



HANDSON LEARNING 

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# LENDING A HAND GOES BOTH WAYS

Lending a hand really does make the world go around. During Term 1 the Hands On Learning (HOL) team at Horsham College worked with Blazeaid to help victims of the January 2014 bushfires. Their work included removing and replacing fencing on the Carter farm in the

Wartook Valley near the Grampians National Park (follow this link to see them in action <http://youtu.be/bDo4KsJBxIM>). The Carter family had been one of the first to support the establishment of HOL at Horsham College in 2013 with the donation of a stove for the HOL

hut. The Carter family lost their house in the devastating January fires and the Hands On team made the most of the opportunity to help them rebuild their property.



*Minister for Education Martin Dixon with HOL artisan-teacher Leon Barents, School Council President Rowan Smith and local MP Hugh Delahunty learning about the HOL team's Blazeaid efforts.*

*Below: HOL students created this masterpiece to represent Blazeaid and the strong sense of community they felt helping those affected by the bushfires. The sculpture was built using corrugated iron and fence materials collected from the bushfire devastated areas and entered in the Wimmera Machinery Field Days Farm Art Sculpture display.*

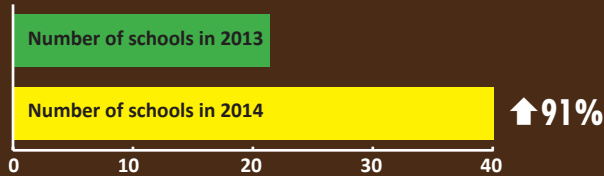




# INCREASING IMPACT

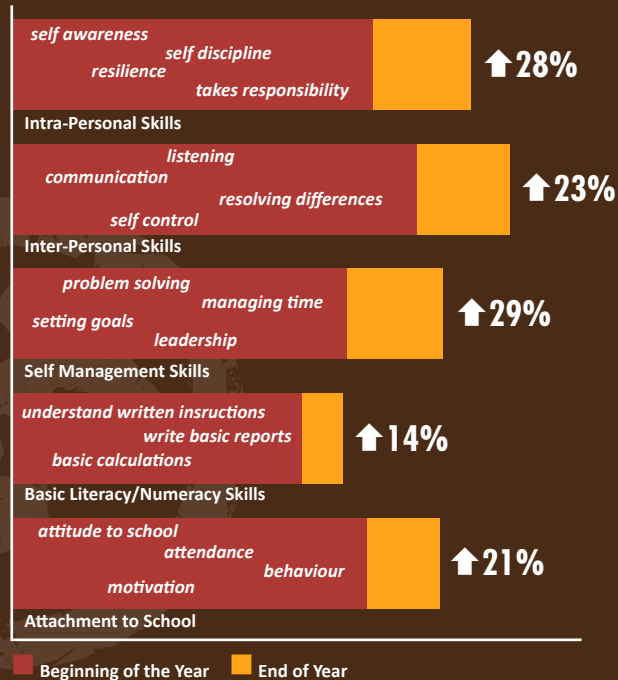
The impact of HOL continues to grow. This year sees nearly twice as many schools using HOL to help more kids, and the benefits to these kids continue to impress, with over 20% improvements across all three personal development domains, and significant improvements in both attachment to school and basic literacy and numeracy skills.

## HUGE GROWTH IN SCHOOLS



## BUILDING THE PLATFORM FOR LEARNING

Impact of HOL on vulnerable students 2013 data set



## Upper Yarra

The local Ricketson Foundation, Bendigo Bank and the Outer Eastern LLEN have kicked in the critical financial and moral support, but it's the students who are driving Hands On at Upper Yarra Secondary College. They consider it an opportunity to experience the real world and have been determined to make the most of it. Since

*Tyron (left) leader for the day explains the jobs and monitors progress.*



commandeering the former principal's house, they have recycled and reused materials from an old storage shed to create a workshop, and have a longterm vision to create a welcoming 'House of Health' for the school and eventually a bed and breakfast for teachers who travel long distances.

It is an outstanding start for a cohort of struggling students suffering inter-generational unemployment, poverty, low aspirations, and one boy who is at his third school in 12 months. "It's hard to like school when you don't know what you want to do in life. At school it's like - am I ever going to use this stuff? But at Hands On we all work together and we do real world jobs. Useful things - not just writing stuff," Allira said. According to Tyron, one of the leaders for the day, "We get to pick up all kinds of skills that will help us in the real world. And we get to meet new people. It's more real and more fun."

