



Northern Mallee Local Learning  
and Employment Network

# Annual Report 2023



► **Connecting  
Schools to Industry**





Manangatang P12 Students at Select Harvests Carina West Processing Facility

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## About Northern Mallee LLEN



L to R- Peter Devilee, Vince Wilson, Cr Troy Bailey, Anne Mansell and Rod Martin

### About Northern Mallee LLEN

Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network (NMLLEN) is one of 31 LLENs across Victoria which were established in 2001 as a result of the 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 State-wide 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 the towns of Mildura, Merbein, Irymple, Red Cliffs, Ouyen, Werrimull, and Murrayville) and Robinvale (part of Swan Hill Rural City Council LGA). In 2023, NMLLEN received funding from the Victorian Department of Education for contracts related to School to Work, On Track Connect, and the Mallee Navigator program. NMLLEN also received funding from Agriculture Victoria for the Northern Mallee Horticulture Immersion (NMHI) Project, aimed at supporting students' transitions into horticulture careers.

#### Our Mission

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.

#### Our Vision

Constructive pathways for our young people leading to employment.

# CHAIR' S REPORT

During this last year all Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) across Victoria responded to a change in direction in line with Victorian Government policy and the Firth Review. With new contractual arrangements in place the Board and staff of Northern Mallee LLEN worked extremely diligently to provide opportunities in training and employment for our young people, remaining a connection point for education and industry. The first of the three year School to Work contract is now complete and brought a range of learnings for all.

An important review of the LLEN network occurred during 2023. There are 31 LLENs across the state of Victoria and all LLENs exchange information and collaborate through the VicLLEN network. After some 20 years of operations, government was keen to explore the roles and services that LLENs provide in their communities and across the state. Facilitated by the VicLLEN network, this review emphasized that all LLENs are keen to stay focused on place based delivery, with years of experience and understanding of their local communities. There is always room for growth and improvement and the VicLLEN network is keen to collaborate further with government and establish an alliance that can advocate and respond to strategic opportunities in training and employment for young people.



NMLLEN enjoys celebrating student success and continues to support the Vocational Education and Training Delivered to Secondary Students (VETDSS) Awards, this year sponsoring the Runner up of the Year. Congratulations to Shae Martin who received this award and to all nominees and award winners. It is wonderful to witness the amazing accomplishments of our young people. I thank all those involved in organizing what is a great event each year.

During the year a difficult decision was made by the Board in regard to the Navigator program. NMLLEN has managed this program since its inception in 2016 which supports vulnerable young people through outreach and case management, enabling re-engagement into education, training or employment. It was determined not to submit an application for what would be a new five year contract. This was simply due to resourcing issues. I would like to acknowledge and thank all partners in this program including Mildura Rural City Council, Murray Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network and the Department of Education for all their work and support provided to the young people that received assistance through this program. The Board and staff of NMLLEN would like to congratulate Mallee Accommodation and Support Program (MASP) and their partners in the delivery of the new platform for Navigator. Referrals can be made to Children, Youth and Families at MASP. Please see the MASP website for further information.

## Acknowledgement

I would like to congratulate and thank each and every member of the NMLLEN team for the incredible input they delivered over the year. Guided by Rod as the Executive Officer and post Covid, the team worked diligently with industry and across all schools and training providers to enable as many opportunities for our young people as they possibly could. My sincere thanks to you all. Partnering with industry, education and community is of utmost importance to our organisation. Our partners remain vitally important to ensuring we can optimise as many opportunities as possible. On behalf of the Board and staff, let me express my gratitude again this year to each and every one of our local schools, our industry partners, and all our community partners, whether individuals or local organisations. The NMLLEN looks forward to continuing to work with you all well into the future. Finally let me extend my personal thanks to all the NMLLEN Board members who give a great deal of time and expertise in developing the strategic direction, understanding new opportunities and monitoring overall performance. I feel honoured to work with you all.

My very special thanks to Peter Devilee who is retiring from the Board after many years of dedicated service, particularly as Treasurer. Peter's links to industry, his passion for vocational education and training and his experience with finances has been of the utmost benefit to the Board. Thank you Peter for all that you have given to NMLLEN – it is very much appreciated. On behalf of the Board and staff, I sincerely thank all those involved with our organization and look forward to the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Anne Mansell".

**Anne Mansell,**  
**Chair NMLLEN**



# EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

## School to Work Program

The Northern Mallee LLEN (NMLLEN) commenced a new school to work program funded by the Department Education in 2023, to support Senior Secondary School pathways reform. NMLLEN committed to offering industry immersion experiences for state, catholic and independent secondary schools. The Northern Mallee LLEN board and staff are committed to providing services which connect industry to education.

NMLLEN staff developed a range of immersion experiences that enabled students to engage with various industries. NMLLEN acknowledge the support received from both industry and secondary schools which allowed these activities to be highly successful.

Secondary school students undertook one hundred and forty-seven work based learning placements. Teachers and students participated in forty-seven School to Work events and thirty industry immersion activities exposed students to various industries. Industry immersion experiences included: workplace visits, mock interviews, guest speakers' incursions, work readiness and career development events.



## Notable Highlights:

- **Come and Try Days in the areas of Allied Health, Engineering, and Social Welfare.** These events provided students with hands-on experiences from industry experts. The Come and Try Days increased students' knowledge of the skills shortage industries.
- **STEM Idols** partnership with Agriculture Victoria where Ag Vic representatives facilitated the **Get into AgSTEM workshops** in both Mildura and Robinvale. Seven STEM Idols shared their individual career pathways into STEM. Students increased their knowledge of the career pathways available in the Sunraysia region.
- Southern Cross Business Advisers (SCBA) Accounting Cadet Program presented students with information from SCBA Directors, Accountants, Administration Managers, Cadet Accountants and Latrobe University on the Cadetship program and La Trobe University Bachelor of Accounting entry requirements. The event provided students with an opportunity to gain knowledge of different pathways available to enter the accounting industry in Mildura.
- VETDSS Transport increases access for students to attend vocational education training subjects.

