



		11	Staff
Contents		13	2016 Committee of Management
02	About NMLLEN	14	Governance
03	Chair's Report	17	Financials

About NMLLEN

Background

Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network (NMLLEN) is one of 31 LLENs across Victoria which were established in 2001 arising from recommendations of the Kirby Report – Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria. LLENs were established as not-for-profit, community based incorporated associations to identify gaps in education and training, provide advice on local and statewide policy issues and broker cross sector partnerships.

NMLLEN is a membership based organisation that brokers partnerships to provide better pathways and support for young people in the Northern Mallee Region. NMLLEN's region covers the Mildura Rural City Council LGA (including towns of Mildura, Merbein, Irymple, Red Cliffs, Ouyen, Werrimull and Murrayville) and Robinvale (Swan Hill Rural City Council LGA).

In 2016 LLENs and the Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) Program were funded by the Victorian Government.

Mission Statement

Brokering strategic partnerships with stakeholder groups resulting in better outcomes in education, training and employment for young people.

Role

NMLLEN brokers strategic and sustainable community partnerships aimed at improving education and transition outcomes for young people, including increasing Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates.

Vision

To be a key contributor towards increasing the number of young people successfully completing Year 12 or equivalent in the Northern Mallee region.



Chair's Report

Fiona Harley, OAM

NMLLEN continues to punch well above its weight in respect of developing partnerships that seek to ensure our young people in the Mallee are engaged in education, training or work. The commitment of educators, employers and the community sector to join with the organisation in pursuit of innovative and creative ventures is reaping success with many more of our most vulnerable young people staying engaged in education and training thus increasing their capacity to gain meaningful employment or follow tertiary education pathways.

2016 was a challenging and rewarding year with NMLLEN's involvement in the following being critical to its success.

Structured Workplace Learning Program (SWL)

The Hon. James Merlino MP, Minister for Education launched the Department's new Structured Workplace Learning Program in May 2016. The new SWL program is focussed on placing students undertaking VET studies in relevant industry placements as part of their VCE or VCAL programs. It also includes creation of School based Apprenticeships and Traineeships. Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) allows students to gain hands on skills related to the VET course they are studying at school. Employers provide training to assist students to master key skills. Placements for Structured Workplace Learning can be undertaken in one week blocks or on a one day per week basis

