

Hands On Learning Australia  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2013-2014







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# WELCOME



*Saran, Year 9, Kurnai College, Churchill campus*

Saran from Kurnai College in Gippsland has had a terrific year in Hands On Learning (HOL) and welcomed the opportunity to introduce our Annual Report and share her journey.

Welcome to the Hands On Learning Australia Annual Report. Before HOL I tended to be late to school and my attendance was very poor and I used to leave school early too. Now I am in the HOL program, I'm on time and stay the whole day. I connect with other students, who I couldn't before, through teamwork and doing jobs around the school. I learn much better with my hands than my head, I learn better when I'm doing, not just sitting behind a desk. I hope you enjoy hearing about other students' experiences in the HOL program - it really does make a difference.

*Saran*





# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Too many kids are left behind. We all know that our school system is failing to keep kids engaged – more than 10,000 drop out every year in Victoria alone. We all know kids for whom the classroom is not the best venue to showcase their skills. Not every young person learns in the same way. I know because my experience of school was not always positive and it is one of the reasons I am so passionate about what Hands On Learning does to give more students the opportunity to stay connected, to discover their talents, and experience success.

And we certainly did that this year. Hands On Learning is a proven program that keeps kids engaged with school. More than 1,000 students in 42 schools participated in HOL during this financial year, representing a remarkable 70 percent growth in schools and students.

This growth was possible through strong professional governance, a commitment to evidence, the breadth of our philanthropic and community support, and – above all – our wonderful people. These features were evident in the various Board working groups that drove strategic decision-making in partnership with Richard, Cam and Lisa, and the effort so many people made to secure robust data collection across all HOL schools. These efforts matter – they enable us to show, for example, that 82 percent of HOL students feel included, compared to 42 percent of non-HOL students, and that 72 percent actually enjoy school, compared to 47 percent of non-HOL students.

These achievements are significant, but we know we have only scratched the surface. The kids we work with represent a fraction of those who could benefit from HOL. There is more to do, and we will continue to put our compelling case to the Victorian and Australian Governments.

But we won't be waiting for governments to catch on. The real driver of Hands On Learning's success is our strong and growing community. Our philanthropic and community backers are a key part of this – their support not only recognises our determination to make a difference; it also reminds us that there are so many good people out there that are on our side.

On behalf of the Hands On Learning Board, a huge thank you goes to the wonderful HOL artisan-teachers who build quality relationships with these vulnerable young people. Meeting many of these teachers, and seeing their commitment in action, is a humbling experience. You are stars!

Words cannot quite capture the respect the Board has for the Hands On Learning management team of Rich, Cam and Lisa. They are not only professionally competent, but personally committed – this comes through so clearly in their professionalism, hard work and respect for others. Great credit also goes to our wonderful Implementation, Training and Support team as our achievements this year simply would not have been possible without their skill and dedication. Inspiring.

I thank you for your interest and support, and hope you enjoy learning more about the inroads we have made this year ensuring fewer of our young people are lost not only to school, but to society.

*Rod Glover*



# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

The 2013-14 financial year was a great one for Hands On Learning Australia (HOLA). We continued to mature as an organisation with excellent governance structures and an active board of directors drawn from experts in all of the important areas of our operation: political; academic; philanthropic; financial; schooling; the community sector; and, the Hands On Learning (HOL) method itself. Our new shared leadership model has been very successful, and we would like to thank the six passionate and committed independent directors who have worked closely with us to put stability, collaborative teamwork, and transparent governance at the centre of everything HOLA does.

Throughout the year HOLA continued to provide the training, project management, and ongoing support that ensured schools maximised the impact HOL had on their students. We also attracted seed funding from our generous supporters to bring the total number of schools operating HOL to 42, including Government and Catholic schools across Victoria, and one in Western Australia. There was also international attention this year, with a contingent of educators from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) coming to see HOL first hand with a view to establishing HOL at several UAE schools in 2014.

Our robust data collection practices and involvement in an Australian Research Council project with the University of Melbourne helped us to demonstrate the ways in which HOL continues to foster self-esteem, promote engagement, and help low performing disadvantaged students develop the social-emotional skills they need to improve learning outcomes, succeed at school, and lead productive lives.

During 2013-14 we continued to be extremely well supported by a range of philanthropic organisations and individuals, with many of our funding partners committing to multi-year partnerships. This greatly assisted with our recruiting and negotiating with prospective HOL schools, enabling us to offer guaranteed support across several years. Schools value our long-term commitment to support them, and we in turn are very grateful to our committed philanthropic partners.

We also engaged productively with the Victorian Government and Opposition during 2013-14, with both Education and Shadow Education Ministers visiting HOL principals to see and discuss the effectiveness of HOL at their schools. We bolstered this contact by securing greater media coverage highlighting the impact of HOL, and the way in which it is being driven by a combination of community demand and philanthropic backing. While uncertainties remain about the outcome of the 2014 election and Commonwealth government education policy, we will continue to prosecute our case vigorously with both the State and Commonwealth Governments to make it possible for every student who needs HOL to have access to HOL.

And by no means least, it is important to recognise the commitment and dedication of the small group of HOLA employees and the talented HOL artisans-teachers they work with. It is their tireless efforts that directly makes the difference to thousands of young people's lives, and it is they who make it so gratifying to be involved in such a positive and incredibly proactive organisation.

*Richard O'Donovan, Cameron Wiseman and Lisa Vagg*





# REFLECTIONS FROM OUR FOUNDER

## THE UNIVERSALITY OF HANDS ON LEARNING

This year's growth has been phenomenal and it is immensely satisfying to see Hands On Learning (HOL) adopted by an increasing range of schools from tiny remote colleges to big metropolitan schools. But no matter which school, no matter where the kids are from, it's a universal message – "this is real, it's fun, I feel like I belong and I am part of something, I feel I have something to offer, I feel connected."

Feeling that you can make a contribution that makes a difference is incredibly powerful and not a feeling experienced very often at school by the vulnerable students we work with in HOL. For them it's often the reverse. School is a more frequently a stressful negative experience. They are often isolated in the traditional classroom environment and the message they take away is, "I am not valuable." In Hands On it is different. Students can readily see what they have achieved, something significant, something they have done as an important member of a team. They get the opportunity to work collaboratively and learn communication skills, problem solving and empathy all within a secure environment with trusted mentors.

HOL takes on major projects that have purpose and meaning, and enable kids to see their relevance within their school environment, and their wider community. HOL provides opportunities to work cooperatively with your friends rather than competing with them. The focus is on what we achieve when everyone's input is valued, when we collaborate and when the job has a real purpose. It's the power of motivation and reward that comes from within.

