

HANDS ON LEARNING

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to shine

54 reasons  
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# NEWS

Quarterly

September 2023



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Echuca Twin Rivers Primary School



### Our cover

Amy from Lilydale Heights College has experienced how being in HoL has the power to change attitudes and actions. Read the how and why on page 5.

## Plantfulness brings life to HoL

A huge thank you [Plantfulness!](#) Students are rapidly discovering their green thumbs with \$1200 of new gardening tools being delivered to 123 of our partner schools to launch our new partnership.

The increased capacity of HoL teams and the diversity of new projects being planned and implemented is exciting. Orders for partner schools for the next round of donations will open early 2024.

Plantfulness is a not-for-profit organisation committed to improving the mental and physical health of our community by promoting mindfulness and health through participation in gardening and nature.

*"Thanks for this great opportunity for our students to dig a little deeper into the great outdoors. We have just the space and desire to make things blooming great (pardon the pun)."*

- Tongala Primary School



Crusoe College



Rainbow P-12 College

### Student celebration

Save the date for this year's HoL Student Celebration. [Register](#) your school and accept the video challenge to share your success this year.



### Welcome to the HoL community

- Bairnsdale West Primary School, VIC
- Ballarat Specialist School, VIC
- Trafalgar High School, VIC
- Wilmot Primary School, TAS
- Wodonga Primary School, VIC

## Bunnings + opportunities

After 25 years with Bunnings, and the last 12 as an Activities Organiser (AO), Catriona or 'Catch' is now an artisan-teacher at Cranbourne East Secondary College with great tips to share.

**ACTIVITIES ORGANISER (AO):** Best person to know in a store! AOs look after everything community so make them your best friend.

**MAKING CONTACT:** Email is best as AOs are out of the store a lot. Most store's email will be storenameao@bunnings.com.au but contact the store to confirm.

**ASKING FOR CONTRIBUTIONS (donations):** Provide a letter on school letterhead. Send your wish list, but be specific. Ensure what you need most is at the top.

**ASKING FOR PROJECTS:** Consider instore activities. You might want to learn to use some tools with a workshop in the store. The AO will provide all the materials, you bring the students. It's free. Around Mother's Day kids could make a gift for their mum, or special person in their life.

**COMMUNITY PROJECTS:** Ask the AO to come out to your school to work on a project with you. AOs will supply the materials and you can supply the extra hands.

**COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY PROJECTS:** Involve students in giving back to the community.

Bunnings might be doing a project with another local community group, and you can provide the people power. I know that the AO would appreciate this greatly!

**FREEBIES:** Most stores will be open to giving you offcuts from the timber yard or seedlings that are being written off from the nursery. It's a great way to repurpose unwanted material.

**TRADE SPECIALIST (TS):** Your school may have a PowerPass account that you might use to charge goods to the school. If you do need to buy a large quantity of anything you can speak to the TS to get a quote for the best price.

**SELLING GOODS INSTORE:** Looking to sell some of your goods? Consider a Bunnings Awareness Table. The best times are Father's Day or Christmas.

**COMMUNITY BBQ:** Request a date for a Fundraising Sausage Sizzle to raise funds for a big project. Send the store a letter on school letterhead. Weekend BBQs make more money than those held on a weekday. (Students must be over 17 to cook but they can serve and do other tasks at a younger age).

## Recognising outstanding contributions

### 10+ Year PARTNER SCHOOLS

Mount Eliza Secondary College  
Murray High School  
Rainbow P-12 College  
Saint Francis Xavier College Berwick (15 Years)  
Kurnai College (17 Years)

### 10+ Year HoLSTERS

LYN CHAPLIN – McClland College  
AL GRIGG – Saint Francis Xavier College  
LOREN FLEMMING – Mount Eliza Secondary College  
NICOLE KRUGER – Rainbow Secondary College  
PIP ROWE – Benalla P-12 College  
MAL SMITH – Rainbow Secondary College  
MICHAEL STUBBE – Kurnai College

