

# ANNUAL REPORT

January - December 2022



Creating opportunities for children and young people to thrive in  
education, work and life



**The North Central LLEN respectfully  
acknowledges the traditional custodians  
of this land where our work takes place,  
and we pay our respects to Elders  
past, present and emerging.**

**For many centuries Aboriginal people have  
met and cared for children and young people  
on the lands on which we now work.**

**This always was and always will be  
Aboriginal land.**

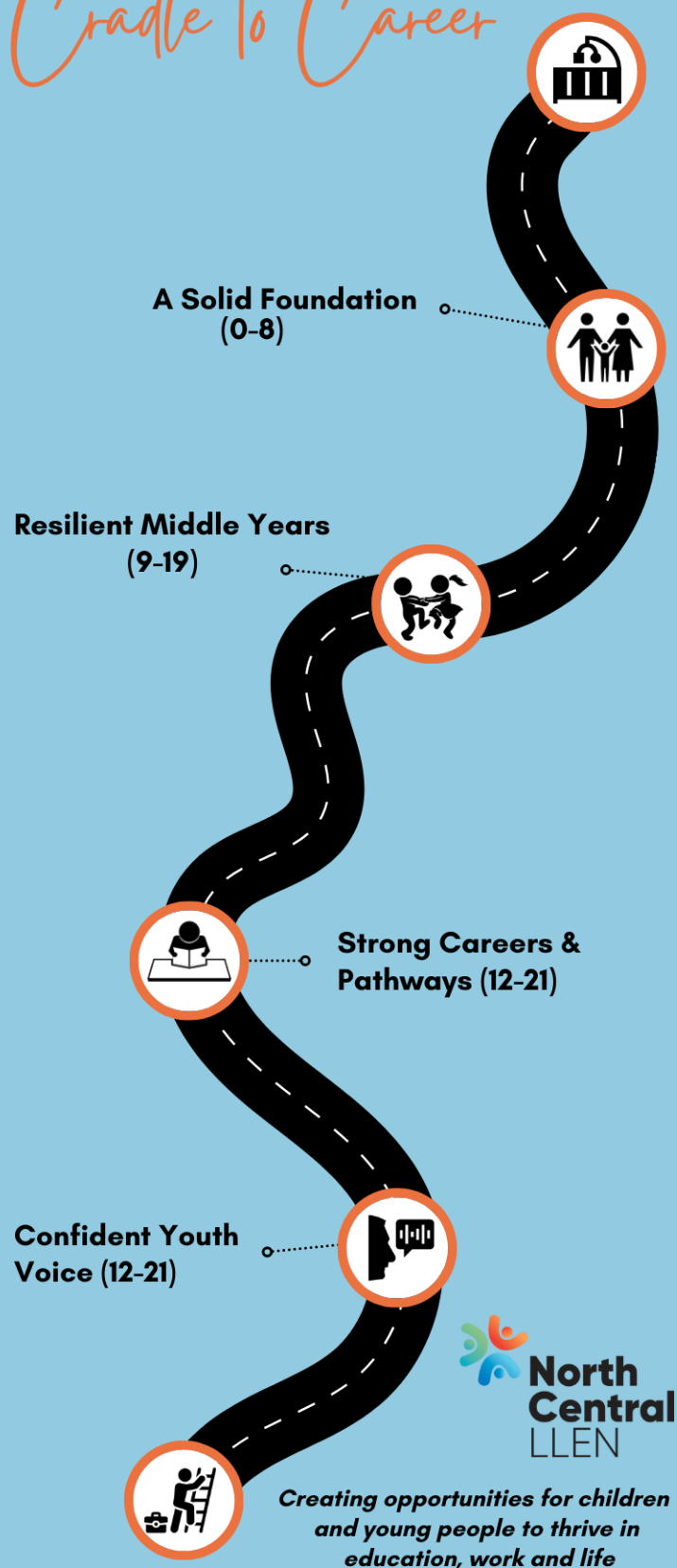


# Cradle to Career...



North Central LLEN

## Cradle To Career



Over the last 18 months the North Central LLEN has been consolidating our "cradle to career" approach of supporting children and young people to thrive in education, work and life.

To document how our work aligns with this pathway, we have developed this infographic (left) that shows how our work intersects at critical times in the development of children and young people.

This work is underpinned by our focus on:

Amplifying Voices	Fostering Connections	Growing Capacity	Expanding Knowledge	Creating Solutions
Empowering children and young people to actively participate and be heard	Developing partnerships and networks that make a difference	Building on knowledge and expertise across the region	Engaging and supporting research to inform and advocate	Facilitating systems change and a culture of continuous improvement

The North Central LLEN is a charitable incorporated association with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status that partners with a range of groups and organisations including education and training providers, business and industry, community agencies, and parent and family organisations to support effective outcomes for young people.

Incorporated in 2002, the organisation has supported more than 6,000 children and young people over the last 21 years.

The North Central LLEN aims to achieve its purpose through the facilitation and coordination of partnerships that deliver support to children, young people, their families and carers experiencing rural disadvantage, social isolation, and from low socio-economic backgrounds within the Shires of Loddon, Buloke, and the community of St Arnaud in the Northern Grampians Shire.

We also work in partnership with a range of organisations to deliver projects in surrounding areas.

Our commitment is to engage and collaborate with organisations and communities to ensure that children, young people and their families get the support they need when they need it.

To do this we take a cradle to career approach working with children, young people and their families across four key areas:

1. Solid Foundations (0-8)
2. Resilient Middle Years (9-19)
3. Strong Careers and Pathways (12-21)
4. Confident Youth Voice (12-21)

# Chair's Report...



## **To the North Central LLEN Members, Partners, Stakeholders and Communities of our region**

I am pleased to deliver this Annual Report on behalf of the NCLLEN Board. It has been a pleasure to Chair the Board over the past 12 months and work with some of the most dedicated people from our communities to create opportunities for children and young people to thrive in education, work and life.

The Board has worked hard to direct and implement positive change and to ensure our staff are best equipped to deliver the programs and policies that benefit and support our objectives.

Strategic oversight, well managed and responsible budgets, program funding that makes a difference, and delivery of outcomes have all been achievable by our very capable CEO Jane Hosking and her dedicated staff.

Significant business of the North Central LLEN over the past 12 months has been the negotiation of a new School to Work contract with the Department of Education and Training (DET). An original proposal put forward by DET saw a 22% reduction in funding that would have made it difficult to fulfill our contractual obligations. Win Scott (Deputy Chair) and I attended briefings and meetings with the Department, and we worked closely with Jane to explain the impact that the funding reduction would have on our organisation.

Jane also worked with the other small rural LLENs that were similarly affected to gain an increase in the base funding and to modify the KPIs. Unfortunately, there will still be a reduction over the three years of the contract but at 13% it is less than originally proposed, and it is workable. Per capita funding models remain an ongoing challenge for rural communities.

Most of us would be aware of the impact that a lack of childcare has in regional and rural communities. To address the issue, North Central LLEN has worked with the Loddon Mallee RDA and the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee Regional Partnerships to produce a report, Creating Viable Childcare in Rural Areas. Gannawarra, Buloke and Loddon Councils were also involved in the project which sets out the issues for rural families and proposes ways in which federal and state government can support more accessible rural childcare options. There is ongoing follow-up work required to secure viable services for our rural communities.

Toward the end of 2022 the North Central LLEN successfully advocated for funding from the DET Transport Fund for the purpose of transporting students from schools within our catchment to join programs at Charlton's Trade Training Centre, providing access to VET training for students who might otherwise have missed out.

We also received DET funding for a new "Pathways to a Career in Agriculture in the 21st Century" project to build and enhance the quality and currency of agricultural education programs and industry partnerships in the North Central region to facilitate in 2023, and in December we received funding through YACVic to help young people recover from the 2022 floods across the Buloke, Loddon and Gannawarra Shires.

Another highlight was taking on the management of the Buloke Loddon L2P program in July to provide assistance to young people who are facing significant barriers to completing their mandatory 120 hours of supervised on road driving experience through the support of Volunteer Mentors from the community.

From Solid Foundation, Resilient Middle Years, Strong Careers and Pathways and Confident Youth Voice, the North Central LLEN continues to be engaged in strong positive programs and outcomes for our youth into the future.

To my fellow Board Members – the strong strategic oversight, purposeful policy objectives, respectful robust decision-making, skills base and leadership you each bring means the North Central LLEN is in good hands. A warm welcome to Brooke Arnold, Barry McKenzie, Cheryl McKinnon and Anthony Hogan elected to the Board in 2022.

I would also like to acknowledge former Chair Ellen White and Cr Eddy Ostarcevic who left the Board in 2022 for their contribution and commitment to the North Central LLEN, and also former Board Member Cr Tony Driscoll who sadly passed away in July 2022.

To the North Central LLEN staff, thank you for all your hard work to achieve the most important objective of all - supporting children and young people to thrive.

To our valued stakeholders, I thank you for your continued support and commitment to the North Central LLEN.

*Cr Dan Straub*



# Chief Executive Officer's Report



They say that it never rains but it pours, and in 2022 our North Central communities have weathered some significant shared challenges - in particular, Covid 19 and then the floods that followed. Both events have disproportionately impacted our children and young people.

This has been a very challenging 12 months for so many in our community, however out of rain comes some rainbows. One of the highlights of the year has been witnessing the amazing spirit of our children and young people contributing to their family's and the community's flood response. They demonstrated inspiring character and resilience.

Recent events reinforced that the challenge is to not only protect the wellbeing of young people but also to prepare them for future adversities not yet fully apparent. You could argue that there has never been a more important time to have invested in working together on a community-led initiative such as the Comprehensive Monitoring System (CMS) that holds considerable promise for strengthening community-based approaches to promoting mental health and wellbeing at all ages and stages across the community.

It has been reassuring to see, and a credit to our local community, that in the 2021 AEDC (Australian Early Development Census) published in 2022, our Loddon Shire children have 'held steady' - even bucking the national trend by making small, but significant (2.2-8.6%), improvements across all developmental domains, despite the social, emotional and educational impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our Strong Families Strong Children (SFSC) partnership has remained committed to keeping our eyes focused on outcomes with our facilitated initiative being on the ground in Loddon from mid-2018 through to 2021.

These promising results have fueled our passionate governance group partners determination to secure ongoing longer-term funding for Early and Middle Years facilitation to focus the service system to work alongside families and support **ALL** of our children to arrive at school ready to learn and to feel connected, confident and hopeful about their future opportunities in education, work and life.

As we come out of the pandemic, it has been a joy for our team to facilitate and participate in "in-person" events and initiatives with children, young people and the community. I thank each and every member of our team for their passion and determination to equip each and every North Central child and young person to thrive.

In 2022 we were excited to welcome Molly, Ryan and Manue to our hardworking team and to say au-revoir and then welcome-back Jess following maternity leave. We bid goodbye to Ella and thank her for the warmth and passion she brought in leading the Youth Take Over Team.

I commend to you the amazing collaborative work documented in this Annual Report. From solid foundations, resilient middle years through to strong careers and pathways and confident youth voice. Please take the time to read through the initiatives - and most importantly outcomes.

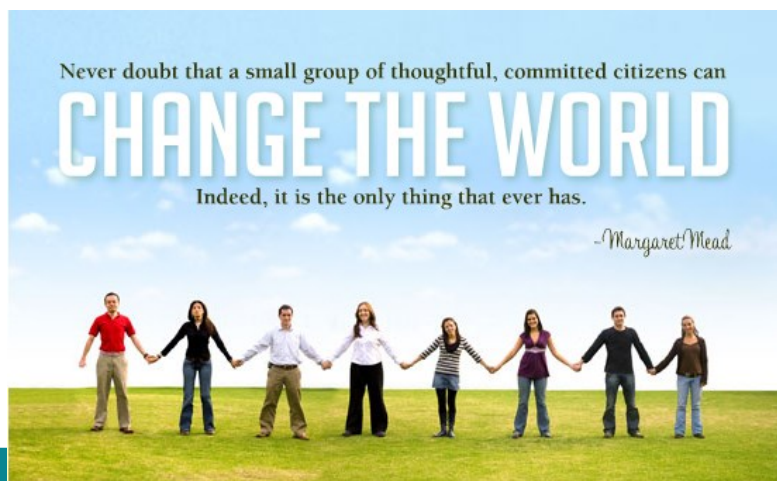
Thank-you to our Chair Dan Straub, and the entire Board for their ongoing commitment to ensuring our organisation is governed strongly enabling us to create secure back-bone funding for our critical partnership work from cradle-to-career.

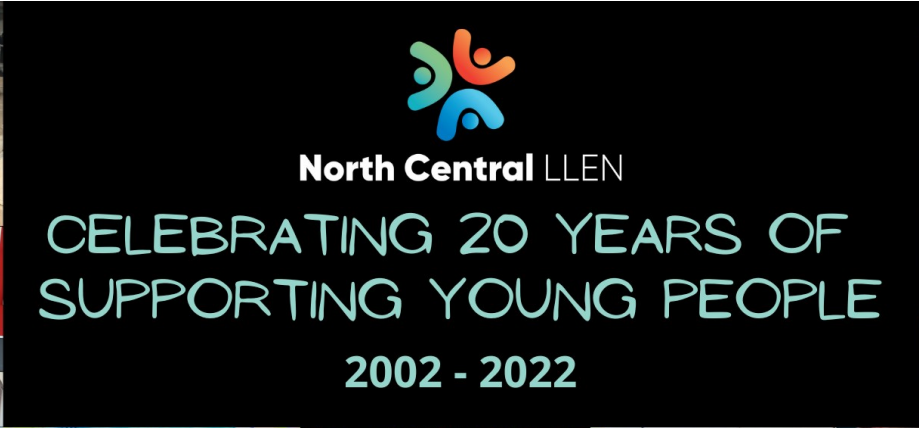
We are humbled and buoyed by the endorsement from Reconciliation Australia of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Heartfelt thanks to our Board and working group, ably-led by Deputy Chair Win Scott, for achieving this critical organisational milestone.

There is much more to do and at this pivotal moment in history, we whole-heartedly commit to working together with our First Nations community to build a brighter future.

