

2023



ANNUAL REPORT

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Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) are independent, not-for-profit organisations that support employers, local education and training providers, businesses, industry groups and community agencies to connect with schools.

NE Tracks LLEN is funded by the Department of Education and is one of 31 LLENs operating in Victoria.

OUR VISION

All youth in our communities are successfully engaged in education, training and employment.

OUR GOAL

To support secondary school students within our geographical boundaries by ensuring they have clear connections to the world of work and access to school to work activities that increase their awareness of local career pathways.

OUR FOCUS

Creating area based strategic and sustainable partnerships that improve education and transition outcomes and build career aspirations for young people in secondary school.



Department
of Education



OUR CATCHMENT



Schools in the NE Tracks LLEN Catchment

Benalla

Australian Christian College Hume
Principal – Sam Woods

Benalla Flexible Learning Centre
Site Principal – Anna Pinnuck

Benalla P-12 College
Principal – Kylie Cotter

EdSpace Education and Training Centre
Principal – Maggie Fanning

FCJ College – Benalla
Principal – Shaun Mason

Mansfield

Mansfield Secondary College
Principal – Tim Hall

Wangaratta

Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership
Principal – Genevieve O'Reilly

Cathedral College Wangaratta
Principal – Nick Jones

Galen Catholic College
Principal – Darta Hovey

Wangaratta District Specialist School
Principal – Alysha Jackson

Wangaratta High School
Principal – Dave Armstrong

OUR COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT



Ben Watts

Chairperson
2019 - present
The Personnel Group
Member since 2016



Sally Matheson

Deputy Chairperson
2020 - present
Tomorrow Today
Foundation
Member since 2018



Denis O'Callaghan

Treasurer
2011 - present
Gordon Legal
Member since 2002



Gail O'Brien

Member
2021 - present
Benalla Rural City
Councillor



Steve Pickering

Member
2020 - present
Department of
Education



Louise Pearce

Chairperson from
2014 -2019
Victoria Skills Authority
Member since 2011

Meet OUR TEAM



Tim Oliver
CEO



Jo Craig
ADMIN SUPPORT
(TO DEC 2023)



Mel Elliott
PROGRAM
COORDINATOR



Annette Borradaile
PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

Chairperson & CEO Report



Ben Watts
CHAIRPERSON



Tim Oliver
CEO NE TRACKS LLEN

We are pleased to report sound results in the first year of School to Work program delivery for the Victorian Education Department, supporting secondary aged students attending government, independent and catholic schools in the Local Government Areas of Benalla, Mansfield and Wangaratta.

Victorian secondary school students are supported to engage with local employers to gain exposure to jobs in growing sectors and consider their future careers. The School to Work program helps schools in our region to set up various work experience placements, workplace visits, guest speakers and work placements for their students.

NE Tracks LLEN through the School to Work program, engages employers and schools to provide students with access to work-based learning opportunities that meet the needs of local employers, including:

- Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning (SWL), and School-Based Apprenticeships & Traineeships (SBATs)*.
- Events and activities that directly expose students to employers, such as workplace visits, careers events and guest speakers.
- Networking opportunities that enhance school-employer connections and professional learning related to industries and employment.
- Support for place-based planning for VET delivered to secondary students (VDSS) and VET clusters to support all Victorian students to have access to a core offering of VDSS certificates aligned to areas of growing industry skills needs.

NE Tracks LLEN leverages its unique advantages working across school sectors, connecting stakeholders and finding place-based solutions for the benefit of students, schools and local businesses.

The response from industry in support of placements for students throughout the year was nothing short of terrific. Employers providing these opportunities for students understand that early engagement with the workforce of the future puts their business in pole position to transition young people from school (and further education) into work. Likewise, our school leaders recognise the need to be flexible, releasing students at times that best suit employers to accept students into placements.