## Our schools

■ Existing Schools ■ New Schools

- Aranmore Catholic College
- Bellarine Secondary College
- Belvoir Special School
- Benalla College
- Collingwood Alternative School
- Donald High School
- Doveton Secondary College
- Eastbourne Primary School
- Epping Secondary College
- FCJ College
- Fitzroy High School
- Frankston High School
- Grovedale College
- Hopetoun P-12 College
- Horsham College
- Kooweerup Secondary College
- Kurnai Secondary College Churchill
- Kurnai Secondary College Morwell
- Lara Secondary College
- Marnebek Special School
- McClelland Secondary College
- Mornington Secondary College
- Mt Eliza Secondary College
- Murray High School
- Murtoa College
- Narre Warren South P-12 College
- Newcomb Secondary College
- Noble Park Primary School
- Northern Bay Secondary College
- Oberon High School
- Sale Secondary College
- Somerville Secondary College
- St Francis Xavier College
- The Lakes South Morang P-9 School
- Traralgon Secondary College
- Upper Yarra Secondary College
- Werribee Secondary College
- Whittlesea Secondary College
- Wyndham Central Secondary College
- Yarrabah Special School



# COMMUNITY DRIVEN

Community support is escalating with all kinds of support coming from a growing number of individuals and organisations.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In a first for HOL, the progressive City of Whittlesea have swung in behind Gandel Philanthropy, the Ian Potter Foundation, Bokhara Foundation, State Trustees, and the local Whittlesea Youth Commitment to support a new cluster of three HOL schools – Epping Secondary College, The Lakes South Morang P-9 School and Whittlesea Secondary College. The region has chronically low retention rates with 35 per cent of students leaving school in Year 10 or earlier. City of Whittlesea Youth Workers will work on the ground in the schools as part of the HOL artisan-teacher team making it possible for the three schools to introduce HOL.

*A great turn out for the inaugural training day for the new Northern Metro cluster schools. Quality assurance is the key to success, so Hands On Learning Australia ensures the rigour of the HOL method is maintained at schools by providing ongoing training and support to HOL artisan-teachers.*



## FEDERAL POLITICIANS

Senator John Madigan drove from Ballarat to Sale College to deliver on a promise to the school's Hands On team to donate part of his parliamentary pay rise to purchase Australian made steel to clad the external walls of their new HOL hut.

*Senator Madigan maximizes his opportunities to talk directly with students about the impact of HOL (left) and gets hands on himself (below).*







*Lions Club and Parents and Friends Association representatives joined the HOL team at Frankston High School to celebrate the opening of the new multi-level deck.*



## LOCAL SERVICE GROUPS

It is amazing what can be achieved with the support of the local community. Frankston High's HOL team designed and constructed a stunning deck now used for outdoor classes and crowded with students at lunchtime. The local Lions Club and Parents and Friends Association supported the project by raising the funds to purchase all the materials. According to Russell Turner, President of the Lions Club Frankston, "The end result is so much more than this impressive deck. You can see the pride, confidence and satisfaction in the faces of these kids. Hands On Learning has given these young people the chance to achieve a great result for themselves, the school and the community".



## FROM BUSINESS

A little help goes a long way. Especially when it comes in the first year of HOL and students are working hard to find the materials to create a new hut at the school. Austral Bricks donated the bricks to pave an outdoor area. Richard West from Austral has also been working with the team. "It's great to help them find their place in life, to see these kids build confidence and realise the skills they have and what they can achieve. There is a bigger picture too. If we want a society where everyone has a role to play

and doesn't feel disconnected, we want all kids to finish school having developed a good sense of how they can contribute. That works on so many levels – for the young person, for the local community, and for the government in general."

*Richard West from Austral (far right) works with students at Somerville Secondary College to create an impressive outdoor area for the new HOL hut at the school.*







## Hands On shines during UK principals study tour

Twenty-eight leading principals from the United Kingdom spent two weeks visiting schools in Australia and Singapore in late 2013 focusing on innovation and success. According to Ken Walsh OBE, Hands On Learning is an impressive feature of the Frankston High School curriculum.

