

Hands on Learning **e**newsletter

August 2018

Welcome

Our first year with Save the Children culminated in centre stage for Hands on Learning students at Melbourne's Parliament House with a week-long showcase in March, and our biggest ever national conference at the Footscray Community Arts Centre in June.

It's been a busy twelve months as Hands on Learning has grown nationally with eighteen new implementations, including three Tasmanian schools joining schools in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and the UAE. We celebrate the achievements of students from western Brisbane to southern Tasmania, and thank our school leadership team partners, committed philanthropic supporters, and the amazing artisan-teacher mentors who make it all possible.

School Education Engagement Team



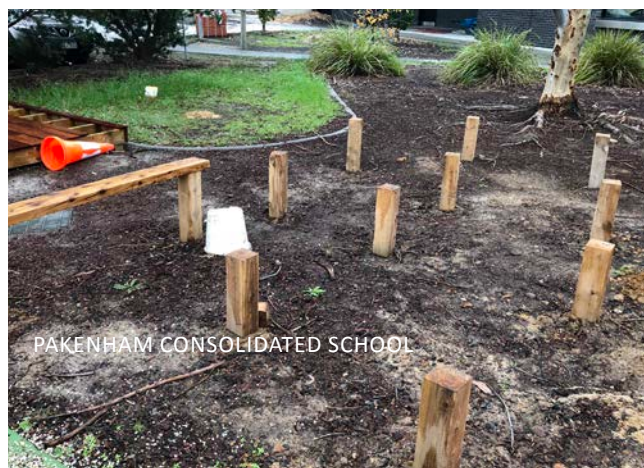
DIMBOOLA MEMORIAL SECONDARY COLLEGE



NOBLE PARK SECONDARY COLLEGE



PATTERSON RIVER SECONDARY COLLEGE



PAKENHAM CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

BOOSTING ENGAGEMENT

More students in more schools
learning by doing

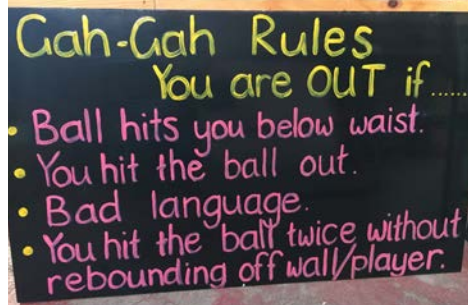
Thanks to our generous philanthropic supporters we have been able to support 18 new implementations to build engagement, increase attendance, and prevent early school leaving.

- CIRE COMMUNITY SCHOOL
- DIMBOOLA MEMORIAL SECONDARY COLLEGE
- EAST DEVONPORT PRIMARY SCHOOL, TASMANIA
- EUROA PRIMARY SCHOOL
- EUROA SECONDARY SCHOOL
- HUONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL, TASMANIA
- HUONVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL, TASMANIA
- KURUNJANG SECONDARY COLLEGE
- MERNDA CENTRAL COLLEGE
- NARRE WARREN SOUTH P-12 COLLEGE (PRIMARY)
- NATHALIA SECONDARY COLLEGE
- NOBLE PARK SECONDARY COLLEGE
- NORWOOD SECONDARY COLLEGE
- PAKENHAM CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
- PATTERSON RIVER SECONDARY COLLEGE
- ReFRESH AT THE AVENUE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE
- WARRNAMBOOL SPECIAL DEVELOPMENTAL SCHOOL

BUILDING REAL SCHOOL ASSETS

Students celebrate adding value around their schools

There is nothing quite like the feeling of “I built that..” especially when you walk past it every day, and your teachers and fellow students celebrate your work.



Gah-Gah pit

Hawkesdale P12 College's HoL team are celebrating the completion of a Gah-Gah pit and tiered seating at a cost of approximately \$2500 which included some excavation work, two pallets of sleepers, steel posts, and donated crushed bluestone dust for the surface.

For those unfamiliar, Gah-Gah is a fast paced, high energy ball game played in an octagonal pit. The Gah-Gah pit at Hawkesdale was completed over four days and the final result is the 'talk of the school' according to HoL artisan-teacher mentor Lachie Reichman.

