables for our project grant funds are still to be completed in 2021. In 2021 HLEN has budgeted for a deficit of income over expenditure in order to utilise a portion of these surplus funds accumulated in recent years.

The Highlands LLEN balance sheet remains sound, with the 2020 surplus contributing to an increase in net assets to \$264,649. As with the previous year HLEN has significant current liabilities of \$700,061 at balance date, \$525,000 of this (75%) being income in advance for 2021 activities. HLEN currently has \$923,151 in cash or term deposits, more than providing for the liabilities as listed.

Our Audit report for 2020 contains no qualifications and I am pleased to recommend to you our financials for the year and look forward to another successful year in 2021.

**Cr David Clark**

Treasurer



David Clark is a small business owner and Councillor in the Pyrenees Shire. He was first elected to Council in 1992 and re-elected in 2008, 2012 and 2016. David has extensive experience in the NFP sector, particularly in agriculture and natural resource management. He joined Conservation Volunteers, based in Ballarat, in the 1980s, has been extensively involved in Landcare, has been in the Army Reserve for 20 years and spent six years working for the state government's Catchment Management Authority.

David operates a mixed farming property at Glenbrae and has lived in Glenbrae his entire life. His three children are currently studying at primary and secondary schools in the region.

David joined the Highlands LLEN Committee of Management in 2009 and has served as Treasurer since 2010.



# Financial Statement

The following Financial Statement is an extract from the full financial report for the year ended 31st December, 2020.

A copy of the full financial report and auditor's report is available on our website.

## Statement of Comprehensive Income

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>Revenue</b>		
	843,217	11,278
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Employee benefits expense	(536,914)	(502,386)
Depreciation expense	(7,497)	(6,767)
Audit, accounting and consultancy expense	(63,425)	(87,759)
Computer and IT expense	(7,224)	(3,928)
Telephone and utilities expense	(10,067)	(10,087)
Rent expense	(22,842)	(20,228)
Training and welfare expense	(10,066)	(10,841)
Motor vehicles expense	(44,945)	(42,052)
Other expenses	(85,923)	(141,060)
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>54,314</b>	<b>86,170</b>

## Balance Sheet

AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	540,496	860,471
Trade and other receivables	382,655	52,343
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>923,151</b>	<b>912,814</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, Plant & Equipment	66,463	18,184
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>66,463</b>	<b>18,184</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>989,614</b>	<b>930,998</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade Payables	614,987	533,761
Other Payables	67,817	148,405
Provisions	17,257	21,223
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>700,061</b>	<b>703,389</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provisions	24,910	17,280
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>24,910</b>	<b>17,280</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>724,971</b>	<b>720,669</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>264,643</b>	<b>10,329</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained Surpluses	264,643	210,329
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>264,643</b>	<b>210,329</b>

## Statement of Changes in Equity

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2020

	RETAINED SURPLUSES	TOTAL
<b>2020</b>		
Balance at 1 January 2020	210,329	210,329
Net Surplus for the year	54,314	54,314
<b>BALANCE AT 31 DECEMBER 2020</b>	<b>264,643</b>	<b>264,643</b>
<b>2019</b>		
Balance at 1 January 2019	124,159	124,159
Net Surplus for the year	86,170	86,170
<b>BALANCE AT 31 DECEMBER 2019</b>	<b>210,329</b>	<b>210,329</b>

## Statement of Cash Flows

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>Cash from Operating Activities</b>		
Receipts from customers including grants	1,181,966	1,181,966
Payments to suppliers and employees	(951,603)	(951,603)
Interest Received	8,581	8,581
<b>NET CASH PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>238,944</b>	<b>238,944</b>
<b>Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(16,003)	(16,003)
Net cash provided by investing activities	(16,003)	(16,003)
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents	222,941	222,941
Cash and cash equivalents as beginning of year	637,530	637,530
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>860,471</b>	<b>860,471</b>

# Organisational declaration

## Statement by Members of the Committee of Management

### ANNUAL STATEMENT TO GIVE FAIR AND TRUE VIEW OF FINANCIAL POSITION AND PERFORMANCE OF INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION

These financial statements are special purpose financial statements that have been prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act (Victoria) 2012* and the ACNC Act.

In accordance with a resolution of the committee of Highlands LLEN Inc., the members of the committee declare that the financial statements as set out:

- 1 comply with the Australian Accounting Standards – *Reduced Disclosure Requirements*;
- 2 present a true and fair view of the financial position of Highlands LLEN Inc. as at 31 December 2020 and its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- 3 at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Highlands LLEN Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.



**Leanne Parker**  
Committee Member



**David Clark**  
Committee Member

Dated this 2nd day of April, 2021

# Independent Auditor's Report

## Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Highlands Local Learning & Employment Network Inc.

### OPINION

I have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of the Highlands Local Learning & Employment Network Inc., which comprises the Statement of Comprehensive Income, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Notes to the Financial Statements and Statement by Members of the Committee of Management for the financial year ended 31st December, 2020.