These are valuable lessons for work and in life in the 21st Century. I am thrilled more kids at more schools have had the opportunity to develop these skills as more schools adopted HOL this year.

*Russell Kerr*





## WHAT IS **HANDS ON LEARNING**?

HOL is a targeted in school intervention where two artisan-teachers work collaboratively with small groups of cross-age students. They form strong, long term relationships by engaging in significant creative building projects around the school and local community.

HOL is made up of four fundamental elements that build a platform for young people to grow confidence, engage and achieve at school.



### A place to belong

A physical sanctuary at school.



### People to belong to

Small teams working together, sharing meals and building strong relationships.



### Real things to do

Engaging in creative and meaningful projects.



### Giving back

Making valuable contributions to their community, building self-esteem and connection.



## OUR PURPOSE

We work to prevent early school leaving by creating opportunities at school for vulnerable young people to be more engaged, discover their talents and experience success.





## GENERATION LOST

SPOTLIGHT ON RISING DROPOUTS  
AND RISK OF SOCIAL DISASTER

**“A staggering 10,000 vulnerable teens are dropping out of Victorian high schools... every year, triggering fears of a generation lost in a world of unemployment.”**

12 May 2014, The Age

Student engagement and early school leaving featured prominently in the media this year. The Age newspaper highlighted the growing problem of school dropouts (The Age, 12 May 2014), and the Victorian Auditor General's office criticised the Education Department for its persistent failure to develop targeted strategies to address known barriers to rural students' engagement with education (VAGO, April 2014).

Young people have different learning styles and those who don't thrive in a traditional classroom are increasingly disengaging from school. HOL solves this problem by giving schools a way to keep these kids engaged. Being involved in HOL just one day a week is enough to give them a breather, make them feel that school matters, and help reconnect them with what is on offer in the classroom the other four days of the week. HOL gives them a reason to keep coming to school and helps them develop the skills they need to cope with, and benefit from, being in the classroom.



## THE KIDS WE HELP

Students present with a variety of issues, predominately disruptive behaviour and social isolation.

School primary referral reason	Frequency	% of reasons
ADD/ADHD/ODD	79	15.7%
Aggressive – physical/verbal	77	15.3%
Attention seeking/impulsive	108	21.4%
Disability (PSD funded)	42	8.3%
Unable to sustain friendships	22	4.4%
Victim of bullying	43	8.5%
Withdrawn/shy/lacking confidence	73	14.5%
Other...	60	11.9%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Based on 2013 data collected from 504 students across 21 schools.

Other background behavioural issues	Frequency	% of issues	% of students
Aggressive behaviour	60	6.3%	12.2%
Anger management issues	17	1.8%	3.5%
Bullying – perpetrator	35	3.7%	7.1%
Bullying – victim	43	4.5%	8.8%
Chronic truancy (school refuser)	32	3.3%	6.5%
Disengagement from school	240	25.1%	48.9%
Disruptive classroom behaviour	243	25.4%	49.5%
Failure to meet learning potential	109	11.4%	22.2%
Non – attendance issues	59	6.2%	12.0%
Social isolation	91	9.5%	18.5%
Substance abuse	28	2.9%	5.6%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>194%</b>

Students could present with more than one background issue, hence >100% figure.

## SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

*“We need to know about more than school attendance and academic grades if we are to meet young people’s needs.”*

Prof. Johanna Wyn, Director Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne.

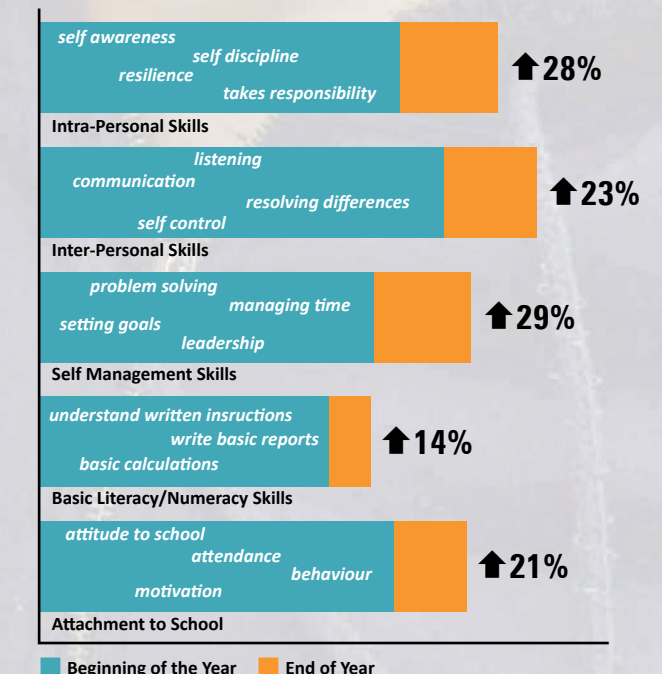
An important element of our best practice method involves the ongoing measurement of skill growth in the young people involved in HOL, particularly those skills they will need to succeed in work and life in the 21st Century.

We compare the progress of students from when they first enter HOL to how they are faring at the end the year.

This data provides a much richer picture of the impact HOL has on young people than is possible to capture through blunt measures like attendance or NAPLAN.

## BUILDING THE PLATFORM FOR LEARNING

Impact of HOL on vulnerable students 2013 data set





# **PIONEERING NEW EVALUATION**

As a founding partner in the Australian Research Council (ARC) national research project 'Building Futures for Young Australians' we have helped develop a new tool to measure what works to keep kids engaged at school.

HOL typically supports disengaging students who are not enjoying school and/or not finding it meaningful.

The ARC project, led by the University of Melbourne, pioneers the concept of enabling spaces, and a Connections, Capacities and Meanings (CCM) framework to measure what works to keep vulnerable kids at school.

Research shows that these three factors can be used to describe the impact of programs like HOL that seek to help young people stay connected to school.

We are delighted with the way this tool captures a slice of the reality of being in school. It tells the story of how schools are enabling spaces for many kids (those who cope well with the classroom), but

it also highlights those kids who struggle with school. Importantly it shows how the experience kids are having in HOL is dramatically different to their normal classroom experience – and given HOL targets those kids who are not coping with school, it demonstrates the way in which HOL provides an enabling space within school for these young people. This explains why their attendance improves through HOL, because they really do feel that HOL is a place they belong, with people they belong to, doing real things, and having something of value to offer.

Over 500 responses of HOL students were compared with over 3,500 responses of high schools students with HOL responses dramatically different – at statistically significant levels ( $p < 0.001$ ), on all measures.