## Northern Mallee Horticulture Immersion (NMHI) Project

The **NMHI Project** collaborating with Chaffey Secondary College, industry, and local secondary schools. The project was funded by the Secondary School Agriculture Fund which is part of the Victorian Government's four-year \$50 million commitment to the Agricultural College Modernisation Program. Sixty one students from Chaffey Secondary College, Red Cliffs Secondary College, Merbein P10 College, Mildura Specialist School and Irymple Secondary College participated in the program.

Students in Years 9 to 12 attended Chaffey SC Farm each Friday for a term to complete technical and practical tasks on the farm. Industry immersions to local horticulture organisations allowed students to see firsthand the modern technology used in horticulture across the Mallee. I express my most sincere appreciation to all the stakeholders who made this immersive program the success it was. I am also pleased to share that the groundwork and foundations established will allow students to experience this learning opportunity again in 2024 and beyond.

## Conclusion

The NMLLEN staff have once again delivered a high number of opportunities to develop students' knowledge of growth industries and allowed students to hear from experienced industry experts. My most sincere thank you to all our industry and secondary school partners for their willingness to work with the NMLLEN. I acknowledge the NMLLEN Committee of Management and staff for their unwavering commitment to young people and ensuring they have access to the high quality programs we deliver which will enable them to make informed decisions on future pathways, education and training. The young people we support today will be our future leaders tomorrow.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "R Martin".

**Rod Martin**  
**Executive Officer, NMLLEN**

# NMLLEN Highlights

NMLLEN delivered the School to Work Program in 2023, and achieved positive results in the first year facilitating workplace learning opportunities and industry immersion experiences for secondary school students in the Northern Mallee Region.

## New Employers on the STW Portal

In 2023, the Northern Mallee LLEN marked a significant development by onboarding seven new host employers into its School to Work program. The diversification across industries is notable, with new affiliations established in Health (2), Community Services (2), Retail (1), Agriculture & Environment (1), and Digital Tech (1).

The inclusion of these host employers reflects a collaborative effort to enhance Work Based Learning (WBL) Opportunities for students in the region. NMLLEN expresses gratitude to both the continuing and newly joined employers for their ongoing support, contributing to the advancement of educational and vocational experiences for the local students bridging the gap between academic learning and practical skills development.



## 2023 Work Based Learning Statistics

Northern Mallee LLEN demonstrated outstanding performance by not only meeting but surpassing its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the areas of Work Based Learning (WBL) placements and School-to-Work events. This commendable achievement was not exclusive to the Northern Mallee region but was mirrored across both regional and state-wide LLENs. The collaborative efforts of these LLENs played a pivotal role in elevating placement opportunities for students. The surge in participation in School-to-Work events was driven by a robust demand for School-Industry engagement from educational institutions. The diverse range of placements offered by Northern Mallee LLEN includes Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning (SWL), and School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATS). The spectrum of event types organised encompasses Guest Speaker and Industry Presentations, Career Events, Industry Immersion, Workplace Visits, Work Readiness sessions, and Mock Interviews.

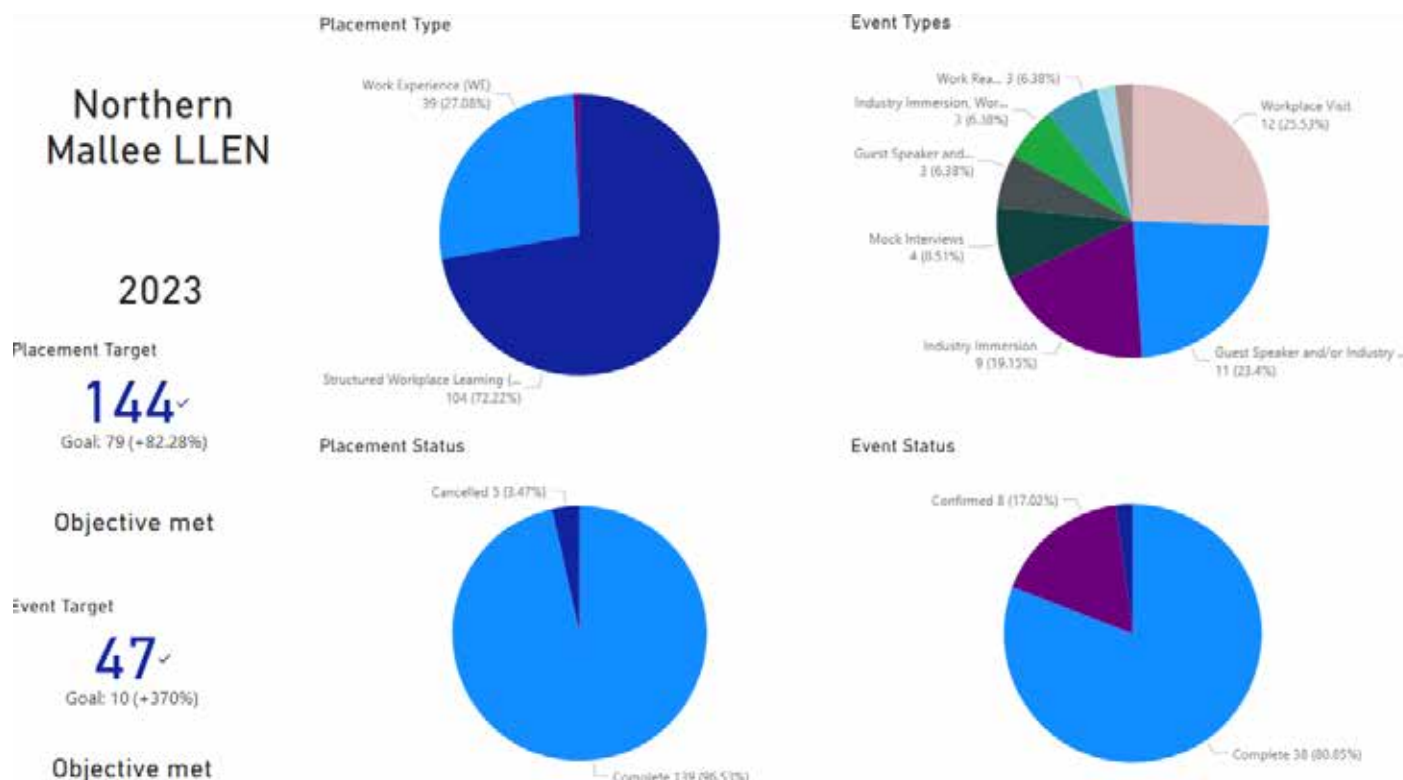
**Northern Mallee LLEN- Placements used and Events**