*Jane Hosking*





Our evening began with a Welcome to Country and Traditional Smoking Ceremony by Dja Dja Wurrung elder Aunty Marilyn Nichols, and was followed by our Annual General Meeting hosted by current Chair Ellen White.

Keynote speaker Professor Craig Olssen joined us remotely from Covid isolation to explore how data can support our work together to support children and young people, and some of the preliminary findings from the AEDC Extension Comprehensive Monitoring System project rolled out across the North Central region during 2020 and 2021.

The evening concluded with the cutting of a special celebration cake by former and current Board Members and Executive Officers, and a toast by all in recognition of the achievements of the LLEN over the last 20 years and for many more years to come.





## "Reflect" Reconciliation Action Plan

In October 2022 the North Central LLEN Board formally adopted a "Reflect" Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) after 18 months of work by a RAP Taskforce of Board and staff members.

This "Reflect" RAP will be used to lay the foundations and prepare the North Central LLEN for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives. It is our public commitment to reconciliation and has been published on Reconciliation Australia's website.

The development of this "Reflect" RAP has already demonstrated that there are a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups across our area we would like to include in our partnerships, research and project developments.

To implement the 13 actions contained within the RAP, a Committee comprising Board Members and staff has been established and we look forward to the outcomes.



**Above: North Central LLEN "Reflect" Reconciliation Action Plan (available to view on our website)**

**Left: North Central LLEN AGM @ Inglewood, May 2022  
Welcome to Country & Smoking Ceremony with Aunty Marilyn Nichols, Dja Dja Wurrung**



## Organisational Changes:

- Transition to Happy HR (human resource management) to better support staff
- Risk Appetite Statement developed to underpin future work of the North Central LLEN
- Policy and Procedure refresh completed to support the organisation's governance structures

## \$2 million new investment secured in 2022 to support children & young people:

- Buloke Loddon L2P Program (Department of Transport)
- Pathways to a Career in Agriculture in the 21st Century (DET Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund)
- New 3-year School to Work Contract (DET)
- New 3-year Careers Education Partnership MOU (North Central Cluster Schools)
- Umbrella Grant to support young people recover from floods (YACVic)
- VET Transport Funding to support student access to VET education for three schools (DET)

# A Dynamic Organisation...



The North Central LLEN's Strategic Plan is now two years into its implementation, and as you can see from the graphic below, we have made some significant steps towards achieving the outcomes outlined within this.



Performance Indicators for each of the four Key Focus Areas are on track, with the exception of "Increase in the number of students finishing school with Year 12 or equivalent".

Covid restrictions have impacted heavily in this area with some students disengaging from school and leaving before completing Year 12 - many to traineeships/apprenticeships or full time work.

We are committed to working with young people, schools and families and other key stakeholders to address barriers to school completion, and to facilitate successful pathways.

We are very proud of our achievements during the last 12 months and commend this Annual Report to you.

## Measuring our Success:



### Solid Foundations (0-8):

- ☒ Maternal Child Health, Kindergarten, Playgroup and School attendance in the early years will improve
- ☒ More children will be on track developmentally when they start school
- ☒ More parents and carers will tell us they are feeling confident about knowing what is needed for their children and how to access or provide for this



### Resilient Middle Years (9-15):

- ☒ Young people report increased confidence and optimism
- ☒ Young people are connected and active community participants
- ☒ Young people actively explore careers & pathways to align with interests and aspirations



### Strong Careers & Pathways:

- ☐ Increase in the number of students finishing school with Year 12 or equivalent
- ☐ Increase in the number of school leavers who continue their studies in VET or University Courses
- ☐ Increase the number of employed youth in our region



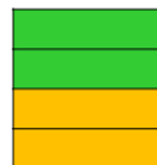
### Confident Youth Voice:

- ☒ More skilled and supported young people willing to express their voice
- ☒ Community groups including more young people in their organisations for mutual benefit
- ☒ Young people have participated in local, regional, and statewide conversations and decisions on important issues



### A Dynamic Organisation:

- ☐ Research and advocacy foundation for all work
- ☐ High performing Board with a proactive risk appetite to explore opportunities
- ☐ A well-resourced organisational structure of highly capable staff with a diverse range of skills and leadership abilities
- ☐ A culture of innovation and continuous improvement



KEY:

Strong Progress

On Track

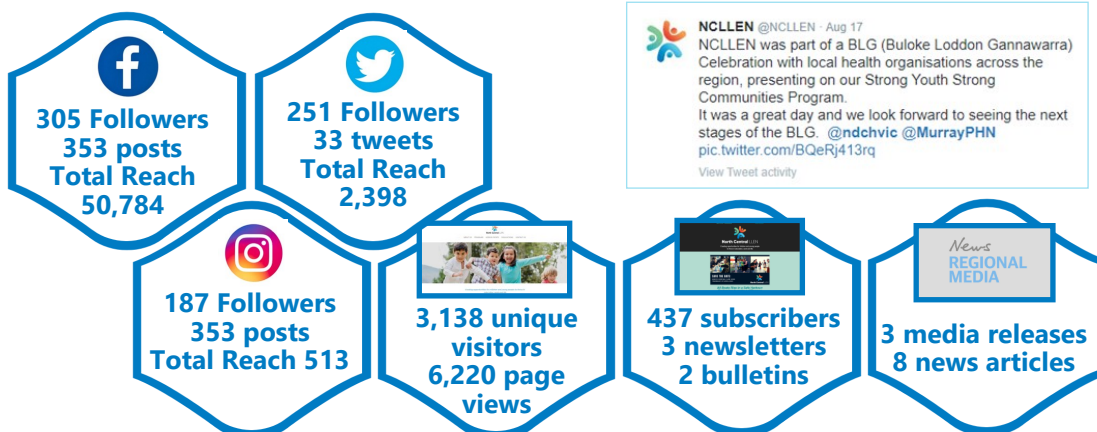
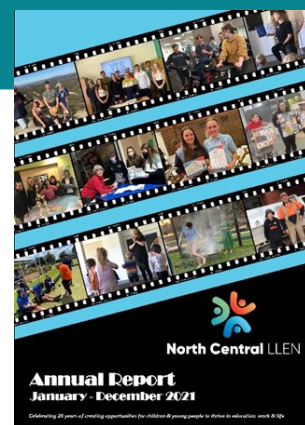
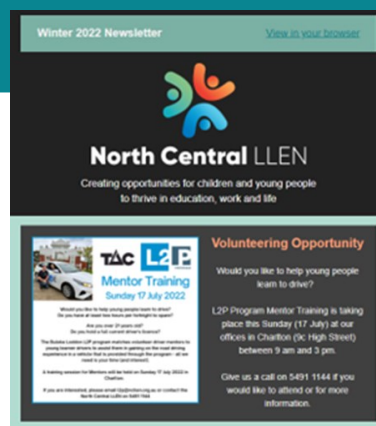
Limited Progress



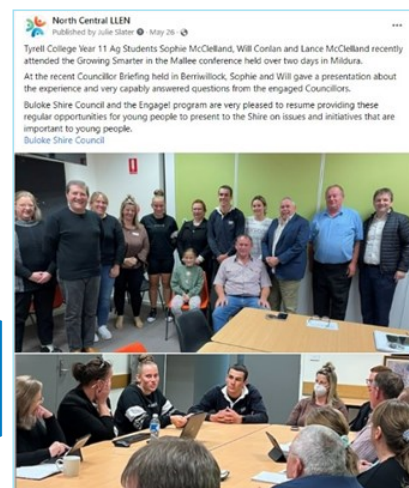
## Telling our Story

During 2022 we continued to work hard to tell our story through social media and mainstream publications across the North Central region.

We continued to be active on social media, maintained a web presence, distributed three electronic newsletters, issued media releases which were published in local newspapers and community newsletters and published an Annual Report outlining achievements over the previous 12 months.



**NCLLEN @NCLLEN - Aug 17**  
NCLLEN was part of a BLG (Buloke Loddon Gannawarra) Celebration with local health organisations across the region, presenting on our Strong Youth Strong Communities Program. It was a great day and we look forward to seeing the next stages of the BLG. @ndchvic @MurrayPHN pic.twitter.com/BQeRj413rq  
View Tweet activity

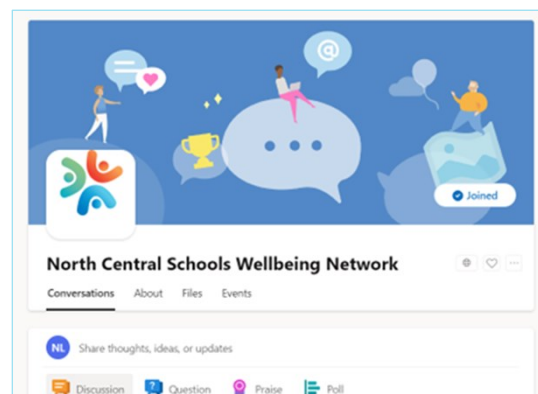


## Stakeholder Engagement

Our stakeholders are central to the work we do to support children and young people to thrive, and we endeavour to engage with them in a range of ways. In addition to our social media feeds, website, newsletters, and news stories we helped facilitate the following stakeholder events during 2022:

- Celebrating 20 years of the North Central LLEN
- Connecting Communities for Change (3 forums)
- School Industry Roundtables (2 events)
- School Industry Events (12 events)

Schools are integral to the work we do, and to maintain open communication we now have two portals - North Central Schools Wellbeing Network and VCE-Vocational Major & VPC Shared Resources.



## Participation

The North Central LLEN actively participates in many Taskforces, Networks, Governance and Operations Committee's including:

- Wimmera Mallee Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce
- Loddon Campaspe Head Start Board
- North Central Principal's Network
- BLG Health and Wellbeing Executive Network
- Northern Grampians Shire MPHWP Reference Group
- Navigator Wimmera South West, Loddon Campaspe and Mallee Governance & Operations Groups
- VicLLENs School to Work Summit Working Group
- RDA Childcare Advocacy Steering Group

**Below: CEO Jane Hosking at a hybrid statewide VicLLENs meeting**



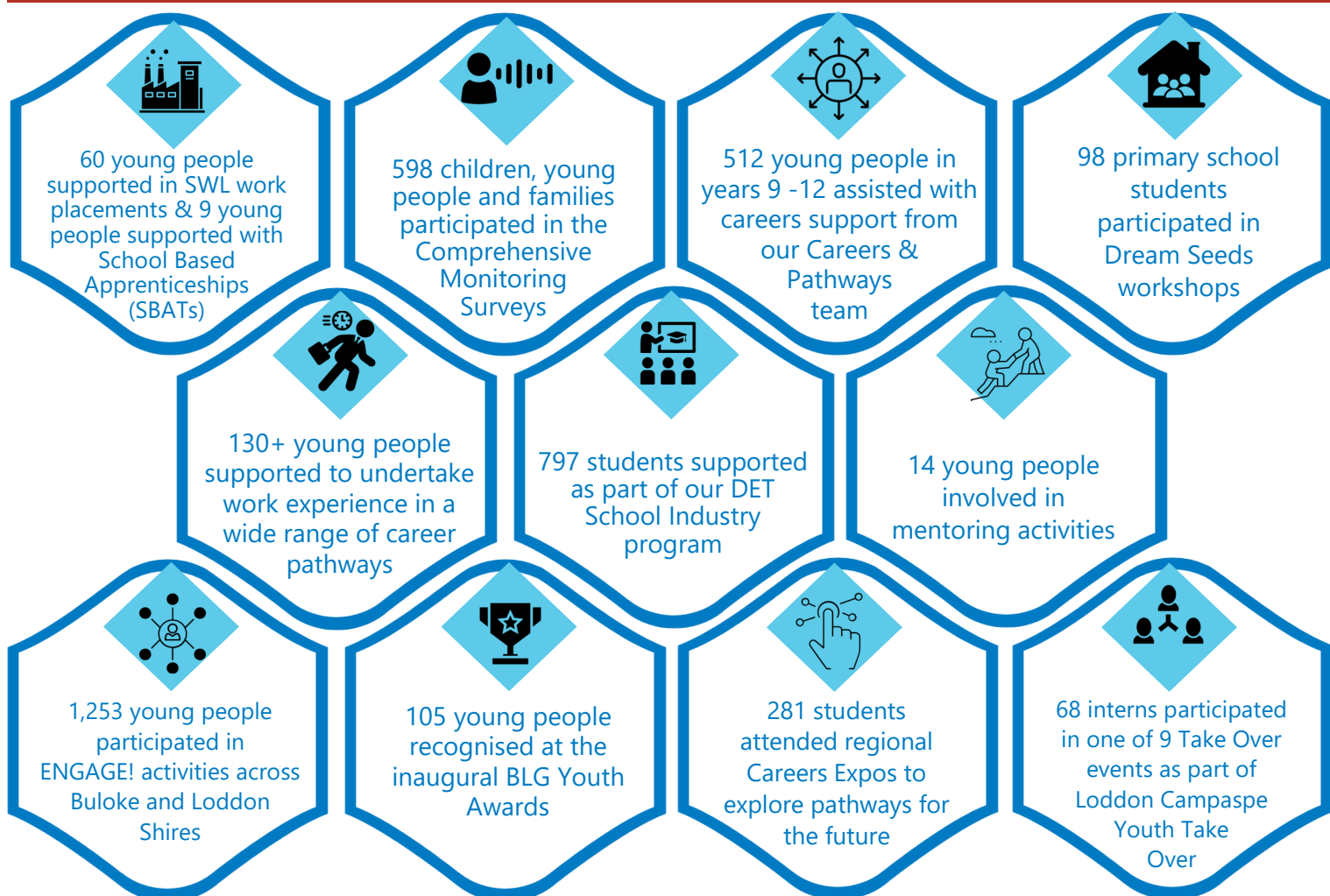
# Outcomes at a Glance...



