HANDS ON LEARNING
A program supported by Save the Children
Hands on Learning
enewsletter
December 2019

LOWOOD STATE HIGH SCHOOL: QUEENSLAND

Wishing you a fabulous festive season

Thank you to every student, artisan-teacher, school leadership team, volunteer, philanthropic supporter, and community organisation working with us to ensure students thrive and Hands on Learning (HoL) flourished in 2019. We appreciate your support and celebrate the improvements we have achieved together in the wellbeing and educational outcomes of HoL students documented in the following pages.

Twenty years after Russell Kerr first piloted the Hands on Learning methodology, we now have partnerships with more than 100 schools in four states and remain as determined as ever to work together towards an Australia where every child who needs Hands on Learning can access it.

Wishing you and your family a fabulous festive season.

School Education Engagement Team

Our cover

It's smiles all around when the Noble Park Primary HoL team join Noble Park Secondary HoL team and humbling to witness the leadership and communication as students work together, share a meal and finish with a team game of rugby. A great way to ease the transition to secondary school, best summed up by Leroy: *"The food was good, the people great, and the school looks nice, especially this place – Hands on Learning."*

Don't miss the latest @handsonlearn

Keen to hear about the latest projects and achievements of Hands on Learning students? Follow us on Twitter @handsonlearn and help us share and celebrate the way HoL students are discovering their talents and experiencing success.

Save the Children

MEDIA **SPOTLIGHT**

This year two extraordinary students put the spotlight on the impact of Hands on Learning demonstrating grace and courage. Tahlia and Isobel shared their personal journey from anxiety and school refusal to confidence and self-esteem with two of Australia's leading journalists.

Jo Hall celebrates the completion of filming with Isobel and the Berwick SFX College HoL team.

Tahlia Heinrich, Heywood Secondary College

Tahlia struggled to get out of bed and often refused to go to school. Burdened with severe anxiety and low confidence, Tahlia could only see failure in the classroom. Four years on, Tahlia has been accepted part-time into a college in Hamilton, and works one day a week at a farm.

"If I didn't have the confidence I've learned in HoL, I would never have been able to walk into the RIST program, where I'm normally the youngest person," she says.

Tony Wright is an experienced and respected member of the Canberra Press Gallery and associate editor for The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald. Read his story in the Sydney Morning Herald about Tahlia here...

Isobel Rabbot, St Francis Xavier College Berwick

Back in Year 7 Isobel had weeks off school. It was the social part that was stressful; a feeling of everyone pressuring you. Three years later and now finished Year 9, Isobel is confident and willing to try anything, *"even if I'm a little bit scared."*

"HoL is the first step in being able to teach me something because I'm not away from school every second day".

Jo Hall is Victoria's most distinguished female television reporter and presenter. Watch her story about Isobel from here...

Celebrating big contributions

As 2019 closes we farewell some serious HoL legends

Seral Fehmi, Brookside College

It would be tough to find anyone more passionate than Seral. An energic and innovative teacher committed to give every student the opportunity to feel good about themselves.

James Clyne, Surf Coast College

James established a terrific work culture building strong relationships and respect amongst the team. The students were really proud of what they achieved, so their self-esteem went through the roof, and they were a lot happier at school.

Tony Zerbst, Murray High School

Passionate, energetic and a problem solver, Tony has a real gift with young people. He can have the difficult conversations with students, but maintain respect, trust and a strong relationship. Tony took kids under his wing and helped them to fly.

Mike Denny, Northern Bay P-12 College

Enthusiastic and motivated with incredibly diverse skills. A real jack of all trades, there was no project that was outside the realm of possibility for Mike Denny.

Mick Kennedy, volunteer McClelland Secondary College

"#GOODBLOKE. Mick was a nice, caring and easy to talk to mate. Over the time that I have worked with him he has shown me so much. Especially positive behaviour and determination or not giving up." **Caine Year 8**

BUILDING BELONGING: HoL PRIMARY

HoL School Support Manager Steve Schneider captures the insights of the team at Swan Hill North Primary School after two terms of Hands on Learning.

"I like that we get to do different projects and talk to different people I wouldn't normally talk to. HoL is more outside and in normal class you sit inside and just write and read."
Riley, Year 4

"You get to help out around the school and work together as a team. There's someone in my class and we'd always argue in every conversation we had, but now we have an argument here and there, but not a lot anymore."
Bailey, Year 6

"I've got better at speaking to other people, making new friends and not being shy."
Honor, Year 4

MARTY GRAY, Assistant Principal

Can you describe the impact of HoL?