### 5 Year HoLSTERS

BRADLEY ADAMS – Hampden Specialist School  
GLENDA ALLEN – Koroit and District Primary School  
JIMMY BOXER – Warrnambool East Primary School  
JODIE CAREY – Merri River School  
BRIAN CONSIDINE – Sydney Road Community School  
WAYNE CRAMP – Kurnai College  
TRENT DAVIS-JENE – Casterton Primary School  
TOMMY DEANS – Wangaratta West Primary School  
LINDA GOLDING – Northern Bay P-12 College  
HEATH HACKETT – Warrnambool West Primary School  
JESSICA HARRIS – Rowville Secondary College  
PETER HAYES – Dimboola Memorial Secondary College  
INGRID HUMM – Creswick Primary School  
JIM KNIGHT – Swan Hill Specialist School  
STEVE MAISON – Mount Eliza Secondary College  
JOSH MASSEY – Chaffey Secondary College  
REBECCA MORRITT – Kurunjang Secondary College  
ERIN RAGGATT – Swan Hill North Primary School  
INGRID TARANTINO – Gowrie St Primary School  
JEFF TOPP – Chaffey Secondary College  
SHELLEY WILLOUGHBY – Sydney Road Community School



## Inspiration across the HoL community

Nobody quite understands the wins and challenges of being an artisan-teacher like your peers. Opportunities to meet continue to grow with practitioners from across Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland attending online meetings and in person catch ups to access valuable networking opportunities and share ideas, inspiration and best practice.



### Tap into the AT network

The private Facebook group for HoL artisan-teachers has a growing community of 116 providing members with a 'helping hand' with project/community ideas and sharing resources between schools.



### Food Ladder greenhouse

Heywood and District Secondary College partnered with not-for-profit organisation Food Ladder to install hydroponic technology and a climate-controlled greenhouse. Food Ladder helps remote and regional schools and communities with small scale food growing systems and specialised training resources so they can grow their own produce. Schools interested in learning more should contact [lucy@foodladder.org](mailto:lucy@foodladder.org)



# HoL Conference

The 2023 HoL Conference was sold out with 170 people attending in person and online.

Designed for sharing bright ideas and celebrating program success, this year's conference included workshops by Dr Tom Nehmy from Healthy Minds and [Hacia Atherton](#), of [Empowered Women in Trades](#), along with illuminating hands on workshops with [Cutting Edge Youth Services](#) and the team from Kurnai College.

There was also a vibrant exhibition space featuring [Zart Art](#), [Bunnings](#), [Chevington Tools](#), [Plantfulness](#), [54reasons](#) and [State Schools Relief](#), along with the celebration of significant contributions from our wonderful artisan-teachers and partner schools.

The day was capped off by a fireside chat with HoL Founder Russell Kerr, Hacia Atherton, and 10 year artisan-teacher Loren Fleming. From the feedback received, 94% of attendees rated this year's conference excellent or good, with 66% as excellent. 100% of attendees providing feedback said they would recommend others to attend a future HoL Conference.

## Annual awards

Stuart Stout from Leeton High School in NSW was this year's recipient of the *John Eldridge Award* for his leadership, dedication, gentle guidance and providing a strong program ensuring student success.

After many years of tirelessly nurturing HoL students and contributing to the community with countless projects Saint Francis Xavier College (Berwick and Officer) received the *Sowinski Community Projects Award* for 2023.



Jackson School took home the annual scarecrow themed photo competition with their creative twist.



A highlight of the conference was the workshop run by Dr Tom Nehmy from Healthy Minds. Over 76% of participants who attended and provided feedback rated the workshop as 'Excellent'. The Healthy Minds school program currently operates in 20 schools and is included in the Victoria government [Mental Health Menu](#).



The Healthy Minds Schools program has been independently reviewed by Beyond Blue's 'Be You' Programs Directory & classified as having the highest (4/4) evidence rating. A full prospectus for the Healthy Minds Schools program is available [here](#).

Attendee Quote *"The Healthy Minds presentation has inspired me to make wellbeing a priority and focus in our school again."*



Celebrating 10+ years of commitment as artisan-teachers are Al Grigg, Michael Stubbe, Loren Fleming, Lyn Chaplin, Mal Smith and Nicole Kruger (absent).



# Achievements and change

Feeling accomplished changes everything. Lilydale Heights College Year 9 student Amy describes the strategies that are changing her engagement.