## CAPACITIES

The CCM Framework dimension of Capacities captures HOL's ability to develop kid's skills.

The feeling that they are not learning anything at school is typical of kids who enter HOL. It is significant (both statistically and otherwise) that the majority feel very differently about HOL.

## MEANINGS

The CCM Framework dimension of Meanings captures HOL's ability to involve kids in real tasks that are valued by their school, their community.

Kids who find school meaningless clearly derive a benefit from the HOL approach, finding it far more meaningful. And because HOL is part of school, school can start to become more meaningful to them.

## CONNECTING

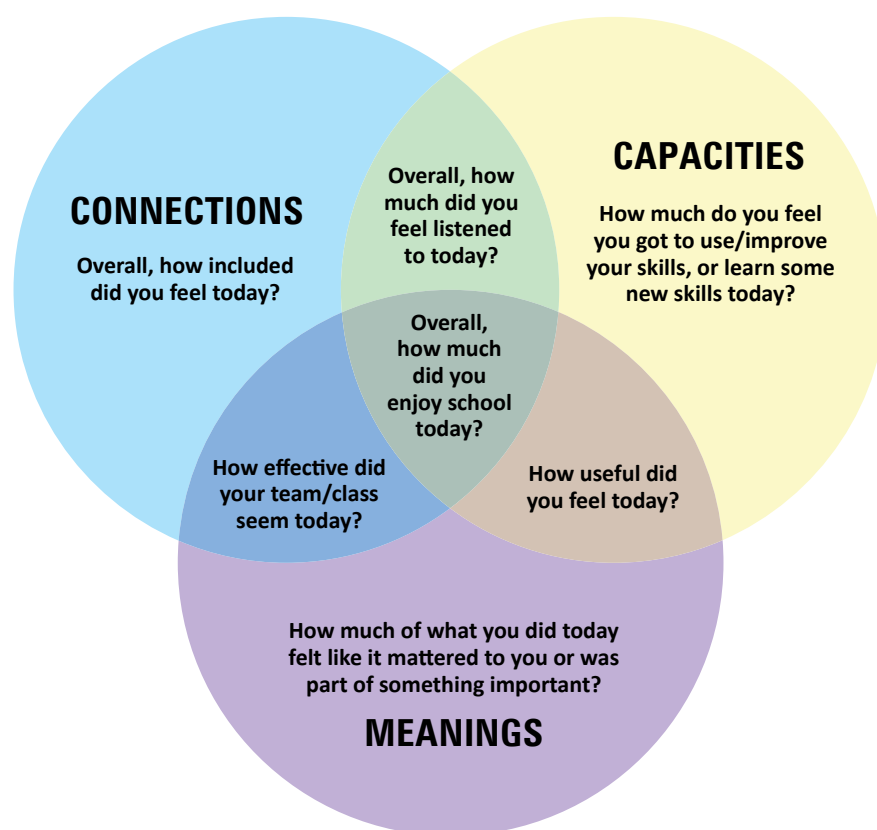
The CCM Framework dimension of Connecting captures HOL's central desired outcome of creating a sense of belonging – giving kids somewhere to belong and people to belong to.

The high rates of inclusion shown here demonstrates how HOL dramatically increases alienated kids' sense of belonging.

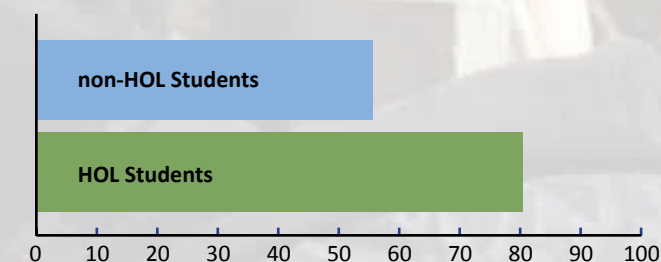
## ENJOYMENT AND HAPPINESS

We believe that at the centre of the CCM Framework lies the notion of happiness and wellbeing. HOL's raison d'être is to build kids' sense of wellbeing through being connected, by developing their capacities, and helping them find meaning.

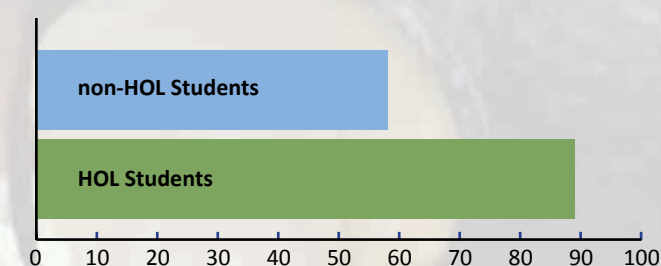
HOL students are drawn from the cohort of kids who are not enjoying school, so it is quite remarkable that 73% of them had positive experiences. This helps explain why so many will alter negative classroom behaviours in order to stay in HOL.



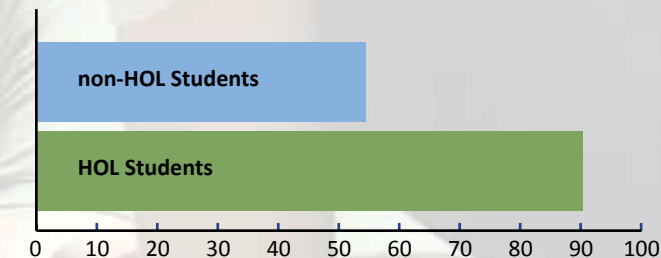
How much of what you did today mattered to you?



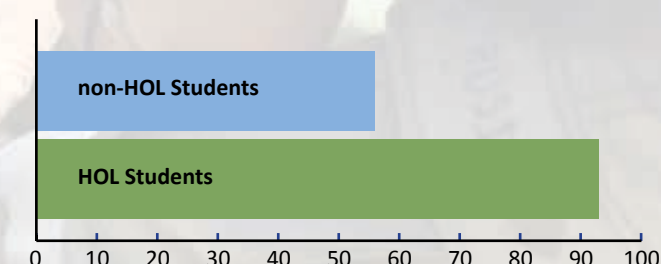
How useful did you feel today?



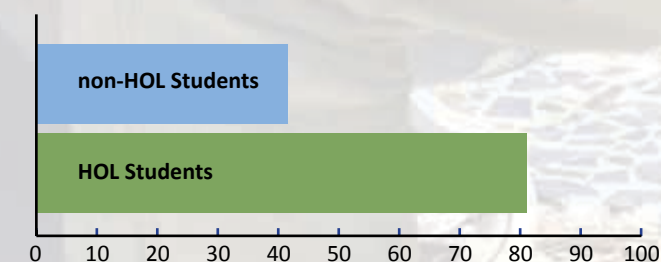
How much did you enjoy school today?