Placements used from School to Work Portal in NMLLEN region in 2023	Target	Achieved
WBL Placements	79	144
School to Work Events	10	47

**Regional LLENs Placements used and Events**

Placements used from School to Work portal in 2023 (all regional LLENs)	Target	Achieved
WBL Placements	655	1107
School to Work Events	40	190

Regional LLENs include Northern Mallee LLEN, Murray Mallee LLEN, North Central LLEN, Campaspe Cohuna LLEN and Goldfields LLEN



The statewide and regional targets were also exceeded. Regional LLENs together achieved 1107 WBL placements against a target of 655. The 31 Victorian Statewide LLENs also exceeded their KPI of 4800 statewide WBL placements and 425 events. This success underscores the collective commitment of Northern Mallee LLEN and VicLLENs to foster meaningful connections between Secondary schools and Industry facilitating industry immersion experiences for Secondary Students.



## 2023 Work Based Learning Highlights

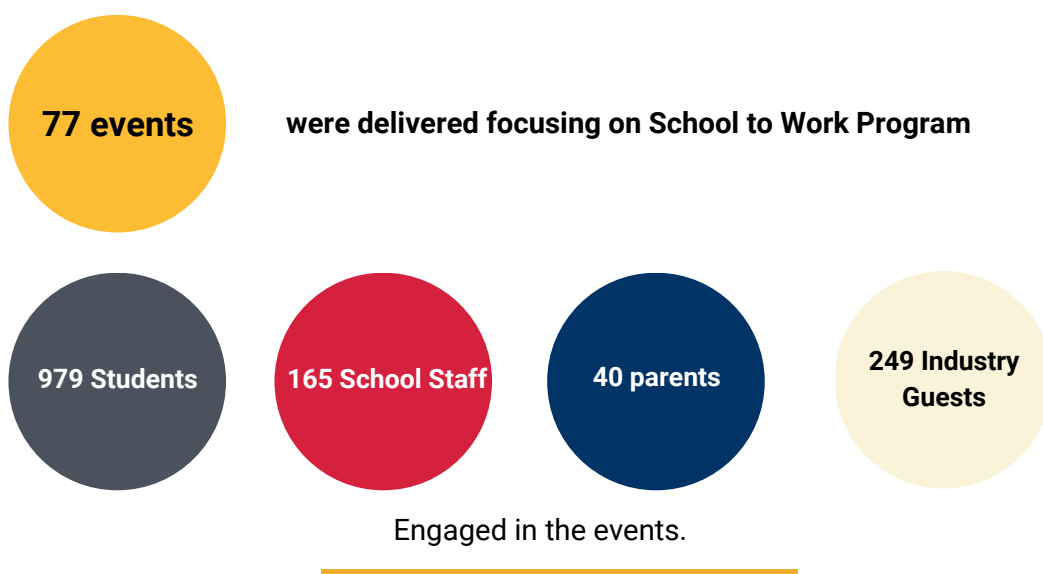
Work Experience enables students to observe and explore possible career options while undertaking a work placement in a real workplace. Work Experience and Structured Work Placements are available to students 15 years and over including VCE students, however, some exceptions apply. In 2023, Northern Mallee LLEN schools used 39 work experience placements through the School to Work Portal for secondary school students in the Northern Mallee Region.

Schools that had students arrange a Work Experience placement through the STW Portal included: **Chaffey Secondary College, Red Cliffs Secondary College, Merbein P10 College, Mildura Senior College, Irymple Secondary College, Robinvale College and St. Joseph's College Mildura.**



Nicolette Robson from LMW with Year 10 VET Students at Irymple SC

## School To Work Program Presentations



## 2023 Work Based Learning Highlights

### NMHI Project participants receive SWL Placement



Bec Shugg and Ethan Warner, Year 12 students from Mildura Specialist School, dived into a transformative week of Structured Workplace Learning from 4th to 8th December as Horticulture Trades Assistants in Parks and Gardens at Australian Inland Botanic Gardens.

Guided by Brian Cuddy and his dedicated team, they explored the world of Parks and Gardens, fuelled by their passion for horticulture-related careers. Their placement not only provided hands-on experience but also marked a milestone as the first participants from the 2023 Northern Mallee Horticulture Immersion Project to receive an SWL Placement in the Horticulture Sector.



### FLO Connect Mildura Campus student Aimee completes her SWL placement

Aimee James completed a Structured Workplace Learning placement at the Mildura Workingman's Club, where she embraced the role of a Hospitality Operations Assistant. From September 4 to 8, Aimee seamlessly navigated the bistro, cellar, and maintenance and administration departments of the Club, leaving a positive mark.

Aimee's journey began with an eye-opening Industry Visit to the Mildura Workingman's Club. It was there that she discovered her passion for hospitality operations, sparking conversations with Steve Banks (Executive Officer) and Sam Thorpe (Operations Manager), who graciously arranged this enriching placement.



