

IMAGE BY SONIA MARTINOVIC: BROOKSIDE P-9 COLLEGE

HANDS ON LEARNING 
A program supported by Save the Children

Hands on Learning
enewsletter

August 2019

EXCITING GROWTH

Thanks to our generous supporters we have been able to support 45 new schools to train and start Hands on Learning in 2019.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Barellan Central School
Murumbidgee Regional High School
Lavington Public School
Leeton High School

WIMMERA/MALLEE, VICTORIA

Chaffey College

NORTH EAST VICTORIA

Mansfield Secondary College
Bouchier Street Primary School
Gowrie Street Primary School
Wangaratta West Primary School

NORTH CENTRAL VICTORIA

Cohuna Secondary College
Echuca College
Echuca Specialist School
St Joseph's College
Kyabram P-12 College
Rushworth P-12 College
Swan Hill North Primary School
Swan Hill Specialist School
Swan Hill College (FLO Campus)



It is no understatement when School Council President Alison Walker describes Mansfield as a fairly unique community. The HoL program was kickstarted with support from the local Bendigo Bank, Mansfield Rotary Club and Yenken's Mitre Ten. "The school isn't a separate entity it is part of our community. People here want to support our kids and keep them connected to school."

CENTRAL VICTORIA

Beaufort Secondary College
Creswick Primary School

SOUTH WEST VICTORIA

Hampden Specialist School
Koroit and District Primary School
St Patrick's Primary (Koroit)
Merino Consolidated School
Noorat Primary School
Portland North Primary School
Portland South Primary School
Warrnambool East Primary School

NORTHERN MELBOURNE

Sydney Road Community School
Jacana School for Autism

EASTERN MELBOURNE

Gladysdale Primary School
Heathmont College
Mount Evelyn Primary School
Fairhills High School

SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE

Clayton North Primary School
Cranbourne East Secondary College
Mordialloc College
St Francis Xavier College (Officer)
Pakenham Secondary School

MORNINGTON PENINSULA, VICTORIA

Padua College (Tyabb)

GIPPSLAND, VICTORIA

Lakes Entrance Primary School

TASMANIA

Cosgrove High School
The Sorell School (Primary)
The Sorell School (Senior)
Eastside Lutheran College

THE EARLIER WE ACT THE GREATER THE IMPACT

There's been an explosion in the numbers of primary schools implementing HoL to support the wellbeing of their students at a critical stage of their development.

HoL Primary, a modified version of Hands on Learning, is proving such an effective wellbeing intervention that 18 partner schools have started a HoL Primary Program in 2019, with a third of all HoL implementations now in primary schools.

Specifically tailored to build a strong wellbeing platform and foster middle years students' personal and social capabilities, this primary model features a modified Shape of the Day, along with practical building and hospitality projects. The 'release valve' of time out of normal class and different ways to learn, not only builds confidence and self-esteem, but re-ignites interest in learning and promotes positive secondary school transitions.



Heywood Consolidated School, Victoria

"HoL is all about self-esteem and building the strong wellbeing foundation critical for learning. We were finding kids of a young age starting to disengage, self-harm, not believing in themselves. The trauma some of these kids have seen effects their lives and when we give them hope of something better, a belief in what they can achieve, they strive to turn their lives around."

It's the structure, method and training that's behind it that makes Hands on Learning so successful. Our staff have been able to pick it up and run with it immediately. The reflective practice at the beginning and end of the day gives students the opportunity to reflect on what they have achieved. When students are older, learning achievements don't come as quickly. HoL Primary allows you to have quick wins every day you do it – it's a brilliant program. I'd love to run a whole school like this, that would be my dream, that's how powerful Hands on Learning is.."

**Jodi May, Principal,
Heywood Consolidated School**



Koroit & District Primary School, Victoria

"We introduced Hands on Learning to build aspiration and confidence, and meet the diverse learning needs of our students. Some kids take to the classroom with ease, while others need differentiated ways to engage in learning at school."