The students involved are a lot more connected and look forward to coming to school when previously, for a variety of reasons, they did not.

What do you like most about the methodology?

Hands on Learning is not directed at just one group of kids – any kid with any issue can get benefit. We have kids with different needs from the shy and reserved, to kids not good at sharing, to those that lack the ability to self-regulate.

Also the speed of the outcomes for students. It surprised me that within three weeks we were seeing positive results back in the classroom.

I hear your HoL team has just secured a grant?

We received a $1,000 grant from Woolworths and one of the most positive things is that two of the HoL students wrote the majority of the application, not the adults.

What are your top tips for schools starting HoL?

1. Employ the right people to run it – motivated and passionate and good at building relationships.
2. Ensure your first group of students don't have any serious behavioural issues to create a great culture and to allow the rest of the school to see the benefits.

ERIN RAGGART, HoL artisan-teacher

How have you found working as a HoL Artisan-teacher?

I've loved the opportunity to build relationships by getting to 'do things' alongside students, as we plan, improve and tackle projects together.

If you could give yourself any advice before your first day what would that be?

Together with the students, set clear expectations of purpose and behaviour. It helps everyone involved.

Value the challenging days. They provide teachable moments in how we as adults respond to adversity.

What are the main developments you're seeing in the students?

Their ability to use initiative, think for themselves and own their behaviour.

What are the keys to your success?

- Good preparation and planning, yet holding those plans loosely.
- Communicating and working with the students' teachers to achieve better outcomes.
- Being intentional with setting students up to succeed with their Focus Plans.

HANDY PROJECT **INSPIRATION**

Great ideas for schools starting HoL primary and schools keen to lend a hand by making a valuable contribution to their local community.

Ideal projects to kickstart HoL primary

HoL sign

Recycling materials into a vibrant HoL sign is a great way to connect students to the program, introduce safe use of tools and foster a sense of ownership over the HoL space early.

Tyre planter box

A cheap great way to make a mark in the school and contain plants like potatoes and mint. Also introduces students to recycling and safe use of spray painting.

Shadow board

Nothing beats the OH+S lessons of organisation and safe storage of your tools.

Add value at your local Aged Care Centre

Planter boxes: Huonville Primary

The power of engaging in real, meaningful projects, enjoying what you are doing and a sense of achievement, was on full display as the HoL team at East Devonport Primary built and delivered planter boxes for the Orana BaptCare respite centre.

"It was a lot funner than you would expect. You would think it would have been kinda (sic) boring, but actually it was really fun to meet the older people."

Andrew, Grade 6

Garden paving: Cranbourne East Secondary College

Transforming a run-down courtyard at Langford Grange aged care home into an attractive paved space has been a real winner for residents and students alike.

The Cranbourne East Secondary College 'hands on blitz' started with the removal of tired plants and hedges, digging out the area around a feature tree, laying pavers, installing artificial lawn, and building two planter boxes to really open up the space for residents.

According to HoL artisan-teacher Shaun Thomas the intricate paving job included lots of measurement and real applications of volume, area and perimeter. The students also had lunch everyday with residents, enjoying the chance to get to know them and celebrate their achievements with them.

"Making the nursing home a better place made me feel proud of myself," Rawiri said. *"It is good knowing you can make people happy,"* Charlie added.

Wheelchair accessible garden beds: Traralgon College

Traralgon College's HoL team celebrated the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the communityby rejuvenating the garden courtyard of their local aged care facility. They also built two wheelchair access garden beds, and a dog toilet for the resident seeing eye dog.

HUNDREDS OF PROJECTS, **100 SCHOOLS**, HoL IN ACTION

Hands on Learning teams build connection and add value to their school and local communities.

Café on the Grove

Latte, cappuccino and all the classics are available every week when the entrepreneurial student-run café at Cosgrove High School opens for students and staff.

School bag rack

HoL Primary at Sorell School hit the ground running establishing a welcoming precinct including a special place to hang their school bags.

Fresh vibe for teachers' courtyard

Problem solving was on full display as HoL Doveton College installed recycled pallet plant boxes, signs and a coffee table attracting high praise from staff.