“Some days I can’t really do it. There were some weeks when I couldn’t come to school at all. It put pressure on my relationship with my parents, and it was bad for my mental health too.

Since I’ve been in HoL things have started to change. Now I’ve got HoL every Friday, I’m at school every Friday. It is fun. It’s peaceful and there is no pressure even though there are

expectations. It’s like you have bit more freedom, lots of people to talk to, you don’t feel outcast, you feel part of a group. The rest of school with so many kids is loud. You feel safe in HoL. Our Focus Plans give us the chance to look back, to consider the different things we have been working on, and how much we have learnt. I feel more confident with the strategies we work on in HoL, which makes me feel more accomplished,” Amy reports.

And the increase in confidence is not confined to HoL. “I’m making more of an effort to be at school on other days. It’s working. I’m coming to school more and putting in the effort in class. I’m able to set a lot more goals for myself, be able to achieve them and feel proud of myself. I’m going to try to get to Year 12. HoL can help turn school around. You have mentors, they give you strategies for class, and you have got something to look forward to at the end of the week. HoL has expanded my social circle. It’s made me more socially confident talking to new people that I’m grouped with in class, or out of school. That will be helpful when I’m working with people I haven’t met before, and when I get a job. The future is still very scary. Now I’m facing it I’m just trying to take it day by day and see where it goes.”



## Keeping kids in education

Shane Kruger, Principal, Lilydale Heights College.

“In my first or second week the HoL crew invited me to visit their space. The light that comes into students’ eyes when they talk about HoL stood out immediately. A real sense of community. There is also ownership and pride in what they have achieved. It’s a very tangible outcome. The traditional classroom is tough for some students. In HoL students build skills and knowledge in different ways, but always with a strong sense of belonging. It is a real practical way to learn by doing with the wellbeing outcomes of being connected to peers, their artisan-teachers, and their school. It keeps them in education and opens many more opportunities. The sense of connectedness and belonging makes them want to come to school. HoL is unique. I can’t think of anything else that delivers such a neat package of engaging students in a different way of learning, while building wellbeing and connection to school. If this is the vehicle for schools to keep kids in education, we should be investing strategically across the board. I see such value in the program. I love it.”



# Shout it out loud

Zoe and Fran, artisan-teachers at Port Dalrymple School, have created a safe and joyful space where seamless teamwork and lots of fun are the order of the day.

*"I'm almost 50 and that was the best Caesar Salad I have EVER had." Tom, school nurse*

*"It's the best place. It's a good little group. We keep focused, there's no drama, no real arguments. You can control your anger. You can make new friends in here and it's a happy place. When we first started, we needed partners to do a job, but now we can work alone we are so good at it. We get to cook food for teachers, and I'm excited they get to try our food." Ella, Grade 4*

*"We work really well as a team in HoL. A lot of communication happens in this kitchen, we try to understand each other's thoughts. Getting set a certain task in HoL and having to finish it helps me back in class to keep an eye on what I'm doing and finish the job. My attention span is improving. I still find it difficult in class, but I see myself slowly getting better since I've been part of HoL." Octavia, Grade 8*

*"I feel excited in HoL. It's really fun. I can learn new recipes and it is really exciting working with other people and talking to new people." Kyson, Grade 5*

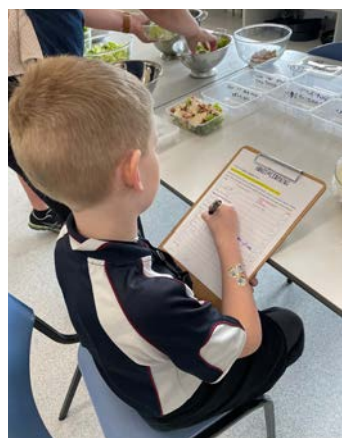
*"I've only been in here a few weeks but its really good, very helpful. I love maths so when we get the orders from the office on the way back, I add them up in my head to see how much we have made." Caleb, Grade 6*

*"It's fun, we get to cook, we get morning tea." Lily, Grade 5*

*It's really good in HoL because you get to meet new people and it boosts your confidence talking to new people. It's comfortable in here, everyone's nice and always helping other people." Breanna, Grade 6*

*"It's fun. It's really enjoyable to work as a team, to be part of this team. Since I've been working in here for a while it feels safe and you feel joy. It's the working together, everyone having fun, just enjoying it." Gracie, Grade 6*

*"It teaches you how to engage with new people. I figured out how to ask people for help when I need it. It helps to have new things you can discuss, new conversation starters basically." Lilli-Jane, Grade 6*





# Teaming with success

The delicious power of being part of a team is the real deal at Dover District School.