Widespread industry engagement doesn't stop there however and we thank all of the local businesses that were sponsors, exhibitors or workshop presenters at our major events –

- Hands On Trades Career Expo
- Food & Fibre Careers Day
- NE Health Careers Forum
- Local Government Career Expo – Rural City of Wangaratta

NE Tracks LLEN is one of only a handful of LLEN's that deliver multiple major Career Events for students to attend. Students get a taste of what is available in the region at these events and then follow up through our LLEN supporting workplace visits and then placements.

Just take a look at the LLEN by Numbers later in this report to see how many students and employers got involved in 2023. So we thank those employers that got on board with us in 2023 and ask the question – why wouldn't your business engage with the workforce of the future before they leave school? All you need do is call the team at NE Tracks LLEN to discuss how they can support this piece of your workforce development activity.

In wrapping up this section of the report, we thank all of our community stakeholders and acknowledge the steady support provided by our committee members and talented program coordinators Annette & Mel.

Ben Watts – Chair

Tim Oliver – Chief Executive Officer

*From the second quarter of 2023, SBATs for government school students in our region were provided under the newly expanded Head Start program

THE LLEN BY NUMBERS

SCHOOL TO WORK PLACEMENTS



180
Work
Experience



Year 9-10 Students attend a workplace (usually 5 days duration) to observe and participate in entry-level tasks that don't require extensive or specialist skills or training



85
Structured
Workplace
Learning



Year 10+ Students attend a workplace for on-the-job training to master a set of skills and competencies. SBAT's*
Year 10+ Students engage at work in on-the-job training as part of an accredited VET course over one or more years while completing their studies at school



26
Workplace
visits and other
industry
engagements



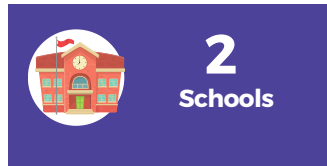
Employers provide Year 9+ Students with workplace tours for student groups, speak at school career events, or mentor a student

THE LLEN BY NUMBERS

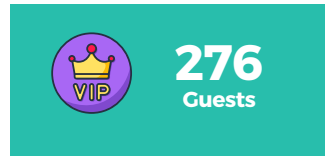
FOOD & FIBRE CAREERS DAY



LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAREERS EXPO



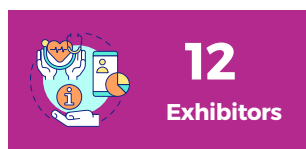
PUTTING HOSPITALITY STUDENTS TO THE TEST



HANDS ON TRADES CAREER EXPO



NE HEALTH CAREERS FORUM



NE TRACKS LLEN COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS





STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

NE Tracks LLEN sponsored a Student Achievement Award at each of the secondary schools.
Congratulations to all of the award recipients for 2023!



Olivia Corso
.....
NE Tracks LLEN Award
Cathedral College



Issac Mason
.....
Young Entrepreneur of the Year
Australian Christian College Hume



Willem Hyland
.....
NE Tracks LLEN Award
FCJ Benalla



Nathan Dabbs
.....
NE Tracks LLEN Award
Mansfield Secondary College



Josie Maxwell & Jack Tanner
.....
VPC and VM Student of the Year Award
Benalla Flexible Learning Centre



Ruby Bihun & Oscar Harding
.....
NE Tracks LLEN Award
Wangaratta High School



Aya Osman
.....
NE Tracks Apprentice or Trainee of the Year
Galen Catholic College



Hospitality Class
(Catered for Hands on Trades Career Expo)
.....
NE Tracks LLEN Award
Ed Space Education & Training Centre



Lucas Ryder
.....
Inspiration & Leadership Award
Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership



Shaneevah Jacobs
.....
NE Tracks LLEN Award
Wangaratta District Specialist School



Jack Dekleuver
.....
NE Tracks LLEN Award
Benalla Flexible Learning Centre



FOOD & FIBRE CAREERS DAY

The Food & Fibre Careers Event has been held annually in Dookie since 2014 at the University of Melbourne Campus.