In my opinion, the financial report of the Highlands Local Learning & Employment Network Inc gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the Highlands Local Learning & Employment Network Inc as at 31st December, 2020 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.

### BASIS FOR OPINION

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report. I am independent of the entity in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

### EMPHASIS OF MATTER – BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee's financial reporting responsibilities under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

### RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL REPORT

The Committee of Management responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)* and for such internal control as the Committee members determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the Network's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Committee members either intend to liquidate the Network or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Committee of Management is responsible for overseeing the Network's financial reporting process.

## AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report, as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that audits conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our [my] opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the entities' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.



**Rob Florence, FCPA**

Florence Audit & Assurance

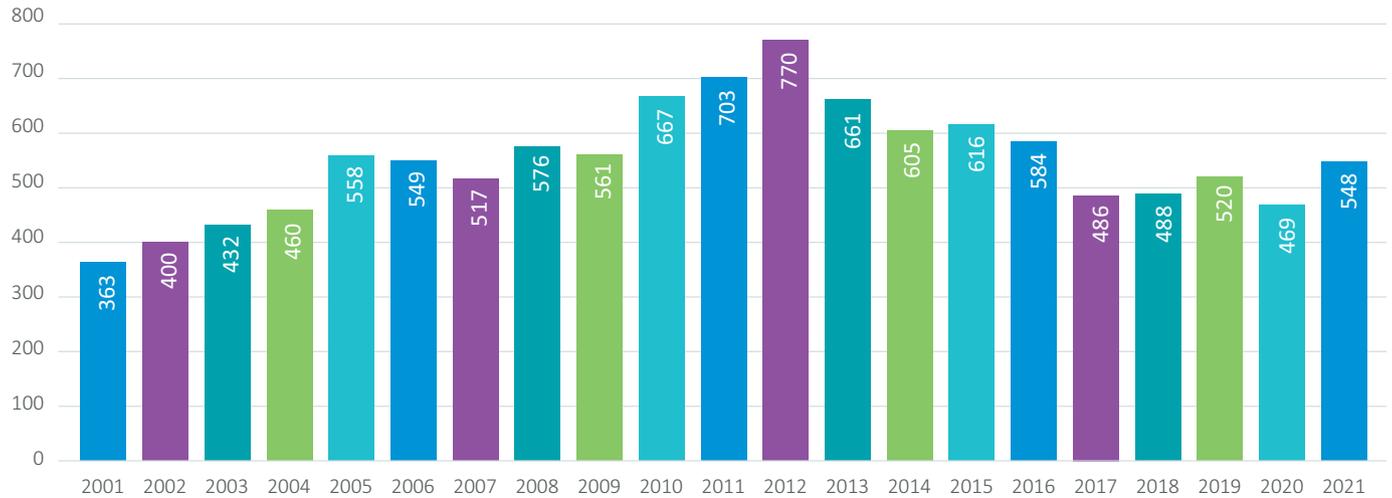
513 Grant Street, BALLARAT VIC 3350

Dated this 2nd day of April, 2021

# Highlands VET Cluster Data Report

## Highlands VET Cluster Yearly Enrolment Breakdown

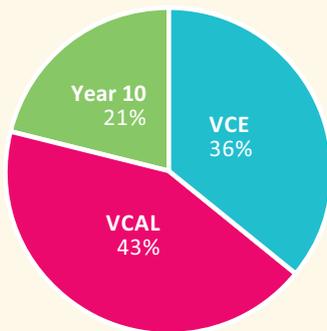
VET CLUSTER ENROLMENTS BY YEAR, 2001–2021



Source: VET Cluster Provision Report

### VET: VCE and VCAL Data Analysis 2020

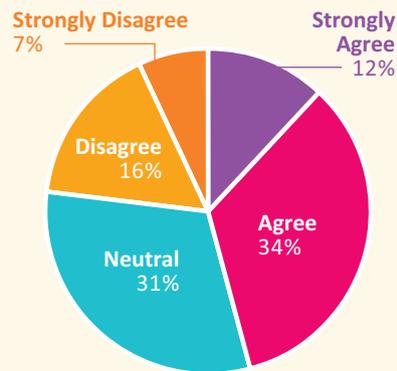
DISTRIBUTION OF VET STUDENTS IN VCE, VCAL OR YEAR 10



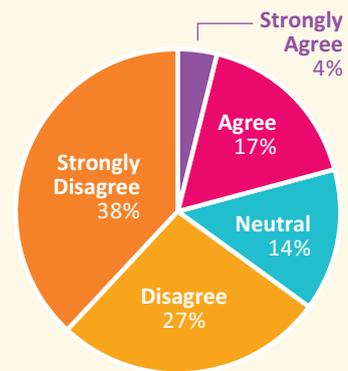
Source: VET Cluster Provision Report

### COVID-19 Impact on VET Cluster Students

QUESTION: ADJUSTING TO ONLINE VET DELIVERY HAS BEEN EASY



QUESTION: MY ATTENDANCE HAS DECLINED DURING ONLINE VET DELIVERY



Source: VET Cluster COVID-19 Impact Survey

# HLEN Engagement 2020



**25**

Logins to SWL Portal by School Staff



**188**

Students who consumed placements from Portal



**1486**

Stakeholder opens of 'The Engagement Express' Newsletter



**3000**

Community members following social media platforms



**1240**

Number of 'School Leavers Manuals' distributed



**10**

Staff attendance at 'Flexible Learning Forum'