Paving adds pizazz

Students celebrate making a genuine and positive difference to their HoL space. Congratulations Sydney Road Community School!

Upcycling car hubcaps

Creatively transforming these former auto parts into giant flowers to decorate the school vegetable garden was a big hit with the team at Lavington Public School.

First day tool testing

Nothing more practical than a first day learning how to use tools safely and starting the first chair for the HoL precinct at Leeton High School.

Festive fundraiser

Lowood SHS's HoL team has been hard at work creating three sizes of Christmas trees for students and staff with profits to going back into the HoL program.

Team building coffee table

"A day working in HoL makes me happy. Nearly every day before HoL I got a phone call home about my behaviour. Now out a whole year I've only had two."
Alex, Year 9, Rosewood State High School.

2019 **IMPACT**

Hands on Learning is distinguished by the ongoing measurement of outcomes.

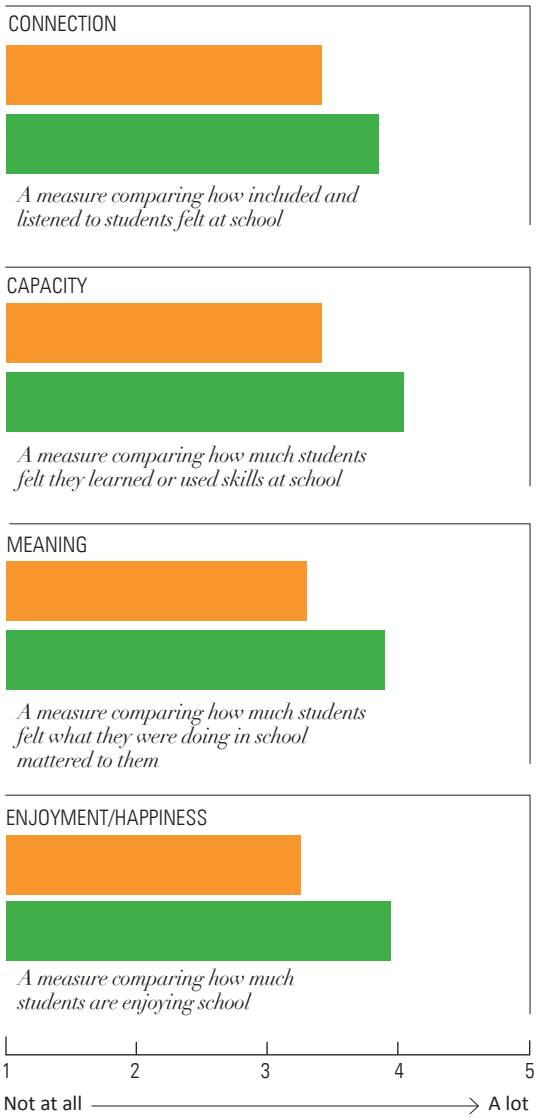
Students reflect on their experience in HoL

The landmark Connections, Capacities and Meanings framework, developed in collaboration with the University of Melbourne in 2014, encapsulates the things that matter to young people – the very things that are most likely to make them turn up, keep them engaged, and keep them coming to school.

We measure things like feeling CONNECTED and belonging, a sense of MEANING and purpose to the tasks undertaken, developing CAPACITIES and skills that will be useful in the real world, all contributing to ENJOYMENT and happiness and wellbeing.