# Allied Health Come to Try Day



Held at the Mildura Sporting Precinct on Monday, May 15th, the Allied Health Come and Try Day provided an invaluable opportunity for 120 students from various schools to explore the exciting world of Allied Health. The students had the chance to rotate through ten different stations, each offering unique activities and insights into the diverse field of allied health.

- Occupational and Hand Therapy
- Radiography and Sonography
- Optometry
- Speech Pathology
- Dentistry Hygiene
- Podiatry
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy and Exercise Physiology
- Dietitian
- Allied Health Assistant



The participating organisations included Nicole McLeod Occupational Therapy and Hand Therapy, I-MED Radiology Network, Quinn & Co. Eyecare Mildura, Sunraysia Community Health Services, and Mildura Base Public Hospital.

Media Coverage:

<https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/education/6157022/health-professionalspitch-careers-to-kids>



# The World of Engineering



Northern Mallee LLEN organised the "World of Engineering- Come and Try Day" on May 30th at Mildura Sporting Precinct. Students were guided by industry professionals and explored diverse engineering domains. The impressive lineup included Design, CAD/IT, Pharmaceutical, Planning, Mechanical, Aero (Aviation), Structural, Civil, and Electrical Engineers.

The organisations that contributed to this event include Interlink Sprayers Pty Ltd, Lower Murray Water, Ramair Flying Services, Tonkin Engineering, Mildura Rural City Council, Sunraysia Institute Of TAFE (SuniTAFE).



Media Coverage: <https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/news/6162331/engineersexpo-pitch>

# Social Welfare- Come learn about me



In a collaborative effort with local community organizations and government bodies, the Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network orchestrated a remarkable event - "Social Welfare – Come Learn About Me" on Tuesday, July 25th, targeting Year 9-12 students.

This event united 68 eager students and 15 dedicated school staff for an eye-opening experience. It featured 10 guest speakers who shared their inspiring career journeys and insights into the world of community services and social welfare.

The students actively engaged, bombarding the speakers with diverse questions during the session.



# STEM Idols

STEM Idols brought together 60 Year 9 girls and 10 science teachers from the Northern Mallee region including schools from as far as Ouyen and Murrayville for an immersive exploration of the intersection of agriculture and STEM.

Led by Anna-Leisa Vietz, Community Education Manager, and Dr. Gabriela Constanza Martinez Ortiz, Community Education Officer, both from Agriculture Victoria Research, the event featured a hands-on Digital Agriculture activity, teaching students to build digital moisture sensors and analyse data for efficient water use. Agromillora Australia generously donated 20 Olive plants for the workshop.



*Thanks to industry guests, media representatives, participants from various schools, and dedicated staff, STEM Idols was a monumental success.*

Driven by a mission to empower young girls and bridge the gender gap in STEM, the day included insights from guest speakers, such as:

- **Dr. Santhi Kumari**, Director of the Anaesthesia Department at **Mildura Base Public Hospital**.
- **Dr. Zelmari Coetzee**, Senior Research Scientist at **Agriculture Victoria**.
- **Leigh Krake**, Project Engineer at **Mildura Rural City Council**.
- **Dr. Jessica Lye**, Citrus Biosecurity Manager at **Citrus Australia**.
- **Julienne Krake**, Project Officer at **Lower Murray Water**.
- Special recognition to **Janet Pietsch**, former Science Teacher and **Irymple SC Principal** for emceeing.



## Media Coverage

<https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/news/6191574/stem-idols-sow-seeds>



# Get into AgSTEM Workshop at Robinvale College



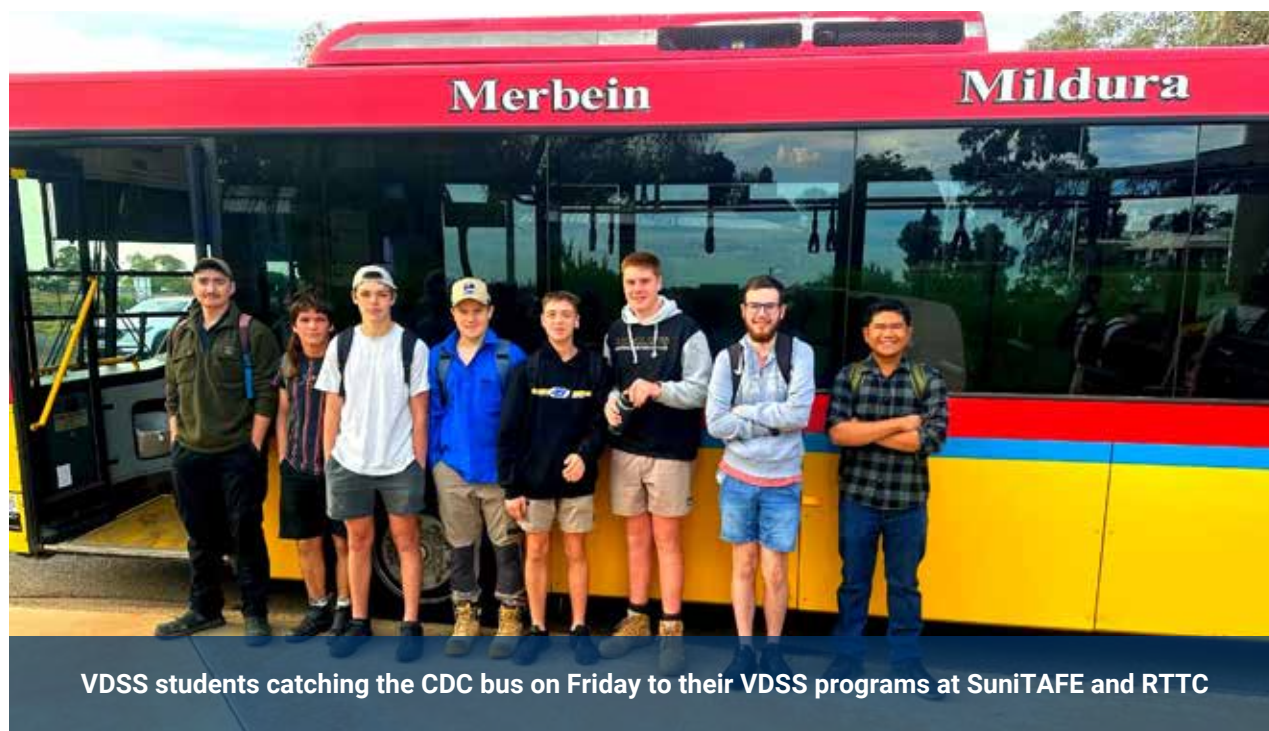
On August 10th, Robinvale College hosted the "Get into AgSTEM" workshop, a remarkable event spearheaded by Anna-Leisa Vietz, Community Education Manager, and Dr. Gabriela Constanza Martinez Ortiz, Community Education Officer, from Agriculture Victoria. This workshop brought together 27 students from Robinvale College and Manangatang P-12 College for an immersive experience in Digital Agriculture STEM activities.

