



28 July 2022

North Central LLEN Celebrates 20 years

Earlier this year the North Central LLEN celebrated 20 years (2002-2022) of supporting young people with a special celebration dinner at the Inglewood Town Hall in conjunction with their Annual General Meeting.

Former staff and Board Members joined stakeholders, investors, Yes Group (Youth Advisory Council) Members, current North Central LLEN staff and Board Members to commemorate this important milestone and recognise the important role the organisation plays in supporting young people to thrive in education, work and life.

The evening began with a Welcome to Country and traditional smoking ceremony by Dja Dja Wurrung elder Auntie Marilyn Nichols, and was followed by our Annual General Meeting lead by current Chair Ellen White where the Annual Report was presented detailing achievements and financial performance for the previous year.

The Celebration Dinner was hosted by North Central LLEN's newest and youngest staff member Manue Arnold and YES Group (Youth Advisory Council) member Luke Slater and featured a panel of young people discussing the importance of supporting young people in their formative years.

Jake Murphy, a current Year 12 student at Wedderburn College and member of the North Central Youth Advisory Council – the YES (Youth, Engagement, Strategy) Group; Tessa Fitzpatrick who completed her VCE studies at Charlton College before working locally and internationally and then commencing studies in Environmental Science; and Couper Brown - a final year apprentice Boiler Maker with Boundary Bend Estate, Boort all shared their journey from school to work and the importance of the community and organisations such as the North Central LLEN in helping them to navigate their career pathway.

Keynote speaker Professor Craig Olssen joined the event remotely from Covid isolation to explore how data can support our work to create opportunities for children and young people to thrive in education, work and life, as well as some of the preliminary findings from the AEDC Extension Comprehensive Monitoring System project rolled out across the North Central region during 2020 and 2021.

Professor Olssen is a Developmental Psychologist with expertise in life course epidemiology and human genetics. Among his many positions, Professor Olssen is the Director of the Deakin Centre for Social and Early Emotional Development (SEED) and the Director of the Australian Temperament Project Generation 3 Study at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI)- one of Australia's oldest running longitudinal studies of social-emotional development.

The evening concluded with a reflection on the growth of the North Central LLEN over the last 20 years by former Executive Officer Jerri Nelson, a video of congratulatory message from stakeholders and supporters, 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.

Speaking after the event, current Chief Executive Officer Jane Hosking said it was fantastic to see so many past Board and staff members at the event to commemorate 20 years of the North Central LLEN.

"It is such an honour to work for an organisation that has worked tirelessly alongside its many partners to support our rural young people to have equitable opportunities in education and pathways since its inception in 2002.

"In 2018 we were successful in obtaining Deductible Gift Recipient Charitable Status and with the support of our north central community, our scope broadened to include children and their families," she said.

"This means that we are now able to take a cradle to career approach working with children, young people and their families at all stages of their development to ensure they are able to thrive in education, work and life," said Ms Hosking.

"We hope the next 20 years allows us to continue to work closely with our partners and stakeholders across the region to build the next generation -ensuring *all* children and young people get the best possible start to life," she said.

To find out more about the 20 year celebration, or to read a copy of the North Central LLEN Annual report, visit www.ncllen.org.au/Celebrate.

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