The most obvious impact has been the sheer excitement of students to be at school on their Hands on Learning day, and the transfer of skills into the classroom. Our students are now talking about how they feel more confident doing maths – measuring, forecasting and planning – and more willing to give it a go. Their personal and social skills have also developed as they have greater awareness of making connections with kids they normally wouldn't work with."

**Marina Milich, Principal,
Koroit Primary School**



Lavington Public School, NSW

"Jak would often be withdrawn, disengaged and hot and cold in the classroom. Being part of Hands on Learning, doing and making something real and tangible, has shifted his attitude to school. It's the perception of adding value, of doing something with purpose, of actively participating and contributing in a way that is valued by others that has been so powerful. We all feel good when we have the chance to make a difference, to do something good for others and these kids need the opportunity the most."

Everyone has got their strengths. HoL is all about helping more kids to find what they are good at, with the added flow on impact of a new enjoyment of being at school and contributing to and building relationships. Jak grabbed the opportunity to be part of our HoL team with both hands, ran with it, and is now more at ease with school. His teacher is reporting he is more confident in the classroom and participating in general.

Hands on Learning is not a magic wand, but it does allow these kids to see how they can add value."

Frank Calabria
Hands on Learning Co-ordinator,
Lavington Public School, NSW



Huonville Primary School, Tasmania

"Every teacher at the school has seen the value of Hands on Learning (HoL). We are deliberating expanding the program from two to four days because of the impact it has on students' demeanour and attitude to school. Most obviously it's the sheer delight of participants and the improvement in mental health and wellbeing. The students are inspired by the camaraderie, by collaborating and sharing success with their peers, and excited to show off their achievements. Teachers across the school report their students return to class in a calmer state ready to engage at a higher level in the classroom. We have students who struggle to engage in maths in the classroom, but really benefit from the practical measurement opportunities in HoL – expanding their skills and knowledge in the classroom. And it's not just one type of student. We have high achievers who just need a break, the opportunity to do something with their hands, and the tactile nature of HoL. HoL is a genuine compliment to traditional classwork and contributes directly to our school improvement plan."

Our students relish the opportunity to work in smaller groups on specific projects that cater to a range of interests and ways of learning. Hands on Learning enhances what we have available in the school and the students are incredibly enthusiastic. They enjoy building things for the school, creating seating spaces, reusing materials and the construction and planting of our kitchen garden has been a huge hit. The students have readily adopted the plant to plate concept and just love supplying our canteen and helping make the fresh produce more accessible and affordable for their peers."

Ian Thomas, Principal,
Huonville Primary School, Tasmania



PHOTO BY ADAM TRAFFORD
COURTESY OF THE COURIER

Creswick Primary School, Victoria

"Our Attitudes to School survey data highlighted some of our senior students struggling to engage in the classroom. Introducing the Hands on Learning program helps us increase student voice and agency and cater for different learning styles. This is real life learning that our students can relate to. Students get to have ownership over what they learn, build their personal and social capabilities, and improve their connection to their school community."

Financially the Hands on Learning program is more than affordable. The impact for students far outweighs resource management and financial considerations, and the implementation of the program has been incredibly smooth as we have been able to access the support and established methodology provided by the Hands on Learning team."

Melanie Stewart, Principal, Creswick Primary School

"We have seen huge improvements in confidence and positive relationship building. Students are learning to work in a more supportive and positive manner with each other e.g. using initiative in using their time wisely, spotting each other when using equipment and working cooperatively on projects. They are beginning to open up and talk about issues that they are struggling with as we work together so they are able to talk, express their feelings and begin to think about how they can work through things. The actual structure, routines and responsibilities for each session has allowed a more relaxed and positive approach to learning in this environment. Overall pride in ideas for our school is evident."

Ingrid Humm, Wellbeing Coordinator and Leading Teacher,
Creswick Primary School

A photograph of two young students, a boy and a girl, standing outdoors in front of a garden bed and a metal fence. The boy, on the left, is wearing a dark blue hoodie with 'HANDS ON LEARNING' on the sleeve. The girl, on the right, is also wearing a dark blue hoodie with 'HANDS ON LEARNING' on the sleeve. They are both smiling. Behind them is a metal fence with large, colorful, 3D letters spelling out 'HANDS ON LEARNING'. To the left is a garden bed with various green plants. The background shows trees and a basketball hoop.