During the workshop, students had the unique opportunity to create digital soil moisture sensors, gaining practical insights into monitoring a plant's immediate environment. They also delved into the analysis of class datasets, learning how to make informed decisions to enhance water efficiency.



Anna and Gaby, with their expertise in STEM applications in agriculture, offered valuable insights into their career paths. Dale Harvey, Northern Mallee LLEN School to Work Coordinator, contributed by shedding light on AGSTEM career pathways and the Northern Mallee Horticulture Immersion Project.

## VET delivered to school students (VDSS) Transport Program



In 2023, the Department of Education initiated a VET Transport pilot project aimed at facilitating access to transportation for VDSS students. The primary objective was to enhance secondary student attendance in VDSS subjects. Notable participating schools included Ouyen P – 12 College, Mildura Senior College, Red Cliffs Secondary College, Robinvale College, Werrimull P – 12, and Merbein P – 10.

During the pilot project in 2023, a total of 43 VDSS students were granted access to transportation, enabling them to participate in various vocational education training programs offered at Sunraysia Institute or TAFE and the Riverside Trade Training Centre.

Building on the success of the initiative, the Department has decided to extend and refund the Transport program into 2024. This continued support aims to break down transportation barriers for students, fostering increased attendance for 87 students in VDSS subjects. The ongoing commitment to providing accessible transport reflects the Department's dedication to creating opportunities for educational advancement and inclusivity.



## Mildura Specialist School, Applied Learning Group Project and Industry Immersion Event



Each year, Mildura Specialist School in partnership with a selected retail business conduct an Applied Learning Group Project for Year 10 and 11, VET Retail students. In 2023, Mildura Specialist School approached Mildura Bunnings Warehouse to partner with the school. Sixteen students have been attending Mildura Bunnings Warehouse for the Applied Learning Component of the Certificate II in Retail Services. The project helps students work towards completing the certificate as a group.

Students complete a Bunnings Induction and store tour before commencing the Applied Learning Component. Mildura Specialist School teachers supervise the training of the students at each industry excursion to Bunnings then assess the students who are required to demonstrate stocking shelves, fronting shelves, price ticketing and interacting with staff and customers where possible.

Bunnings staff assisted by providing a designated training area, staff guidance on store procedures and store supervision to the group of students. Thanks to Bunnings Warehouse for assisting the Applied Learning Group Project in 2023.

## VIC VICE VR Experience Roll Out

VIC VICE is a cutting-edge virtual reality platform that offers students in Victorian classrooms a chance to experience various workplaces in a fully immersive, interactive and multi-sensory way. Northern Mallee LLEN staff have introduced this new technology to schools in our region and enabling students and staff to experience virtual industry tours. There are currently 4 key sectors- Agriculture, Community Services, Transport and Logistics and Health under which 12 workplaces are covered.





## Industry Visits

Northern Mallee LLEN facilitated a range of Industry Visits for Secondary students through 2023.



**Robinvale College VCE VM students Industry Visit to Mildura Health Private Hospital**



**FLO Connect Mildura Campus Industry Visit to Mildura Working Man's Club**



**Mildura Specialist School VPC Students Visits to MRCC Parks and Gardens**



**Robinvale College Year 9 and 10 students visit Australian Vintage Ltd. Buronga Hill Winery**



**Mildura Specialist School Year 11 and 12 VPC students Industry visit to McDonald's Mildura**

## SCBA Cadetship Presentation

Accounting students from Mildura Senior College (MSC) and St Joseph's College (SJC) seized an exciting opportunity with Southern Cross Business Advisers (SCBA). SCBA presented its Business Services and Accounting Cadetship Program, featuring guest speakers Tony Jones (Director), Trudi Martin (Administration Manager), Mikayla Trobbiani (Accountant and former SCBA Cadet), and James Pictor (Cadet Accountant), alongside Mei Li Kok from La Trobe University. SCBA's diverse services, spanning compliance to human resources, were showcased.



The Accounting Cadetship program, exemplified by James and Mikayla's success, aligns with students' study programs, fostering continuous improvement. James, now a fourth-year Accounting student at La Trobe University, and Mikayla, a CPA Accreditation pursuit, shared their journeys.

The event emphasized the program's synergy with university studies, facilitated by the partnership with La Trobe University. Mei Li Kok detailed entry requirements, paving a promising path from school to a thriving career in Business Services and Accounting. The collaboration among SCBA, La Trobe University, MSC, and SJC presents an excellent opportunity for aspiring accountants.

## Northern Mallee Horticulture Immersion (NMHI) Project



**Ken Mansell with NMHIP Participants**

Northern Mallee LLEN led the 2023 Northern Mallee Horticulture Immersion Project in partnership with Chaffey Secondary College. The project is funded by the **Secondary School Agriculture Fund** which forms part of the Victorian Government's four-year \$50 million commitment to the **Agricultural College Modernisation Program.**

The goal of the Northern Mallee Horticulture Immersion (NMHI) Project is to encourage the uptake of Certificate II in Rural Operations, Certificate II in Horticulture (VDSS), or the VCE Agriculture and Horticulture studies in the following year or to commence a School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT's) aligned to students secondary school subjects to following a career pathway by providing students with the opportunity to study and work while completing their secondary school certificate.

