

54 reasons

Part of the Save the Children Australia Group



Past, present, future

HANDS ON LEARNING

# NEWS

Quarterly

March 2024



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# 25 years

2024 marks twenty-five years since Russell Kerr first piloted Hands on Learning at Frankston High School.

Thousands of empowered students across four States later, Hands on Learning (HoL) is flourishing.

From the very beginning the magic of people and relationships has been the essence of HoL. We have grown from the ground up with the support of visionary school leaders, the talent and skills of hundreds of artisan-teachers, and the generous and ongoing donations of committed philanthropists to make it possible for our 54reasons HoL team to support and connect partner schools.

Far from job done, we are as passionate as ever to achieve our enduring vision of increasing access to HoL for every child who needs it.

## Our cover

25 years on, Frankston High School past and present students connected with HoL Founder Russell Kerr and current artisan-teachers to discover the future is bright and strong relationships are still at the core of HoL.



## Serious support

Daniel Ricciardo is serious about his ambassadorship of HoL. He is auctioning his 2024 Melbourne Grand Prix helmet, designed by young artist Rosie Pettenon, to raise funds for Save the Children, specifically tied to support and grow HoL. Daniel is pictured here with Save the Children Group CEO Matt Tinkler.

## Welcome to the HoL community

- Howrah Primary School Tasmania
- Kalianna School, Victoria
- Orford Primary School, Tasmania
- St Helena Secondary College, Victoria
- Flagstone State Community College, Queensland



Orford Primary School students are hard at work with one of their first projects, garden beds to grow produce for the school and program.



With sustainability across all we create and eat the focus of practical workshops at the 2024 HoL Conference, we are excited to welcome inspiring Australian chef of the year, Jo Barrett.

## Teamwork and ingenuity: we can all make a difference

“We all have potential, but we don’t all have the opportunity to shine.”

Join us on September 13th in Frankston to hear why Jo was in a rush to leave school, and how her teacher mentors helped her discover her talent and pursue her passion.

Jo is not only one of Australia’s finest chefs, she also has a practical insights into zero-waste living having spent 2020 living off-grid in the centre of Melbourne in a three-storey house and urban farm at Federation Square that produced all of its own power, water and food. Even the cooking gas was generated from human and food waste. Jo’s experience is featured in the stimulating Greenhouse documentary about Joost Bakker’s futurefoodsystem. “If we could grow it on, or in the urban house, then it was on the menu,” Jo reports.

As one of Australia’s most creative and resourceful chefs, Jo specialises in sustainable, waste free cooking. Her award-winning *Little Picket* restaurant at the Lorne Bowls Club is incredibly popular, and *Sustain*, her groundbreaking cookbook is packed with practical ways that we can all help to save the planet from our kitchen benches.

Join us as Jo shares her passion, experience, and learnings.



## A promise to the future

This year we are proud to introduce the trajectories of some of the 20,000+ young people who have participated in HoL over the past 25 years.

### One year on

Twelve months ago Mason would have laughed imagining speaking in front of the whole school as Education Captain at Horsham West and Haven Primary School. A year down the track it's a reality.

"I am naturally shy and one of the quiet ones," is the way Mason described themselves.

"It was fun to meet other kids and learn at school in a different way. Creating and finishing projects built up my confidence. And that's transitioned into my normal classwork. Now I can work with people I wouldn't normally hang out with outside class.

Before HoL I had more of a fixed mindset, not trying any harder and now I've really developed into a growth mindset. One of my Focus Plans was to be the first person to have a go at something new. I used to step back and let someone else do it so I could see how to do it. Now I'm more inclined to have a go in class.

*"It's the teamwork and communication, and the confidence that grows when you are part of HoL that has made a big difference for me."*

*Mason, Year 6*



Being part of HoL increased my confidence and helped me go for the role of Education Captain.

Even my mum has noticed. When we went to Adelaide into a big store the employee asked what I was looking for? I talked to them like I knew them. My mum noticed the big change. It's the teamwork and communication, and the confidence that grows when you are part of HoL that has made a big difference for me."



## Twenty-four years on

The similarities between one of Melbourne's leading makeup artists, and the Senior Project Manager for commercial builder George Rydell Constructions might not be immediately obvious, but they are stark.