**People & organisations we partnered & collaborated with in 2022**



## Our Outcomes at a Glance in 2022





# Our Programs & People...

## SOLID FOUNDATIONS



Jess Turner

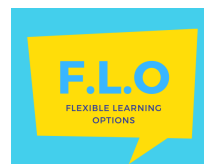
## RESILIENT MIDDLE YEARS



Jerri Nelson  
Pam McConville



Julie Slater, Julie Roberts  
Pam McConville, Barb Bear,  
Peter Aurisch



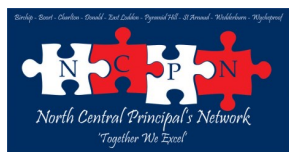
Supported by  
the NCLLEN

Tania Watts  
Peter Aurisch  
Fiona Hall

## STRONG CAREERS & PATHWAYS



Ella Hughes,  
Ryan Hale,  
Amanda McClelland,  
Manue Arnold



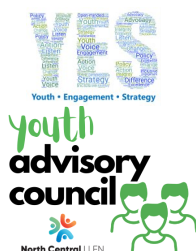
mates  
mentor assist target engage skills

Sue Clay, Ange Poxon, Barb Bear,  
Pam McConville and Mary-Ann Sait



Tania Watts

## CONFIDENT YOUTH VOICE



Julie Slater, Mary-Ann Sait  
Molly Meadows,  
Matt Allan (NDCH)



North Central LLEN

## LLEN INC

Jane Hosking  
Julie Slater, Julie Roberts



# Strong Families Strong Children (0-8)...

Despite having limited resources in this space, we remain committed to working with our partners to build the capability of families, services and the community with the goal of ensuring all children begin school ready to learn and actively participate in community life.



**STRONG FAMILIES**  
**STRONG CHILDREN**  
BULOKE & LODDON

**As part of the Strong Families Strong Children Program (SFSC), our 2022 priorities have been:**

- Sourcing funding for increased sustainability of SFSC into the future,
- Progressing a sustainable Early Childhood Education and Care model for our communities,
- Creating stronger and more accessible antenatal services for our families, and
- Continuing to facilitate support for families to navigate timely access to services for their children, with learnings from each child and family used to support systems change to benefit all

## 2022 Achievements:

- Establishment of an Antenatal Community of Practice bringing together Health Services and Shires to establish a Community of Practice and collaborative models of care enabling all women and families to feel increased confidence in the continuity of care through the earliest stages of their parenting journey.
- Co-facilitation of School Industry Roundtables with a focus on Early Childhood Education across the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee regions
- Participation in a Loddon Mallee Regional Development Australia (RDA) Taskforce identifying ways to create accessible and sustainable Early Childhood Education and Care services in rural areas.

## Oral Health Network Partnership

SFSC was a member of the Department of Health Working Group for the Oral Health Network Partnerships. This group surveys the current landscape in which our families access Dental Services and helps educate communities on what their options are to access these services. This working group will continue long into the future as we ensure our families have access to quality health services.



**TWO CONCERTS**  
**JULY 17**  
**BIRCHIP TOWN HALL**  
**10 AM AND 1 PM**  
Make a day of it- order your coffee and picnic box at  
O'Donnell's Cafe, visit Kawaii Kids and play in the park!  
Bookings via <https://www.trybooking.com/BZBKG>  
Brought to you by Birchip Playgroup

## Mik Mak's come to Birchip

SFSC supported the Birchip Early Years Community's Grant Application to bring Mik Mak's to Birchip. The grant subsidised the cost of bringing the performance to Birchip by decreasing ticket prices and making the performance accessible to all.

Music ignites all areas of child development and skills for school readiness including intellectual, social, emotional, motor, language, and overall literacy. It helps the body and the mind work together giving children the opportunity to build motor skills and for them to practice self-expression.

Most importantly however this was an opportunity for our kids who regularly miss out on opportunities like this due to their rural living situation.

The grant allowed for our all families to have local access to a live performance and have an opportunity to reconnect socially – something so important for our young families after a difficult and isolating 2 years.



## Playgroup Support

2022 saw the revitalisation of Playgroups across the Loddon and Buloke Regions. Each Shire made this a priority area as we had this new cohort of children who had sadly never experienced the wonders of Playgroup.

SFSC took this opportunity to help advocate for local Planned Activity Group's for what each community wanted their playgroups to look like. Each town had different perspective on how to relaunch the program.

We watched our local kids who had been confined to their homes or online platforms for social connectivity – instantly delight in the experience of a regular and consistent program.

We worked alongside the Buloke Shire to engage with existing community playgroups and Mallee Family Care's return to the region to work with our kids. Playgroups offer babies, toddlers and young children a wide variety of early learning experiences. They are a great way for children to learn about the world, make friends and develop social skills.



**Above: Birchip Playgroup enjoying Tumbling Tots**

Playgroup also gives mums, dads, grandparents and caregivers a chance to share ideas and experiences.

## Tumbling Tots

SFSC helped facilitate a very successful Tumbling Tots program in 2022.

This program allowed children to experience endless movement opportunities and be encouraged to think, play, create, construct and solve problems with their bodies and in turn build their coordination and confidence.

### Supported Playgroup

Join us at Supported Playgroup this fortnight for some fun autumn themed activities.

**Thursday, 27th of April, 10.30-11.30am**  
Wycheproof Books and fun  
Wycheproof Resource Centre

**Monday, 1st of May, 9.30am - 11.00am**  
Charlton Playgroup  
Held at St. Joseph's Primary School  
Fruit snacks provided.

**Friday, 5th of May 10.30am - 12pm**  
Birchip Playgroup  
Held at Birchip IHOM, fruit snacks provided.

For further information please contact Kelly our Supported Playgroup Facilitator at [kmccrohan@buloke.vic.gov.au](mailto:kmccrohan@buloke.vic.gov.au) or on 0487 459 772.



**Above: Storytime at Birchip Playgroup**

Tumble, Twist and Turn your way to a fun morning of

### Tumbling Tots

@ **Charlton Stadium** Charlton Stadium, Dookie Street

Tuesday's in August 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th

10:30-11:30am and 51st

A gold coin donation per family is appreciated.

No booking necessary.

For more information please call Jess McGurk on 0400329339

Tumbling Tots is a movement based program for crawlers to 5 year olds. It strives to enable all children to experience endless movement opportunities and be encouraged to think, play, create, construct and solve problems with their own bodies and in turn build their coordination and confidence. It promotes the active participation of the child's mother, father or carer.

This program has been made possible through funding from Vic Health and Buloke Shire Council

## Changing the system one child at a time...examples of families we supported in 2022

### YOUNG PERSON WITH A HIGH-RISK PREGNANCY AND DISCONNECTED FROM ALL FAMILY

SFSC supported her to engage with Bendigo Health, Family Services and to transfer her school enrolment to a local High School.

She welcomed a beautiful baby girl, and was assisted to find appropriate housing, and source much needed baby items.

SFSC linked her in with Playgroups and Mother Support Groups.

Mum has successfully completed her schooling and is now enrolled in a TAFE Program.

### KINSHIP CARE ARRANGEMENT

Grandparent took unexpected custody of three grandchildren all under four years of age.

The children arrived with no clothes or basic necessities, and Carer was on a limited income.

SFSC facilitated access to basic necessities such as clothes, nappies, food, pram and beds.

This happened weeks before Christmas so the family was also supported to make sure Santa knew where they were located with the help of kind donations from a range of local community organisations and generous community members.

### 3- YEAR-OLD WITH AN AUTISM DIAGNOSIS AND A NEW NDIS PLAN

Parents quickly found barriers to accessing services in rural communities, even if you have funding for the service.

SFSC worked with this local family to make sense of their plan, engage a Plan Manager that can oversee what supports were needed as Mum and Dad were both working parents and had little time to research and engage services.

This support took pressure off the family and allowed them to focus on the care their child needed.

# Comprehensive Monitoring System (CMS)...



## Comprehensive Monitoring System

The Comprehensive Monitoring System (CMS) is a way of capturing relevant local information at key stages in the lives of children and young people and reporting the information back to communities in the most useful format possible.

Being able to access and use relevant local data is crucial for communities to understand how their children, young people and families are faring, and to work out whether effective community programs and supports are in place to care for people as they are growing up.

The CMS will assist communities to capture knowledge about children's and young people's social and emotional development in the Shires of Buloke, Loddon, and Gannawarra (BLG).



The North Central LLEN has played an integral role in facilitating local data collection supporting our local Maternal and Child Health Services on how to effectively gather this data and assist with the engagement of families for those eligible in completing the infant and/or toddler survey.

We engaged with and supported schools to implement the survey in a school setting, and utilised our strong networks to engage with young adults on the post-school survey.

This data capture came to an end in 2022, with preliminary reports provided back to our communities in July 2022 at the Connecting Communities for Change Forum in each Shire where we showcased the data collected for key stakeholders in these areas.

The next step is combining this data with community practice wisdom to support evidence based decisions and advocacy.

**To remain emotionally well, we need to adapt to challenges as they emerge. When our ability to adapt is compromised we can become emotionally unwell. The most important way to communicate good mental health is through a long life process of building foundational social and emotional resources that help us adapt.**

**598**  
**children, young**  
**people & families**  
**participated in the**  
**CMS Surveys**



## Focus on Childcare

The North Central LLEN is part of a Loddon Mallee RDA Taskforce to identify ways to create viable childcare services in rural areas.

The Taskforce has produced an Advocacy document which acknowledges the strength of well established placed-based community partnerships (like Strong Families Strong Children) to work through existing barriers to create a viable operating model of childcare services to meet the needs of rural communities.

The document also outlines the support required at both a Commonwealth and State level to find solutions to regulatory barriers, as well as to increase childcare subsidies in rural areas (for service improvement), and particularly for disadvantaged families.

The Victorian Government is also being asked to support the co-location of childcare services with primary schools, kindergartens and potentially Maternal and Child Health or other services.



### What we know:

- Over 19,000 children under the age of 4 live in rural areas in Victoria's Loddon Mallee region. Many of these areas have such poor access to childcare, that the Mitchell Institute has described them as "childcare deserts". The region currently has 100 children per childcare service, which is among the worst rates in the State.
- This lack of childcare is a primary barrier to workforce participation, particularly for women. A Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership commissioned analysis has shown that within our region women's workforce participation (at 57%) is lower than men's (65%), and is much lower in our rural areas (down to 43% in one rural LGA), and that women are more likely to be working part-time and casual than women in the rest of Victoria.
- High-quality early childhood education and care has a dramatic positive impact on children, families and the economy - every \$1 on rural childcare, returns \$1.32 in benefits.

### Positive Impacts:

**For children,** the positive impacts persist across their lifetime – increasing literacy, skills, school completion and lifetime earnings and decreasing unemployment and welfare dependency. In countries that have long provided early education and childcare as a universal service, the benefits have been greatest for children in disadvantaged families.

**For families,** a Grattan Institute report has shown that childcare has the potential to improve family disadvantage by allowing adults to return to paid work. They estimate modest increases in child care subsidies would boost the lifetime earnings of a woman with children on average by \$150,000.

**For the economy,** the Grattan Institute has estimated that a 90% universal subsidy (costing about \$10 billion a year) would boost GDP by \$24 billion a year. A cost-benefit analysis in our difficult-to-service rural communities across three Local Government Areas, has shown costs of \$52.8 million would generate benefits of \$70.1 million.



### What is Needed:

The Advocacy document proposes a number of cost effective intervention measures that would create sustainable rural childcare including:

- Incentivise rural staff accreditation and retention;
- Provide medium term assurance of service availability and reliability;
- Harmonise regulation and funding across government; and
- Flexibly operate and price rural service delivery.

**SFSC has worked to elevate the voice of many of our region's families by documenting their individual stories. We are committed to bringing the right people to the table to connect and work towards meaningful solutions that are sustainable and meet the needs of local children and families now and into the future.**

# Resilient Middle Years (9-19)...



## A partnership approach to supporting young people

Strong Youth Strong Communities (SYSC) is a community-based initiative that builds on the Strong Families Strong Children program to promote wellbeing and school engagement in the formative years to prevent long-term social and economic impacts. It provides a coordinated framework for all services and supports to work within.

SYSC connects community-based resources to develop and implement a model of wellbeing services in schools and communities that is preventative; cost effective; and strengthens partnerships to build the capacity of schools and community.

The aim is to ensure every young person can be connected and supported to build their internal resources to thrive. We work with partners to facilitate the support young people and their families need when they need it and improve wellbeing, school attendance and engagement.

With investment from the Buloke, Loddon and Gannawarra Shires, and additional legacy support from the Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership, we have been able to continue this important initiative in 2022 applying this lens across all our middle years programs.

## As part of the Strong Youth Strong Communities (SYSC) program, our 2022 priorities have been:

- Aligning effort through the development and implementation of the Engage! & FReeZa partnership across the BLG shires where shared FTE between organisations supporting the collaborative planning, implementation and improved access to activities and opportunities being created for young people 15-25.
- Working with key regional DET staff to create a summary working document incorporating the findings of our SYSC consultations to better support each school's continuous improvement and planning to align with the revised DET Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO 2.0).
- Consolidating the establishing the North Central Schools Wellbeing Network (Online Portal) as a shared space for North Central schools to discuss and collaborate on wellbeing issues, initiatives and resources.
- Working with Murray Mallee LLEN to extend Navigator services to southern Buloke, supporting young people who are disengaged to return to education and learning
- Accessing funding to support young people impacted by Floods



## BLG Celebrates

The Buloke Loddon Gannawarra (BLG) Health and Wellbeing Executive Network provides an important vehicle and collective oversight to create a strong voice based on evidence and community understanding to key stakeholders.

The Network is committed to exploring ways to support children and young people to be healthy and to thrive in education, work and life, thus building the next generation of rural communities.

The NCLLEN was excited to be a part of a BLG Celebration event in August which brought together representatives from local health organisations across the BLG region.

An informative and exciting agenda of presentations – including one on our Strong Youth Strong Communities Program, the event gave attendees an opportunity to get together and talk about current and upcoming projects as well as meeting some new faces in the space.



**The North Central LLEN team showcased the SYSC initiative at the BLG Health and Wellbeing Executive Network celebration in Kerang to 40+ community leaders (including Mayors, Councillors and Board members)**



## Connecting Communities for Change Forums

During July we hosted a series of "Connecting Communities for Change" Forums across the Buloke, Loddon and Gannawarra Shires in conjunction with Northern District Community Health and the three LGAs as part of our Strong Families Strong Children (SFSC) and Strong Youth Strong Communities (SYSC) partnerships.