How effective did you feel today?



How included did you feel today?



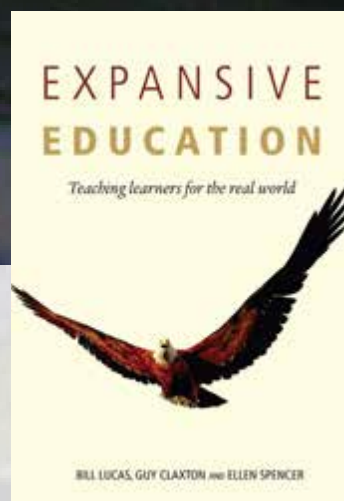


# LEADING RESEARCHERS SHOWCASE HANDS ON LEARNING



## ***The Self-Transforming School*** (Routledge, 2013)

Preeminent academics Professor Brian Caldwell and Jim Spinks have had a significant influence on education policy in Australia for decades. In this book they combine an analysis of factors contributing to the success of schools, with an examination of powerful trends that are shaping developments in education policy and practice. Hands On Learning is highlighted as an exemplary school-based initiative that helped Frankston High become a self-transforming school for its disengaged students, providing a higher quality of education for all through the adoption of the Hands On Learning method.



## ***Expansive Education: Teaching learners for the real world*** (ACER Press, 2013)

Acclaimed authors Bill Lucas, Guy Claxton and Ellen Spencer note a growing realisation on the international stage that a country's future in the 21st Century and beyond depends on its peoples' creativity, problem solving, communication and collaboration. They provide case studies of pioneers in the field of expansive education from across the globe and the positive results that have accrued. Hands On Learning is showcased as a potent example of moving learning outside the traditional classroom and demonstrating how powerful it is for students to learn in real world settings.



## ***Putting the Jigsaw Together: Flexible learning programs in Australia*** (Victoria University, 2014)

This nationwide two-year study by leading academic Associate Professor Kitty te Riele was supported by the Ian Potter Foundation and focuses on innovative learning engagement programs that re-engage young people with education. More than 900 flexible learning programs were identified across Australia, with the study finding "staff are the greatest asset for these programs. They build the strong relationships that are the foundation of young people's engagement with learning in flexible learning programs." Hands On Learning is featured with a case study of HOL at McClelland College, examining how HOL keeps young people connected to learning, why they thrive, and the positive outcomes it creates for students.



# YOU HEARD IT **FROM THE KIDS**



## COURTNEY, YEAR 8

*"I find it hard to listen and I get distracted easily. I don't really like school. I used to get bullied, because I'm different. There was no point going to school. I didn't go to school much before HOL. I just slept a lot. HOL is fun. It's just fun. You can do stuff as well, not just sit and listen to the teacher. Writing and sitting watching is boring versus doing it. I come to school more now."*

## JASON, YEAR 8

*"Before HOL every day at school was hell. You have to do two pages of writing every period. It just gets boring sitting there doing nothing. You don't do anything like build something. I'd get into trouble when I spoke out and then get arvo-detentions. Without Hands On I would have got kicked out and now I want to try and stay at school."*

## JASMINE, YEAR 8

*"In HOL you get to do more activities, do what you like doing, and get to know people you wouldn't otherwise. It's noisy in normal class, a few kids distract me from getting my work done. At HOL I've worked on the pizza oven, putting timber panels up in our hut and I created a photographic photo wall for our hut..."*

## KALISTA, YEAR 9

*"I felt like the teachers didn't like me and a lot of people didn't like me. Now Hands On Learning gives me something to come to school for. I just come every day. I have been at school every day for about two months. It's just more fun and makes me realise that there is something fun about school. Just the teamwork, working with a lot of other students, learning new skills and not having to write down a lot of the stuff like you have to do in normal school – it gives me a bit of a break. It just makes me happy."*

## CHARLIE, YEAR 8

*"I've always liked building things and using my hands and when I saw what was happening in HOL I asked to join. Ever since, I've had a lot of fun. It makes me feel happy and creative. It makes me feel like I can do more things than just sit at a table on the computer. I've been working with Ulash and the others on a few projects. I like the teamwork and HOL gives me a chance to do what I want to do in terms of learning."*

## JOHN, YEAR 9

*"When I go back to class after a Hands On day I work better because I've had a break and I can then concentrate more on my work."*



# SIGNIFICANT GROWTH

## SCHOOLS RUNNING HOL DURING 2013-14

Nearly 1,000 students participated across 42 schools running HOL during the financial year.

Aranmore Catholic College, Leederville (WA)  
 Bellarine Secondary College, Drysdale  
 Belvoir Special School, Wodonga  
 Benalla College, Benalla  
 Collingwood College Alternative School, Collingwood  
 Donald High School, Donald  
 Doveton College, Doveton  
 Eastbourne Primary School, Rosebud  
 Epping Secondary College, Epping  
 FCJ College, Benalla  
 Fitzroy Secondary College, Fitzroy  
 Frankston High School, Frankston  
 Hopetoun P-12 College, Hopetoun  
 Horsham College, Horsham

Koo Wee Rup Secondary College, Koo Wee Rup  
 Kurnai College, Churchill  
 Kurnai College, Morwell  
 Lara Secondary College, Lara  
 Lorne-Aireys Inlet P-12 College, Lorne  
 Lowanna Secondary College, Moe  
 Marnebeck Special School, Cranbourne  
 McClelland College, Franks North  
 Mornington Secondary College, Mornington  
 Mount Eliza Secondary College, Mt Eliza  
 Murtoa College, Murtoa  
 Narre Warren South P-12 College, Narre Warren  
 Newcomb Secondary College, Newcomb  
 Noble Park Primary School, Noble Park