Both were part of HoL at Frankston High School in 2000. Both had a ball. And both describe the impact of Hands on Learning as lifelong.

"Tests and essays aren't the only way for a kid to show how clever they are – or help them build the skills they need to succeed at work or in life.

Getting outside the classroom and learning by doing makes a huge difference.

HoL gives kids tangible outcomes which is so important in your middle years when more often than anything you feel like a nuisance. It was really good to get your hands dirty and achieve, and experience different pathways to success and happiness.

It's a foundation as a kid that you carry through as an adult, like a blueprint to success.

The wellbeing part is huge, working as a team, moving your body, being out in your community. We all need a tribe to belong to, to accomplish together. In HoL everyone had their own role so individually you felt in charge, empowered, and as a group we empowered each other.

It was such a great vibe, it was so much fun.

Hands on Learning motivated us to come to school, kept us connected to school, and we went on to successful pathways in business and industry.

Every school should be supported to run Hands on Learning so kids can be nurtured as early as possible to imagine what they can do in life."

Sophie Knox and Dylan Webb,  
Frankston High School alumni 2000.



*"HoL gives kids tangible outcomes. It was really good to get your hands dirty and achieve, and experience different pathways to success and happiness. It's a foundation as a kid that you carry through as an adult, like a blueprint to success."*

*Sophie and Dylan, FHS 2000*

# Connecting with your community

The world is better when we get the chance to work together, share ideas and inspiration, and lend a hand in our local communities.



## Helping hand

Beaufort Secondary's HoL team joined Blazeaid adding more helping hands to support local farmers to rebuild fences destroyed in the recent bushfires that ravaged their region.



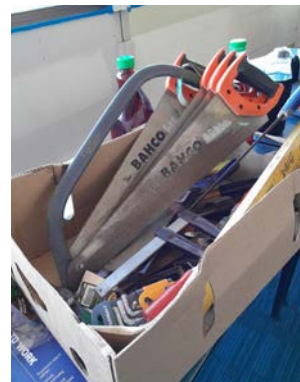
## Tassies training together

Induction training for Howrah Primary and Rose Bay High schools led by 'Tassie Tim', HoL School Support Manager for southern Tasmania.



## Southeast sharing

Pretty tough to beat the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne as the location for the most recent HoL network meeting for southeast Victorian HoL teams. The lively roundtable of 14 artisan-teachers representing 9 local schools shared strategies from food budgeting to student selection, to group dynamics.



## Welcome to the family

There are all kinds of ways to welcome new members to the HoL family. Frankston High school generously donated a box of tools, and Padua College Tyabb tipped in with timber to kickstart the new HoL team at St Helena College.

## THE HEART OF HoL

Meet the heart of HoL Café at Bribie Island State High School, Queensland, Amanda Waters

### Why did you put your hand up for HoL?

I believe every child deserves the chance to shine.

### What makes HoL Café thrive at Bribie?

One step at a time not the whole staircase. We are learning to work in a team, learning to share the fun stuff and the clean-up. The kids feel comfortable. Like they belong, they connect with kids they wouldn't usually speak to, and have a new way to show what they can do. That's especially powerful as the school principal is one of our best lunch customers!

### What are you proud of?

Our students. They decide the menu for staff lunches, order and prepare all the food, and interact in positive new ways with school staff. And their faces when staff tell them how good their food is are priceless. One of our team hardly came to school, she now stays the whole day in HoL, and last week had three full days of school attendance.