"All the other kids are talking about Hands on Learning and want to join HoL because we do stuff like the Gah-Gah Pit."



The latest from HoL Junior

Last week Hawkesdale's Junior HoL girls completed their Smurf village... (with a little help from the boys!) "It looks fantastic and will be an interactive garden once our plants are a little more established," said Shannon Drysdale, HoL artisan-teacher mentor.



BUILDING REAL SCHOOL ASSETS: STUDENTS CELEBRATE ADDING VALUE AROUND THEIR SCHOOLS



Seating pods

The HoL team at Doveton College were actively involved in identifying the next HoL project – a real need for shaded seating around their school. With design and construction help from the HoL School Support Team, the students worked diligently to complete this fabulous new shaded seating pod that will now be replicated across the school.



New front fence

The HoL team at Murray High School in Lavington NSW is called on regularly to complete lots of projects around the school. A recent upgrade to the front of the school didn't include replacing an old steel and wire fence. The Principal asked HoL to solve the problem of stopping balls of all sizes getting under and through the fence into the teachers' carpark. After consulting with students and the staff, the team decided to go with a plastic sleeper fence because it was aesthetically pleasing. Using plastic retainer sleepers with a spacer to create rails between H-section steel posts, the students removed the old fence, jack-hammered concreted posts out, ground off reinforcing from the concreted area, laid the new posts and rails, and installed trees and a watering system over a six week period. The end result is a hit with parents, students and staff. Let alone the local Bunnings store who hadn't considered using reinforcing sleepers as post and rail fencing, and are now looking at marketing the concept.



PLENTY OF PRIDE

The transformation of an ugly overflow drain into a frog pond and outdoor environmental studies classroom complete with retaining walls, an access deck for experiments, and landscaping might still be a work in progress, but the early wins are the source of real pride for the Hands on Learning team at Werribee Secondary College.

Artisan-teacher mentor Daniel Gluhak readily admits that there's been lots of digging as part of the team's work to create a new outdoor learning space at their school. "The digging developed our perseverance, while we honed our measurement skills marking out the areas properly, mixing concrete to the right ratios, making sure the levels were all correct and cutting the lengths of wood accurately and precisely. That's the basis for all building and it doesn't matter what you do. Once you get the measurement right everything runs smoothly."

For Assistant Principal William Hatzis, Hands on Learning is all about engaging students and helping motivate them in all areas of their education. "It is so important that HoL is an onsite program so the students remain part of our school and we control what we want to happen. The projects give the students real pride and develop their confidence back in the classroom and the rest of the school community can see what they are doing and help celebrate their achievements."



The Director of Student Voice, Ben Riley, acknowledges it's probably wishful thinking that one education style will suit everyone. "Our academic results speak for themselves and many of our students benefit enormously from learning by doing. Our predominant responsibility as educators is to support our students to be 'future ready'. That can be as simple as turning up on time, accountability, teamwork, and strong interpersonal skills. Skills you can't achieve in 49 minute chunks. In terms of the 21st century workforce, we don't need to memorise slabs of information, we can Google. What we do need is skills to work with each other, to communicate, to problem solve, and real self-discipline. Hands on Learning gives our students the opportunity to develop these work ready skills."

Leading by example

Year 9 student Sam has had a leadership role - making sure everyone works as a team and spreads the workload with different groups rotating through digging, measurement and mixing the concrete. "It's hard work but I'm working with really good mates. Looking at what we have done makes me feel proud."

Sam's pride is shared by artisan-teacher mentor Sandra Pieterse who admires the way the team respects every contribution and watches out for each other.



READY FOR THE FUTURE

With Deloitte Access Economics predicting two thirds of jobs will be soft skill intensive by 2030, parents are celebrating the way their kids get to develop their soft skills in Hands on Learning working on authentic and entrepreneurial projects.