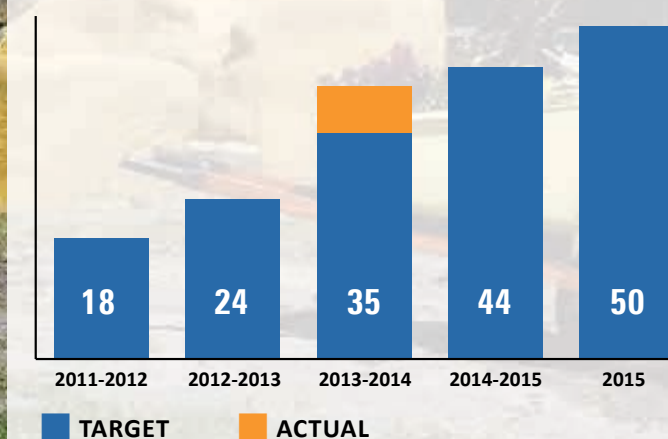
Northern Bay P-12 College, Corio  
 Sale College, Sale  
 Somerville Secondary College, Somerville  
 Traralgon College, Traralgon  
 St. Francis Xavier College, Berwick  
 The Lakes South Morang P-9 School, South Morang  
 Upper Yarra Secondary College, Yarra Junction  
 Wangaratta High School, Wangaratta  
 Wedderburn College, Wedderburn  
 Werribee Secondary College, Werribee  
 Whittlesea Secondary College, Whittlesea  
 Wodonga Middle Years College, Wodonga  
 Wyndham Central College, Werribee  
 Yarrabah Special School, Aspendale

## EXCEEDING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN TARGETS

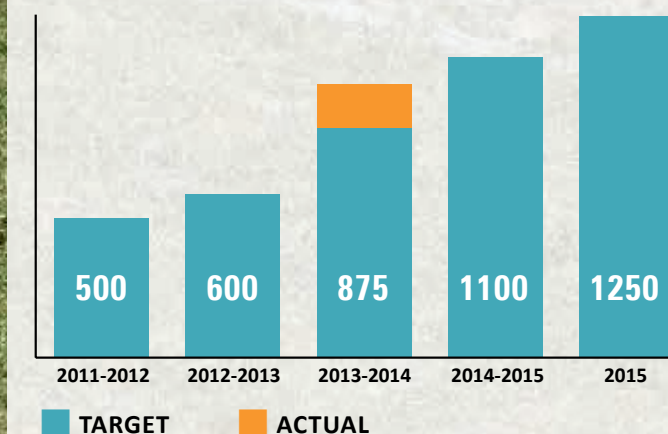
The HOL footprint increased dramatically this year with 16 new schools embracing the HOL method, exceeding our strategic plan (2012-2015) target of 11 new schools.

This has only been possible with the unwavering support of our philanthropic partners who, through seed funding, have enabled these new schools to conduct the HOL experiment and test for themselves whether HOL really works and how good a fit it is for their students. HOL also provides unique ways for schools to engage with individuals and community/business/ philanthropic foundations who wish to support their local schools.

Projected SCHOOLS using HOL by end 2015



Projected HOL STUDENTS by end 2015







# POTENT PARTNERSHIPS FORGE NEW CLUSTERS

## NORTHERN METRO



An unprecedented partnership between the City of Whittlesea and philanthropy has made it possible for The Lakes South Morang P-9 School, Epping Secondary College and Whittlesea Secondary College to introduce HOL in 2014. Youth workers from the City of Whittlesea are working alongside HOL artisan-teachers with the support of a three-year seed funding package led by Gandel Philanthropy and the Ian Potter Foundation.

*"All young people deserve the chance to excel in everything they do. HOL provides more opportunities for kids to achieve at school - building the self-esteem, motivation and attendance that leads to greater education and life outcomes,"* Vedran Drakulic, CEO of Gandel Philanthropy said.

## WIMMERA



HOL headed west in late 2013, with a three-year flagship grant from the Newsboys Foundation. Schools in Donald, Hopetoun, and Murtoa joined Horsham Secondary College to form a Wimmera HOL cluster. The Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) was instrumental in paving the way, along with the North Central LLEN. Warracknabeal and Rainbow Colleges, along with Horsham Special School are on the horizon to join the cluster next year. Tim Shaw, Executive Officer of the Wimmera LLEN describes HOL as a fantastic way to keep young people engaged with their education.

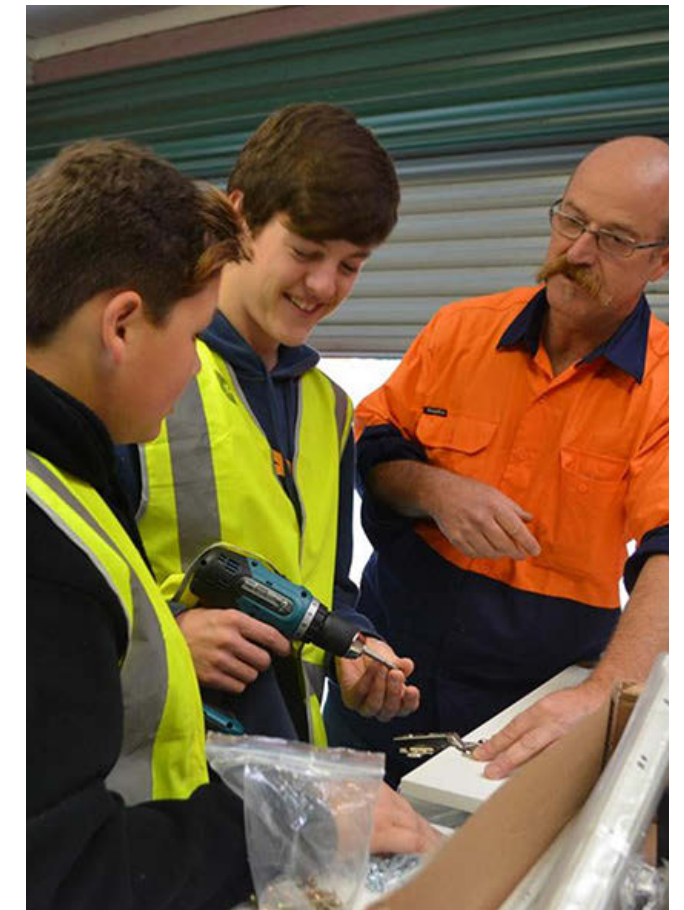
*"It's great to see kids from rural schools benefiting. The program enables our young people to stay engaged with education and provides the opportunity to develop not only their practical skills, but the essential social and life skills they need to succeed in work and life. It's a great program, it has real impact and it is backed by quality people in the HOL team. The kids love it, schools love it and we love it."*

## PENINSULA



Government, philanthropy and local stakeholders combined forces to introduce new targeted transition support for local students at three schools around Rosebud on the Mornington Peninsula. HOL began first at Eastbourne Primary School and will expand into Rosebud Secondary College and Dromana Primary School next year. This exciting new initiative is being supported by Foundation 59, Grosvenor Foundation and Ballandry Fund, along with the Mornington Peninsula Shire and the Department of Human Services through a Community Renewal Grant as part of the Rosebud West Community Renewal Project. In an innovative approach to transition, Grade 5 and 6 students will work with HOL teams from Rosebud Secondary College each year to give vulnerable students first-hand experience of the school they will be attending in Year 7. In the process, the HOL teams will work on valuable community infrastructure projects for the Rosebud region.