"We saw the creative work undertaken by students on real building projects around the school. The superb decking outside the school entrance and the imaginative design and construction of a garden as a tribute to a former principal are examples of their most recent projects. We met current students who told us about their learning journeys. Each student spoke with confidence about the how the Hands On program had transformed their experience of school. It was clear that they were now highly motivated and had developed a deep sense of personal achievement that keeps them at school and influences their attitudes to their other school subjects. On returning to the UK one of our delegates, Carolyn Robson CBE, Executive Principal of Rushey Mead School Leicester wrote: 'Hands On Learning at Frankston High School was the highlight of our study tour, demonstrating how imaginative practical activities, supported by a very positive social environment, can engage vulnerable or disaffected young people and change their whole attitude to education and the world.'"



# GOING INTERNATIONAL

## Hands On to start in the UAE

A ten member delegation from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) visited Australia in the second week of Term 2 for an intensive week of HOL training in preparation for the introduction of HOL at two schools in the UAE in September this year.

Organised by the UAE based Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research, the delegation included teachers, principals, community representatives and education administrators from the UAE.

Keeping at risk students in school is a challenge for educators and policy makers across the globe, and the Foundation identified Hands On Learning Australia as a leader in educational innovation and the provision of best practice 21st century education.

*(above and below right) The HOL team at Northern Bay Secondary College relished the opportunity to show off their achievements at the You Yangs Regional Park.*





# FABULOUS FACILITIES OPENED



## Kurnai Hut

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development South Eastern Victoria regional director John Allman officially opened the impressive new HOL hut at Kurnai College, Morwell. He was quoted in the local Latrobe Valley Express identifying HOL as the most effective program of its kind in engaging students.

"There are lots of models around, but research and the evidence tells us that this is definitely the best one because it's about keeping the students at school, onsite, connected to school, connected to teachers, connected to their friends and connected to their community," he said.

"I think that every secondary school in every community should have a Hands On Learning program, because every secondary school in every community has students that for a time during their schooling, become disengaged."



*Education Minister The Hon. Martin Dixon, MP joined students, parents, and community leaders and HOL Founder Russell Kerr to open the "Hands On Learning Hut" at Frankston's McClelland College.*

## McClelland College

More than two hundred students have been involved in transforming what was an old bike shed into the HOL hut at McClelland College in Frankston, attracting vital support from the local community - including donations of everything

from bricks, plaster, a generator, pavers and earth-bags, to a stove, cutlery, food, and literally the kitchen sink! According to Principal Amadeo Ferra, "The power of HOL is not only the community engagement it fosters, but the

life-long skills students develop like creativity, teamwork, and problem solving. As well as experiencing what it's like to achieve something successfully – which gives students a great sense of pride."





## Our BOARD OF DIRECTORS



*Hands On Learning Australia's new Board of Directors pictured left to right standing are: Clare Shearman MBA, co-ordinator of Southern Ethnic Advisory & Advocacy Council; Adam Cameron CPA, Finance Director of the Hardie-Grant Publishing Group; Angela Pollard, Principal of Mount Eliza Secondary College; Rod Glover (Chair), Principal of Rod Glover Consulting; Lisa Vagg, Executive Director (Communications); Professor Johanna Wyn, Director of the Youth Research Centre University of Melbourne; and crouching are Cameron Wiseman, Executive Director (Finances); Dr Richard O'Donovan, Executive Director (Operations); and, Billy White, small business owner and former HOL student.*



## Our ARTISAN-TEACHERS

HOL is all about people and relationships and the inspiration we provide each other. Artisan-teachers from Sale to Horsham, north to Benalla and south to the Mornington Peninsula, travelled to Anglesea in December for two days of professional development.

Workshops covered best practice ideas about keeping projects fresh and interesting, alternative building methods, and occupational health and safety training, along with trauma theory, tackling challenging behaviour and drug awareness.



## GETTING TOGETHER







Newcomb SC students and parents

## Our PARENTS

HOL open nights are popular as parents and family members have the chance to see for themselves the work their children have been doing and - often for the first time - to celebrate the success they have achieved at school.



Werribee SC families



## Happy 60th Pete

*Traralgon HOL artisan-teacher Peter Gafa*

What do you do for someone who has supported you, mentored you, and shared their experience and knowledge? You buy them a ticket to Perth to visit the kids they haven't seen all year of course!