LEARNING IS EASIER WHEN IT IS FUN

Mount Evelyn Grade six student Angus (pictured left) is very clear about why he loves Hands on Learning.

"It makes learning easier. We've been working with protractors in class and it's not really fun working on paper doing triangles, but when you have to work things out in Hands on Learning it makes it a lot more funner (sic). In HoL it is actually real there in front of you – not 2D on your paper. I don't learn maths quickly in class, my brain won't go snap, but when I learn it in HoL it's easier because you learn it in a fun way you get to know it and you can put it in your memory and use it back in class. When you learn it here it is a lot easier. I wish I could do HoL every day. I feel great when it's a HoL day, I can't wait to get to school. It's really great here because I know things in here. You don't know you are actually doing it, but there is maths in everything in HoL. When you learn when you don't even realise that's the fun way of doing it."

And Angus's Grade six teacher has got the evidence "There is a huge difference in Angus's most recent test results measuring angles using protractor – he smashed it."

Hands on Learning is also making a big difference for Khalen (pictured right)

"Fun is the first thing I think when I think of Hands on Learning. I'm a very hands on, energetic person. When I do HoL it uses some of my energy so I'm not as silly, and when I go back into class I'm ready to work. I'm the disruptor of my class, so now I'm calmer when I go back after HoL, and I stay calm. I love HoL because we build a lot and it keeps me entertained with the things I would rather do. And because I'm doing something that I enjoy, I learn easy. When you go to HoL you are always learning. When you are at school not many people like the work, but when you go to HoL you are still learning but you enjoy it."

TRIPLE WIN

Liam Sweeney is the Purchasing Manager of the five-star Jackalope Hotel on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. Ten years ago he was part of Hands on Learning at Frankston High School. It is no surprise that when Liam needed some specialist hands on skills he contacted Hands on Learning at nearby Western Port Secondary College.

"We had a vision of transforming some heritage cabernet sauvignon vines into table settings for our Doot Doot Doot restaurant, but no capacity to do the work ourselves. Hands on Learning immediately came to mind.

If you are going to outsource it is so good to do it within the local community, and particularly to involve and upskill local young people. In purchasing it can be frustrating when you struggle to get things made in Australia, so commissioning the HoL team at Western Port Secondary was a real triple win. I know first-hand the impact of Hands on Learning on a student, the students were able to raise funds for their program, and we were able to get a creative and tricky job done really well.

It's not just the obvious hands on proficiency. It is also great to see the people skills that kids develop in the Hands on Learning program – they really do set you apart. Learning to work with others and learning to work as a team are skills not everyone has, but they are skills you learn first-hand in Hands on Learning and they are skills employers notice pretty quickly."





Surf Coast Secondary College: Nesting boxes

Surf Coast College is working with the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee to construct nesting boxes for an endangered variety of plover in the local area. Once they construct all the boxes they will join Committee members to install them along the iconic coastal reserves on Victoria's Great Ocean Road.

BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Making valuable contributions to the community builds self-esteem and connection, and provides tangible opportunities to prove your value to the community by making real contributions to it.



Euroa Primary and Secondary College: Community Garden

This resourceful team has upcycled donated fruit boxes into self-watering raised vegetable garden beds for the local community. Even better - the students did all the work themselves, repairing the boxes, lining them, installing a fake floor and pipes, and spreading trailer loads of manure donated from the local horse stud.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WARRNAMBOOL STANDARD