## WESTERN METRO



Access to Hands On Learning in Melbourne's west was kick started during the year with seed funding from the Ian Potter Foundation, Gandel Philanthropy and Bokkara Foundation to establish HOL at Werribee and Wyndam Secondary Colleges. And the new cluster is set to grow significantly next year with the Lord Mayor's Charity Foundation stepping in to fund the addition of St Albans, Copperfield and Brookside Secondary Colleges. The impact of HOL at Werribee Secondary College is already being felt with Assistant Principal William Hatzis describing the outcomes for students...

*"We've had reports from quite a few teachers of substantial improvements in attendance, student performance within the class, and the way the HOL students interact with other students as well."*





# GOING GLOBAL

Keeping at risk students in school is a challenge for educators and policy makers across the globe. The Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), rated as one of the world's best new think tanks, has identified Hands On Learning as international best practice in the field. A contingent of educators visited Australia in May for critical first-hand exposure to the students, teachers and schools at the heart of Hands On Learning.



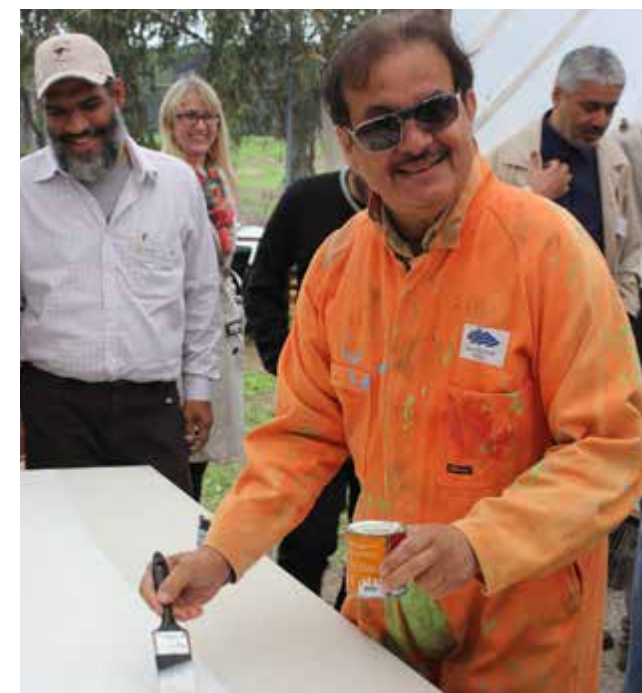
Hands On Learning schools in the Frankston and Geelong regions welcomed a delegation of UAE teachers, principals, community representatives and education administrators in Term 2 2014.



The international delegation hit the ground running attending a statewide meeting of HOL artisan-teachers at 9.00am Monday morning. They joined with HOL teams from schools in Frankston, Mornington and Geelong and participated in 'hands



on' practical training. Another highlight was hearing directly from former HOL students about the difficulties they faced at school and the transformative impact HOL has had on them.





# LENDING A HAND ACROSS THE STATE

## HELPING OUT



### HOPETOUN P-12

Lake Lascelles in Hopetoun attracts outdoor enthusiasts across the country. The HOL team has been working hard building a limestone hut on the foreshore of the lake and loving the experience. According to HOL artisan-teacher Dorian Doti the lake is a much loved local attraction, and with water now flowing from the Grampians Wimmera Mallee pipeline, it has revived tourism and local business, keeping the town sustainable when others in the region are in decline. *"The HOL kids feel connected to the town through the project, and have expressed their satisfaction acquiring skills that they will definitely use in industry. Three plan to pursue careers in building and HOL has helped harness and direct that interest. At the same time another three have returned to mainstream classes with a completely different work ethic and level of interest - working on the limestone hut has motivated them to focus on subjects they would not otherwise enjoy."*



## SOMETHING TO OFFER



### WERRIBEE SECONDARY COLLEGE

Watching the HOL kids work so hard during the installation of a new kitchen that they didn't even stop for lunch was a real buzz for Anglicare Victoria's Tania Di Giantomasso. *"It was so good to see these kids so obviously feel like they had something to offer, feel really valued and part of the team."*

Tania is the Youth Program Facilitator of Anglicare's Garage Youth Drop In Centre located opposite the Werribee Station. Building the new kitchen has been a real partnership between Bunnings (who donated the materials for the new kitchen), Anglicare, and the HOL team from Werribee Secondary College who built and decorated all of the cabinets.



## A BIT OF LOCAL LOVE



### KURNAI, CHURCHILL

Kurnai College's HOL students have teamed up with the volunteer Crinigan Bushland Reserve Committee of Management to give the local much loved local bushland park a real facelift. The team not only built new steps and small bridges, boxed out a completely new walking path and mulched garden beds, but have a much greater and genuine connection to their community in addition to experiencing a significant boost to their self-esteem.



## COMMUNITY SPIRIT



### FCJ AND BENALLA P-12 COLLEGE

Community spirit and supporting others is popular in Benalla. The local Tomorrow:Today Foundation funds HOL artisan-teacher positions at both Benalla P-12 College and FCJ Catholic College and both HOL teams are building a reputation for helping out around the community. Benalla P-12 College helped refurbish rooms at the Benalla Uniting Church, and FCJ Catholic College has been helping build fences destroyed by bushfire at local farms. The local Scouts have been trying for years to attract grants to renovate their hall and FCJ Catholic College's HOL team stepped in to lend a hand. The Scouts had sourced donations of paint but just didn't have enough hands until the HOL team pitched in painting inside and out, working on doors, plinth boards, poles and even water tanks. It is amazing what a good coat of paint does for everyone's spirits.





# THE POWER OF HOL

## GETTING IN EARLY



*"We are particularly concerned that there is a distinct lack of services and responses through schools and community sector organisations for vulnerable 8-12 year-olds... As the transition between primary and secondary school occurs at this age, middle years children can drift away from school and are at risk of disengaging from education entirely."*

Building the Scaffolding, Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) 2013

A modified version of HOL was piloted at Noble Park Primary in 2013 to keep vulnerable primary students connected to school as they transition to secondary. Adapting the method to accommodate the physical abilities of younger children proved so successful that Eastbourne Primary in Rosebud introduced HOL during the year, with primary aged students in Dromana and Benalla set to follow in the year to come.