LIAM: MURRAY HIGH SCHOOL

Murray High School artisan-teacher mentor Tony Zerbst has huge respect for Year 10 student Liam Phair. “Back in Year 7 Liam really struggled in class. Liam’s academic and social skills have steadily improved, but his practical skills and problem solving have astounded everybody. He is highly regarded at Murray High School and is now the go to man for all of us. Liam has gone from strength to strength over the years in his skill development and has contributed a wonderful service to the school in his time. He topped both wood and metal classes last year and we are confident that when gets to TAFE that his name will be up in lights.”

No-one recognizes the development of Liam’s skills more than his mum Kathy.

“Liam is more open to talk and communicate with other students and teachers. He was shy and reserved, but being part of Hands on Learning has

given him the confidence to be more social. The growth in his communication skills has helped him do much better at school and will be so important on the job site where he will be working with people from all walks of life.”

“If Liam didn’t do HoL in Year 7 it would have been a different story. I couldn’t get him to go to school some days, and when he was there he was disruptive and suspended often.

From the day he started, Tony could see potential that no one else did and took him under his wing. He recognised Liam’s hands on skills immediately, how hard he would work and pushed him to do his best with Maths and English so he could secure an apprenticeship. There are so many kids that could really flourish in our schools that don’t get this chance – Hands on Learning needs to be in every school,” she added.



Being part of the HoL café team at Brookside College has been a gamechanger for Year Nine student Amy who received the Brookside Above and Beyond Award at the end of Term 2, recognising a student at the College who has ‘gone over and beyond for their school or local community’.

“When I’m in ‘Hands on’ I’m happy because we are all working on the same thing, we get trained in the same way, and we are on the same level. In class it’s really different. I don’t feel as comfortable. Being part of the team in HoL has given me the confidence to step up and say something as I know people

will listen to what I have to say. It makes me want to come to school. HoL takes the weight off your shoulders and gives us a break from being in class all the time as that can make you feel overwhelmed and stressed. When I go back into class after being in HoL I’m always in a happy positive mood and wanting to actually learn for once”.

Amy’s mum Sue can’t believe the difference. “I’ve noticed a big change. Amy was always down on herself. Now she is happy and wants to go to school, is much more confident and happy to communicate with everyone. It’s amazing from the start of the year to now.”

AMY: BROOKSIDE P-9 COLLEGE

STUDENTS TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Pride was palpable and happiness transparent as Hands on Learning students from across Victoria converged on Melbourne's Parliament House for a special week-long showcase of their ingenious building work from March 27-29.

Featuring everything from huge solid park benches, planter boxes and billycarts to delicate mosaics, the Showcase in Queens Hall was an incredible opportunity for MPs to discover the inspiring work happening at schools in their electorates and meet the students involved.

"The Showcase was a tangible demonstration of the power of authentic entrepreneurial learning and the impact of helping students who learn in diverse ways to discover their talents, experience success and change the way they think about school," Save the Children CEO Paul Ronalds said.





Kurnai College students Shine

Kurnai students Jai, Khamis, James and Diamond joined local MP Harriet Shing on stage speaking eloquently and passionately about the skills they have developed in the program like leadership and teamwork and their respect for Hands on Learning Coordinator Michael Stubbe, and received a standing ovation from the audience of politicians and schools from across the State.



SOCIAL MEDIA LIGHTS UP

Politicians from all sides were in furious agreement about the power of learning by doing with many posting pictures on social media.

JAMES MERLINO
Minister for Education



ROMA BRITNELL
Member for South West Coast



NATALIE HUTCHINS
Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence



STEPH RYAN
Shadow Minister for Training, Skills & Apprenticeships



NATALIE SULLEYMAN
Member for St Albans



JENNY MIKAKOS
Minister for Youth Affairs



Regional newspapers profile their local students

‘Lifting engagement’, Shepparton News: [Read the article here](#)

‘What’s brewing at Brookside?’, Star Weekly: [Read the article here](#)

‘Hands on trip to Parliament’, LaTrobe Valley Express: [Read the article here](#)

‘Building projects on show’, Benalla Ensign: [Read the article here](#)

‘Engagement the key with helping children learn’, Euroa Gazette: [Read the article here](#)



PROFESSIONAL INSPIRATION

The 2018 Hands on Learning Conference was a resounding success and opened with a reminder for us all to take the opportunity to make a difference every day from humanitarian Moria Kelly AO.