### What are you bringing from your life experience into HoL?

I'm a fully qualified chef, past owner of two cafes and a catering



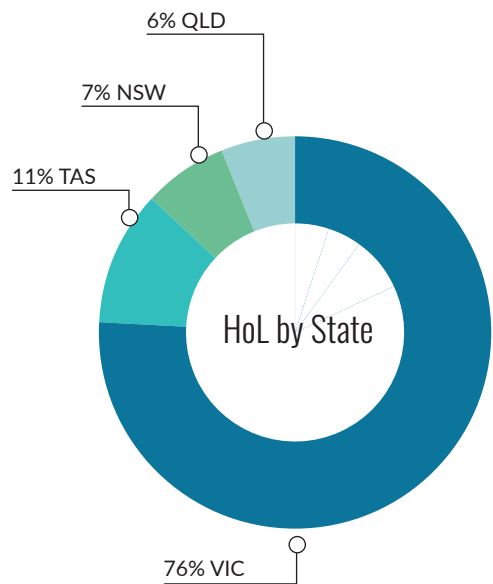
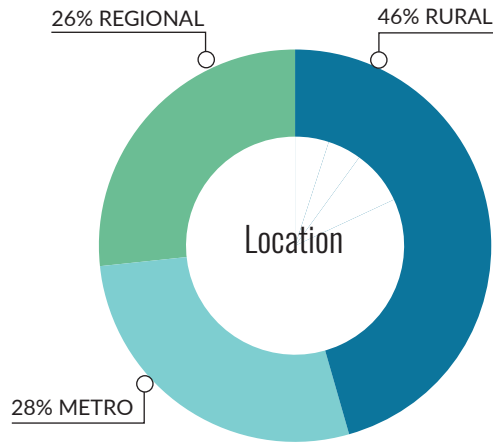
company and I love food. I come from a family five, all adopted and multi racial. We always felt included no matter what. In schools there are always the kids shinning bright, but what about the kids that fly under the radar? They deserve the chance to achieve too. I feel like I've found my calling in life. I'm exhausted but I'm so happy.

### Where do you see HoL going this year?

We are looking like introducing a second day of Café in Term 2.

# 2023 – what the numbers say

Our aggregated data collection continues to demonstrate Hands on Learning’s practical approach to improve educational outcomes, increase belonging and student wellbeing.



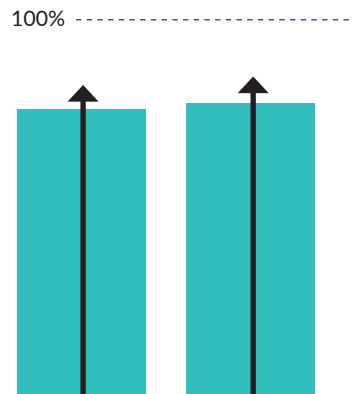
## 2023 growth

Schools recognised the need for a supportive program like Hands on Learning (HoL) resulting in 31 schools commencing a program in 2023.

### STUDENTS

**77%** of students report an improvement in confidence to try new things

**78%** of students report an improvement in problem solving



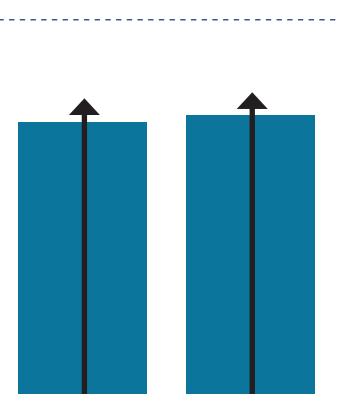
*“Being in HoL has improved my emotions while I’m at school altogether and it makes me feel included.”*

Student – Craigieburn Secondary College

### STAFF

**71%** of staff report an improvement in students working positively with others

**75%** of staff report an improvement in students’ overall happiness



*“Student has built her confidence and appears to be applying this to friendships and her schoolwork.”*

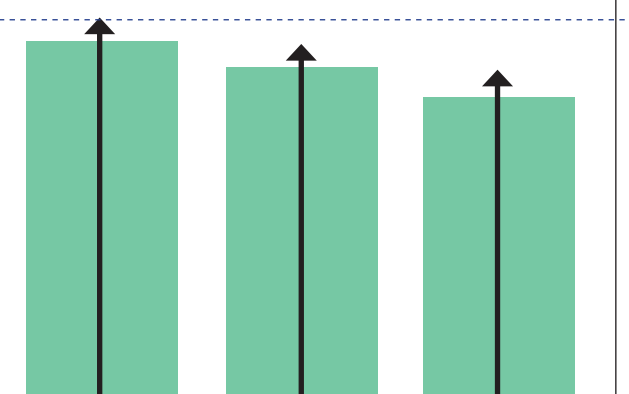
Year Level Coordinator – Hawkesdale P-12 College