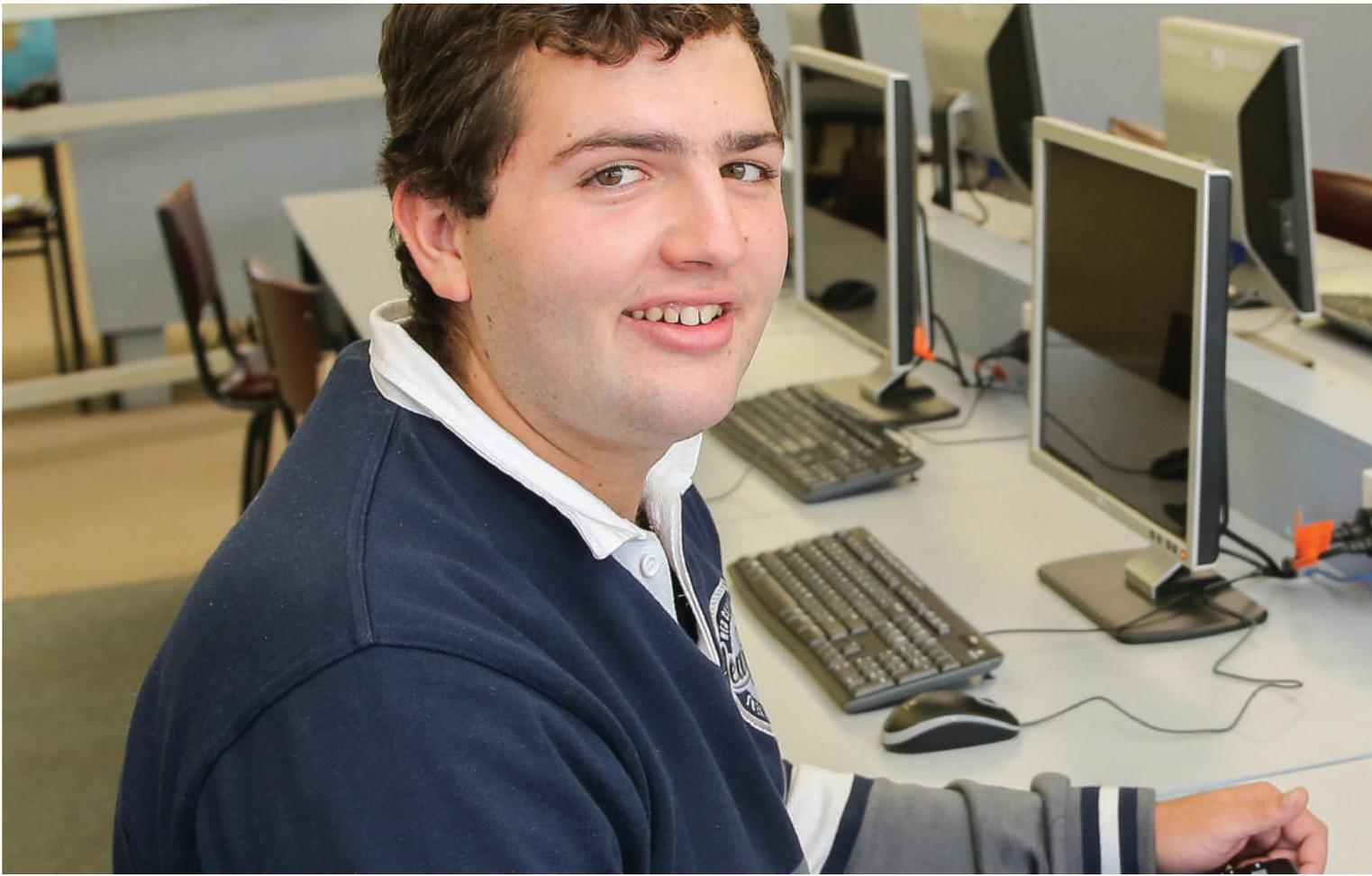
A key feature of the new SWL program is the statewide portal where all placement opportunities are listed on the website <http://workplacements.education.vic.gov.au/> for students to browse and express their interest.

The Statewide Online Portal has been designed with the following main features:

- Employers/LLENs are able to post appropriate SWL/SBAT opportunities
- Employers/LLENs will be able to post information about potential host companies
- Students/teachers will be able to search statewide for SWL placements that align with the VET programs being studied
- Teachers will be able to assign an appropriate SWL placement to a particular student
- Electronic links related to other portals and regional websites containing place-based information on SWL placements
- When requested by the teacher, the portal will generate the partially completed SWL legal documents in Word format (as required under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006)
- The portal will facilitate the generation of reports accessible by schools, the Department and LLEN's



*NMLLEN
Partnerships
have a
significant
impact on
opportunities
for young
people in our
region.*



The portal lists over 2,500 SWL opportunities across Victoria for school students to secure a work placement. During 2016 the SWL coordinator worked closely with local businesses and engaged 21 employers who provided 30 placement opportunities onto the portal for our local students. The SWL program is strongly supported by Lower Murray Water, who are using the program to gain insight into a student's abilities and skill's and possible future employment. Feedback from employers is that the SWL Portal is a more efficient way of linking students with work place learning opportunities by minimising the number of calls they get from students seeking placements.

Through the SWL portal, employers are able to provide our students with an accurate insight into their business and assist young people in making more informed choices when it comes to career paths of the future.

Mildura Region Trade Training Centre (MRTTC)

NMLLEN continued to play a role in supporting the MRTTC throughout 2016. NMLLEN conducted consultations with industry and VET teachers at the Deakin and Riverside TTCs to develop an industry engagement strategy as part of the MRTTC Strategic Plan. This plan will be implemented in 2017 and aims to increase industry engagement to support the delivery of VET courses offered at the Deakin and Riverside TTCs.