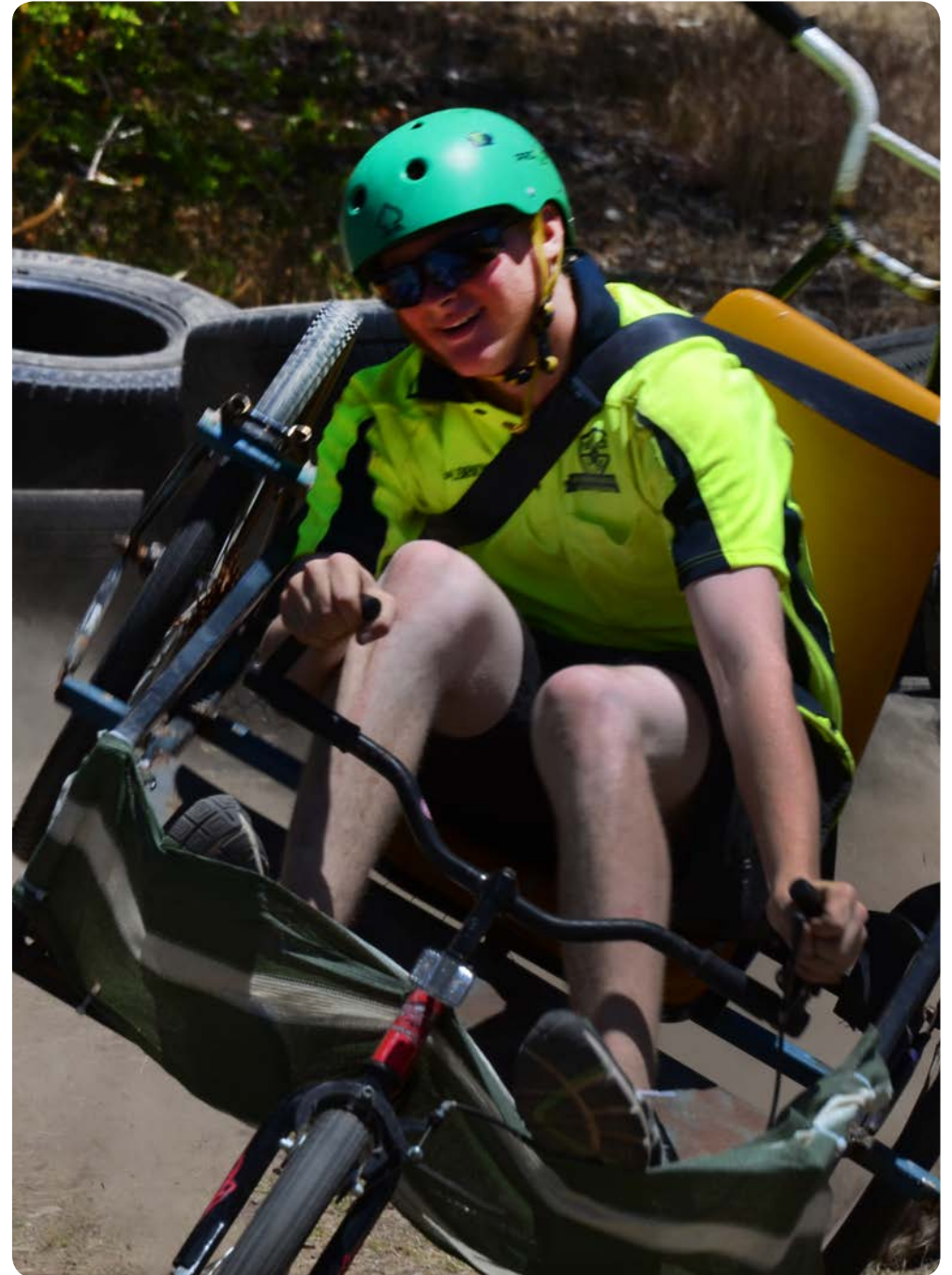
At the end of the 2013 the Traralgon Secondary College HOL team wanted to buy artisan-teacher Peter Gafa a Christmas present. When they learnt it was his 60th birthday they came up with an idea to buy him a plane ticket to Perth and started a collection amongst past and present HOL students. Some of the school's maintenance staff and teachers chipped in too. Peter who has worked with young people in a variety of support roles over the last 14 years was gobsmacked and emotional about the gesture. And he "had a ball in Perth - a seriously great time".



# Our STUDENTS

## FIRST BILLY CART DERBY FOR THE NORTH EAST

Inventive and ground-breaking design and creative use of recycled materials was the order of the day as sixty students from Benalla College, FCJ Catholic College and Wodonga's Belvoir Special School battled out the inaugural North East Victoria HOL Billy Cart Derby.