2023 saw our most successful Food and Fibre Careers day yet! With over 400 students between Year 9-12 registered from as far afield as Wodonga, Beechworth and Mansfield, to Shepparton, Cohuna and surrounding rural areas.

Students learn about agriculture, horticulture, emerging and complementary industries through interactive workshops and talking to exhibitors.





SECONDARY SCHOOLS AGRICULTURE FUND (SSAF)

The SSAF's objective is to increase the number of young people pursuing training and/or working in agriculture. NE Tracks LLEN funding is applied to build sustainability of the annual Food & Fibre Careers Day held at Dookie. Details of the Food & Fibre event are detailed separately in this report.

Consultants have been engaged to –

- support and improve event delivery and develop event management plans
- identify and engage with agri businesses and peak bodies to broaden workshop delivery and support for the event with financial sponsorship
- develop a career pathways framework to guide post event engagement by students with agri businesses in their local areas

To further support sustainability, event delivery from 2024 will be shared across NE Tracks, Goulburn Murray and Campaspe Cohuna LLENs, ensuring a more even representation of agri businesses from across the region, leading to ease of access by students to farm and workplace visits.





NORTH EAST HEALTH CAREERS FORUM

The North East Health Careers Forum delivers 'a hands on' approach to inform secondary school students from Year 10-12 about the many diverse career opportunities available across the Health sector.

In 2023 the forum provided 21 'hands on' workshops for students to choose from. Workshops included general practice medicine, pathology, nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, aged care, allied health, simulation, drug and alcohol counselling, and social work.





NE Tracks LLEN's largest, and signature event is the annual Hands on Trades Career Expo (HOTCE). The Expo exposes students from Year 9 upwards in government, independent, catholic and specialist schools, to a wide variety of different trades and roles within businesses and organisations, local, statewide and nationally.

50 Exhibitors from a range of industry sectors provide a Hands On activity for students to experience. They share information about local businesses and present opportunities for follow up visits to learn even more about career options. Engagement is high as student's think about future career choices leading to retention of youth in our region and sustainability for local industry; large and small.



As part of HOTCE, a Business lunch was also delivered. Attended by exhibitors and their staff, School Principals, Careers Advisors, Education Dept local Executive, Mayors, Councilors & CEO's from surrounding LGA's, local media, staff from other community organisations & not-for-profits and potential new exhibitors. The Benalla Rural City Mayor and several of our Sponsors highlighted the opportunities they provide to local students. Catering was provided by local school students completing hospitality units as part of their studies.

Hands on Trades Career Expo 2024 is shaping up to be the largest of our events to date.

There is a lot of interest already from potential new sponsors and discussions are underway to expand the event to include a host of new exhibitors.





TESTIMONIALS

"Lots of interactive activities for the kids to do, heaps of exhibitors and new exhibitors compared to previous years. A great atmosphere. A great event."

Robyn Farley – Jobs , Skills and Pathways Manager, Ovens Murray. North East Victoria Region. Department of Education Victoria

"It has been great to see so many students really engaging and understanding in what's going on in the different trades sectors."

Louise Pearce – Senior Skills Advisor, Victorian Skills Authority

"We highly recommend being here as an exhibitor. Being able to meet with students from the different schools and the key people from within the schools that have been organised through the LLEN has just been brilliant. From today we've been able to potentially look at bringing students through our organisation to showcase what we do."

Jo Maples – Marketing and Communications Manager, Merriwa Industries

"It opens up people's options on what they can possibly do, what they haven't thought about because quite often you can only see what's in town whereas in here they can see things they might not normally see."

Exhibitor

"Students explore the different activities they might encounter at work...Take this opportunity to introduce your business to the workforce of the future."

Bart Crawley – CEO, Merriwa Industries

"One of the things we ask our exhibitors to do is bring a real hands-on experience for the students to try and again this year they got it, over and over. Everywhere they looked there was an opportunity to try their hand at something new."

Tim Oliver – CEO, NE Tracks LLEN

"Students have got a great deal out of it's very impressive that so many employers are willing to get onboard."