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WARRNAMBOOL STANDARD

Warrnambool Special Developmental School: Picnic seats

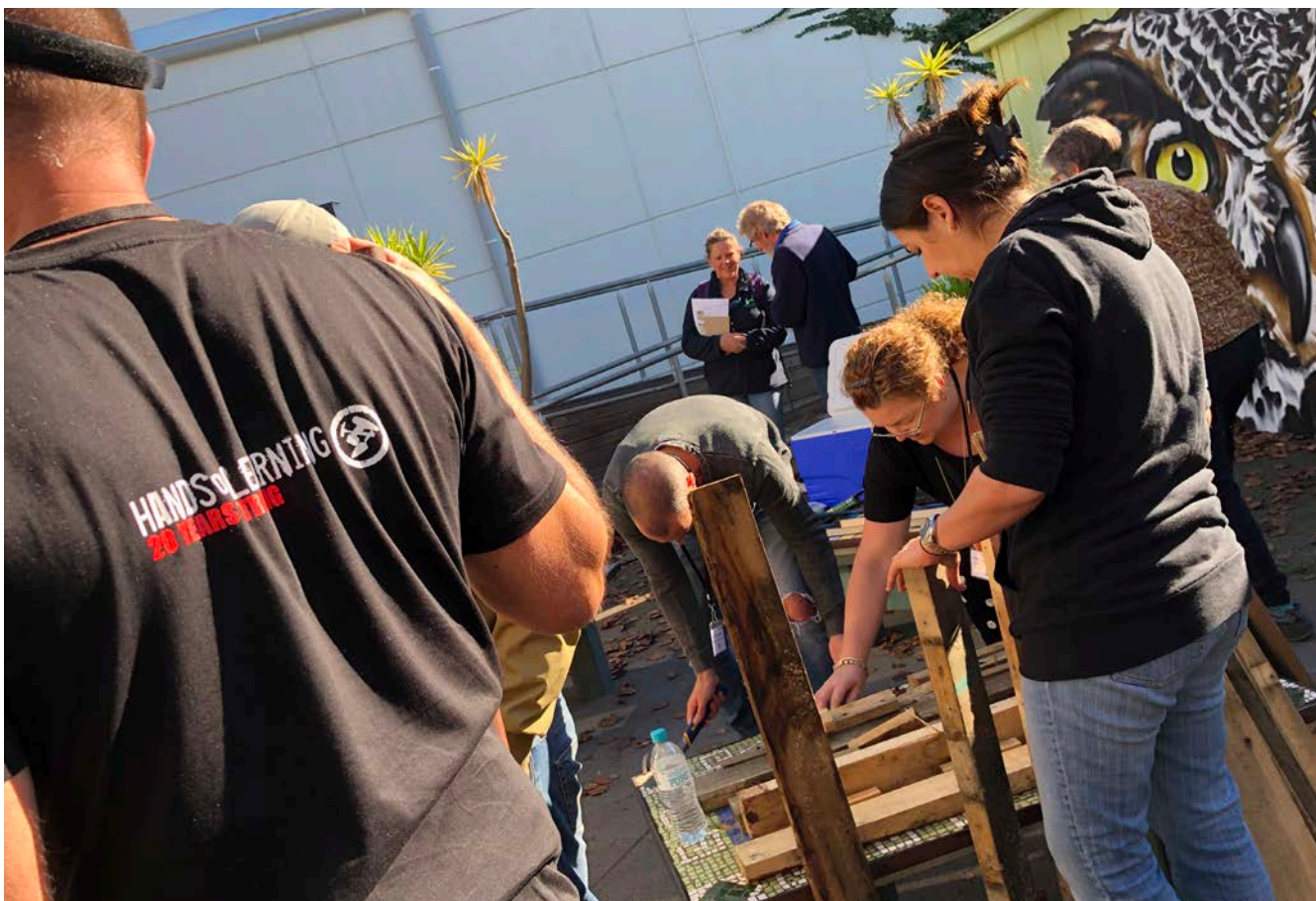
Racegoers at Warrnambool Racecourse will now enjoy sitting on refurbished picnic seats painted in the colours of Grand Annual Steeplechase winners by students from the Warrnambool Special Developmental School Hands on Learning team in Years 4-10.

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

Hawkesdale P-12 College: Pallet tables and couch

These customised pallet tables for the Hawkesdale Football and Netball Club were such a massive hit and the talk of the town that the enterprising crew at Hawkesdale moved straight on to upcycling more pallets into a couch for the McArthur Recreational Reserve.