### **Project partners:**

Northern Mallee Local  
Learning and Employment  
Network  
Chaffey Secondary College  
Almond Board of Australia  
Citrus Australia  
SMECC

### **Partnering Schools:**

- Chaffey SC
- Red Cliffs SC
- Merbein P10 College
- Mildura Specialist School
- Irymple SC

### **Industry/ Worksite Visits and Incursions:**

- Agriculture Victoria Mildura  
SmartFarm
- Agromillora Australia
- Analytical Laboratories &  
Technical Services Australia  
(ALTSA)
- Australian Inland Botanic  
Gardens
- Bright Food Asia Pacific
- Duxton Vineyards
- Haeusler's Group
- Mildura Fruit Company
- Mildura Fruit Juices Australia
- Select Harvests
- Southern Cross Farms
- SuniTAFE
- SuniTAFE SMART Farm
- Qualia Wines

*In 2023, 61 participants successfully commenced the project from five partnering schools **Chaffey Secondary College, Red Cliffs Secondary College, Merbein P10 College, Mildura Specialist School and Irymple Secondary College.** Students from Years 9 to 12 attended Chaffey SC Farm each Friday during the four terms of the project*



## Northern Mallee Horticulture Immersion (NMHI) Project



**Group 1 NMHIP Graduates**



**Group 2 NMHIP Graduates**



**Group 3 NMHIP Graduates**



**Group 4 NMHIP Graduates**

There were some great outcomes with the project with student study pathway-focused outcomes for future enrolments from the NMHI Project in 2023, they were as follows.

- *Increased VDSS enrolments Years 10, 11 and 12*
- *Increased VCE Agriculture and Horticulture Studies enrolments, Years 11 and 12*
- *Increased Agriculture and Science related studies in Year 10*

The NMHI Program 2024 will be led and coordinated by Chaffey Secondary College with partnering schools Merbein P10 College, Red Cliffs Secondary College, Irymple Secondary College, and Mildura Specialist Schools in collaboration with Northern Mallee LLEN and Industry.

Two Groups of sixteen participants (totalling 32 students) will commence the NMHI Program in 2024 over the two semesters.



**NMHIP Participants at Agromillora Nursery**

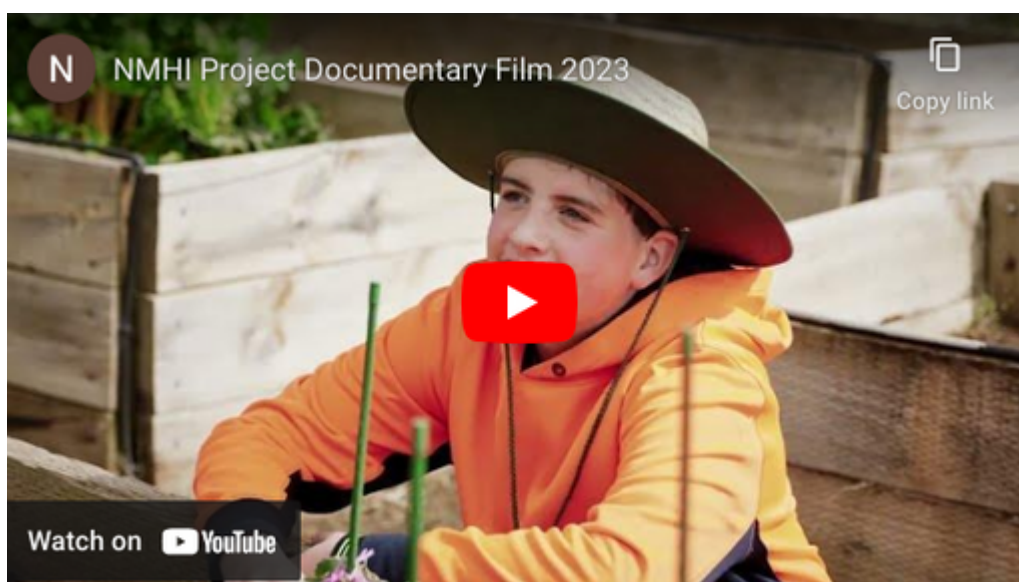


**NMHIP Participants at ALTSA lab**

## **NMHI Project Documentary Film**

Northern Mallee LLEN engaged Mitchell Barkman to film the NMHI Project Documentary- Students, industry professionals, and NMHI Project staff share their impactful experiences, offering insights into the journey of produce—from inception in cutting-edge labs to its presence in both domestic and international markets.

NMLLEN are truly grateful to all the project and Industry Partners who contributed to this documentary. Also, a huge thanks to Mitch Barkman for filming this documentary and NMLLEN staff Monica Trehan and Dale Harvey for working alongside Mitch to see this documentary from planning to launch.