Student Part Time Work Survey

In 2015 NMLLEN conducted a survey of 548 Year 9 students from local schools about their involvement in part time employment after school, on weekends and during schools holidays.

In 2016 NMLLEN followed up with a survey of 734 Year 11 and 12 students across the district. This represented 50% of all Year 11 and 12 students.

Some of the findings and applications from this survey include:

- Awareness that approximately 6 in 10 Year 11/12 students are combining school and paid employment.
- There are a further 78 (11%) other students who are looking at entering the workforce in the near future.
- 94% of students with part time employment work between 0-19 hours per week
- The opportunity to better relate the skills, knowledge and qualifications the students gain in their employment to their school work.
- The students are interested in improved preparation for work readiness through résumé and job application skills development.
- The opportunity for schools to identify and assist students in the pursuit of employment who may not have the networks and support outside of school.



75-80% of students in FLO type programs are still engaged in education or training 12 months after their program

- Students who identified with Pacific Islander culture had the lowest rate of employment (36%) while those who identified with the Southern European had the highest employment rate (79%)
- Students showed a good understanding of the range skills and attributes related to employability and work readiness.
- Students took on part time work to increase their independence, skills and spending money but also gained skills such as customer service skills, workplace requirements and time management.
- Students recognised the link between their part time employment and their future employment but the majority did not see that the skills they gained in employment were useful with their school work.
- Top employment sectors: retail, hospitality, sport & recreation, agriculture.
- Top methods of gaining employment: résumé given directly to businesses, online applications, family and friends networks.
- There were twice as many Year 11 and 12 students employed than Year 9 students surveyed in 2015 but benefits, challenges, skills, sectors etc. were very similar in both groups

NMLLEN wishes to acknowledge and thank schools and their students for their participation in the survey.

Engagement and Re-engagement

A key focus of the Dept. of Education and Training's Education State is on disengaged young people. NMLLEN has continued with key partnerships in retention and re-engagement throughout 2016.

FLO In Schools

This partnership with Mildura Senior College, Red Cliffs Secondary College, Irymple Secondary College, Merbein P-10 College and Chaffey Secondary College has now been in place since 2012. The 2016 program offered 98 students who are at risk of disengaging from school, the opportunity to undertake flexible learning options designed to increase their engagement in learning and attendance at school. NMLLEN contributes to the delivery of these programs and also conducts an annual data collection for the program.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) are vital education and training pathways for young people, especially for those in regional communities.

The outcomes of FLO in Schools are very positive with 70% of students remaining in education or training 12 months after the 2012 FLO program, increasing to 88% of students remaining in education or training 12 months after the 2015 FLO program. Approximately 35% of FLO in School students are from disadvantaged groups.

FLO Connect

This program is designed to re-engage young people aged 13-19 who have been out of school, for three months or longer back into education or training. The FLO Connect program, conducted at 78 Pine Ave Mildura is a partnership led by Red Cliffs Secondary College and Mildura Rural City Council and is supported by NMLLEN and a wide range of community organisations.

FLO Connect commenced in 2014 and is an individualised learning program based on the young person's strengths and interests and who are supported by case management. The aim of the program is re connect the young person back into school, TAFE, or an RTO.

Since commencing in 2014, FLO Connect has enrolled (including currently enrolled) 173 students with 98 of these progressing onto schools, TAFE/RTOs or employment. The FLO Connect program outcomes include 85% of students remaining in education or training 12 months after participation in the FLO Connect program.

An important part of the FLO in Schools and FLO Connect Programs is the development of connections to the community. This has been achieved through many and varied partnerships with community services and activities in the community involving 55 community based programs, activities

and partners associated with FLO in Schools and FLO Connect in 2016.

Student satisfaction and Parent satisfaction surveys are conducted by NMLLEN for FLO in Schools and FLO Connect.

Both student and parent surveys indicate significant improvements across the respective domains.