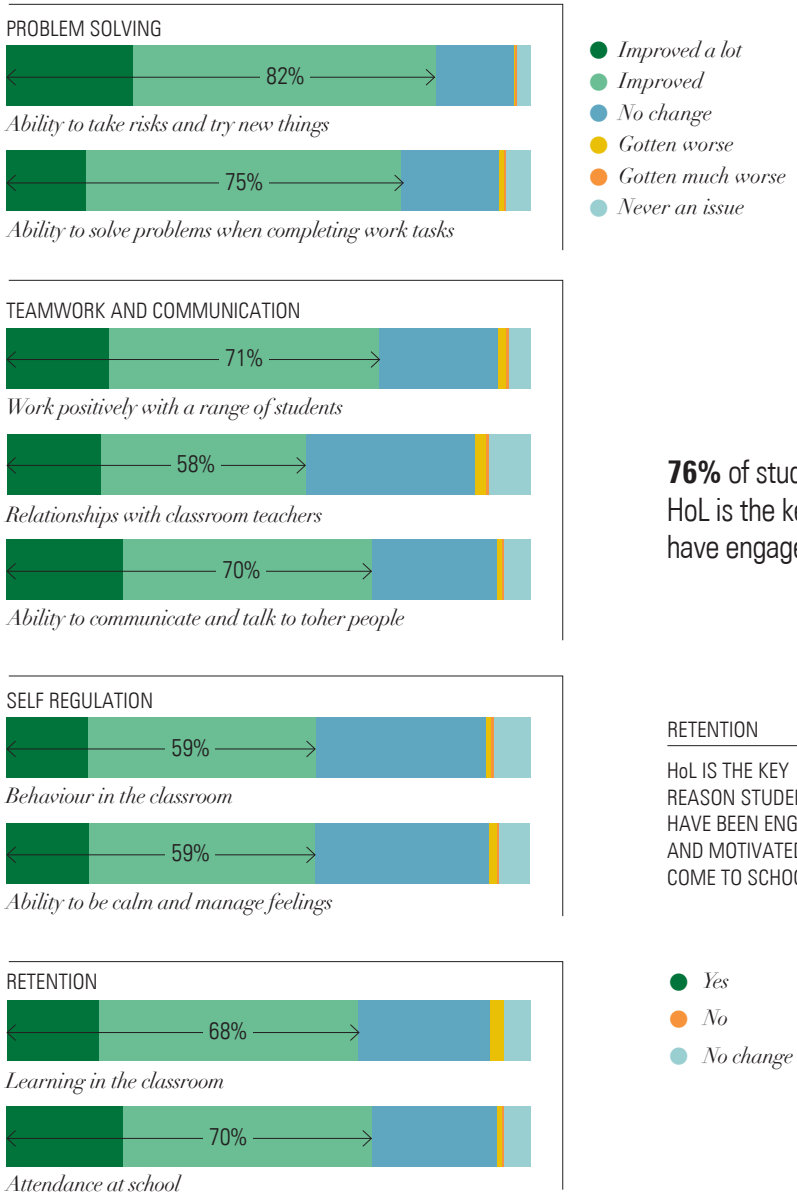
pre-HoL STUDENTS: HoL students surveyed at intake about their experience of a typical school day prior to starting HoL

current-HoL STUDENTS: HoL students completed another survey after participating in HoL for a duration of 6 -8 months

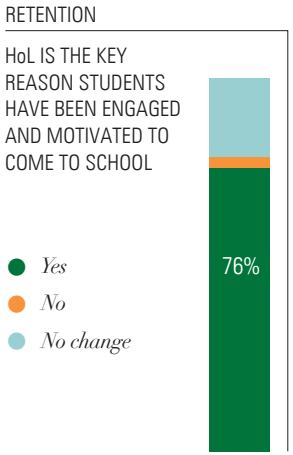


Increasing soft skill capabilities

Hands on Learning (HoL) provides a practical environment for students to develop personal and social capabilities and the enterprise skills to succeed at school, and in future education and employment.