More than 120 people attended the Forums from schools, local government, service providers and the community to better understand how to use data to support decisions about local services and community assets to enable best outcomes for our children and young people.

The forums provided data snapshots for each Shire and an opportunity to link with early education providers, schools, service providers, local government, and key staff from government departments to look at ways to better connect to support children and young people during the formative middle years.

Key Themes explored included:

- **Evidence for Action:** Presentation of the latest data trends from the recent Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data release and the Comprehensive Monitoring Study (CMS) undertaken across the Buloke, Loddon and Gannawarra Shires in 2020 and 2021.
- **Using data to make decisions:** Linking data to decision making and resource investment to improve outcomes for children and young people
- **Local services and community assets:** place-based networking to support wellbeing and education engagement in our communities

Post the forums, the SYSC partners have continued to work with a number of stakeholders including Deakin University and the Victorian Australian Early Childhood Development (AECD) as they progress the Comprehensive Monitoring Surveys (CMS) pilot through an application process for a federal government grant to support the ongoing integration of the CMS across the BLG for another six years.

The CMS enables communities to understand and identify the specific factors that are crucial to the wellbeing of children and young people, and can provide us with the evidence of where communities might target additional support and resources.

Some months ago staff and partners in the SFSC and SYSC were part of trialling the development of the Centre for Social Emotional and Education Developments (SEED) resource hub known as the SEED POD.

This resource is a wonderful way to identify and access programs that have been tested and trialled in Australia and globally and meet the highest standards for evidence based programs to address any challenges or gaps in the social and emotional development of children and young people.

The SEED POD has resources that support many of the challenges identified by the stakeholders who attended the Connecting Communities Forum. This website will continue to be updated with real time research and evaluation and links to resources for stakeholders to consider.



**More  
than 120 people  
attended a  
Connecting  
Communities  
for Change  
Forum**

# Resilient Middle Years (9-19)...

## The Pat Cronin Foundation Be Wise Presentation

Let's End  
the Coward  
Punch



Learn to  
'Be Wise' and  
reflect on  
attitudes and  
beliefs about  
violence.

## Be Wise Presentations

As part of the Engage! program, students from Wedderburn College (photo below left), Birchip P-12 School, St Arnaud Secondary College, Boort District P-12 School, Charlton College and Donald High School received a visit from the Pat Cronin Foundation during Term 3.

The "Be Wise" presentations talked about anger and aggression, strategies for violence prevention, and the consequences of violence using Pat's story to show why these issues are important, and the tragic consequences of unwise decisions.

Students were empowered to be part of a change in culture where violence is not acceptable and to "end the coward punch".



323  
students  
participated in a  
Be Wise  
presentation  
during 2022

**MOVING OUT?/BECOMING INDEPENDENT ?**  
<https://ruralinspire.org.au/life-after-school>  
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthy-living/moving-out-of-home-tips-for-young-people>

**LOOKING FOR SOME CAREERS INFO?**  
<https://myfuture.edu.au/>  
<https://www.yourcareer.gov.au/careers>  
<https://www.goodcareersguide.com.au/>  
<https://ceav.vic.edu.au/jobs-victoria-career-counsellors-service>  
<https://headspace.org.au/services/work-and-study-support/>

**NOT GOING TO UNI BUT MAYBE WANT TO DO - FURTHER STUDY/GAP YEAR?**  
<https://youthtakeover.org.au>  
<https://www.bendigotafe.edu.au/>  
<https://year13.com.au/>

**LINKS 4 LIFE AFTER SCHOOL**

**LOOKING FOR A JOB?**  
<https://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/>  
<https://www.skillsone.com.au/category/traineeships/>  
<https://www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/individuals/coaching/online-learning>  
<https://www.aapathways.com.au/job-hunters>

**OTHER SUPPORTS:**  
<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/young-people>  
<https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/>  
<https://au.reachout.com/>  
<https://ruralhealthconnect.com.au/lgbtqi/>  
<https://ysas.org.au/>  
<https://kidsline.com.au/>

**North Central LLEN**  
[www.ncllen.org.au](http://www.ncllen.org.au)

North Central LLEN produced a postcard of useful links for school leavers at the end of 2022 to support them as they transition from school to further study, work or training.



## RURAL

### The Umbrella Project

In December, the North Central LLEN and Northern District Community Health, on behalf of the Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra (BLG) Health Services Network, received funding to support young people as they recover from the impact of recent floods.

The first of a suite of activities was implemented with the YouThrive DreamSeeds team visiting Pyramid Hill (2 schools), Boort, Sea Lake (2 schools), Wycheproof & Charlton to present their workshops focussing on resilience, aspiration, and connection bringing a flood recovery lens to the activities they facilitated at each workshop.

98  
students  
took part in the  
DreamSeeds  
workshops





## Engage!-FReeZa partnership with



As part of our partnership with Northern District Community Health, the North Central LLEN actively supported a number of Engage! and FReeZA events during 2022 to provide opportunities for young people to connect and grow.

FReeZA provides opportunities for young people (12-25) to enjoy live music and other cultural, recreational and artistic events that are supervised, safe, drug, alcohol and smoke-free.

Our Youth Engagement Team of Matt Allan (NDCH) and Molly Meadows (NCLLEN), led the way with a diverse range of events including:

- ★ Skating Weekend
- ★ YouthFest in Schools
- ★ RSA and First Aid training for young people
- ★ Be Wise presentations in schools
- ★ Music Festival (Microwave)
- ★ Inaugural Youth Awards (jointly funded by Engage! and FReeZA)



The Engage-Freeza Partnership team: Molly Meadows (left) and Matt Allan (right)

## YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED





# Strong Careers & Pathways...School to Work



## Secondary School Reforms - Many Talents One VCE

Throughout 2022 the North Central LLEN worked alongside the North Central Trade Training Centre, North Central schools and DET to support an active Secondary School Reform (SSR) Community of Practice with the aim of empowering and enabling our schools and broader community to engage fully in the reform process.

We wanted our communities - students, parents, teachers, and others to be aware that Victoria's senior secondary education was changing and that from 2023, the new VCE Vocational Major (VM) would replace Intermediate and Senior VCAL and the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) would replace Foundation VC. This means the VCE will recognise different students equally.

The changes mean students will have more education choices, a higher-quality curriculum and better workplace experiences – preparing them for further study, training at TAFE, or work.

From 2023, more students will study the VCE. That is because the VCE will include the Vocational Major, a 2-year program that sits within the VCE. There will also be the Victorian Pathways Certificate for those who need flexibility in their learning.

### 2022 DET School-Industry Contract Outcomes

- 60 students supported to undertake Structured Workplace Learning (SWL)
- 9 students supported to undertake School Based Apprenticeships (SBATS)
- VCE-Vocational Major & VPC Shared Resources Portal (44 members)
- 12 school-industry events facilitated for North Central students



**Alexander from Wycheproof P-12 College is undertaking a Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) placement with Hayden McKinnon from Charlton College learning about all things Information Technology.**

**Hayden and Alexander visited the North Central LLEN to replace a battery in a laptop that wasn't charging properly and now it is like brand new!**







## School Industry Roundtables (SIR)

The North Central LLEN collaborated with the Northern Mallee LLEN and the Murray Mallee LLEN to support the Department of Education's School-Industry Roundtables at Mildura and Swan Hill in June. In addition, we actively participated in the Bendigo region Roundtable.

The SIRs targeted Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and the range of different entry-level Career Pathways students can follow with support from the industry sector, local employers, higher education and training providers, and secondary schools.

Participants provided valuable input to create ideas and develop new and innovative approaches to engage and encourage young people to join this high-growth sector.

Some key takeaways from the SIRs included the brainstorming of a pipeline featuring ideas around awareness, interest, desire and action which included:

- Exposing a broad range of young people to the industry and its potential; tell the story, demonstrate the value of the pathway and build awareness;
- Increase opportunities for quality work experience; and
- establish a collaborative group of key stakeholders to examine ways to solve systems issues and barriers

The SIRs were funded by the Victorian Government as part of the Transforming Career Education in Victorian Government Schools plan.



## New funding to explore Careers in Agriculture

The North Central LLEN together with the North Central Schools Cluster has received funding from the Sustainable Schools Agriculture Fund to build and enhance the quality and currency of agricultural education programs and industry partnerships in the North Central region.

"Pathways to a Career in Agriculture in the 21st Century" is a two-part project that will take place over an 18-month period taking a systems approach where co-design with young people, schools, and industry will be integral to its success and sustainability into the future.

From this information, we will develop a framework for an innovative careers education program that explores the many facets of the 21st century agricultural workforce.

This will incorporate a focus on excellence in education (enhanced curriculum), excellence in training (School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships - SBATs, work experience and immersion programs), and a clear alignment to SWL to increase the number of young people pursuing training at school in agriculture.



# Strong Careers & Pathways...School to Work

## SCHOOL TO WORK

### New three-year School to Work Contract

The North Central LLEN is one of 31 Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) to receive funding as part of the School to Work program to support secondary students gain work placements in their local area.

Schools will be supported to match the right student with the right opportunity – including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships (SBATs) – to build a pathway into local jobs in growing industries.

The program will also help schools engage with businesses to better prepare students for successful transitions into the workforce.

School to Work is part of the new senior secondary school reforms, combining VCE and VCAL to create a single pathway, ensuring every young Victorian can get the education they need for the job they want.

The program will help secondary students engage with businesses to gain work placements in their local area and set them up for bright future careers.

The North Central LLEN will continue to work in partnership with local schools, industry and the North Central Trade Training Centre, to facilitate Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) for students undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET) studies, as well as innovative events that will provide students with exposure to career opportunities across a range of industries.



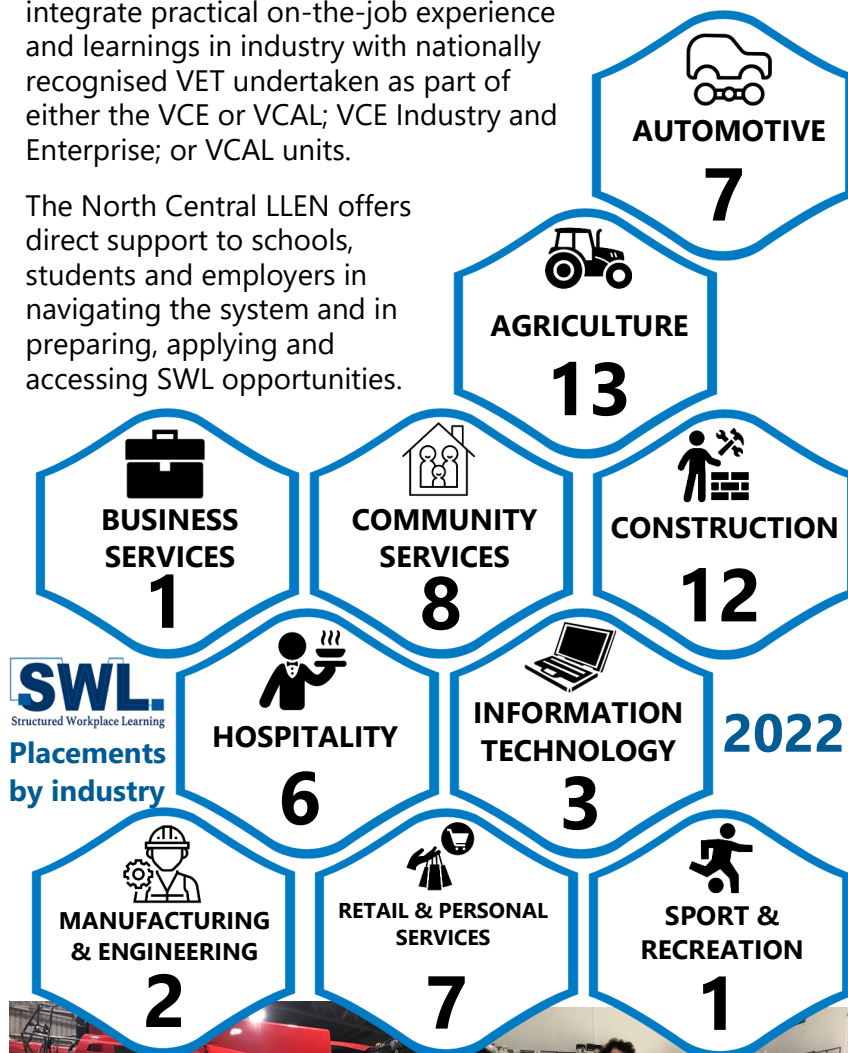
Department of Education

### Structured Workplace Learning (SWL)

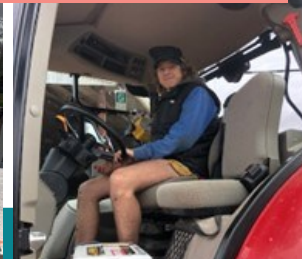
In 2022, we had 60 students participate in Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) Placements across the north central region (and beyond - with some students travelling as far as Bendigo and Swan Hill each week) to undertake work experience in their chosen field.

SWL provides students with the opportunity to integrate practical on-the-job experience and learnings in industry with nationally recognised VET undertaken as part of either the VCE or VCAL; VCE Industry and Enterprise; or VCAL units.

The North Central LLEN offers direct support to schools, students and employers in navigating the system and in preparing, applying and accessing SWL opportunities.



SWL placements included (clockwise from top left): Conrad Sudgen (Wedderburn College) with O'Connors St Arnaud; Shelby Douglas (Wedderburn College) with St Arnaud Veterinary Clinic; Jett Hird (Boort District P-12 School) with Dredgport Holdings, Brady Whykes (Boort District P-12 School) with Streader Constructions, Hannah Braddish (St Arnaud Secondary College) with the St Arnaud Community Kitchen, and Zac Mayberry (Boort District P-12 School) with George Tallis Hardware.





