



Prestigious Award for Mornington

Mornington Secondary College's Hands on Learning has won the School Project Major Award for 2010, from The Order of Australia Association, Mornington Peninsula Regional Group.

Awards Convener, Tom Newman OAM, described it as an outstanding 'in school' program that helps students to realise their potential. "We all know someone who left school early and every school has students who need direction at some stage. This program changes lives as it builds pride and hands on skills that are lifelong," he said.



Students recently installed a new park bench at the Sunshine Reserve in Mt Martha.

"It's absolutely stunning, featuring beautiful timber and craftsmanship," according to Gill Gordon of the Sunshine Reserve Conservation & Fireguard Group.

"We get wonderful work for not a lot of cost and the local community gets an asset that we can all enjoy and appreciate," she added.

Exciting outcomes at Norlane

Norlane High's Hands on Learning students are building a section of boardwalk for the You Yangs Mountain Bike Course, used by 70,000 people every year.

"You can tell the students love creating something from start to finish and get real satisfaction out of making a difference for so many people," Parks Victoria Team Leader Mark Whyte said.

Principal Barry Rowland says the program provides a real connection to school as the timetable five days straight just doesn't 'do it' for some kids.

And the outcomes are impressive. "Attendance is close to 100% on HOL days and overall attendance for the rest of the week improves too. Student self-esteem and self-worth grows, and relationships with peers and staff have been enhanced.

"Without HOL at Norlane HS in 2010 some of these students would not be attending school at all and in danger of disengaging completely from secondary schooling," Mr Rowland said.



Hands on teaching revives traditions and contact with elders



The hands on restoration of a "flattie" boat traditionally used to hunt dugong and turtle is fostering new connections between indigenous students and elders at Yarrabah State School in Far North Queensland.

It is also giving students with a history of absenteeism a real positive reason to come to school.

The repair of these boats engages students in a legitimate cultural practice mentored by their elders and raises awareness of the impact of illegal hunting of dugong.

"Next we plan to set up permanent monitoring of marine habitat for the flattie crew, hoping that this will lead to science meeting culture in a sympathetic learning curve," Hands on Learning teacher John Lewis said.



Team effort draws students back to school in Frankston

At McClelland College in Frankston, it's 'John's' first day back at school for six months – he was enticed by the opportunity to work on creative building projects as part of the Hands on Learning program. Now focusing on being a helpful group member, he is working well and attending every session.



According to principal Angela Pollard, "It is hard to find any other way to achieve these results with these students."

McClelland's program works closely with Anglicare, a local family welfare agency who employ Estelle to work with the HOL program to offer welfare support for vulnerable and at risk families.

Anglicare have been so impressed with the model, that Estelle will now be employed an additional day a week within the HOL program. This means an extra 10 more places for students at the school each week. A great outcome.

Striking feature wall at Westernport attracts community applause

Over the past year, 20 students across years 7-10 have built a striking wall along the main entrance to Western Port Secondary College in Hastings that is attracting significant local community acclaim.

The students were literally 'hands on' using tons of crushed rock in bags and sections of second-hand power poles to build this impressive replacement to an old wire fence.

"The assignment not only gave our students an important break from the regular curriculum, but a chance to do something they felt they could succeed with and sense of real achievement," HOL teacher Michael Rigby said.



HOL in brief

(October 2010)

Schools	21
Students	570
Staff	41

About us

Hands on Learning Australia is a harm prevention charity helping 21 secondary schools deliver a one-day a week in-school program for students most at risk of leaving school early.

Creative building projects that benefit the school and local community give disengaged students the belief, confidence, and opportunity to achieve something valued by others.

And it works. Attendance at Hands on Learning averages 98%, and 92% of students have moved into apprenticeships or further study.

Imagine what could be achieved if all schools had access to programs like Hands on Learning?