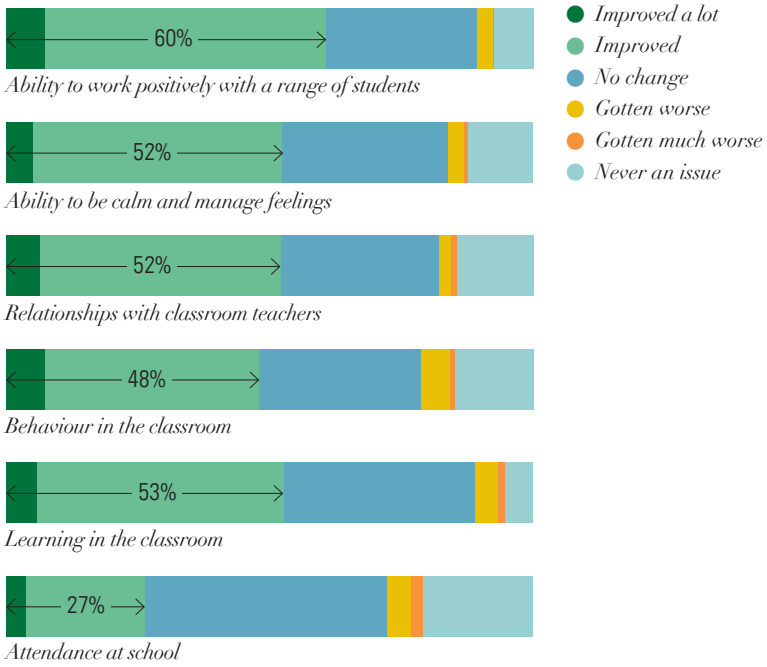


76% of students say that HoL is the key reason they have engaged in school



Measuring the impact back in the classroom

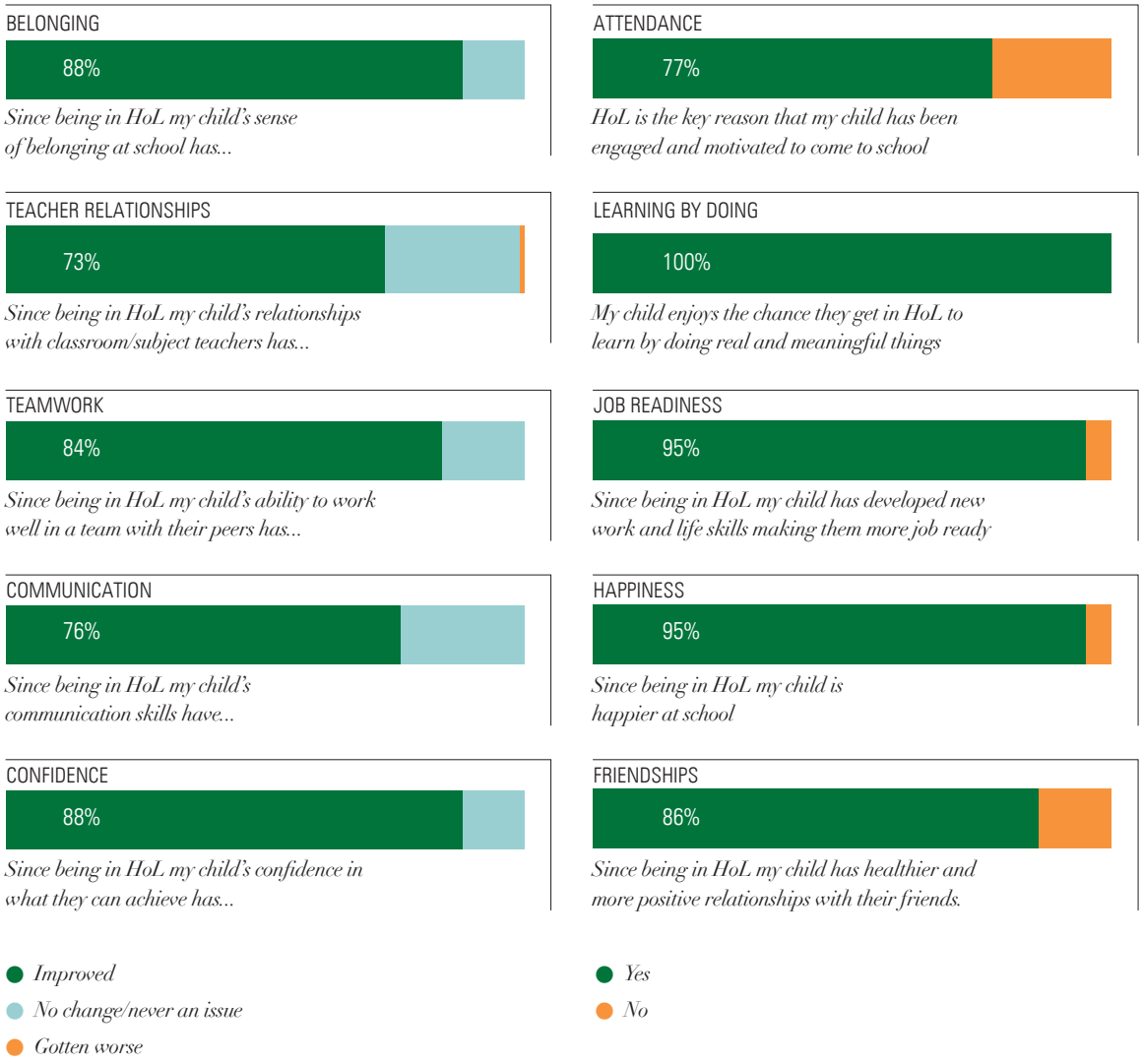
School staff have provided information about the behaviour of their students after they have been in HoL for 6 months. This underscores the strength of HoL in changing young peoples' lives, and it's efficacy in helping them re-engage with their learning.