20 YEARS **STRONG**

Twenty years on the power of Hands on Learning was on full display at the 2019 Hands on Learning Conference with artisan-teachers, school leaders, and past students joining long term supporters for a day of ideas, camaraderie and celebration.



Stimulating hospitality

A tour of established HoL precincts on conference eve culminated in a visit to Elisabeth Murdoch College for a 'sky is the limit' take on upcycling and repurposing to create a home for HoL at your school – accompanied by fabulous woodfired pizza.

Practical program a huge hit

Opening with an stirring reminder to take the opportunity to make a difference every day from Victorian local hero Mat Bowtell, delegates participated in a range of practical and theory sessions to support the everyday running of HoL – from building team performance and boosting child safety, to practical and community project inspiration.

Feedback from participants was outstanding with 98 per cent rating the conference excellent or very good. *"Excellent and motivating guest speaker really set the tone, loved meeting people and sharing stories. The 'hands on' part was great and gave us some renewed focus on upcycling pallets."*



HOL ALLUMNI - WHERE THEY ARE 20 YEARS ON

Twenty years after he opened the first Hands on Learning hut, Tim Costello joined HoL Founder Russell Kerr and past students Rachelle Leveque and Daniel Franz at the 2019 Conference.

Rachelle and Daniel built the very first HoL hut at Frankston High School.

Back in 1999 Rachelle was a 14 year old full of angst, a high achiever, who wasn't always stimulated and school refusing at times. HoL was an important early plank in her education. "It was the best day of the week and I felt respected and like I could be whoever I needed to be that day. It was safe space. A place where you got a real sense of achievement. I'm so proud of that hut we built, still."

Twenty years on Rachelle is on maternity leave from her role teaching Year 12 at Haileybury College.

"My trajectory could have been so different. That support and connection we had in HoL gave me the confidence, resilience and determination to get back on track, to finish school and go to university."

The Year 9 Daniel was a different story. Being in HoL was important for Daniel who was a kinaesthetic learner. Daniel completed a mechanical apprenticeship after Year 12, spent eight years in the Australian Airforce with several deployments in Afghanistan looking after equipment, and is now a Program Manager for Thales Australia. "The biggest thing for me about Hands on Learning was working together to achieve a common goal. Working in teams. You got something out of HoL that you couldn't get in the classroom. In normal class you listen, but in HoL you do it together."

"I'm still in contact with lots of the HoL kids. Every single one of them has been successful. At the time I had no idea why it was so good for me. It was only after working for a while that I realised I could trace my skills back to doing it first in HoL. If you have the opportunity to do HoL at school you have a jump start in life."

IMPRESSIVE INNINGS

Principals join us to celebrate 10 and 20 year partnerships.

This year it is wonderful to commemorate significant and valuable 10-year partnerships with Benalla P-12 College, Kurnai College, McClelland College, Northern Bay College, St Francis Xavier College, Sale College and Traralgon College. Let alone the 20-year commitment and steadfastness of Frankston High School.

These extraordinary milestones and the long-term commitment and investment in the support and the learning needs of all students at these eight schools is inspirational.



LONG TERM CONTRIBUTIONS

We recognise and appreciate the significant contribution of ALL HoL artisan-teachers. 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.



BRUCE MILLAR:
BRAUER COLLEGE

Bruce brings loads of life and work experience to his position and is a fabulous role model. A great bloke who is mighty passionate about developing his student's skills, about Hands on Learning and about community. Bruce has mentoring and 'giving back' in his DNA.

ROBERT STOJKOV:
BROOKSIDE COLLEGE

Solid, dependable and dedicated, with students' interests front and centre, sums him up. Rob is super organised, and uber reliable and really enjoys what he is doing and it shows. A hospitable and friendly host to visiting schools, and a respected mentor for students and peers.