## TEAMWORK MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

McClelland College, Frankston High School and Somerville Secondary College students relished the opportunity to test their creativity, design and brute strength against Hands On teams from other schools in the annual Mornington Peninsula raft race.





# HELPING OUT ACROSS THE STATE

## SPREADING THE JOY

Frankston High School students are building an outdoor pizza oven at the Joy of the Earth Community Gardens. Built on old tennis courts, the garden beds are a genuine community affair with support from Rotary and other community organisations and are open to everyone to grow, share and enjoy fruit and vegetables.



## MORE WINS FOR BENALLA COLLEGE

Hot on the heels of success in 2013, Benalla College's HOL team worked on a second community project with the local Rotary Club in Term 1 building community exercise stations around picturesque Lake Benalla. According to artisan-teacher Ed Bishop the Benalla Rural City has monitored the exercise stations and is pleased with the lack of vandalism and the amount of use they are attracting.



## DIGGING TO HELP OTHERS

The Hands On team at Traralgon helped give the Latrobe Valley Community Shed's outdoor area a real face lift, building a community herb garden.



## THE HIGHPOINT OF THE YEAR

Northern Bay's HOL team voted their work building a bridge over a ravine in the You Yangs Regional Park near Geelong, the highlight of their year. The construction of the bridge helped open up the Northern Ranges walking trail at the Regional Park ensuring the students have a lasting legacy and a great sense of satisfaction about their work. Parks Victoria paid for all the materials and the HOL team at Newcomb Secondary College stepped in to support the project helping clear the walking trail in preparation for its opening.





# HOW ARE THEY GOING?

A number of philanthropic groups including local Foundation 59 and the Newsboys Foundation stepped in with support to 'save' the HOL program at the Mornington Secondary College in 2010. Foundation 59 has continued its support for the last three years.

## Jake Knott

MORNINGTON  
SECONDARY COLLEGE

Jake Knott started doing HOL in Year 7. "I wasn't doing well with my studies because I got really frustrated in class, I was very irritating to teachers, I wouldn't listen, I wouldn't do any of my school work, I used to be bit of a mischief maker. I got a D in Year 7 overall.

Hands On just helped me. It gave me a break during the middle of the week from class, and that helped me start concentrating better, listening more back in class, and learning more stuff.

At Hands On they try and keep you on the job at all times, make you stick to the job and finish it. I used to drift off and now I'm sticking with my work, doing it all on time. That's helped me a lot.

I also developed social skills and am able to speak in front of others. I used to stay quiet if I met someone new and wouldn't be able to talk to them. I'm more confident now to speak – not big



crowds – but I'm able to talk in front of small and medium sized groups.

I'm in Year 10 now and I'm getting B's and C's. I'm doing all my essays and getting high scores in my maths and science

and I reckon I can do a lot better in life now. I reckon I can become pretty much anything if I try my hardest and get good grades. I want to do sport and recreation – maybe become a sports physio."



# Georgia Hart

MORNINGTON  
SECONDARY COLLEGE

For Georgia Hart Year 8 was really tough. "I had the worst social anxiety and I struggled really bad with depression. I hated sitting in the classroom surrounded by people and everything. It was a horrible experience and I just didn't like it at all. Everything about school was stressful, there's so much pressure to be good at everything – academic, music and sport. You can't be good at everything but you are expected to be.

When I started HOL I was nervous, very scared, but everyone was so welcoming. We did all our activities in small groups and I worked with different people all the time, kids from higher year levels would mentor you, and you would work with kids in your year level you didn't know.

That really helped with my teamwork and communication skills and I learnt to take a stand and be more confident in an environment that I would normally freak out in when I didn't know the person. Instead I relaxed and that helped with my social anxiety.

As my confidence grew in Hands On I was encouraged to show new kids around, lead them as I had been mentored myself, and



that helped me be able to talk to more people, show them different things and have them understand. It's helped me academically because I am comfortable and confident in myself now. I like myself a lot more than I used to and I'm doing pretty well in school. I'm Year 10 Level Captain now. I have got three academic

stars and I'm taking accelerated English and Maths in Year 10 and VCE Biology 1 & 2. I would definitely love to go to university and study biomedicine and that requires a pretty high ATAR score which will be really hard. I can probably achieve it, but we will see."