Navigator

The Victorian Department of Education and Training initiated a new pilot program across eight regions to address the issue of young people disengaging from school. Northern Mallee LLEN, in partnership with Murray Mallee LLEN secured the Navigator contract for the Mallee region. The program involves the provision of intensive case management support for young people aged 12-17 who have disengaged from school. Northern Mallee LLEN, in partnership with FLO Connect (Red Cliffs SC and Mildura Rural City Council) delivers case management support to young people in the Mildura, Ouyen and Robinvale districts.

The first referrals in the Northern Mallee were received in September 2016 and by the end of the year, 33 referrals had been received for case management support. The aim of the program is to support these young people to address their social, emotional and wellbeing needs and to reconnect them back into school or training.

NMLLEN wishes to acknowledge the support of our partners and the Dept. of Education and Training Mallee Area Office in delivering this important program.

Transition

NMLLEN initiated a pilot program in 2012 to support the transition of local primary schools students into Year 7 at secondary school. The project utilises the Dept. of Education and Training (DET) Student Mapping Tool (SMT) to support the transition of students through data exchange with a particular emphasis on indicators for students who are at risk of disengaging from education.

The project has expanded to include 14 primary schools and 5 secondary schools exchanging data using the SMT model for over 400 students transitioning from Y6 to Y7 in 2016.

In 2016 the schools appointed a local coordinator who now oversees the project. NMLLEN continues to provide advice and guidance.

Mental Health

March 2015 saw the official opening of headspace Mildura. headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation that provides early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds.

The service is designed to make it as easy as possible for a young person and their family to get the help they need for problems affecting their wellbeing. This covers four core areas: mental health, physical health, work and study support and alcohol and other drug services.

NMLLEN is proud to be an active partner in advocating, promoting and assisting headspace Mildura to deliver this important service in the region.





Robinvale

In 2016 NMLLEN continued to support Robinvale College with a mentoring program for 31 of its Year 9 students.

NMLLEN Project Officer Hilary Thiele worked with Robinvale College Principal and staff to design and implement the program. The program involved students working with mentors in journalism (Robinvale Sentinel), hospitality (Nooy's Bakery), youth development (the Clontarf program at Robinvale College), personal training (with a private local trainer) and nursing - with a mentor from Robinvale and District Health Services

The program evaluation showed students to be keenly positive about the program. This positivity in itself has been a reason for the school to continue it for at least another year. Key features that appealed to the students were the importance of significant adults working with them in an authentic context; that students could see a direct connection between the outcome (a product or a key interaction with the public) as a reason to learn and the opportunity to work in small groups.

Another key finding lay within the frequency of student comments indicating the potential of the program to inform key capabilities and competencies outlined in the Australian Blueprint for Career Development. They showed an awareness that while the workplace they were exposed to within the program was in a particular vocational area, it was not the vocation itself that was important so much as the broader skills they were learning, such as how to interact with people and the importance of safety.

It was pleasing to see this insight, with its potential to be part of the way these students are learning to 'successfully manage their careers' (Australian Blueprint for Career Development). The mentors need to be congratulated for enabling the students to have this awareness. The students overwhelmingly showed a keenness to undertake more mentoring hours - and this is hugely contingent on the number of mentors who can make themselves available. The Year 9 Mentoring program has become embedded as part of the Robinvale College's program.

Local Learning and Employment Options (LLEO)

NMLLEN, in partnership with school's Career Advisors and local RTOs, TAFE and La Trobe University developed the LLEO website in response to requests for a local portal that contains information about local courses for students, teachers, Careers Advisors, youth workers and parents. The LLEO website contains information on 350 courses available locally enabling users to search and plan educational and training pathways.

NMLLEN has continued to support the maintenance and updating of this valuable resource for young people in our community.