## HeadSTART School Based Apprenticeships

Toby Poxon from Boort District P-12 School commenced a Certificate III in Engineering Fabrication with Hofmann Engineering in Bendigo in January 2021 as part of the HeadSTART program which he completed during 2022.

Toby undertook work experience at Hoffman Engineering as a Year 10 student in 2020 and was offered a full-time apprenticeship. Whilst interested, Toby wished to continue his studies to provide him with the best opportunity to further advance his career after his apprenticeship was completed.

Supported by his parents, Toby travelled to Bendigo two days per week to attend work. He completed a scored assessment in Certificate II in Engineering as a Year 11 student in 2021, and in 2022 completed his Year 12 VCE whilst progressing his apprenticeship.

**Toby Poxon**  
Certificate III in  
Engineering  
Fabrication  
Apprenticeship  
Hofmann  
Engineering



**Boort  
District  
P-12  
College**

**/HEADSTART**  
APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

THE  
EDUCATION  
STATE

VICTORIA  
Education  
and Training

## School Based Apprenticeships

School Based Apprenticeships provide students to combine their VCE studies with practical on the job experience.

In 2022 we had nine students undertake SBATs in addition to their studies at a variety of workplaces across a diverse range of industries including agriculture, automotive, construction, and community services.

Students undertook a combination of VCE and VCAL subjects in addition to their weekly work placement.

We are extremely grateful to employers across our region for investing in the future workforce through on-the-job training.

**Pictured: Tom Potter (far right) who undertook an agriculture SBAT with Nelson Farms, and Frasier Holland (right) who completed an agricultural SBAT with Troy Perryman.**



## School based apprenticeships during 2022



AGRICULTURE

**6**



AUTOMOTIVE

**1**



CONSTRUCTION

**1**



COMMUNITY

**1**



# School to Work (12-21)...



## St Arnaud Secondary College

Year 9 students from St Arnaud Secondary College took part in 3-day Broader Horizons program in July to discover the diverse range of career opportunities available locally in the health, agriculture and local government sectors.

The program was part of our School-Industry Engagement program funded by the Department of Education and Training and was made possible thanks to the support of the Northern Grampians Shire, East Wimmera Health Service and numerous agribusinesses.

**Health:** Students spent time at East Wimmera Health Service where they met with a range of staff talking about their role within the organisation, and also attended a session at St Arnaud Health & Fitness, met with staff at Mr Mobility, and Johanna Medlyn a local Physiotherapist.

Students also participated in the Royal Flying Doctor presentation at St Arnaud Primary School and spent time at McCallum Industries, meeting with staff, touring the premises and cooking with residents.

**Agriculture:** Students visited a number of agribusinesses, including Elders where they met with the Branch Manager and also spent time in a shearing shed learning about careers in the wool industry.

They undertook a Mill tour at Ridley Agriproducts and spoke with staff, met with the team at O'Connors (farm machinery), Baiada (poultry), Rivalea (piggery) and Goldacres Spray Centre (machinery).

**Local Government** - Students spent time with the CEO Liana Thompson and Councillor Eddy Ostarcevic, as well as the Project team who took them on a tour of the new St Arnaud Sports Facility, Parks and Gardens staff, and the Works team.

Other Council facilities they toured included the Early Learning Centre, St Arnaud Library, and the Stawell Sports and Aquatic Centre where they joined with fitness instruction sessions and assisting with the school swimming program.

## Donald High School

New to the Broader Horizons program, Year 9 students from Donald High School participated in a mini Broader Horizons program as part of their Careers Week at Buloke Shire Council in early September.

First stop was the Donald Depot to speak with staff about how they came to work at Council, and the kinds of qualifications/life skills they needed to kick-start their careers.

Students then visited Council's main office at Wycheproof and met with the executive team who gave a brief overview of more than 30 different kinds of jobs at Council.

They also spoke to staff from payroll and accounts payable, information technology, media and communications, youth and early years, child development, human resources, local laws, town planning, urban and parks, administration of public pools and building maintenance, waste and environment, roads and emergency management.



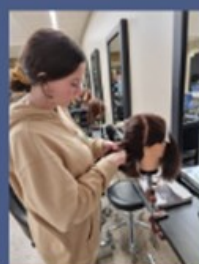


## Tertiary Information Service Careers Expo

In July more than 100 VCE students from across the Buloke and Loddon Shires attended the Tertiary Information Service Careers Expo at Charlton Park Community Bank Complex.

The Expo focused on VTAC and transitioning to tertiary education after high school, with students attending a presentation, followed by an opportunity to meet with representatives from a range of tertiary organisations to gain further information about study options.

The YMCA (early childhood careers) and Buloke Shire Council were also present to promote local career opportunities for young people.



## VET Taster Day

In June the North Central LLEN again partnered with the North Central Trade Training Centre (NCTTC) to host a "Taster Day" for Year 9 students from eight north central schools to explore the different subjects on offer at the NCTTC.

The day began with a panel of speakers talking about career pathways including Chelsea Hicks (Health), Melissa Freeman (Agribusiness), Mick Russell (Trade) and Holly Chambers (Agriculture) sharing their career journey and talking about the diverse range of careers available in key sectors such as agriculture, health and local government.

The 100+ students then each attended three "taster" classes to help them make their subject selections for the following year from the College's diverse offerings including community services, agriculture, allied health, automotive, construction, engineering, hairdressing, and hospitality, animal studies, beauty, music, and sport & recreation.

**797**  
**students across our**  
**eight cluster schools**  
**were supported as**  
**part of our**  
**School to Work**  
**program**



# School to Work (12-21)...

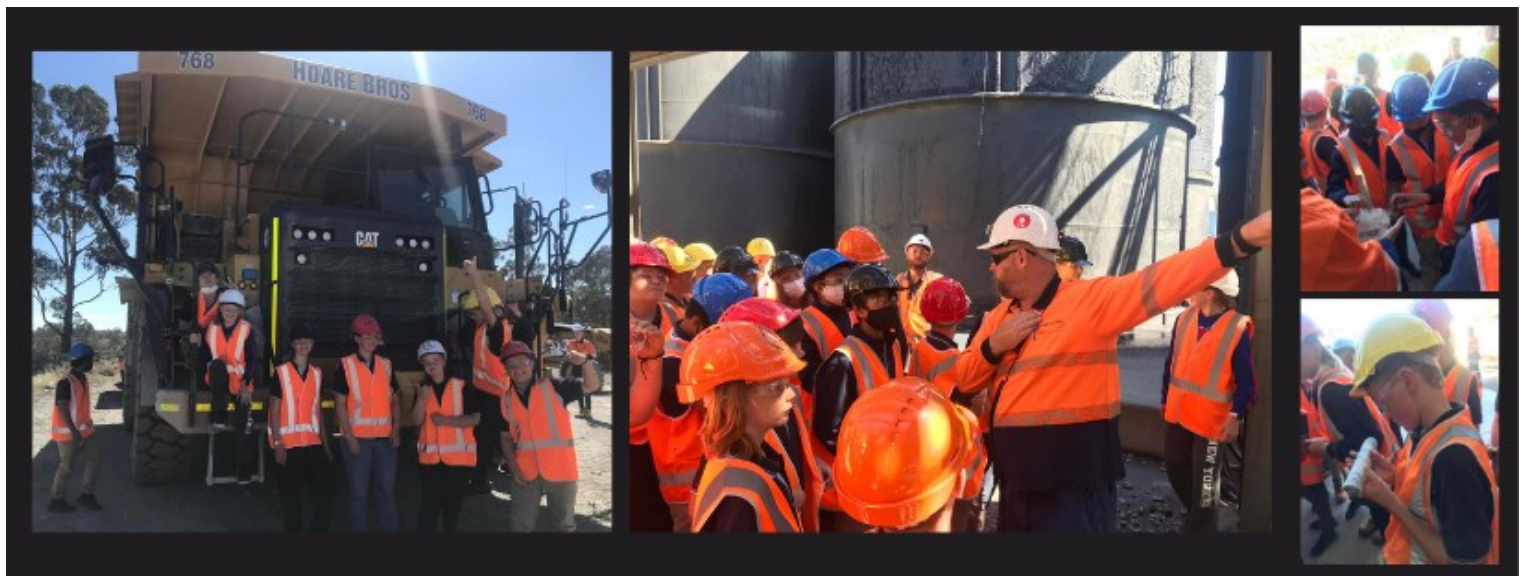


## School Mine Site Tours - Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn

As part of our DET School-Industry Partnership Program, Wedderburn College students from Years 10, 11 & 12, enjoyed an excursion to Fosterville Gold Mine in May (see photos above). Students were given an overview of the mine and learnt what jobs are available before doing a surface tour of the mine.

Students heard from a range of professionals including geologists, engineers and trades people, as well as career pathway stories from young professionals. They learnt about the diverse range of careers available in mining and had their questions answered by local people working in the industry.

Pyramid Hill College students also visited Fosterville Mine during Term Two (see photos below taken by teacher Lizzie Fox). Both visits were supported by the Mineral Councils of Australia.



## School to Work Events - Students & Industry

**Mine  
Tours**

**56 students  
8 industry**

**NCTTC  
Taster Day**

**114 students  
8 industry**

**TIS  
Careers Expo**

**105 students  
4 industry**

**Broader  
Horizons**

**52 students  
48 industry**

**Gear Up**

**23 students  
1 industry**

**Grow  
Smart Mallee**

**6 students  
10+ industry**

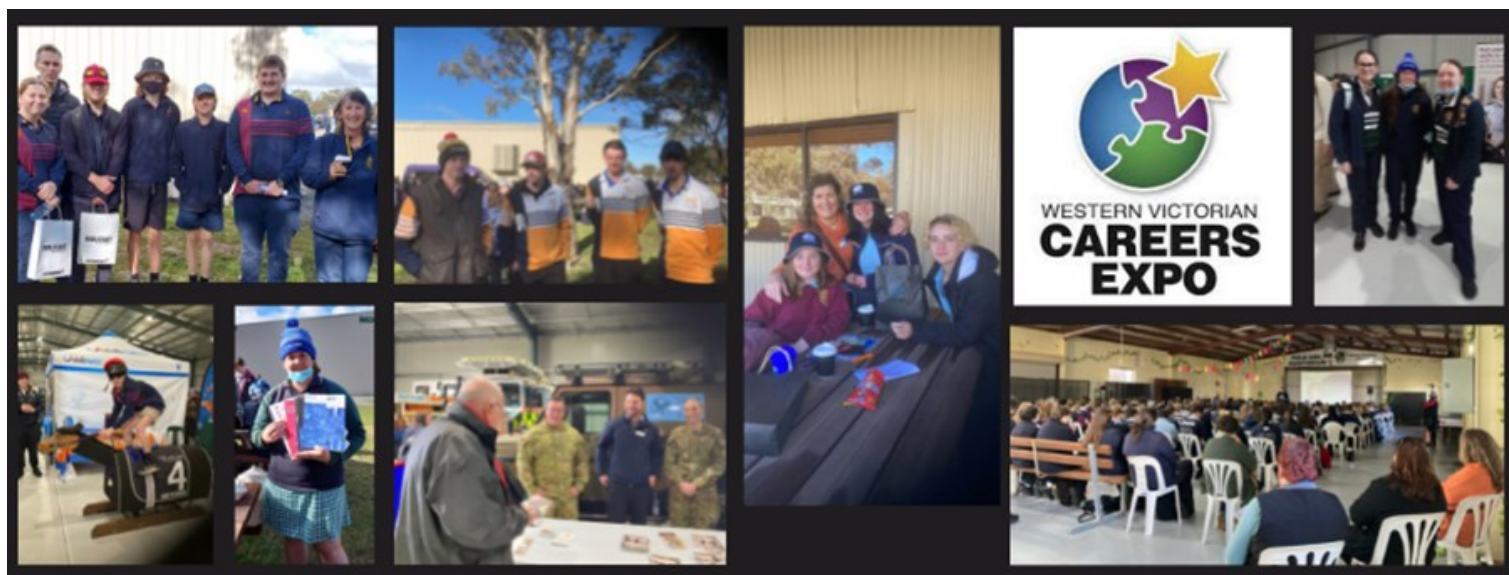




## Young Women in Trades and Tech

Six Year 9 and 10 students from Pyramid Hill College travelled to Melbourne in May to attend the DET Women in Trades and Tech Expo at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. A range of career opportunities were promoted within various trades and tech professions such as building and construction, bricklaying, electrical engineering, plumbing, automotive and marine trades, aviation, transport and logistics, mining, agriculture and horticulture.

Students were able to explore a range of career pathways through hands on experiences, tech displays, information sessions and guest speakers. They came away from the day with many giveaways (pens, caps, stationery and brochures) and many different career opportunities in mind.



## Western Victoria Careers Expo

As part of our School-Industry program, 100+ students from Donald High School, Wedderburn College, Charlton College, and St Arnaud Secondary College attended the Western Victorian Careers Expo in Horsham in June.

We partnered with the Wimmera and Southern Mallee Careers Association to facilitate a one-stop-shop of vocational information with a focus on agriculture. The Expo featured local, regional, metropolitan and interstate exhibitors and presenters, including more than 20 Victorian and South Australian universities.

Students had the opportunity to talk to a wide range of career, industry and course advisors on a one-to-one basis, as well as "try a trade", and attend a range of seminars and presentations. Students were supported before and after the Expo with tailored curriculum resources to maximise their learnings.