Piping hot scones with jam and cream for morning tea and fried rice on the BBQ for lunch are only part of the recipe for success of the HoL program at Dover District School. Throw in the warmth of the artisan-teacher duo of Ang and Cookie, clear team values of respect and a 'have a crack' attitude and the reasons this program is having impressive student outcomes becomes obvious.

"Ensuring that our HoL program had the right mix of both staff and students has resulted in a great environment for the whole team. We're very happy with the progress already made, and look forward to seeing even greater personal and team development in the future," said Principal Lachlan Joyce.

There's a distinct positive energy across the team who work together cohesively and productively. Being part of a united group with the opportunity to show your skills and talents in a different way is a real winner.



"HoL makes everyone closer, and it makes them feel included. There's no popularity contests when you are in HoL," Chloe says.

Taylia adds, "HoL can help. I had a couple of problems before I started. In here I know I'm safe. I know it's fun, I meet new people. I can control my feelings better after being in here."

Jane has developed new confidence talking to people. "In HoL you get to talk to people without being judged."

The power of being part of this team is obvious. "It's fun and you get to show what you can do," says Tyler.

Thomas is on fire leading the way with gentle advice and support for his peers. It's hard to reconcile this leader with the way Thomas describes himself when he first started HoL. "I was really shy when I got to this school in Year 7. In HoL I was shy at the start too, but when you get to know what good people they are you can relax, you can talk to them, you learn to speak up and contribute." Happy students empowered by a fresh confidence in what they can do has got to be the secret to success.



# Many hands make a big difference

From aged care to the local dog exercise park, lending a hand is big at St Helens District High School.

The HoL team at St Helen's District High School has expanded their community support from gardening at the aged care centre to partnering with the local council to enhance the St Helens Dog Yards.

"Teaming up was the key. The students were involved in all elements of the planning from the selection of the local native species to the landscaping and risk assessments," according to Polly Buchhorn, Nature Resource Management Facilitator, Break O'Day Council.

After working together to prepare and pack a team lunch, planting of the 115 local native plants was led by a particularly energetic Lachie of Grade 7 who was straight to work digging holes and ensuring all the plants found a new home.

*"I enjoy it because nature is cool. It's going to be fun watching the plants grow, especially when we come back later and look at the result."* Student, Grade 10

*"I get up on a HoL day way faster than usual."* Lucas, Grade 9

*"I'm new to the school and before I really struggled to talk to people, and I was shy about saying yes when answering the roll and now it's not a struggle anymore."* Imogen, Grade 8

*"It's a bit like a family, you've got the annoying cousins, my lovely sisters, my 'mum' and 'dad'. Sometimes you have to do chores, but it's fun and we always go places and help people."* Daisy, Grade 8







# Investing in the future

Giving students the tools to seize their opportunities.

“A school exists to create opportunities for what comes next for the student – university or the world’s best plumber,” is the way Urangan State High School Principal Tony McCormack describes it.

“Ultimately it is about setting up opportunities. Our education system doesn’t necessarily address the barriers some students have to learning or give them the tools to see opportunities versus challenges.

*“I see HoL as a powerful investment that saves money. The more we spend to re-engage students at a critical junction, get them back on track, and give them the skills for what comes next, the less it will cost the school and the community.”*

Principal Tony McCormack

Why HoL? Head of Year 11 and Head of Student Engagement, Katie O’Neil is unequivocal. “It works. We went looking for a tier two program with proven evidence to enrich our already diverse range of wellbeing supports. I love that HoL is not a 6-10 week program with the expectation that by the end of it the student will be ‘fixed’ and sent back to class. We worked lots in advance of starting HoL. We visited other HoL schools and identified the need to invest strongly in the Shape of the Day and reflective practice elements of the HoL methodology – the ‘bread and butter’ of the HoL program.”