### PARENTS

**95%** of parents report increased development of new work and life skills by their children

**88%** of parents report improvement in their child’s sense of belonging

**80%** of parents say HoL is the key reason my child is more engaged and motivated to attend school

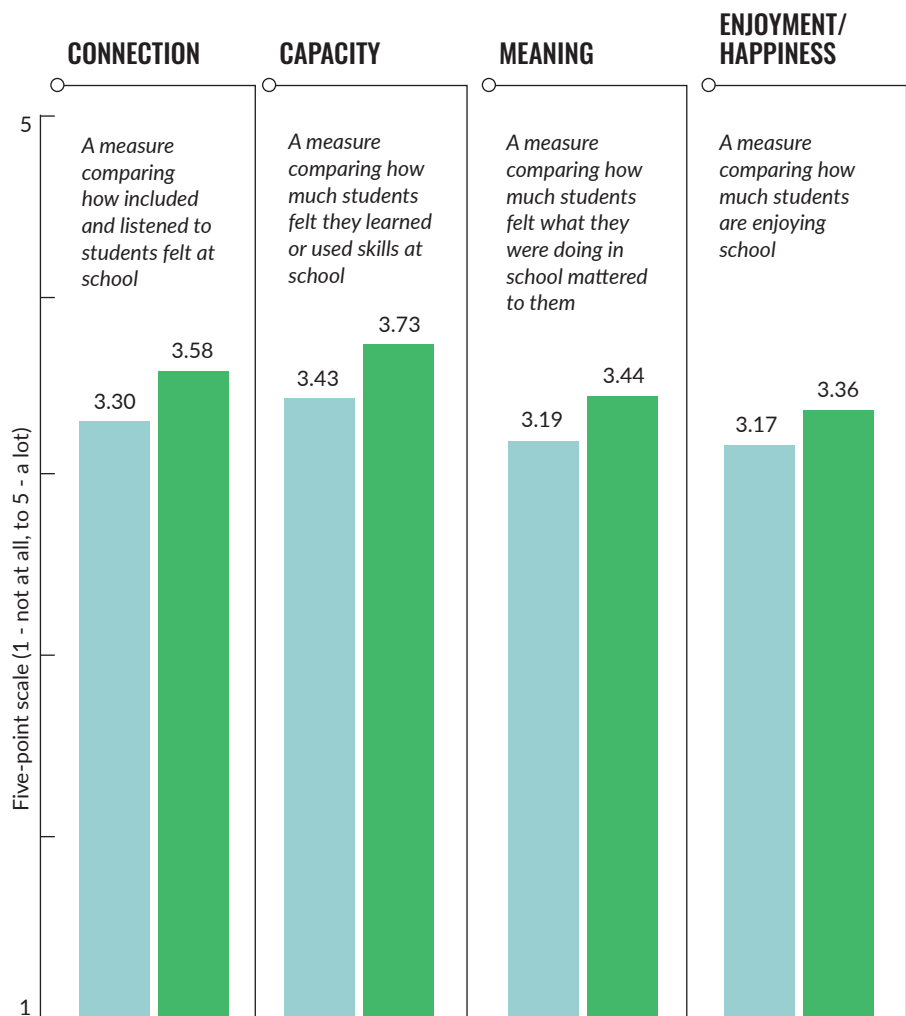


*“It is his favourite part of school. He feels seen and included and supported. I also believe he feels trusted to try new things where others may have not provided him that opportunity.”*

Parent – PaduaCollege, Tyabb

## Engagement and connection

The Connections, Capacities and Meanings (CCM) framework used here emerged from a world-first Australian Research Council/University of Melbourne project to measure the impact of programs like HoL more accurately – those which seek to help young people stay connected to and find meaning at school.



● pre-HoL STUDENTS:  
HoL students surveyed at intake about their experience of a typical school day prior to starting HoL

● current-HoL STUDENTS:  
HoL students completed another survey after participating in HoL for a minimum of two terms

## What the students say across the states

*“HoL is a great program and I highly recommend it to other kids who struggle in school or would like to explore opportunities.”*

Year 8 – Bateman’s Bay High School, NSW

*“I have come a lot further as a person than I would have in the classroom. I am better at solving problems.”*

Year 8 – Benalla P-12 College, VIC

*“I love HoL, best thing ever (only reason I come to school).”*

Year 8 – Chaffey College, VIC

*“I love HoL! It’s so fun and I think it’s really helped me improve in a lot of things. Like it helped me make more friends, so I hope to do it next year.”*