Hands on Learning's annual national conference brings together practitioners, school leaders and key education stakeholders from Brisbane to Devonport for professional development, inspiration and camaraderie. Delegates participate in a range of practical and theory sessions to support the everyday running of HoL – from putting trauma theory into practice, to difficult conversations with young people, to thinking outside the square with innovative team building activities.

Learning by doing

As always, one of the highlights of the conference is the chance to roll up your sleeves and take part in learning by doing and this year that included building musical instruments, designing and constructing aquaponics, and learning the intricacies of framing and rendering techniques.



IMAGE BY ROBERT McKECHNIE



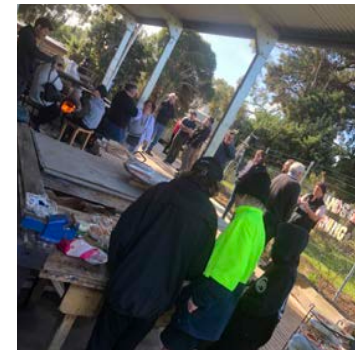
IMAGE BY ROBERT McKECHNIE



IMAGE BY ROBERT McKECHNIE

Learning by visiting

Nothing beats seeing it in action and talking to students and staff if you really want to understand how Hands on Learning works. This year conference delegates from interstate and outside Melbourne took the opportunity to visit established HoL precincts at a range of different schools on the day after the conference. Learning first-hand about what others are doing and sharing what works is a powerful experience for any school considering starting or running the HoL program.



HoL 'BROWNLOW'

Artisan-teacher mentors are the heart and soul of Hands on Learning. Each year we commemorate the character of the first HoL artisan-teacher mentor, John Eldridge, recognising outstanding contribution and celebrating the greatest asset of Hands on Learning, the people involved, and the relationships they build with students, the school and the community.

The 2018 John Eldridge Medal was awarded to Tony Zerbst of Murray High School in New South Wales, an artisan-teacher mentor described by the then principal Richard Schell as passionate, energetic and a real 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 is someone interested in making a difference

to student lives no matter how challenging their behaviour. Someone who puts in 100% and has a strong reputation for going in to bat for kids especially when others just can't see the potential.

At the same time, Tony is a genuine team player who has a fantastic rapport with everyone, running a popular program with kids lining up to get into HoL – and a flair for bringing staff across the school on board with the value of the program."

In fact in the principal's words Tony is an 'energizer bunny' who just keeps on going and takes every opportunity to promote Hands on Learning, including leading significant projects supporting the kids to make a real and valued contributions to the school and community that build self-esteem and a real sense of connection.

In the words of one of the parents, "Tony just takes kids under his wing and helps them fly."

LONG TERM CONTRIBUTIONS

We recognise and appreciate the significant contribution of ALL HoL artisan-teacher mentors. This year there's a group who are celebrating supporting young people participating in HoL for five years or longer and we would like to highlight their long-term contribution:



PENNY STRAY:
FITZROY HIGH SCHOOL

Penny injected her energy and passion without hesitation into Hands on learning at Fitzroy High School right from the very beginning. Penny is a genuinely kind, caring and thoughtful person. She has always instinctively understood the philosophy of Hands on Learning and brings her creativity and passion into all the projects she does and has created a very safe and supportive place for the young people of Fitzroy to belong to. No other person could make an old tram look so incredible.



IAN BURROWES:
FCJ COLLEGE BENALLA

Ian has worked at FCJ College in Benalla since HoL started at the school. He is a genuine soul who is empathetic and always wants to support the students helping them overcome personal challenges. Ian is a quiet achiever and has been successful at developing very positive relationship with the students. Ian is an excellent role model and has many talents to share with the students, one of which is the bespoke Ned Kelly pot belly stoves that he is well known for making.