“It’s all about having the right ingredients,” Tony adds. “The sustainability piece is what I like about HoL. The recipe is sustainable which other home-grown programs have not necessarily been. The methodology has been demonstrated across metropolitan and regional settings in multiple states. Having the right people is the key

ingredient. The capacity and willingness of our HoL staff and leadership team to engage in what’s best for the kids is amazing.”

Deputy Principal Kelly Dorries reports, “the proof is already in the pudding, so we added a second day. I’m seeing growth in kids moving from disengaging to engaging.”

Year 8 student Nash has just heard his application to be a junior school leader next year has been successful.

“I work better when its hands on. It makes the week go faster because you are not sitting in class five days in a row. It kind of makes me want to stay in school because of the changes for me from being in the program. You can concentrate more on schoolwork when you get a ‘break!’”

Kiarra in Year 9 is also experiencing real and positive outcomes, and potentially moving into a school-based apprenticeship. “I’m energetic and find it hard to concentrate in class. I love the freedom here to show what I can do. I get to use all my energy on a Monday in HoL so I’m not causing disruptions in class.”



# Food with purpose

A student designed menu focused on creating food for other people is a great way to kick start HoL Café.

It might be very early days for the team at Murrumba State Secondary College, but the joy in the kitchen is immediately obvious. Every week students take home a meal for their families and regularly cater for staff meetings and school events. Artisan-teachers Adam and Sarah are fostering an environment that creates the comfort and space to achieve, and their students are thriving.

"It warms your heart to see the faces of students who are relaxed, happy, proud and experiencing success," says Principal Sharon Cordiner.

"HoL is part of a suite of intervention strategies our Deputy Principal Erin Dance is leading, focused on an integrated support model for the whole child." After just two terms the prognosis is looking good.

Aaliyah, Year 9 reports, "We feel more comfortable and less judged in here. It's a space to be yourself in. You get challenged in here to see what you are capable of doing. I've developed better skills to manage myself back in class. I struggled to keep still before and back chatted the teachers. I wagged every elective I could. Now I'm able to sit quietly, not distract others, and I'm wagging so much less."

"It's great to work in here and take your mind off of what's happened during the week," Kai adds.

For Milla it's fun. "It's less stressful. And it's great it is on a Wednesday in the middle of the week. HoL is good for learning how to work in a team. In life, and in the future, there will be people you won't want to work with, but you will have to. There will always be people you don't like or don't know. It is good to learn the skill of teamwork."



Morning tea is a big hit with the College's School Officers.





## Flying high

A \$10k Intercultural Understanding Partnership grant will turbo charge the already flying HoL program at Chatsworth State School.

Creating spaces that all the school can use and enjoy, but HoL students can say “I was part of that”, has HoL firing after seven short weeks. News of a \$10,000 Intercultural Understanding Partnership (ICUP) grant, a national initiative of Together For Humanity funded by the Australian Government, is the icing on the cake.

The ICUP project will build connection and belonging across the school, featuring a collaborative rock wall artwork with local Indigenous community elders, along with a sensory bush tucker garden to run through the whole space.

“Artisan-teacher Leesa Millard has been instrumental fostering an energetic collaborative team from day one. The students are just loving ownership and creating spaces people can see and enjoy. They are developing maturity in terms of responsibility and trust, enjoy the team element, and experiencing leadership opportunities,” Assistant Principal Alisia Cameron said.

“We worked hard to balance the intake of students. Some struggled with impulse control, a couple were withdrawn and shy and tend to fall under the radar in the classroom, and some had untapped leadership skills. Out here these students are having success, developing the chance to have a different group of kids to know, and work with role models from older year levels.

It’s been our goal to offer something different to make sure all our students get the chance to be them, and to succeed.”




Support is flowing for the HoL team with the uncle of one student stepping in with a donation of tools.

*“I love it, having time with new friends, learning how to regulate yourself, and work as a team. It’s not just time out of class, you are learning all the time in HoL. I don’t know how to explain it, it’s just fun.”*

*Travis Grade 5*

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