Year 5 – Chewton Primary School, VIC

*“Being in HoL has improved my emotions while I’m at school altogether and it makes me feel included.”*

Year 9 – Craigieburn Secondary College, VIC

*“It has made me become more open to go outside my comfort zone, my attendance has gotten better and I feel more myself in HoL.”*

Year 10 – Cranbourne East Secondary College, VIC

*“Without this program I would probably be at home every day, not wanting to go to school.”*

Year 9 – Creekside P-9 College, VIC

*“HoL is the best thing that has ever happened for my mental health.”*

Year 8 – Dover District School, TAS

*“Hands on Learning has Improved my confidence lots and I enjoy the teamwork in HoL.”*

Year 7 – Echuca College, VIC

*“HoL has helped me focus more and stay on task.”*

Year 8 – Mornington Secondary College, VIC

*“My behaviour has changed - I can regulate my emotions more and I’m able to talk to staff about how I’m feeling and why.”*

Year 9 – Echuca Twin Rivers Specialist School, VIC

*“It was my favorite part about school for a while, but now I enjoy all school and it’s like a bonus.”*

Year 9 – Frankston High School, VIC

*“I used to not be excited to come to school, but now that I have Hands on Learning on Mondays I feel good about going.”*

Year 5 – Gleneagle State School, QLD

*“I get to meet more people and make more friends.”*

Year 7 – Leeton High School, NSW

*“HoL is a space where I can get a break away from the drama that goes on in regular classes.”*

Year 8 – Lowood State High School, QLD

*“It means everything to me.”*

Year 9 – McClelland Secondary College, VIC

*“Really Hands on Learning has been one of the best programs and experiences I’ve ever had. Everyday is a delight in HoL. I’ve made most of my friends in HoL and wouldn’t of had this happy life without HoL. Thanks for everything.”*

Year 10 – Mount Eliza Secondary College, VIC

*“It’s one of the few places where I don’t feel like a ball of anxiety.”*

Year 9 – Padua College, VIC

*“HoL is my favourite day because it’s just fun.”*

Year 7 – Yolla District School, TAS

*“I love Hands on Learning. It helps me learn all the time and I get new opportunities. It’s fun to work on all the stuff we do and will help me for when I’m older.”*

Year 6 – Port Dalrymple School, TAS

# The structure that unites

Fences literally do come in all shapes and sizes in Hands on Learning. Got something to screen, something to showcase, something to protect? What about a fence?



## Practically creative

Koo Wee Rup Secondary's HoL team took student agency and sustainability to a new level designing and creating an ingenious fence to encompass their HoL space. Teamwork was central as the crew worked in pairs repurposing a range of materials from donated hardwoods to pallets, to the humbler combination of string and sticks. The result features planter boxes filled with herbs grown in compost created from food scraps recovered from staff rooms across the school. This fence walks the talk of productivity. It has also garnered significant respect. "Before we moved in this space used to get broken into all the time. There's been no vandalism since we moved in mid last year," HoL artisan-teacher Coco Pinnis reports.



## Staying put

Sturdy and strong Maffra Secondary College students have erected this magnificent fence to protect their Indigenous garden.



## Privacy please

Built by HoL students at Dimboola Memorial Secondary College this reclaimed timber and corrugated iron 'Great Wall' shields a visit to the pivvy.





## Sensory delight

Summerdale Primary School HoL team built an awesome Herringbone compost screen with beautiful reclaimed timber.

## Warm welcome

No warmer welcome than this fabulous front fence installed by the HoL team at Hawkesdale P-12 College.



## Screening beauty

The HoL team at Padua College Tyabb built this fence around their greenhouse from recycled timber, painted it, and added the decorative timber birds that they cut with a jigsaw. The purpose was to screen the greenhouse to make their beautiful precinct even more beautiful.



## Eco warriors

The team at St Francis Xavier, Officer, landed at Locky's Legacy Wildlife Shelter as part of a community project and enhanced the landscape with this sculptural and practical fence.



## Bright and breezy does the trick

Trafalgar High School HoL students have made a statement with their first project.





## Everything old is new again

The Rainbow Secondary College HoL team know that rejuvenation, refurbishment and preserving the past is a perfect way to sustain our future.

# HANDS ON LEARNING



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