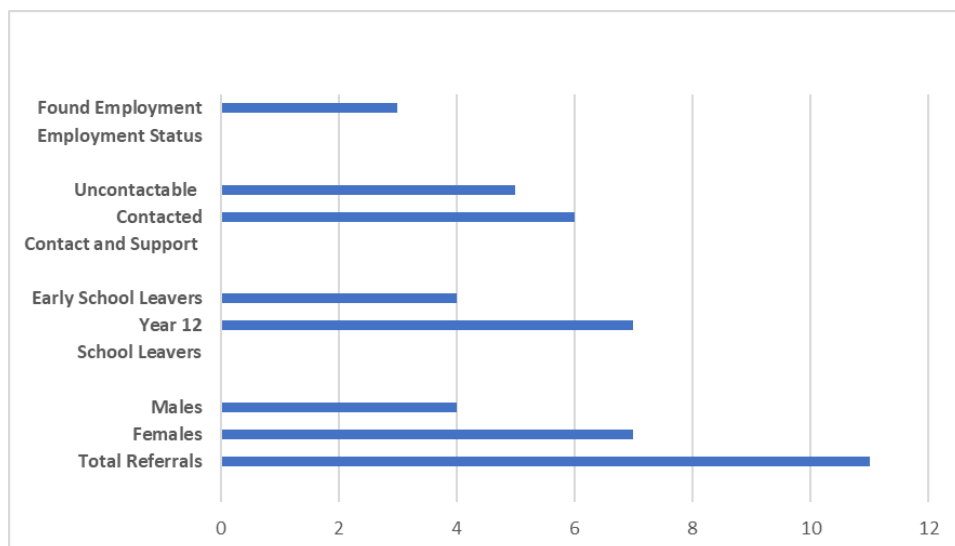




## Ontrack Connect

On Track Connect aims to assist young people who have left school in the previous year and who are not studying or in full time work at the time of the annual Department of Education (DE) 'On Track' survey of school leavers – a large-scale survey run by the Social Research Centre, on behalf of the Department of Education. In 2023, 11 students were referred out of which 7 were females and 4 were Male. 7 out of the 11 referrals were Year 12 school leavers. 6 were contacted and 5 were uncontactable. 3 had found employment.

### Status of Ontrack referrals from 2023



**The young people that were contacted were looking for advice on education, training and employment.**

## Navigator Program

The Mallee Navigator Program, launched in September 2016 as a collaborative initiative involving Northern Mallee LLEN, Murray Mallee LLEN, Mildura Rural City Council, and Red Cliffs Secondary College, has played a crucial role in re-engaging young individuals aged 12 to 17 with less than 30% school attendance in the Mallee region.

This program, spanning Mildura Rural City Council, Swan Hill Rural City Council, Gannawarra Shire, and Buloke Shire, provides intensive wrap-around case management support to help reintegrate eligible young people into education or training. Since its inception, the Mallee Navigator program has received over 400 referrals. However, Mallee Accommodation Support Program (MASP) will be the lead Mallee Navigator service provider delivering services in the Northern Mallee region and Mallee Family Care will deliver services in the Southern Mallee region from January 2024.

103

Young people receive individual case management support on a quarterly basis.

27

Students exited the Navigator program after meeting the minimum attendance requirements in 2023.

27

Young people re-engaged with education or training in 2023.

49

Young people exited the program before completion





SCN Members at Agromillora Nursery

## Sunraysia Career's Network (SCN) Industry Tour

On June 2nd, Northern Mallee LLEN facilitated an informative industry visit for the Sunraysia Careers Network (SCN) member to the Agromillora Australia Irymple site of the Horticulture Nursery.



SCN Members at Agromillora Nursery

The SCN members were treated to an immersive experience in the local horticulture industry and its modern technological advancements. They were able to witness first-hand the growth and development process of a wide array of wooden tree varieties using cutting-edge technology.

Brendan Payne and Jessica Moore played gracious hosts, providing a scrumptious lunch and an insightful guided tour of the facilities. The SCN members were able to enhance their knowledge of Agromillora and the numerous career pathways within the Horticulture industry.

## Sponsorship of SuniTAFE Awards

NMLLEN proudly sponsored the Apprentice of the Year 1st Year award, with the esteemed honour going to Shane Powell. Shane excelled in the field of Certificate III in Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology, showcasing exemplary dedication and skill throughout his first year. This sponsorship reflects NMLLEN's commitment to recognising and supporting outstanding achievements in the pursuit of vocational excellence. Congratulations to Shane on this well-deserved accomplishment.

## 2023 Sunraysia Careers Network VETDSS (VET Delivered to Secondary Students ) Excellence Awards



The 2023 SCN VETDSS Excellence Awards celebrated outstanding talents like Maya Oldham (VET Hospitality, Student of the Year) and Shae Martin (VET Design, Runner-up). Kudos to Julia Lewis, Bradley Vallance, and Interlink Sprayers for Advocate, Trainer, and Employer of the Year respectively. Northern Mallee LLEN sponsored the "Student of the Year-Runner Up" award, won by Shae Martin. Natika Mitselburg, NMLLEN Project Officer, played a key role in the awards' interviews.

### Community Networks

Northern Mallee LLEN continued its involvement and support for a wide range of community networks including:

- Sunraysia Careers Network
- Northern Mallee Community Partnership 'Hands Up Mallee'
- Headspace Mildura
- Mildura Region Trade Training Centre
- Northern Mallee VET Cluster
- Mallee Workforce Working Group

## NMLLEN in the news

### **World of Engineering:**

<https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/news/6162331/engineersexpo-pitch>

### **Allied Health - Come and Try Day**

<https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/education/6157022/health-professionalspitch-careers-to-kids>

### **STEM Idols 2023:**

<https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/news/6191574/stem-idols-sow-seeds>

## NMHIP in the news

### **Group 1 Graduation Ceremony**

<https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/farming/6129471/students-graduate-from-inaugural-northern-mallee-horticulture-immersion-project>

### **ABC Mildura Swan Hill- in conversation with Rod Martin:**

Victorian Country Hour - ABC Radio

### **Bec Ogden-Brunell and Dale Harvey in an interview with Hot FM:**

<https://youtu.be/e0SmN-WeKGw>

### **Group 2 ALTSA Industry Tour media coverage:**

<https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/news/6158780/analytical-laboratories-and-technical-services-australia-re-starts-tours>

### **Group 3 SuniTAFE Smart Farm Industry Visit:**

<https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/farming/6192141/students-get-smart-on-farm-technology?amp=1>

### **Group 3 Graduation Ceremony:**

<https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/education/6204759/hands-on-learning#2>