Jamie Morrison – Learning Coach: Applied Learning and Careers, FCJ College Benalla

"I've been trying all the carpentry stuff, the electronics, welding. It's good fun."

Student

"I think it's really good like come here there's fun games to play and stuff. I don't know it's just a good experience."

Student

"I think it's pretty good. It takes sort of everything into account in the real world."

Student

"It's been really good. There's people trying to get us in everywhere so we can find out what you like. Everyone's been really helpful."

Student

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAREERS EXPO



The NE Tracks LLEN team met with the acting head of Human Resources at the Rural City of Wangaratta to discuss workforce development and engaging with senior secondary school students.

Out of those discussion came the plan to deliver a pilot event – RCoW Local Government Career Expo. The LLEN developed a concept with RCoW and also brought in GOTAFE to support event delivery. Wangaratta High School hosted and 181 students participated from Wangaratta High School (154) and 'The Academy' (27) – another nearby secondary facility.

A Speed Dating activity followed with selected RCoW staff from Tourism, Emergency Management & Response, Early Child Care, Marketing & Communications, Human Resources, Town Planning, Environmental Services, Administration, Governance, Aged & Community Care, Field Services and the Depot.

In groups of 3 or 4, students spent about 7 minutes talking with RCoW specialists to learn a bit about the roles and responsibilities of each Department. Some provided simple activities or brought along tools and equipment, while the Tourism stand proved very popular testing students tastebuds and knowledge with cheese tasting from local producers. GOTAFE provided information about further education and training courses available where additional qualifications might be required for certain roles.

RCoW Mayor & CEO attended the event and they joined their staff, students and teachers for a bit of networking over a light lunch.

Next step is for students to identify areas of interest where they will undertake ½ to 1 day visits of up to 5 different Departments over a month or so. They can then select a Department to undertake a full week Work Experience placement to learn even more.

NE Tracks LLEN will now fine tune the pilot event, which is expected to involve over 20 RCoW Departments next year and all 5 secondary schools in Wangaratta will be invited to send students. GOTAFE will also increase their support of the event by embedding trainers with those departments where career pathways are enhanced through additional training and education.



PUTTING HOSPITALITY STUDENTS TO THE TEST!



This year we put a call out to our schools for hospitality students to take up the opportunity to cater for our major event – the annual Hands On Trades Careers Expo Business Lunch!

Three schools took up the challenge: Ed Space Benalla, Wangaratta District Specialist School and Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership. The menu comprised three courses; entrée, main and sweet treats, divided up between the schools.

- Ed Space Benalla students made a Pumpkin & Coriander Soup for entrée and for main course presented sausage rolls and mini quiches
- Wangaratta District Specialist School students provided White and Chocolate chip muffins and catered for those with special dietary needs who were lactose free and gluten free with a Blueberry Muffin option
- Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership students made Chunky Coconut Choc Chip and Smartie Cookies.

276 guests attended the lunch which went off without a hitch! Everyone enjoyed the meal and we even had some fruit to donate to Waminda Community House for distribution among the community!





MICROSOFT.... INTERVIEW 2 IMPRESS



The Australian Business and Community Network present the Interview 2 Impress program, designed to equip students with the practical skills needed to engage with employers as they explore options beyond school. The program partners with a diverse group of companies from Australia and beyond. This year, mentors were from Microsoft.



NE Tracks LLEN accompanied 18 year 11 & 12 students from Benalla P-12 to Melbourne enabling participation in what is a fun and engaging program. Students met with staff members from all the Microsoft divisions discussing each mentors' experience of working in such a large and dynamic corporation. Primary goal for the day was to complete multiple interviews in a variety of different ways.



Students interviewed mentors and recorded their answers. After time for reflection, the mentors then interviewed the students. It was a very engaging experience with students absorbing a lot of new information. Over lunch, (hosted by Microsoft), students were encouraged to network with their mentors before the next round of interviews commenced. This time the students were more relaxed and came up with thoughtful questions to ask of the mentors.