Collective Impact (CI)

NMLLEN is a member of the Northern Mallee Community Partnership (NMCP) which has adopted, and is moving towards implementing, a Collective Impact approach to better address our community's complex social issues. The CI approach saw the establishment of Hands Up Mallee (HUM) which recognises that large-scale social change comes from collective community effort rather than isolated policies, organisations and programs. Hands Up Mallee is generating awareness and is seeking commitment across our whole community to tackle the causes of our community's complex social issues together

The emerging common agenda from the collective impact initiative is:

- All children have the best start in life
- All children, youth and families live free of family violence
- All young people are educated for lifelong success
- Families with children and youth are financially secure

NMLLEN has continued to be actively involved in NMCP and HUM and supporting this significant and important initiative.

Mallee Children and Youth Area Partnership (CYAP)

Children and Youth Area Partnerships are establishing new ways of working at the local level to more effectively join-up social services in Victoria at a system



level to support better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

NMLLEN is a member of the Mallee CYAP Steering Group which covers the LGAs of Mildura, Swan Hill, Buloke and Gannawarra.

The Mallee CYAP is committed to increasing the reach and measurable effectiveness of prevention and intervention for vulnerable children, young people and their families across the Mallee.

On Track Connect

In 2016 NMLLEN again secured the contract with the Dept. of Education and Training to conduct On Track Connect. This program refers Year 12 completers and early school leavers from 2015 who have been unsuccessful in securing a place in higher education, training or employment, to their local LLEN.

LLEN provides advice and support and links them to agencies and providers who are able to assist them in pursuing their education, training or employment pathway.

During June and July, 21 young people were referred to NMLLEN for assistance. Across the state, over 1,500 young people were referred to LLENs for assistance.

Conclusion

NMLLEN continued to demonstrate that through partnerships, much can be achieved to create opportunities and attain outcomes for young people in our

region. The outcomes of FLO in Schools and FLO Connect shows that continued effort over sustained periods of time can have an impact.

The Board and Executive have continued to provide good governance and provision of support to the NMLLEN staff.

The Board also undertook an extensive review of its role during 2016 and is implementing a series of recommendations to ensure it continues to operate strategically and effectively.

I wish to thank the Board for their efforts, especially in the development of the new NMLLEN Strategic Plan 2017-19.

My sincere thanks and appreciation to Ron for his leadership and dedication to the work of NMLLEN. My thanks also to the staff for their commitment and efforts throughout 2016. They can all be very proud of what has been achieved.

Fiona Harley OAM
Chair



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NMLLEN Staff



Ron Broadhead

Executive Officer

Ron has led NMLLEN as Executive Officer since 2008. His vast experience across a range of education and training roles has been invaluable in identifying, brokering and contributing to many key partnerships for the region including the Mildura Region Trade Training Centre, FLO Connect /FLO in Schools, Navigator, headspace Mildura Consortium, Northern Mallee Community Partnership and Mallee Children and Youth Area Partnerships.



Ian Westhead

Structured Workplace Learning Coordinator

Ian joined NMLLEN in December 2014 and has extensive experience in hospitality and education. His local knowledge and networks enable him to create opportunities and support young people as they make the transition from school to employment. Ian also contributes to NMLLEN projects that impact on improving vocational pathways for young people.



Paula Robinson

Project Officer (Part time)

Paula took up her position at NMLLEN in March 2013. She has a background in education, communications and project management. Paula organised and facilitated the Student Part Time Work Survey as well as the Supporting Transition Project and works with key partners in the FLO in schools, FLO Connect projects and School Focussed Youth Service.



Tania Pearce

Communications & Project Officer (Part time)

Tania commenced with NMLLEN in August 2016 with past experience in managing Student Services at SuniTAFE; Apprenticeship Support Officer and Youth Work.

Tania's communication role includes producing the NMLLEN Newsletter, maintaining the NMLLEN website, Facebook and Twitter social media and organisation of the NMLLEN Annual General Meeting. Her project work includes support for the Navigator Project.



Hilary Thiele

Project Officer (Part time)

Hilary is a former secondary school Principal. She became a NMLLEN staff member in August 2013 with diverse experience as an educator in the Mallee. Hilary is working on a project involving mentoring of Year 9 students at Robinvale College by local employers.