# Strong Careers & Pathways (12-21)...



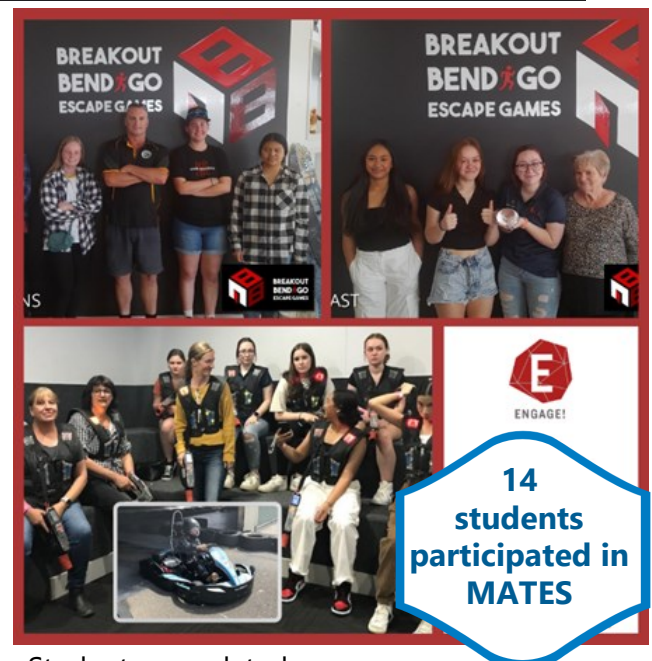
## MATES Mentoring Program

Now in its seventh year of operation the North Central LLEN continues to support the MATES mentoring program across the region by providing support to our schools and community based coordinators.

Year 9 and 10 students at Pyramid Hill College took part in the MATES mentor program during 2022 with events held regularly throughout the year to enable mentors and students to catch up including a launch evening (above), a games night, and ending the year in style with a trip to the Escape Room and The Zone in Bendigo (right).

Students and mentors tested their team skills and escaped successfully within a time limit, did some wild driving on the Go Karts and competed at Laser Tag - a great way to finish another successful year.

Matt and Molly from Engage! also met with Year 9 and 10 students to discuss the success of MATES mentoring at the college. Students completed a survey and offered ideas for group activities with many stating that a highlight was the Games nights, with most wanting to have more games nights and/or activities to do things with mentors and friends.



## Royal Flying Doctor Service

During Term Three the Royal Flying Doctors Service visited schools at Wycheproof, Sea Lake, Birchip, Donald and St Arnaud as part of their "Look! Up in the Sky" education program.

This incursion included an Aeromedical Simulator which is a life sized replica of the fuselage of a flying doctor plane. It is fully equipped with stretchers, communications, oxygen, suction and the other medical equipment.

The purpose of the visits were to enable students to broaden their knowledge of careers within the health industry.

These photos (left) were taken at Tyrrell College Sea Lake who were joined by students from St Mary's Primary School. At this event in addition to the RFDS, members of VicPolice Highway Patrol and the SES were also present to promote career opportunities in emergency services.

100+  
students  
took part  
in the  
incursions





## School to Work Summit

On 31 March 2022, VicLLen and VALA hosted the inaugural School to Work Summit, which saw 570 leaders, educators, innovators and changemakers come together and discuss how we can collectively improve the school to work journey for young people.

Education, vocation and innovation were at the heart of discussions held during the School to Work Summit, with four key takeaways from the day:

1. The Importance of access and equity in education (and why we're not there yet)
2. What should schooling really look like? Throughout the day, there was a collective consideration of the way our schooling system is currently modelled – what is, and what should be, the real role of education in setting up students for their futures?
3. Challenging the stigma against vocational pathways - several speakers prompted us to reconsider the way we talk about applied learning and the way we think about students who wish to pursue pathways in VET, VCAL and eventually the Vocational Major.
4. "Bigger, not backwards"- Challenges and opportunities as part of the Senior Secondary Reforms - the event was a large-scale forum to explore the potential of the secondary school reforms from different angles.



Education  
and Training



**NAVIGATOR  
PROGRAM**

In October 2022, the North Central LLEN supported two young people as part of the Navigator program.

Navigator is a Victorian Government initiative that supports young people who are disengaged from education, to return to education and learning, working with young people, their families and support networks to address issues underlying disengagement and help them re-engage with their education and achieve their goals.

The service is available to young person between 12 and 17 years of age, enrolled in, or intend to enrol in a Victorian education setting and have attended 30% or less of the previous school term, or equivalent, or not be attending an education setting at all.



23 students comprising VET Agriculture students (NCTTC) and Year 9 students from Boort District P-12 School attended the "Gear Up for Ag" presentation facilitated by 'The National Centre for Farmers Health'

The program's key objective was to engage students in a practical, fun and interactive way providing evidence based education that promotes health, wellbeing and safety within the agricultural sector.



# School to Work (12-21)...

## Work Experience

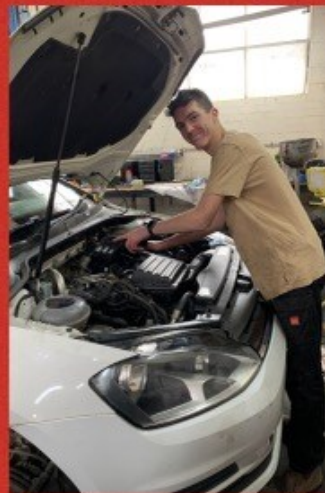
Work experience is an integral part of our north central schools curriculum. Our team of Careers Practitioners assisted our nine cluster schools to match students to work experience opportunities as requested enabling them to experience a wide range of career pathways in Years 10 and 11, both within the region and beyond.

Schools should be commended on their flexibility and commitment to this important opportunity for young people.

Work experience provides a better understanding of the work environment and what employers expect of their workers. It also increase self-understanding, maturity, independence and self-confidence and in many cases an increased motivation to continue study and/or undertake further training.

For those that travelled to Bendigo, Ballarat or Melbourne, it was also an opportunity to be independent and experience life away from home - some for the very first time!

Work experience provides a chance to 'try out' a workplace, prior to undertaking VCE, VET in Schools, or an SBAT in Years 11 and 12 and in some cases it enhances opportunities for part-time and casual employment.



**Above: Students from East Loddon P-12 College enjoying a week of work experience in Melbourne. Left: Wedderburn College students (top) Emily Rollinson at O'Connors Farm Machinery in St Arnaud and (bottom) Crystal-Lee Hardiman College at Loddon Shire Council in Wedderburn.**



# 2022 Vocation Education & Training Awards...

Each year the North Central LLEN sponsors vocational education and training awards at each of our nine cluster schools to recognise excellence.

Awards are presented to a student who has achieved excellence in their vocational studies, and to an employer demonstrating excellence in providing a Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) place to support students with valuable on-the-job training to enhance the skills being taught at the North Central Trade Training Centre.

Below is a list of students and employers who received an award in 2022 - Congratulations!



**Above Right: Harry Forrest, Hayden Geddes and Aaron Schofield (Donald High School). Below Left: Louisa Coles and Christy Arnel (Wycheproof P-12 College). Below Centre: Conrad Sudgen (Wedderburn College). Below Right: Bridie Reid, Sophie and Gabby Sanford (Birchip P-12 College)**



**Vocational Award**  
Sophie Kemp & Bridie Reid  
**Workplace Award**  
Mallee Landscapes



**Vocational Award**  
Mitch Edwards  
**Workplace Award**  
Boort Co-Op



**Vocational Award**  
Charlotte Stewart  
**Workplace Award**  
Mark & Ange Donnellon



**Vocational Award**  
Hayden Geddes  
**Workplace Award**  
Hogan Builders & Cabinet Makers



**Vocational Award**  
Colby Collins  
**Workplace Award**  
Glen-Brae Pastoral



**Above: Mitch Edwards (Boort)**



**VET Award**  
Jacob Clough-Fidley



**Vocational Award**  
Kaden Ross  
**Workplace Award**  
Jarryd Ezard Constructions



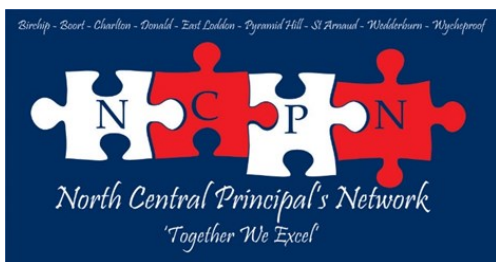
**Vocational Award**  
Conrad Sudgen  
**Workplace Award**  
Loddon Shire



**Vocational Award**  
Louisa Coles  
**Workplace Award**  
Pampered Pets Wycheproof



# Careers Education Partnership...



Over the last 12 months the Careers and Pathways team have continued to work alongside nine North Central schools as part of the Careers Education Partnership (CEP).

A core component of the partnership is for our qualified and dedicated Careers Practitioner team to provide leadership and tailored support.

Our staff also work with students in Years 9 to 12 to create individual Career Action Plans to explore different pathways, identify skills and interests, and help them define their own career journey.

Alongside our one-to-one interviews, we facilitated industry-based Mock Interviews, ran Portfolio sessions & Career Classes, supported tertiary & industry tours, participated in subject selection interviews & VTAC sessions, and provided a weekly careers newsletter for all Year 11 & 12 students.



## CAREERS & PATHWAYS NEWSLETTER 2022

Issue 1, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022

### CAREER RESEARCH

NOT SURE WHAT YOU WANT TO DO WHEN YOU FINISH SCHOOL?



RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH! There are so many resources around for you to research and explore a wide range of different courses and careers. It's important for you to utilise the resources available in order to make the right decisions for YOU!

Remember it is your life so it's important that you do the investigating and access the resources available to you - including meeting with your Careers/Pathways Co-ordinator!

- Also remember you don't have to plan out your whole life, it's all about finding that one great place to start!
- Some great ways to research are:
  - My Future [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au) - Career bulletins
  - Good Careers Guide [www.goodcareersguide.com.au](http://www.goodcareersguide.com.au)
  - Webinars
  - Open Days or Experience Days
  - Work experience
  - Talk to people who already work in an industry you are interested in e.g., Health care, Trades, Education.

### HOW DO I APPLY?

HOW & WHEN DO I APPLY FOR UNIVERSITY/TAFE COURSES?



**University Courses** - For all University courses in Victoria, Year 12 students must apply through the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC). You are able to list up to 8 different courses in your preference list. The no. 1 course should be your preferred course right down to no. 8 - which is a course you are still happy to study (you don't have to list 8 preferences, but it's a good idea to have a few back up options). Even if you plan to have a gap year in 2023 you will still need to apply for courses this year. Applications for 2023 courses open in August 2022. [www.vtac.edu.au](http://www.vtac.edu.au)

**TAFE Courses** - For most TAFE courses you will need to apply directly via individual TAFE websites, however some TAFE courses require you to apply through the VTAC system. Visit individual TAFE websites for further information.

**Private Institutes** - Similar to TAFE institutes you are required to apply for some Private institutes via the VTAC system, whereas others require you to apply directly - see institute websites for further information. Please keep in mind that Private institute fees are usually a lot higher than TAFE and University Fees.

**Studying Interstate** - Each state has their own version of a VTAC system e.g., NSW/Carberra - UAC, South Australia - SATAC, Queensland - QTAC, and West Australia - TISC. If you are considering studying Interstate you will need to apply through the appropriate Admissions Centre.

Charlton, Donald & St Arnaud  
Sue Clay  
0429 426 950 / s.clay@ncilen.org.au

Pyramid Hill  
Barb Bear  
0477 242 485 / b.bear@ncilen.org.au

Birchip, Boort, East Loddon & Wychebrook  
Angela Poxon  
0420 148 393 / a.poxon@ncilen.org.au

Wedderburn  
Pam McConville  
03 5491 1144 / p.mcconville@ncilen.org.au

**The North Central LLEN website (right) features a range of online Resources to support students transition from school to further education, training or work including apprenticeships/traineeships, scholarship opportunities, accommodation options, and University Open Days.**



## Weekly Careers Newsletter

35 weekly Careers Newsletters during 2022 were produced to assist students in Years 11 and 12 as well as a broad range of stakeholders.

Newsletters featured information about a range of topics including TAFE and University Information sessions, Apprenticeships and Traineeships, Experience Days, Open Days, Gap Year Opportunities, VCE subject webinars, Early Admission programs, scholarships, Admission Tests, Career Expos, Campus Tours, VicPol, Army and Defence Career opportunities, and so much more...

All of the issues can be accessed from our [website](#).

## VCE-Vocational Major & VPC Shared Resources

In late 2022 the North Central LLEN established an online Community of Practice for VCE - Vocational Major & VPC Educators in the North Central Region.

The Portal allows Careers Practitioners to share their ideas and resources, ask questions, and access the skills and support of others working across the region.





## CASE STUDIES: Supporting student career planning

### **SIMON MORGAN**

#### **VCE STUDENT (TAFE/TRAINEESHIP) –**

In 2022 Simon completed his Year 12 VCE at Donald High School. His subjects included English, Further Maths, PE, Geography, Biology & VET Allied Health studies at the North Central Trade Training Centre.

He undertook a Structured Work Placement at Goodwin Village Aged Care facility in Donald for his VET Allied Health Studies. This year Simon is undertaking a Diploma of Nursing Traineeship at the West Wimmera Health Service through Federation TAFE. He does have an interest in one day studying to be a Registered Nurse and he may do this further down the track. As a qualified Enrolled Nurse via the Diploma of Nursing, he will be able to pathway straight into the second Year of a Bachelor of Nursing University Degree reducing the course from 3 years down to 2 years.

Our Careers Practitioners supported Simon with subject selection - encouraging him to undertake VET Allied Health; career research; course research – TAFE and University; and career planning based on his skills and areas of interest.

### **ABBY THOMPSON - VCE STUDENT (UNIVERSITY STUDIES)**

In 2022 Abby studied Year 12 VCE at Charlton College. Her subjects included English, Chemistry, PE, Further Maths, Biology and Health and Human Development. Abby has always had an interest in Sport related careers, particularly Sports Physiotherapy, and for the past few years she has Volunteered as a Sports Trainer for the Charlton Football/Netball/Hockey Club.

She is now studying a Bachelor of Physiotherapy @ Latrobe Bendigo. She applied for the Latrobe University ASPIRE Early Entry Program and received an early conditional offer for the Bachelor of Physiotherapy based on her Community contributions, prior to studying her VCE Exams.

Our Careers Practitioners supported Abby with subject selection; career research; course research – TAFE and University; and identifying personal strengths (including those through her volunteer work).

### **JESSE WANDEL - VCAL STUDENT**

In 2022 Jesse studied Year 12 VCAL at St Arnaud Secondary College, and was awarded the VCAL Dux. His subjects included Literacy, Numeracy, Work Related Skills, Personal Development, and an Agricultural School Based Apprenticeship at Charinga Merinos in Berrimal via Longerenong Agricultural College.