**13**

Number of secondary school Principals who responded to the 'COVID-19 Student Impact Survey'



**469**

Number of students participating in the VET Cluster



**313**

Number of students who attended Highlands LLEN activities



**5**

YAB appearances in the media



**167**

Number of people who attended the 'Yes You Can' Webinar Series



**25**

Number of secondary schools participating in the VET Cluster



**15**

School students supported by MAST/PAGG



**3**

Number of 'BYSN' meetings held



**Kelly Ashmore**  
Administration Officer

# Administration Officer

The Engagement Express Newsletter was an equally important conduit for communications to our stakeholders, with a total of 1,486 opens of the four issues of the Newsletter by the end of the year. The School Leavers Manual, which has been produced annually for school leavers across the Central Highlands Region (including Ararat and Maryborough), was successfully produced and distributed in booklet form to 1,240 school leavers, youth and community organisations.

The Administration Officer spent a significant amount of time throughout 2020 supporting the VET Cluster in its implementation of the new student management database. This project involved comprehensive evaluations of a wide range of possible systems for the Cluster as well as consulting on the testing and implementation of the system that was selected through the development company About Today. The work that was completed during 2020 will pave the way for a fully functional student management database to be operational for the 2021 VET Cluster Program intake period.

As a result of the cancellation of the Get Into Games Expo at the beginning of 2020, several exploratory discussions were had with staff at the City of Ballarat Council as well as Highlands LLEN around the development of a Gaming Industry Resource. This resource would be used by students in the classroom with their teachers and at home, in conjunction with the Expo, to further their knowledge about the many facets of the Game Development Industry. The initial stages of the project took place at the end of 2020, with stakeholder consultation set to take place in early 2021.

## On Track Connect

Highlands LLEN (HLEN) received a total of thirty-seven referrals for On Track Connect in 2020, a project which was managed by Pearl Goodwin-Burns. In comparison to previous years of On Track Connect referrals, young people required a higher level of support and generally most referrals expressed a significant amount of anxiety about their future and their ability to find meaningful employment and/or engage in Higher Education. A number of young people reported they had 'given up' on employment for this year and instead were using their time to assist helping their parents/carers and siblings with responsibilities at home, a comment indicative of the significant impact of COVID-19 on young people transitioning out of school.

Of the thirty-seven young people from the Ballarat region, thirty-four were Year 12 Completers and three were Early Leavers. Thirty young people were able to be contacted by HLEN, and 20% had already found suitable employment or study. Of the remaining young people, HLEN referred 62.5% on to local organisations for further support with pursuing post-school education and/or employment.

2020 was a year of initiative and creativity for the various projects within the Administration Officer role. COVID-19 resulted in an increased focus on all communications from Highlands LLEN to ensure our stakeholders remained informed of our activities throughout the year. The Highlands LLEN, VET Cluster and GROW Ballarat social media platforms saw significant increases in community engagement with their combined overall base reaching over 3,000 community members and local organisations by the end of 2020. The expansion of social media included utilising advertising campaigns to bolster enrolments in the Highlands VET Cluster, a successful initiative which saw over 12,000 people from across the region reached by our communications during the application rounds for 2021 VET Programs.

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THERE IS NO FUNDAMENTAL  
SOCIAL CHANGE BY BEING  
SIMPLY OF INDIVIDUAL AND  
INTERPERSONAL ACTIONS.  
YOU HAVE TO HAVE  
ORGANISATIONS AND  
INSTITUTIONS THAT MAKE A  
FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE

CORNELL WEST

”



**Chloe Waddell**  
Administrative Support (VET Cluster)



**Sally Poulton**  
Finance Officer



# Annual Report 2020

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## Social Media

### HIGHLANDS LLEN

 [www.facebook.com/Highlandsleninc/](https://www.facebook.com/Highlandsleninc/)  
 [www.linkedin.com/in/highlands-lLEN](https://www.linkedin.com/in/highlands-lLEN)

### VET CLUSTER

 [www.facebook.com/VETCluster/](https://www.facebook.com/VETCluster/)  
 [@highlandslenvet](https://www.instagram.com/highlandslenvet)

### GROW BALLARAT

 [www.facebook.com/growballarat/](https://www.facebook.com/growballarat/)  
 [www.linkedin.com/in/grow-ballarat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/grow-ballarat)

ABN: 46 429 658 543

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Several images located on pages 12 and 15 courtesy The Courier Newspaper, 2020