### **Article on the Northern Mallee Horticulture Immersion Project (NMHI Project)**

#### **"In A Nutshell - Spring 2023 Vol 24 Issue 3" by the Almond Board of Australia**

<https://nmllen.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/In-a-Nutshell-IAN-Spring-2023-FINAL-16-17-1.pdf>

### **NMHIP Planting the seeds- Sunraysia Daily- 6-Jan-24**

[NMHIP-Planting the seeds-article SD- 6 Jan 24](#)



# Social Snapshot



@NORTHERNMALLEELLEN



824



Reach up by 17%  
Facebook Visits  
up by 175%  
Video views up by 46.9%  
6.2% growth in Followers



@NMMLLEN



361



36% Growth in followers  
15% Growth in Engagement Rates



@NMMLLEN



221



9% Growth in followers



@NMMLLEN



225 Followers and growing



@NORTHERN\_MALLEE\_LLEN



@NMMLLEN



WWW.NMMLLEN.COM.AU

2500 new users  
Avg Engagement time 1m 48 sec

# NMLLEN STAFF



## Rod Martin, Executive Officer

Rod has extensive experience in Employment Services, Education & Training, and government-funded programs. Rod previously managed Apprentices & Trainees, Industry Trainers, and Youth workers under the Group Training, RTO, and Youth Connections programs while employed with SMGT. Rod coordinated the Work for the Dole program across the Wimmera Mallee before joining NMLLEN as the Structured Workplace Learning Coordinator in January 2018. In January 2021 he succeeded Ron Broadhead as NMLLEN's Executive Officer.

## Dale Harvey, STW Coordinator

Dale joined NMLLEN in April 2018 as the Structured Workplace Learning Program Project Officer and transitioned to the role of School to Work Coordinator in January 2021. He has extensive experience across Education and Employment Services Sector including as an Employment Consultant, School Based Training Coordinator, and Business Development Officer. Dale Harvey is also the Project Officer for the Northern Mallee Horticulture immersion (NMHI) Project that started in 2023.



## Peta Maas, Administration Officer

Peta joined NMLLEN in December 2018 as the Administration Officer. Peta has an extensive background in administration and management gained via her lengthy service in the Royal Australian Navy and other administrative roles. Peta's role is to maintain the day-to-day operations of NMLLEN and provide support to the Executive Officer, staff, and Board.

## Natika Mitselburg, STW Project Officer

Natika joined NMLLEN as a Project Officer in March 2021. She has extensive experience in the Vocational Education and Training industry. Natika works closely with the local secondary schools, their students, and industry to assist with Work Based Learning opportunities and develop and deliver programs that will support and enhance the essential needs to connect students with the local industry. Natika curates School Industry engagement events such as Allied Health-Come and Try Day.



## Monica Trehan, Marketing and Project officer

Monica joined NMLLEN as a Marketing & Project Officer in March 2021. Monica has extensive experience in Marketing and Communication working across a range of industries such as Education, Automotive, Health, Technology, and Business Consulting. Monica's role involves managing the NMLLEN website, social media, marketing collaterals, and supporting NMLLEN projects. Monica also leads STEM Idols, an event based on promoting STEM-related career pathways to the region's students.

# 2023 Executive Sub Committee



Anne Mansell, Chair, NMLLEN (2019 to present)  
Former CEO, Dried Fruit Australia,



Geoff Dea, Deputy Chair, NMLLEN (2017- present)  
CEO, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE



Peter Devilee, Treasurer, NMLLEN (2011- present)  
Managing Director, Devilee's Air Conditioning & Refrigeration,



Peter O' Donell, Secretary, NMLLEN (2022 – present)  
Executive Director, Southern Cross Farms



Rod Martin, Executive Officer, NMLLEN  
(January 2018 - Present)

## 2023 NMLLEN Committee of Management

- Belinda Hudak
- Janelle McGregor (resigned)
- Vincent Wilson (resigned)
- Greg Kluske
- Graeme Forrester
- Akesa Kei
- Cr Troy Bailey
- Karen Levey



# Governance

## Committee of Management

NMLLEN moved from a membership category committee of management at the 2023 Annual General Meeting.

### Executive Sub Committee

The role of the Executive Sub Committee is to ensure the efficient operation of Northern Mallee LLEN through receiving reports, monitoring financial reports, and making recommendations to the Committee of Management for consideration and approval. The Executive Sub Committee meets bimonthly.

#### Members:

- Anne Mansell (Chair)
- Geoff Dea (Deputy Chair)
- Peter Devilee (Treasurer)
- Peter O'Donnell (Secretary)
- Rod Martin (Executive Officer)

### Committee of Management member changes

In 2023, the following changes to the Committee of Management occurred:

#### Members who continued their participation:

- Greg Kluske - D/Principal Learning & Teaching at St. Joseph's College, Mildura
- Graeme Forrester- Executive Principal, Chaffey Secondary College
- Belinda Hudak - Principal, Mildura Senior College
- Geoff Dea- Chief Executive Officer, SuniTAFE
- Karen Levey- State Training Manager Vic & NSW, MADEC
- Peter O'Donnell - Managing Director, Southern Cross Farms
- Anne Mansell- Community

#### Members who resigned:

- Vince Wilson- CEO, MASP
- Janelle McGregor- MBPH, Executive Director People @ Culture
- Peter Devilee -Managing Director (Devilee's Air Conditioning & Refrigeration)

#### NMLLEN welcomed new committee of management members at the AGM listed below:

- Cr Troy Bailey, - Councillor, Community Health and Wellbeing portfolio, MRCC
- Akesa Kei - Executive Officer, Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Community College

***Northern Mallee LLEN thanks all the new, retiring, and continuing Committee of Management members for their contributions in 2023.***





154A Ninth St, Mildura Victoria 3500 T: (03) 5021 3266  
E: [info@nmllen.com.au](mailto:info@nmllen.com.au) W: [www.nmllen.com.au](http://www.nmllen.com.au)



Education  
and Training