Jesse grew up on a farm and he has always wanted a career in Agriculture. He jumped at the opportunity to undertake an Apprenticeship whilst completing his Year 11 & 12 studies, which involved working 2 days a week and attending Longerenong College in 1-week blocks throughout the year.

Our Careers Practitioners supported Jesse with subject selection; SBAT information; and personalised goal setting.

## Mock Interviews

46 Year 10 students from Boort and East Loddon schools participated in mock interviews during 2022 to improve their communication skills and gain an insight into what employers are looking for when employing new staff.

Industry representatives were on hand to conduct the interviews and provide real-time feedback to the students to help them improve their communication skills in a safe and supportive environment.

## Federation University Visit

Students studying VCE Physical Education and Year 10 Health/PE at Charlton College travelled to Federation University in Ballarat in June to engage with Exercise Sports Science lecturers as well as experience some practical fitness tests utilising the University's state of the art equipment.

They also toured the University and explored it's facilities to give students an insight into University life and education.



Charlton College students Tahli Roberts (left) & Tyler Riley (right) trying out the sports science equipment at Federation University

Provided  
career support  
to 512  
students in  
Years  
9-12

Supported  
130+ work  
experience  
placements

Coordinated  
mock  
interviews for  
60+ students

Distributed  
35 Careers  
Newsletters to  
210 VCE/VAL  
students

Created  
curriculum  
materials for  
North Central  
Cluster  
Schools

Facilitated  
a Community  
of Practice for  
School-Based  
Career staff

# Loddon Campaspe Youth Take Over...



Loddon Campaspe Youth Take Over is well and truly up and running and living up to its name. From web pages to office walls, workplaces have well and truly been "taken over" during 2022. Youth Take Over aims to bridge the disconnect between young people and employers in the Loddon Campaspe region.

A key element of the program is the facilitation of short internships in which a group of 4-10 young people work on a project that leads to a 'Take Over' of a workplace. Young people are trained by community and industry experts to learn about the industry and develop the skills they need to run their Take Over, and get experience they can talk about in their next job application. Participants leave the program with industry knowledge and contacts plus the skills and confidence to launch their career adventure. Nine "Take Overs" were completed during 2022:

**MADE IN ECHUCA** - interns worked on behalf of Echuca Moama Tourism to create a digital shop for local artisans. Six young interns built the website and photographed products for the local business guided by Jordan Collins from Small Business Online.



**BENDIGO HIGH STREET MURALS** - Eight interns worked alongside Reece Hendy from Nacho Station to design and implement a mural on the interior walls of the Goldfield LLENs office in Bendigo. They were supported by four creative specialists and learnt how to breakdown a client brief, pitch ideas, and project manage the project in a busy office.

**BENDIGO TELCO MURAL** - Following the murals at the Goldfields LLEN, Bendigo Telco approached YTO about a mural in their new CX Centre. This was an opportunity to trail a different Take Over model with YTO alumni applying to be on a team of contractors to complete the artwork for the Telco, with some wrap around support from YTO including how to operate as a sole trade or small business.



APPLICATIONS  
NOW OPEN

WINE LABEL  
DESIGN

8 week internship.  
The skills you need.

YOUTH  
TAKE  
OVER

**WOMEN IN TRADES SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN** - Five young interns helped create a digital marketing campaign for Trades Women Australia, facilitated by VicLLENs Communications Coordinator Emma Linton and seven social media/communications mentors learning how to find inspiration for, and plan, brand and execute, a state-wide social media marketing campaign. The campaign was released on International Women's Day and ran through Careers Week.

**DESIGN A WINE LABEL** - interns worked with Graphic Designer Kira Hyde from KH Studio and four creative and wine industry mentors to design a new label for Red Edge Wines in Heathcote's "Degree Shiraz". The Take Over culminated with a launch and exhibition of the labels at a Heathcote Gallery. The winning design wrapped the whole bottle and has been used by the winery to launch a whole new line of wine.

**YOUTH PARLIAMENT - MANDATORY YOUTH WORK READINESS PROGRAM BILL** - This Take Over, facilitated by the YMCA and mentored by past youth parliamentarians, saw six young people attend the Victorian Youth Parliament in June 2022. The team represented young people from a range of backgrounds living in rural areas. They were trained in public speaking and leadership at a residential camp and researched and presented a Mandatory Youth Work Readiness Program Bill to the over 100 youth parliamentarians. Their Bill, which argued for a better model of careers education for regional and rural young people passed unanimously, was given the assent of the Youth Governor, and presented to the State Government for consideration.





**START YOUR OWN STREETWEAR LABEL** - Seven young interns worked with One Day Studios to co-create an online streetwear brand called Ambient, each coming up with a unique t-shirt design for the brand which they sold through an online store under the guidance of Josh Salmon and Jasper Storer-Reeves along with three creative industry and small business mentors. The Interns then took over the ONI shopfront in Castlemaine for a weekend to launch the t-shirts and retail these to the public.

**FILM AN EPIC RESCUE MISSION** - this project saw seven interns create a documentary film of the 2022 Mineral Councils of Australia Victorian Mine Rescue Competition. Led by Facilitator Leonie Van Eyk. The team learnt about setting up camera gear, interviewing techniques, framing, exposure, editing and storytelling whilst also building key teamwork and project management skills.

The interns were supported by six mentors and guest speakers from the mining, emergency services and film sector who introduced them to a range of career paths and entry level opportunities. The Take Over team ran an event to launch the film, where they also participated in a panel discussion about their experience and learnings.

**BOORT HOSPITAL CAFÉ** - Five young interns from the Loddon region commenced a "take over" at Boort District Health's Spanner Café in December. They were trained in coffee-making, food preparation, table setting/clearing and customer service, and were supported to complete their Food Handling Certificate online. Unfortunately a Covid shutdown at the hospital cancelled the final event, however participants still came away equipped with a suite of skills to work in the hospitality industry.



COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIP  
PROGRAM

## Youth Affairs Council Victoria 2022 Rural Youth Awards

Loddon Campaspe Youth Take Over was a finalist in two categories at the 2022 Rural Youth Awards - Outstanding Youth Project and Youth Participation in Education, Training and Employment, as well as the People's Choice Award.

We strive for Youth Take Over to be for young people, by young people, so it is an honour to receive recognition of this by the youth-led judging panel.



# Flexible Learning Options...

FLO students participated in a diverse range of activities, projects and opportunities to further their education and strengthen their future pathways during 2022.

Thanks to the Engage! program, one of the larger projects embarked upon was designing a Wycheproof lino print to be printed onto calico shopping bags. Three designs were decided on for the final print and these bags were given away as gifts.

Along with completing VCAL PDS outcomes, students also worked on getting their learner permits, practicing their driving at ChartSec. Students with Learner permits connected with the L2P program combining L2P driving with FLO learning days.

2022 had a strong focus on expanding hospitality skills and students continued to gain confidence participating in regular work experience at the Rex Café every Monday and in Term 4 students attended a Youth Take Over at the Boort District Hospital. Students also completed their RSA and Food Handling Certificates.

Students also had the opportunity to attend guided tours of Bendigo TAFE and SuniTAFE in Swan Hill exploring subject areas of interest.

Opportunities to visit local attractions throughout the year such as the Spanner Man sculpture gardens in Boort, Lake Wooroonook, the Granites, Kooyoora State Park, St. Arnaud, Wycheproof and Swan Hill were all enjoyed.

FLO students also benefited from guest speakers including James from SuniTAFE Swan Hill who was able to make connections and inform students about possible job and course opportunities.



*Above: Peter, Vesper and Fiona from the FLO gifting one of their tea towels to NCLLEN Office Manager Julie Roberts.*

## FLO Program "Takes Over" Boort District Health

At the end of 2022 North Central FLO students participated in a Loddon Campaspe Youth Take Over at Boort District Health to obtain core hospitality skills and learn more about career pathways in the health sector. Unfortunately Covid-19 intervened half-way through the Take Over with a lock down of Boort District Health to all visitors. This saw the participants pivot to the Rex Theatre in Charlton where they were able to utilise their new hospitality skills in the kiosk and the new meeting room at the rear of the theatre. Although not quite the outcome anticipated it was a valuable learning experience for the students and we hope to schedule a second take over at Boort District Health in 2023.





# Buloke Loddon L2P Program...



In July 2022, the North Central LLEN took over the management of the Buloke Loddon L2P Program (with ongoing support of Charlton College a local Advisory Group).

The program is part of a state wide initiative funded by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) which aims to reduce the number of driver fatalities by giving learner drivers supervised experience in many different environments and situations, building self confidence, trust and safety on our roads.

The L2P program aims to provide assistance to young people who are facing significant barriers to completing their mandatory 120 hours of supervised on road driving experience through the support of Volunteer Mentors from the community and there is no cost to participate.

Young people are matched with trained volunteer mentors and have access to a sponsored vehicle to gain driving experience.

**Below: Wedderburn College Students following their driver assessments as part of the Buloke Loddon L2P program**




**BULOKE LODDON**

**TAC L2P PROGRAM**

### Need help getting your P's?

The TAC L2P program helps young learner drivers (16-21) with limited access to supervising driver or vehicle to get on the road with trained mentors available to help them obtain the 120 hours necessary to get their licence.



**North Central LLEN**

For more information about this FREE program contact the North Central LLEN on 03 5491 1144 or email [l2p@ncllen.org.au](mailto:l2p@ncllen.org.au)



**Buloke Loddon**  
**TAC L2P PROGRAM**  
**Mentors Wanted**

Would you like to help young people learn to drive?  
Do you have at least two hours per fortnight to spare?

Are you over 21 years old?  
Do you hold a full current driver's licence?

The Buloke Loddon L2P program matches volunteer driver mentors to young learner drivers to assist them in gaining on the road driving experience in a vehicle that is provided through the program - all we need is your time (and interest).

If you are interested, please email [l2p@ncllen.org.au](mailto:l2p@ncllen.org.au) or contact the North Central LLEN on 5491 1144.



## 2022 Achievements

- 16 young people participating in the program (12 of these have joined since 1 July)
- Facilitated two mentoring training workshops and signed up 11 new mentors.
- Obtained an additional vehicle (1 January to 30 June) to expand the program further



# Confident Youth Voice...



Young people from across Victoria came together at the Charlton Bowling Club in February to find out more about the new Rural Youth Network. The Network aims to build a new type of community where the best of local community connections is blended with the best of online opportunities.

It is a place that will provide young rural and regional Victorians (aged 18-30) with the information and opportunities to build their connections, resilience and supports.

Coordinated by Rural Youth Network leader Finn Poxon from Boort, the event featured live music by Elias Lanyon, a delicious barbecue dinner and some barefoot bowls while learning about the Network and the opportunities it provides.

An initiative of You thrive Victoria, the Rural Youth Network has been created by young rural people for young rural people. The North Central LLEN was proud to support the event as part of our Engage! program.



## 16 Days of Activism

The Loddon Engage! programs joined with Boort District Health to promote 16 Days of Activism in November at Boort District P-12 School in November promoting respect and equality as a way to reduce violence against women and children.

At the end of the presentation students were presented with a "16 Days of Activism" cookie and orange ribbon which they tied to the school fence creating a sea of ribbons as a visual reminder of the need to prevent violence against women and children.





## Civic Presentations

A core component of our Buloke Engage! program is monthly presentations to Buloke Shire Council from young people on activities they are involved in, or projects they are passionate about.

In May, Buloke students from Tyrrell College, Birchip P-12 College and Wycheproof P-12 College travelled to Mildura to participate in the 'Growing Smarter in the Mallee AgTech Summit' to learn about the latest in emerging production innovations using smart technologies.

Upon their return students and staff from Tyrrell College pictured above) presented to Buloke Shire Councillors in Berriwillock to share what they learnt and how they will use this information in the future.

In June, Amara Cowell & Isabelle Mulquiny (pictured below) spoke about their recent experience and participation in the Fairfax Youth Initiative Film Festival at the Buloke Shire Council Briefing held in Wycheproof.

They spoke about the Fairfax Youth Initiative as well as their individual projects, with many questions asked by Councillors and Council staff all of which they answered offering a broad insight into their experience.

During July members of the Buloke Loddon YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament team (pictured above right) shared their journey with lots of questions and conversations taking them well over their allotted time!

In September Les Cooper (pictured right) from Nullawil spoke about a YouthFest project held at Birchip earlier in the month. Les was part of the organising committee together with other young people from Birchip and the Mallee Sports Assembly.

Buloke Shire Council and the Engage! program are pleased to resume providing these regular opportunities for young people to present to the Shire on issues and initiatives that are important to young people post Covid and look forward to continuing the program in 2023.





# Youth Engagement & Participation...



The YES Group (North Central Youth Advisory Council) had another active year in 2022 participating in meetings, presentations & consultations on a range of issues.

Lucinda Holmes-Brown (pictured above left) was the final speaker at the annual Women on Farm's Gathering (WOFG) in Inglewood, a state-wide meeting of women from Victorian farming communities, in March where she spoke about the Youth Council which was formed in November 2021, and other opportunities to elevate youth voice such as speaking at events like the WOFG, finishing the event on a very positive note.

In April, the Buloke-Loddon Youth Parliament team of Jake Murphy, Noah Slater, Tyler Riley, Lennon Jablonka and Mia Braun met in Charlton to finalise their Sustainability and Carbon Neutrality in Mining Bill 2022 and in May they participated in a training weekend to prepare them to debate the merits of the Bill in Parliament and to refute the Youth Rehabilitation Bill 2022 put forward by the Red Robins (Red Cross) team.

Also in May, Luke Slater was a co-chair of the North Central LLEN 20 year celebration dinner and later in the year participated in an important health education consultation with Latrobe University students.

In June the Youth Parliament Team took the floor of Parliament House successfully debating their bill on Sustainability and Carbon Neutrality in Mining, with three members of the team also delivering adjournment debates on the urban-rural divide, why we need an increase in foreign aid, and the need for tighter restrictions on gambling advertising.