## CALD STUDENTS



Our partnership with the Southern Ethnic Advisory Council (SEAAC), funded by the Scanlon Foundation (and support for SEAAC from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust) to deliver HOL at Narre Warren South P-12 College continues to reap rewards.

*"We have many newly arrived refugees from Iran, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka. If I see that an enrolling student is from overseas, I consider them immediately for HOL. HOL is a much more intensive support for students both from their peers and teachers. It is a safe place for them to feel comfortable but to also excel at a different style of learning. It enhances their employability skills and allows smooth integration into our school of 1900 students – a significant transition as many of our newly arrived students come from English language schools of fewer than 60 students."*

Clorinda Siemienowicz, Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Narre Warren Secondary College

## HIGHLIGHTS

### INNOVATIONS

This year HOLA supported two innovative pilots seeking to transform schooling to improve engagement and motivation for all students - from the brightest who lack stimulation and inspiration, to the most academically vulnerable.

Real Time Learning at Mount Eliza Secondary College received support from the William Buckland Foundation, Cooper Foundation and the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, while the McClelland Academy Program at McClelland Secondary College benefited from the valuable support of the John T Reid Charitable Trusts.



### FAMILY TIES

Principals consistently report HOL family events are popular and very often the first time parents have had the chance to celebrate successes their child has achieved at school. While the style of the event may vary - pizza lunch, pasta night, roast lunch, or information evening - the attendance of parents and family members who otherwise seldom attend parent-teacher interviews is a consistent theme.



### CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

An enthusiastic crew of corporate volunteers from Goldman Sachs joined forces with HOL students from Mount Eliza and Mornington Secondary College at the Presentation Family Respite Centre in Balnarring Beach to re-plant the entrance driveway in May 2014. Students relished the opportunity to mix with our corporate volunteers and hear a whole new perspective on life after school.







# THE HEART AND SOUL OF HANDS ON LEARNING

The strong genuine relationships HOL artisan-teachers build with each other and HOLA's team, provide the camaraderie, sustenance, and inspiration these passionate people need to support some of the most vulnerable young people in our schools.



## HOLCON 2013



Hands On Learning Australia's annual conference is one of the best times every year to witness the power of people and the inspiration they provide each other. HOL artisan-teachers travelled to Anglesea in December 2013 for two days of professional development and fellowship. Nobody really understands the challenges and rewards of working with



vulnerable young people quite like someone else doing exactly the same thing. While the conference's informal sessions were a great chance to share strategies, the formal workshops covered best practice projects ideas, alternative building methods, and occupational health and safety training, along with trauma theory, tackling challenging behaviour and drug awareness.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE



Quality assurance is the key to our success. HOLA ensures the rigour of the HOL method is maintained by providing ongoing training and support to schools. All new HOL artisan-teachers receive induction and immersion training covering student selection and group make up, Focus Plan strategy, data collection, project identification and planning, OH&S and community and parental engagement strategies.

## VALUED VOLUNTEERS



Year in, year out a small band of volunteers share their time, skills and experience with young people in HOL. This year a special round of applause goes to Merv Bullas at Somerville Secondary College (pictured above), Gary Wragg at Eastbourne Primary in Rosebud, and Jeff Fisher at St Francis Xavier College in Berwick.





# FUN FABULOUS EVENTS

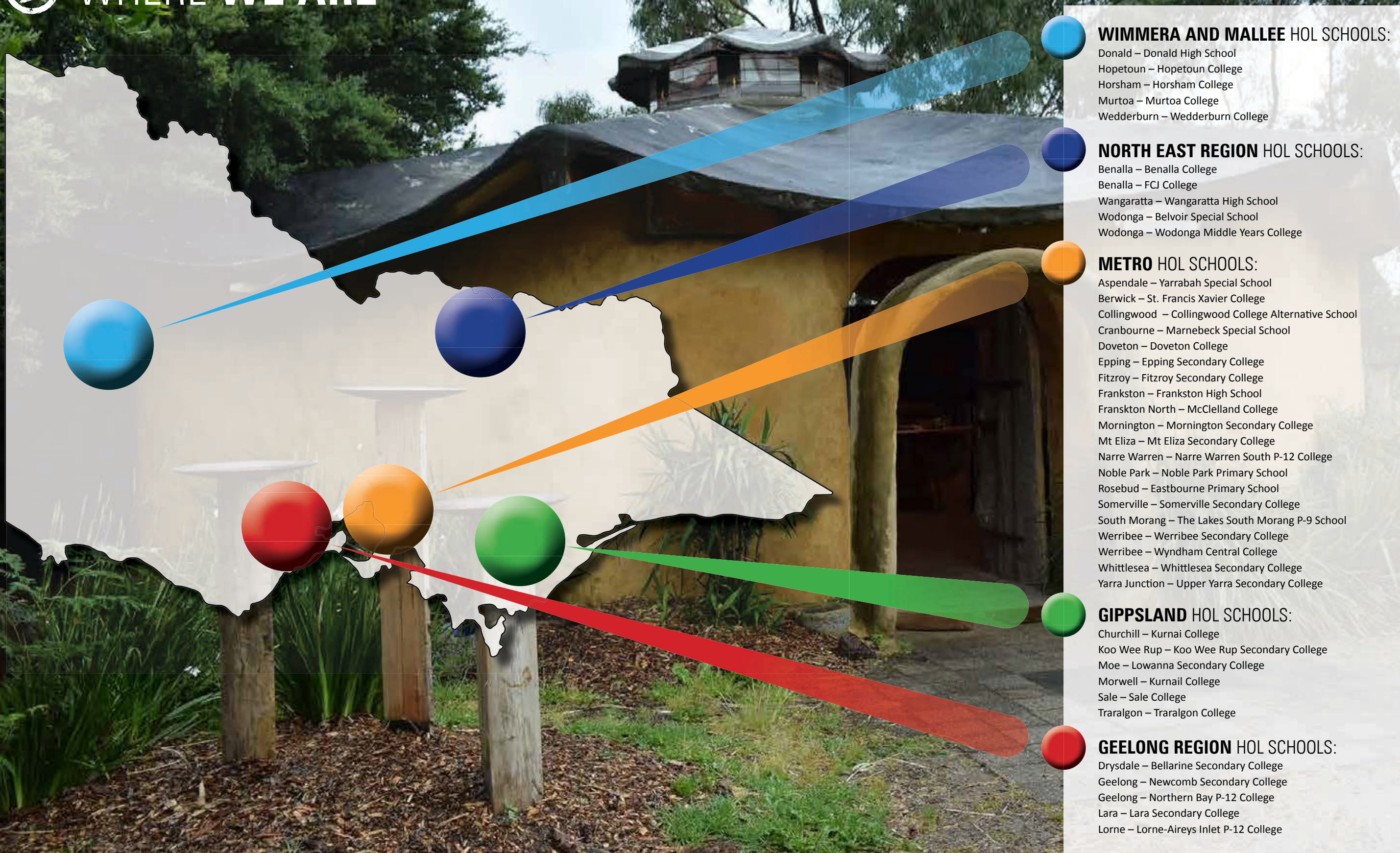
Annual inter-school HOL events like the billy cart derby and raft race on the Mornington Peninsula are a huge hit. As the number of HOL regions grow so too do the number of regional events. Students from participating schools collaborate completely on design and racing –with teamwork, problem solving and good communication the order of the day.