After the interview sessions wrapped up we were invited to the high security top level of the building where all the Microsoft magic happens. The tour showcased a very inclusive workplace accommodating employee needs that included day care, a gym and a variety of "chill zones" where creative thinking takes place each day.

At the end of a truly exceptional experience, students were encouraged to maintain contact with their mentors and send through resumes for review. Many at Microsoft have come from different industries and backgrounds, not necessarily completing university. Some joined the company by participating in a mentoring program like this one and the opportunity presents for the students from Benalla P-12 to grasp the challenge and do the same!



THALES



www.netracksllen.org.au

SCHOOL INDUSTRY TOUR

One of the exhibitors at this year's Hands On Trades Career Expo was Thales from Benalla, a company developing critical propellants, explosives and munitions for the Australian Defence Force.

Thales is a global organisation with 35 sites in Australia, employing 650 staff between its two Australian Government owned facilities in Benalla and nearby Mulwala (NSW). The company has a long history in the region and with new government contracts needs to further develop the local workforce to meet their growing requirements. Management understand that engaging with senior secondary students while they are still at school opens their eyes and their minds to the myriad career opportunities with Thales.

NE Tracks LLEN has a strategic approach to events where we follow up with each exhibitor post event to discuss how we can support further engagement with students as part of their workforce development. We offer workplace visits by groups of students which then leads on to opportunities for, work experience placements, SWL's, SBAT's and traineeships in line with each employer's needs.

As a result, three school groups (government and non-government schools) have now visited the high security operation at Benalla. Accompanied by careers teachers and NE Tracks LLEN staff, students toured the facility for two hours and met with two staff members that had recently completed apprenticeships in electrical and mechanical engineering with Thales. This provided an opportunity for a Q&A session where students were highly interested and engaged.

The Thales production manager joined in too and fielded questions about employment opportunities, working conditions and career pathways supported by the company. This led to our receiving information about minimum requirements for employment across roles in production and technical areas where apprenticeships may be offered.

In conjunction with a local employment services provider, we are fostering discussions with careers teachers at FCJ College and two students who are interested in securing apprenticeships in 2024. Thales are keen to move forward and explore options with these local candidates. They also have production roles to fill in early 2024 that other students might consider as a result of their experience at the Hands On Trades Career Expo and the follow up visit to Thales.

Work experience placements are also available.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DTAC is a collaboration between Galen Catholic College, NE Tracks LLEN, CSU Wangaratta and GOTAFE. The committee delivers events for students throughout the year and provides all schools in Wangaratta access to resources that build digital capacity and capabilities. Some of the events this year included – CSU/Wangaratta High School Indigenous Day, National Science Week activities, and hosting a Hands On exhibit at our Hands On Trades Career Expo.

A highlight was the Regional VEX Robotics Competition which attracted competitors from several Wangaratta schools, with the winners judged by our program coordinators, Mel Elliott & Annette Borradaile.





ZONTA
CLUB OF
WANGARATTA INC



Zonta

STUDENT BREAKFASTS

NE Tracks LLEN was proud to support the Zonta Club of Wangaratta in 2023, providing sponsorship and mentorship to students in attendance. Two events were held – The International Women's Day Career Breakfast for Girls and the inaugural Boy's Breakfast hosted with the ethos of "Building Better Men".

Students attending the International Women's Day Career Breakfast explored different career pathways, learning of the journeys taken by guest speakers and table mentors. With 21 Mentors, 11 teachers, 6 guests, 12 Zonta members, and 78 Students, the room was buzzing.

The inaugural event "Building Better Men" Boys Breakfast provided similar learning opportunities. In attendance were 12 teachers, 8 guests, 8 Zonta members, 10 mentors, and 34 students.

Feedback from both events was extremely positive, with high student engagement as they discussed the career pathways each speaker and mentor took.

NE Tracks LLEN has confirmed continued support for the Zonta Student Breakfast events in 2024.