Alison Greenway

Project Officer (Part time)

Alison began at NMLLEN in March 2013 with experience in careers counselling and welfare positions. Alison has continued to maintain the Local Learning & Employment (LLEO) website with the latest information for young people making the transition from school to further education, training or employment.



Executive

Chair: Fiona Harley, OAM

Deputy Executive Director
Mallee Family Care

Category 10



Board members

Greg Kluske

Deputy Principal,
St. Joseph's College

Category 1



Deputy Chair: Ruth Fox

General Manager, Service Delivery,
Sunraysia Community Health Services

Category 8



Geoff Dea

CEO,
Sunraysia Institute of TAFE

Category 2



Treasurer: Peter Devilee

Managing Director, Devilee's Air
Conditioning and Refrigeration

Category 6



Joshua Cole

President,
Sunraysia Youth Alliance

Category 8



Secretary: Chris Hobart

Australian Services Union

Category 5



Graeme Cupper

Principal,
Merbein P-10 College

Category 1

2016 committee of management



Jeremy Seward

Mildura Chamber of Commerce
Category 6



Ofa Hakalo

Committee Member,
Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic
Communities Council
Category 8



Don Palazzo

Manager, Resources and Facilities,
Mildura Base Hospital
Category 6



Marion Wilson

Manager,
Community College, MADEC
Category 3



Cr. Sharyon Peart

Councillor,
Mildura Rural City Council
Category 7



Dr Deb Neal

Head of Campus,
La Trobe University, Mildura
Category 4



Jason Bell

Financial Information Officer,
Centrelink
Category 8



Belinda Hudak

Assistant Principal,
Mildura Senior College
Category 1



Sandra Stewart

Koorie Education Coordinator,
Department of Education and Training
Category 9



Governance

Committee of Management

Committee of Management is drawn from 11 membership categories:

Membership Category		Number of Committee Members
1	Schools: Government and non-government	3
2	TAFE Institutes or Universities with TAFE Sectors	1
3	Adult Community Education organisations	1
4	Other education and training organisations including private registered training organisations, universities and Group Training Companies	1
5	Trade Unions	1
6	Employers, Peak employment organisations, Regional employer organisations and employment agencies	4
7	Local Government	1
8	Other community agencies and organisations, Commonwealth and State government departments, Parent Organisations, School Focussed Youth Service, Adult Community and Further education Regional Councils, Regional Youth Councils, Regional Development Australia	3
9	Koorie Organisations, Peak Koorie agencies and Regional Koorie organisations	1
10	Community Members	1
11	Co-opted member appointed by the Committee of Management as a community member or a person associated with an organisational member	-



*In 2016
the NMLLEN
Board
developed
its new
Strategic Plan
2017-2019*



Committee of Management member changes

In 2016 the following changes to the Committee of Management occurred:
Members retiring were: Helen Martin, Erin Fush, Rochelle Collinson, Ruth Whitton and Michelle Withers.

New members were: Belinda Hudak (Category 1), Geoff Dea (Category 6) and Josh Cole (Category 8).

NMLLEN thanks all new, retiring and continuing Committee of Management members for their contributions in 2016.

Executive Sub Committee

The role of the Executive Sub Committee is to ensure the efficient operation of NMLLEN through receiving reports, monitoring financial reports and make recommendations to the Committee of Management for consideration and approval.

The Executive Sub Committee meets monthly.

Chair: Fiona Harley

Members: Ruth Fox (*Deputy Chair*)
Peter Devilee (*Treasurer*)
Chris Hobart (*Secretary*)
Ron Broadhead (*Executive Officer*)

Governance Sub Committee

The role of the Governance Sub Committee is to establish and maintain a governance framework for the NMLLEN Committee of Management which includes development of policies and procedures in line with the funding body's framework. It also monitors the performance of the organisation.

The Governance Sub Committee meets as required.

Chair: Fiona Harley

Members: Ruth Fox (*Deputy Chair*)
Chris Hobart (*Secretary*)
Don Palazzo (*Committee member*)
Ron Broadhead (*Executive Officer*)