LOREN FLEMMING: WESTERN
PORT SECONDARY COLLEGE

Loren would have to be one of the most kind-hearted people around. Currently at Western Port Secondary College, Loren has also worked at Mount Eliza and McClelland College. A sparky by trade, she certainly has brought 'spark' to the programs and colleagues she has worked with. Loren is extremely caring and compassionate and constantly aims to bring out the best in the young people she works with. Loren is valued for her gentle soul, professional manner and her obvious love and respect for the Hands on Learning program.



KIRSTEN MORLEY: SOMERVILLE
SECONDARY COLLEGE

Kirsten's energy, fun loving nature, and genuine love of supporting young people is obvious. Kirsten has integrated Hands on Learning so well into Somerville Secondary College and communicates well with the staff at the College and our HoL School Support Team. Well known for her care and compassion, Kirsten has also done much to support a wonderful set of volunteers at Somerville.



MAL SMITH AND NICOLE KRUGER: RAINBOW P-12 COLLEGE

Mal loves his community and his passion immediately rubs off on the students. He instils pride and respect in the students while challenging them to try different tasks. Mal is always full of positive energy and this creates a great space for the HoL students to feel appreciated and grow confidence.

Nicole is vibrant and enthusiastic with a 'can do' attitude, and is not fussed by anything that is dished up, with her sole focus the students' wellbeing. Nicole is so genuine, she can relate to the students on their level. She has loads of empathy to give the students and this is what makes her great.

Both Nicole and Mal share a fantastic working relationship where they bounce off each other and both go over and above to provide the students with a safe and non-judgemental environment where they are all fully supported.

DAVID MCNICOL AND LOUISE AZZOPARDI: COPPERFIELD COLLEGE

David is a very focused worker known for his loyalty and honesty. David has a lovely calm manner and brings an enormous amount of prior industry skill into this role.

Louise is a very kind and supportive person. Her genuine belief in her students and the quiet, understated and effective way in which she works with the students is a real joy to watch.

David and Louise started HoL at Copperfield College and work really well together, demonstrating the kind of support and respect for each other that is wonderful modelling for the students they have worked with over the last five years.

EARLY WINS IN QUEENSLAND

The power of teamwork, problem solving and communication

In 2017 two Queensland schools introduced Hands on Learning as a targeted intervention to support students to learn by doing, discover their talents, experience success and change the way they think about school.

A year later there's been many wins. At Rosewood State High School momentum has grown quickly as the team established an impressive Hands on Learning precinct centred around two site huts. They lined both structures, installing a kitchen and meeting area in one, and setting up fabulous tool storage in the other. In between they've levelled the site, built retaining edging and laid pavers to create a fabulous space that the students love.

Principal Nicole Sherlock is a huge advocate for the power of learning by doing.

"Our Maths and English teachers value these real and meaningful learning opportunities. Hands on Learning is all about keeping disengaged kids in mainstream education and developing important soft skills for work and life. We are talking job readiness skills like teamwork, communication, completing the job at hand and not walking off half way, no mobiles, and getting to work on time. Hands on Learning replicates the workforce. Our social media posts are generating hundreds of likes and we have parents asking "How do we get our kids into Hands on Learning?"

Over at Ipswich State High School students have been engaged in a real mix of projects around the school including installing concrete paths, refurbishing play equipment, building storage sheds and refurbishing gardens. The program has expanded in 2018 to run three days because of the positive return on student behaviour,



attendance and work readiness, and a desire to support a larger and wider variety of kids, according to Blair Young, the Head of Student Services in the Junior School.

"We recognise many students need a less formal setting to learn. HoL helps us engage the kids who don't like coming to school and it provides a gradual reintroduction to school for the school refusers who have had a previous bad experience. Students have built a real sense of belonging with the Hands on Learning space itself, and a much greater connection with peers and teachers so they are happier coming to school, which changes the way they think about school and their attendance rates have gone through the roof."



ROSEWOOD STATE HIGH SCHOOL



The Team from Ipswich State High School, with Member for Ipswich West Jim Madden MP at the HoL Presentation Breakfast for civic, business and school leaders.