## WHERE WE ARE





# HOL REGIONS



## MELBOURNE METROPOLITAN

With an increase in new schools of 100 per cent thanks to seed funding from valued supporters such as Gandel Philanthropy, the Ian Potter Foundation, and Foundation 59 there are now students doing HOL across metropolitan Melbourne from Wyndam and Werribee in the west, Whittlesea and Epping in the north, over to Yarra Junction in the east, down to the Frankston area in the south east and Rosebud on the Mornington Peninsula.



## GEELONG

HOL in the Geelong region continues to attract considerable support from the local community led by Give Where You Live and the Geelong Community Foundation, in addition to the support from the Bokhara Foundation, Collier Charitable Fund, the Gwyneth Raymond Trust, and Cooper Investors.



## GIPPSLAND

Four schools in Gippsland were the first non-metropolitan schools to start HOL in 2009 and remain as committed as ever with a strong determination among these local schools to cater for the different ways young people learn and the needs of all their students.



## WIMMERA AND MALLEE

A three-year flagship grant from the Newsboys Foundation was the catalyst for the establishment of a Wimmera cluster of HOL schools in collaboration with the Wimmera Southern Mallee and North Central Local Learning and Employment Networks.



## NORTH EAST

Community spirit really is strong in the North East with Benalla's progressive Tomorrow:Today Foundation continuing to financially support HOL at both Benalla P-12 College and FCJ College. The cluster has expanded geographically this year with the introduction of HOL at Wodonga Middle Years College.



# THANK YOU TO OUR KEY SUPPORTERS

Hands On Learning Australia is a not-for-profit Harm Prevention Charity with DGR status. Our funding comes entirely from philanthropic foundations, trusts, corporate supporters, and individual donors. We sincerely thank our partners for their greatly appreciated support that allows us to survive, thrive, and continue supporting vulnerable young people in our schools.

Goldman Sachs Australia Foundation	Hacend PAF
Pam Usher	Herbert Smith Freehills
Brougham Foundation	Casey Cardinia Foundation
Gwyneth Raymond Trust	Erica Foundation
Collier Charitable Fund	May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust
Antipodean Family Foundation	Ricketson Foundation
Geelong Community Foundation	Price Family Foundation
RobMeree Foundation	Ballandry (Peter Griffin Family) Fund
	Scanlon Foundation





# OUR BOARD



**Rod Glover**

*Chairman Principal, Rod Glover Consulting*

Rod has provided strategic advice to the most senior levels of government. He was the inaugural Senior Fellow for the Institute for Large-Scale Innovation in San Francisco, and is an Associate with the innovation agency NESTA in London. Rod was previously the Deputy Secretary, Innovation and Projects, in the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet. Rod is a Board member of the Victorian Government's Centre of Excellence in Intervention and Prevention Science (CEIPS), and was a member of the Australian Government's National Sustainability Council.



**Adam Cameron**

*Finance Director, The Hardie Grant Publishing Group*

Adam Cameron is a qualified CPA with over twenty years extensive experience in the chartered accounting, financial services and publishing industries. For the last ten years he has been the Finance Director and Company Secretary of the Hardie Grant Publishing Group which has been a long term financial supporter of HOLA.



**Angela Pollard**

*Principal, Mount Eliza Secondary College*

Angela is secondary school principal with a keen interest in student engagement. She has been Principal of Mount Eliza Secondary College in south east Melbourne since November 2012, and was previously Principal of McClelland College in Frankston for five years where she led a significant regeneration of the school and a dramatic and positive improvement in academic results.



**Billy White**

*Small business proprietor and former HOL student*

Billy has been running a successful plastering business for three years. School was particularly tough for Billy as he struggled with literacy from the early years, feeling whenever teachers put paper and pen in front of him they were setting him up to fail. Hands On Learning was his first experience of success at school. The acknowledgement Billy received for his achievements in HOL motivated him to keep attending school and had a transformative impact on his confidence and aspiration.



**Clare Shearman**

*Co-ordinator of the Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council (SEAAC)*

As a former CEO of the YMCA and current Co-coordinator of the Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council (SEAAC), Clare has an impressive track record in youth advocacy. SEAAC is a Melbourne not for profit committed to empowering culturally diverse young people. Clare has a MBA from the Cranfield School of Management in the United Kingdom.



**Professor Johanna Wyn**

*Director of the Youth Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne*

Johanna is one of Australia's preeminent youth researchers and is currently leading the Building Futures for Young Australians national research project funded by the Australian Research Council. This seminal national research is developing the first large scale national evidence base of what works to keep young people connected to education and/or support their pathways into work.



**Lisa Vagg**

*Executive Director, Communications*

Lisa has worked in communications across the government, not for profit and education sectors, including eight years leading the communications for the Heritage Council of Victoria. She is an advocate of the transformative power of education and campaigned extensively with other parents about the value of preschool education, culminating in the Victorian Government's 2007 decision to create the new Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.



**Cameron Wiseman**

*Executive Director, Finance*

Cameron has extensive fundraising experience developed through a number of senior roles in his 15 years with large non-government development agencies World Vision and Oxfam Australia. Cam joined HOL as a volunteer in 2009 and he has driven the relationship marketing strategy which sees the organisation in the strong financial position it is in today.



**Dr Richard O'Donovan**

*Executive Director, Operations*

Dr Richard O'Donovan has taught at secondary and tertiary levels, worked on numerous educational research projects, worked in the IT industry as a programmer, and has designed administrative software for schools.

He pioneered a Real Time Student Feedback system that provided teachers with live feedback during lessons via a student-held iPod Touch. Richard has a PhD in mathematics education from Monash University.



# CONTACTS

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*The stunning three dimensional HOL logo that features on the back cover was hand crafted by long time HOL volunteer Merv Bullas.*