SERAL FEHMI:
BROOKSIDE COLLEGE

Could you find anyone more passionate than Seral? Or more innovative? HoL Café was born from Seral's vision. This energetic and innovative teacher is committed to give every student the opportunity to feel good about themselves. Don't get in her way if you aren't going to do the best for her students!

LYN CHAPLIN:
McCLELLAND COLLEGE

Lyn is as good as any tradie with the skills, knowledge and work ethic to get in and get the job done. An incredibly hard worker who leads by example on any given project and is well respected by the students. It is 100% about the kids for Lyn, and she truly believes in mentoring them to 'have a go' and try new things!

LEON CAREY:
KOROIT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leon is passionate about making a difference for students. He goes in boots and all – chasing down any opportunity to put the spotlight on student success. Leon doesn't just know people, he cares with his heart and helps with his hands. What you see is what you get with Leon, and we like what we see.

HoL 'BROWNLOW'

Presented annually and named in honour of the first artisan-teacher in Hands on Learning at Frankston High School, John Eldridge. The award recognises and celebrates the greatest asset of Hands on Learning – the people involved and the relationships they build with students, the school and the community.

2019 award recipient Shannon Drysdale is an artisan-teacher at Hawkesdale P-12 College and has been in the role since Hands on Learning started five years ago. The award recognises Shannon's endless passion and the way she has created innovative projects that promote fun, engagement and challenge for the students involved. Shannon also has an incredible ability to establish real connections between Hands on Learning and the local community, allowing students to contribute to and belong to their local community in an authentic and meaningful way - from constructing recycled pallet bar tables for the local footy club, to working alongside BlazeAid to restore farm fencing after the 2018 St Patrick's Day bushfires.

Shannon's attitude to Hands on Learning is pretty simple. *"I love it. You get to see kids enjoying school in a different way. They are happy. You see them enjoying learning – and sometimes they don't even know they are learning. I've loved it from day one because you can see the impact every week."*

According to Shannon working with an awesome artisan-teacher in Lachie Reichman makes all the wins possible.

"Our team has completed lots of projects across the school that have become genuine assets, with the Ga Ga pit we built a real highlight. It is so popular and every day kids are constantly playing in it. Our HoL students feel a huge sense of accomplishment. Lachie has been instrumental in driving these projects and sharing the load. It's a long day in HoL. Some days the kids don't get along with each other as well, and we are constantly developing new ways to keep everyone happy. Working with Lachie is my secret to success."

Ultimately though for Shannon it's all about the students. *"It was an incredible buzz to listen to one of our student interviewed on ABC statewide radio. Hearing Mitch speak so passionately about HoL, and how proud he was about what he has achieved, was beautiful."*



[Click here to hear Mitch](#)
(5.20 min)

"It's the impact on the kids that is the gamechanger. HoL is so beneficial for these kids. I can guarantee some would not still be at school without HoL."



**CONGRATULATIONS
SHANNON, YOUR
PASSION CREATIVITY
AND ABILITY TO BUILD
CONNECTIONS CREATES
LASTING CHANGE**



PIZZA ANYONE?

Pizza ovens may come in all shapes and sizes, but are consistently the heart of a Hands on Learning program fostering camaraderie and connection among the HoL team and with families and the school community.