40% of students need for disciplinary action was reduced

Capturing the perspective of parents

Parents are emphatic about the positive impact of HoL on their children with 243 parents from 46 schools responding to our 2019 Parent Survey.



FEEDBACK
FROM FAMILIES

Nobody understands the impact of
Hands on Learning quite like families.

"Some days it is really hard to get Jackson to school. I think HoL is his favourite place in the whole school. If he is having a hard time at school this is the one day he won't miss. Jackson feels at home when he is here. He gets to achieve things in here. It helps in his other classes. He's more confident now and more likely to give things a go."

"There's been massive changes in Toby. He loves HoL and it is the highlight of his school week. Toby has somewhere to belong and feels secure and part of the group. We are not all textbook learners so it's fantastic to see these kids get the chance to shine. Hands on Learning should be in every school."

"It is amazing – the community spirit and teamwork. Matt feels happy here. From the first day he loved it. He loves the work they've done for the Scout Park and for Bikes for Humanity. He loves the friendship, the teachers; he feels really comfortable."

"Ryan loves it and he is doing way better at school now. We think all kids should go through HoL. Blake our eldest was also in HoL and has just finished Year 12 and it definitely helped him stay at school. Melissa starts next year and we really want her to do HoL too. We love the way it is always safety first and attention to detail. Great life and work skills."

"Riley talks about HoL all the time and he is coming to school so much more now."

BIG WINS AT IPSWICH STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Families celebrate their children's achievements at the 2019 Hands on Learning open night.

Noah and his Dad Michael

"Noah struggles in the classroom and he found it difficult to concentrate and stay focused. Hands on Learning has really improved his concentration and focus. He accomplishes things and finishes projects. He brings some home and even builds things at home, like the chook shed."

Patrick and Mum Stephanie

"Before HoL, Patrick was regularly in trouble and suspended. After one of the teachers observed him in class, he was accepted into the Hands on Learning program and I am so thankful he got in. He has changed 100%. He now loves helping others and his interaction with staff is so different".

Patrick shows his Mum Stephanie, the hand wash sink he helped construct.

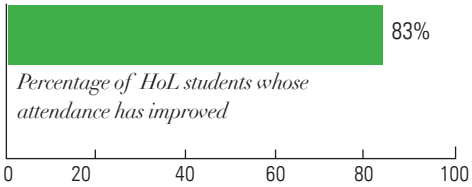
Finn and Mum Annie

"We haven't been in Queensland long. Hands on Learning has really helped Finn transition. It has improved his relationships with other students and staff. I like that he has learned how to treat people, be more open and more relaxed. He is now happy to go to school, less anxious and more confident. He even cooks and does gardening at home."

Finn said *"I am pleased I am part of the group and have made friends. Hands on Learning helps me look to the future."*

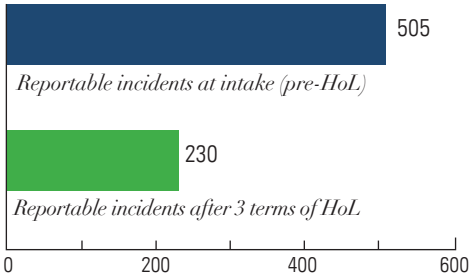
Increased attendance at ISHS

83% per cent of HoL students recorded improved attendance, with **20%** improving between **21 - 37%**.



Improved behaviour at ISHS

54% drop in reportable incidents among HoL students.



ENGAGING OUR LOCAL MPs

From Huonville in Tasmania to Queensland's Beenleigh it has been fabulous to have local MPs joining students and staff to celebrate their achievements.

Hon Tanya Pilbersek, MP and Peta Murphy, MP
Mount Eliza Secondary College

Hon Damian Drum MP
Bourchier Street Primary School

Senator Claire Chandler
Huonville Primary School

Hon Greg Hunt MP
Western Port Secondary College

Hon Darren Chester MP
Kurnai College Morwell

Hon Jason Wood MP
Pakenham Consolidated School

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck
East Devonport Primary School

Bert van Manen MP with Dave Scarlett
Qld HoL School Support Manager