VIC VICE

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

Where traditional means of work experience and industry tours are not always achievable, by slipping on a headset, VIC VICE allows students to embark on immersive journeys through virtual worlds filled with both 360-degree videos of different industries and digital simulations of real-life workplace activities.

NE Tracks LLEN staff, Annette Borradaile and Mel Elliott, have both been trained in this new technology and they will be introducing it to both Career Practitioners and students in the schools in our catchment in 2024 making careers education more accessible than ever before.



FOR MORE INFORMATION



www.vicvice.com.au

NE TRACKS LLEN IN THE NEWS



Employers - we all need you

THE time of year to find apprenticeship opportunities is here. The Education Week 2023 banner encourages employers to get involved. The text highlights the importance of apprenticeships for students and the role of employers in providing training and support. It mentions that employers can benefit from having a trained workforce and that apprenticeships provide a pathway for students to gain skills and experience while earning a wage.



Winton raceway career expo a big drawcard for students

Winton raceway career expo was a big drawcard for students. The event provided a platform for students to learn about various career opportunities and gain hands-on experience. The text mentions that the expo was held at Winton raceway and was attended by a large number of students and employers. It highlights the importance of such events in providing students with valuable information and resources.



Gearing up for students' careers expo

PHOTOGRAPHY are well underway for the annual Hands On Trade Careers Expo. The event is a great way for students to learn about various career opportunities and gain hands-on experience. The text mentions that the expo is being held at Winton raceway and is expected to be a major success.

Tesla arrivals a jump-start for local industry

GOTAFE is getting a jump-start on training mechanics of the future. The text mentions that Tesla has arrived at the Winton raceway and is providing a platform for students to learn about various career opportunities and gain hands-on experience. The text highlights the importance of such events in providing students with valuable information and resources.



Insights at the career expo

PHOTOGRAPHY are well underway for the annual Hands On Trade Careers Expo. The event is a great way for students to learn about various career opportunities and gain hands-on experience. The text mentions that the expo is being held at Winton raceway and is expected to be a major success.

Teamwork the name of the game in robotics

Teamwork is the name of the game in robotics. The text mentions that students from Wangaratta Primary School and other local schools participated in a robotics competition. The text highlights the importance of teamwork and collaboration in such activities.



Council careers expo this week

WANGARATTA High School will host a Local Government Careers Expo. The event is a great way for students to learn about various career opportunities and gain hands-on experience. The text mentions that the expo is being held at Winton raceway and is expected to be a major success.



STEM day Wangaratta Primary School

STUDENTS at Wangaratta Primary School together with other local primary schools with the support of Winton and Golden College were treated to a day full of STEM activities including Star's Planetarium. The text mentions that the event was held at Winton raceway and was attended by a large number of students and employers.



VEX team skills on show

WANGARATTA Primary School VEX team showcased their skills at the VEX Robotics competition. The text mentions that the team participated in a robotics competition and won several awards. The text highlights the importance of such events in providing students with valuable information and resources.



THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS

NE Tracks LLEN thanks our sponsors for their support of our events in 2023. Without their help, we could not present large scale careers events that assist students in their transition from School to Work.





MEMBER STATEMENT 2023

**NE TRACKS LOCAL LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT NETWORK
INCORPORATED
ABN:18 598 926 337**

COMMITTEE REPORT

Your Committee Members present this report on the association for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.

The names of each person who has been who has been a committee member during this year are:

Benjamin Watts

Chairperson – Committee of Management, Administration Working Party

Sally Matheson

Deputy Chairperson – Committee of Management

Denis O'Callaghan

Treasurer– Committee of Management, Administration Working Party

Barbara Alexander

Resigned May 2023

Gail O'Brien

Member – Committee of Management

Louise Pearce

Member – Committee of Management

Steve Pickering

Member – Committee of Management

Principle

The principle activities of the association during the financial year were to develop and maintain community partnerships for the purpose of supporting young people with learning and employment opportunities.

Operating Result

Surplus (deficit) for 2023 amounted to \$15,237