HAWKESDALE P-12 COLLEGE



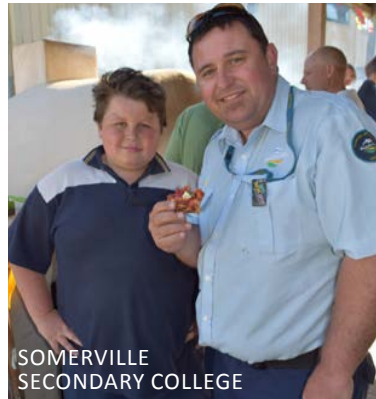
FITZROY HIGH SCHOOL



BENALLA P-12 COLLEGE



ELISABETH MURDOCH COLLEGE



SOMERVILLE SECONDARY COLLEGE



TRARALGON COLLEGE



FRANKSTON HIGH SCHOOL



MURRAY HIGH SCHOOL

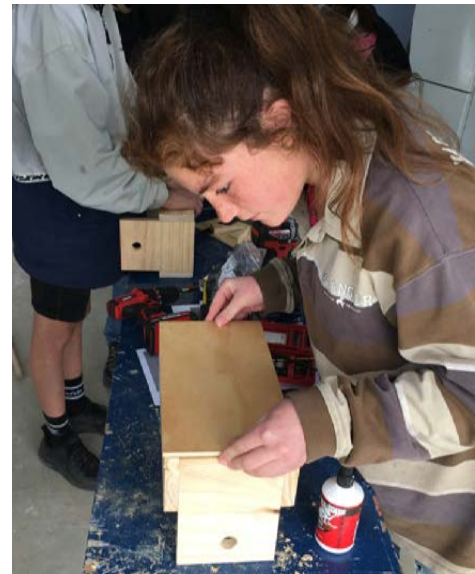


HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

Learning by doing on all fronts

Hands on Learning induction training is all about learning by doing as artisan-teachers explore the fundamentals of the HoL methodology, with an emphasis on Student Intake, Shape of the Day, Focus Plans and OH+S.

Participants experience a typical 'Hands on' day from the perspective of a student, working in small groups on practical projects, like constructing a chair or stool, whilst learning safe work procedures and valuable reflective practice to share with students.



Tool testing

New artisan-teachers also pick up great tips for measurement and tool training to prepare students for their time in HoL.



WHAT'S NEW FOR THE HOL COMMUNITY



One man, one trailer, five schools

Jamie Harding is one busy bloke. Together with partner artisan-teachers he runs Hands on Learning for students at Echuca College, St Joseph's College Echuca, Echuca Specialist School, Kyabram P-12 College and Rushworth P-12 College.

The innovative partnership between the five schools, the Campaspe Cohuna Local Learning and Employment Network (CCLLEN) and the Moama Bowling Club, means Jamie has a full-time job and a trailer stocked with tools to travel between schools. Why put your hand up? Originally a boilermaker, Jamie has been teaching in the region for 15 years and knew how much kids value real practical ways to learn.

"It's been a real bonus to move between the schools and share ideas and inspiration – from minestrone soup recipes to great project ideas. It's only early days, but the signs are great. The students feel safe, they understand the expectations, and the reflective practice we use in HoL is giving them practical strategies to use back in class to boost their personal and social capabilities."



Indulge and help grow HoL café

Over 4 days from 12 September, Green & Black's will launch, Green & Black's Conscious Café at Cremorne's Glasshaus in Melbourne, in collaboration with renowned zero-waste chefs, Matt Stone and Jo Barrett, and leading furniture designer, Mark Tuckey.

Sixty dollars from every ticket sold will go directly to help expand the entrepreneurial HoL Café program supporting students to establish a café catering to the needs of their school community – helping enhance their communication, project management and organisation skills.

Mark Tuckey will create exquisite bespoke furniture for this exciting four-day pop-up which will include a three-course zero waste menu, with matching wines, featuring Green & Black's chocolate inspired dishes. Green & Black's was founded on the principle of creating an indulgent chocolate that not only appeals to people's consciences, but their taste buds too.

Get your tickets @ \$63.73 per person from <https://www.greenandblacks.com.au/conscious-cafe>



Upcycle with the pallet breaker

Upcycling old pallets is a HoL mainstay, but pulling apart pallets can be a real chore. The work can be done with either jimmy bars and a hammer, or you can make life easy with a pallet breaking tool that helps destruct a pallet with little to no broken boards and in a safe and controlled manner.

Everyone who saw the Pallet Breaker in action at the 2019 HoL Conference knows how good they are. Made of high quality Australian steel (a heavier gauge steel than the ones available online) these handy tools are a great way to recycle pallets and give them a second life.

Contact franz.mahr@savethechildren.org.au if you would like the dimensions so your team can make you own, or purchase these Australian made tools @ \$45 per unit each (excludes handle) and your awesome new tool can be hand delivered by your School Support Manager at your next cluster meeting or school visit.