In September Blair Gould attended the National Leadership Forum in Canberra at the invitation of Federal Member for Mallee Dr Anne Webster. The four-day Forum brought together young leaders from across Australia and the Pacific to explore and expand their leadership through the lens of values, compassion, and connection.

Also in September, the YES Group provided funding for Youth Fest Events to be held at Donald High School, Tyrrell College and Charlton College – the YES Group, with

support from the North Central LLEN applied for a Youth Fest 2022 Grant to celebrate the contributions and achievements of young people in their communities.

And in December the group was acknowledged with both a group and individual awards at the inaugural BLG Youth Awards in Boort.

**Yes Members at the BLG Youth Awards**



**Above: Blair Gould pictured with Federal Member for Mallee Anne Webster (left) at the National Leadership Forum in Canberra**





In 2022 the North Central LLEN entered a team in the Victorian Youth Parliament program for the first time.

Run by YMCA Youth Services, Youth Parliament is an opportunity for young people to be heard at the highest levels of the Victorian Government.

20 teams of six participants each receive training in public speaking and leadership at two residential camps as they research the issues they are most passionate about.

The teams each prepare a Bill on a state issue and debate it in the Victorian Parliamentary Chambers. Bills passed by the Youth Parliament and given the assent of the Youth Governor are then passed onto the State Government of the day for consideration.



**Below: The Youth Parliament Team in action (clockwise from top left) Lennon Jablonka, Jake Murphy, Tyler Riley, Mia Braun, and Noah Slater.**



**Above with Member for Murray Plains Peter Walsh ((L-R) Lennon Jablonka, Mia Braun, Jake Murphy, Martina Moshy, Noah Slater and Tyler Riley. Below: In the Legislative Assembly (L-R) Tyler Riley, Jake Murphy, Noah Slater, Lennon Jablonka, and seated Mia Braun.**



The Buloke Loddon Youth Parliament team chose to prepare and present the [\*\*Sustainability and Carbon Neutrality in Mining Bill 2022\*\*](#). Jake Murphy (Wedderburn), Tyler Riley (Charlton), Mia Braun (Pyramid Hill), Lennon Jablonka (Charlton) and Noah Slater (Donald) were joined by Martina Moshy from the Y to form the six member team that was responsible for drafting the Bill and then arguing on the floor of Parliament House why it should be adopted and turned into legislation.

As the First Bill up for debate on day one of sitting week, each of the six team members spoke on the merits of the bill, and despite the enthusiastic rebuttals of the Opposition, the Bill was passed.

The Buloke Loddon team was in action again later in the sitting week when it was their turn to refute "The Red Robins" Rehabilitation in Youth Justice Bill 2022, with all five members again speaking about the inadequacies of the legislation.

Three of the team members also participated in adjournment debates with Jake Murphy addressing the Minister for Education and the Arts about the disadvantages facing rural students regarding the limitations of subject selections, especially in the arts, and a second speech on the need for more Foreign Aid.

Noah Slater addressed the Minister for Regional Development talking about the urban-rural divide and the need to provide a more equitable approach to services and infrastructure across the state, while Lennon Jablonka addressed the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gambling and Liquor Regulation speaking of the need to set limits on gambling advertising to reduce addiction.



# Youth Development...



In May, the North Central LLEN facilitated SRC training across the north central region as part of our Engage! program with three events - Wycheproof (Tyrrell College, Birchip P-12 College and Wycheproof P-12 College), Charlton (Donald High School, St Arnaud Secondary College, and Charlton College), and Pyramid Hill (Boort District P-12 School, East Loddon P-12 College, and Pyramid Hill College).

During the two hour interactive workshop students learnt about the purpose of SRC Leadership Teams, their role as representatives of the whole student body. and how they can influence change to improve the wellbeing and learning experiences of students.

Groups identified their individual skill sets and shared fundraising ideas. Students were also shown how to run meetings effectively, using an agenda and keeping minutes.

Social media, newsletters and local newspapers were suggested as useful ways to promote activities and raise the profile of SRCs in their schools.

Students were enthusiastic about getting involved and showed they are committed to their leadership roles coming up with some great ideas for the future.

As part of the training, students also took part in a survey to contribute input to the activities that will be delivered as part of our Buloke and Loddon ENGAGE! programs over the next three years.

Students were asked to provide input on events/activities they would like to be involved in; skills they would like to learn; and events/activities that celebrate and showcase young people in their local community.

We are really excited about co-designing projects with young people to ensure they meet their needs.

63  
young people  
participated in  
SRC training  
and the  
Youth Round  
Tables



## Training - May 2022



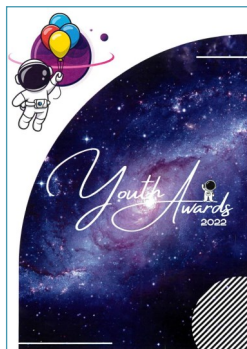


# Youth Celebration...

## Youth Awards

In early December more than 150 people attended the inaugural Buloke-Loddon-Gannawarra Youth Awards at the Boort Memorial Hall where 105 young people received awards in recognition of their work in leadership, creativity, resilience and teamwork.

It was a fabulous evening and would not have been possible without funding from the Engage! and FReeZA programs.



Youth Awards - 9 December 2022



105  
young people  
recognised at  
the inaugural  
BLG Youth  
Awards





# Board and Staff...



## North Central LLEN

North Central LLEN Board Members (from left) Win Scott, Anthony Hogan, Cr Bronwyn Simpson, Barry McKenzie, Brooke Arnold, Cr Dan Straub, Colleen Condliffe, Cr Eddy Ostarcevic, and Tony Hand. Absent: Cheryl McKinnon

## Board & Governance

The major project on the North Central LLEN Board Agenda during 2022 was to oversee the implementation of the organisation's five-year Strategic Plan which aims to create opportunities for children and young people to thrive in education, work and life.

Ensuring that we continued to meet the requirements to retain our DGR status was an ongoing priority and a we continued to review of North Central LLEN policies and procedures as they came due.

Board Member	FEB	APRIL	JUNE	AUG	OCT	DEC
Cr Dan Straub	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Win Scott	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Anthony Hogan	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cr Bronwyn Simpson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tony Hand	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Colleen Condliffe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brooke Arnold <sup>1</sup>	-	-	✓	✗	✗	✓
Barry McKenzie <sup>1</sup>	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cheryl McKinnon <sup>1</sup>	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✗
Cr Eddy Ostarcevic	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Ellen White <sup>2</sup>	✓	✓	-	-	-	-

Developing a Risk Appetite Statement to inform our decision making was also completed in 2022.

We farewelled long-time Board Member and former Chair Ellen White, and Cr Eddy Ostarcevic. We thank them for their commitment over many years.

We also welcomed three new Board Members - Brooke Arnold, Barry McKenzie and Cheryl McKinnon.

### Board Meetings & Attendance

Six North Central LLEN Board Meetings were held during 2022. Meeting attendance averaged 83%, as per the table at left.

The Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee, Chaired by Anthony Hogan, also met six times during the year.

<sup>1</sup> Elected at May 2022 AGM

<sup>2</sup> Retired at May 2022 AGM

North Central LLEN Board Members (clockwise from bottom left) Barry McKenzie, Anthony Hogan, Colleen Condliffe, Brooke Arnold, Cr Dan Straub, Cr Eddy Ostarcevic, Win Scott, Cr Bronwyn Simpson and Tony Hand. Absent: Cheryl McKinnon







## Staff

The North Central LLEN workforce remained stable during 2022, with the departure of one staff member (YTO Director Ella Hughes) and arrival of three new staff members - Ryan Hale and Manue Arnold (YTO) and Molly Meadows (Engage!) joining our team.

Monthly staff meetings continued to be held during the year to provide support to staff, collaborate and align our initiatives.

Jeanette Pope delivered an informative workshop on evaluation to staff early in the year introducing the concept of achievement audits to document our work and enable us to produce better reports as part of our acquittals.

In April, North Central LLEN staff met at the Charlton Bowling Club for a workshop on Hope Action Theory facilitated by the Careers and Pathways team who each completed a three-month certification program.

Following the workshop, staff enjoyed a shared lunch and a social game of lawn bowls with lots of fun and laughter.



Photos clockwise from top:

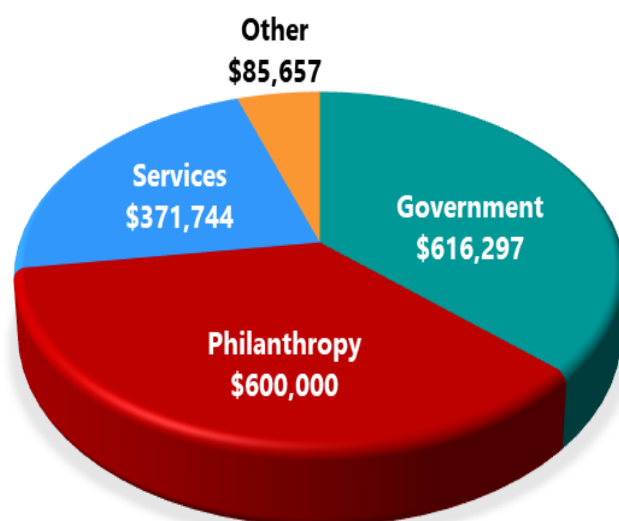
1. Professional development and team building event at Charlton Bowls Club
2. Hybrid staff meetings X 2
3. Members of the NCLLEN team (L-R) Standing - Jane Hosking, Barb Bear, Sue Clay, Jerri Nelson, Ella Hughes, Pam McConville, Mary-Ann Sait, and Ryan Hale. Front - Amanda McClelland and Manue Arnold
4. Manue and Ryan receiving their welcome to the North Central LLEN Packages



# Sound Financial Management...

Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the Year Ended 31 December 2022	2022 \$	2021 \$
Revenue	1,673,698	1,460,677
Salaries & employee benefits expense	(965,743)	(714,622)
Depreciation expense	(52,979)	(53,699)
Finance costs	(3,384)	(2,089)
Project costs	(204,003)	(133,388)
Motor vehicle expenses	(54,599)	(22,107)
Administration and association costs	(80,695)	(78,158)
Occupancy and associated costs	(33,782)	(19,128)
Advertising and promotional costs	(13,486)	(4,539)
Other expenses	(1,216)	(1,800)
Surplus/(deficit) before income tax expense	263,611	431,147
Income tax expense	–	–
Surplus/(deficit) after income tax expense	263,811	431,147
Other comprehensive income	–	–
<b>Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity</b>	<b>263,811</b>	<b>431,147</b>

## 2022 Income Sources



### Government Grants:

- Department of Education & Training - \$401,047 LLEN School to Work contract
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing - Engage! \$100,000
- Department of Transport (Buloke Loddon L2P Program) \$115,250

### Philanthropy:

- Agnico Eagle Community Foundation \$600,000

### Services

- Careers Education Partnership, \$170,000
- FLO, Navigator \$40,744
- Strong Youth Strong Communities \$161,000

Statement of Changes in Equity As at 31 December 2022	Retained Earnings \$	Total Equity \$
Balance at 1 January 2021	196,269	196,269
Surplus for the year	431,147	431,147
Other comprehensive income for the year	–	–
Balance at 31 December 2021	627,416	627,416
Balance at 1 January 2022	627,416	627,416
Surplus for the year	263,811	263,811
Other comprehensive income for the year	–	–
<b>Balance at 31 December 2022</b>	<b>891,227</b>	<b>891,227</b>



A copy of the full audited financial statements prepared by **AFS & Associates** can be downloaded from our [website](#).



<b>Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2022</b>	<b>2022 \$</b>	<b>2021 \$</b>
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,114,494	725,794
Trade and other receivables	189,172	352,057
Other current assets	-	-
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>1,303,666</b>	<b>1,077,851</b>
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	22,293	721
Right-of-use assets	56,479	34,909
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>79,402</b>	<b>35,630</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>1,383,068</b>	<b>1,113,481</b>
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	99,139	106,257
Other liabilities	249,650	280,733
Lease liabilities	44,434	14,812
Employee Benefits	82,546	56,815
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>475,769</b>	<b>458,617</b>
Non-current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	13,374	21,639
Employee Benefits	2,698	5,809
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>16,072</b>	<b>27,448</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>491,841</b>	<b>486,065</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>891,227</b>	<b>627,416</b>
Equity		
Retained earnings	891,227	627,416
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>891,227</b>	<b>627,416</b>

## North Central LLEN Financials

North Central Learning and Employment Network Inc. applies Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosure Requirements as set out in AASB 1053: Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosure Requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

The association is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

Australian Accounting Standards set out accounting policies that the AASB has concluded would result in financial statements containing relevant and reliable information about transactions, events and conditions.

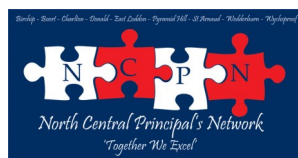
Material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are presented below and have been consistently applied unless stated otherwise.

<b>Statement of Cash Flows as at 31 December 2022</b>	<b>2022 \$</b>	<b>2021 \$</b>
Cash flows from operating activities		
Receipts from customers	1,924,822	1,612,423
Payments to suppliers and employees	(1,469,454)	(1,161,911)
Short-term and low-value lease payments	(18,234)	(7,585)
Interest received	5,458	1,439
Interest paid	(3,384)	(2,089)
<b>Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities</b>	<b>439,208</b>	<b>442,277</b>
Cash flows from financing activities		
Payment of principal component of lease liability	(1,092)	(54,739)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>	<b>(49,416)</b>	<b>(54,739)</b>
<b>Net increase / (decrease) in cash held</b>	<b>388,700</b>	<b>387,538</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	725,794	338,256
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year</b>	<b>1,114,494</b>	<b>725,794</b>

The financial statements, except for the cash flow information, have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs, modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities.

The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

# A big thank-you to our Funding Investors



We acknowledge and thank the State Government of Victoria for the funding provided to the Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) across Victoria to develop partnerships which result in an increase in the number and range of school-employer engagement activities in our local government areas of Buloke, Loddon and Northern Grampians Shire (St Arnaud only)



Education  
and Training

[www.ncllen.org.au](http://www.ncllen.org.au)