

BANYULE / NILLUMBIK LOCAL LEARNING & EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 12th – 7.15am – 8.45am

THE DVLC – Corner of Diamond Creek & St. Helena Roads, Greensborough

1) WELCOME

- a) **Attendance:** Ian Harrop (Chair), Kate Rhodes (Executive Officer), Stephen Fiyalko, Janice Martin, Jane McNally, Sarah Derum (minute taker), Cheryle Michael, David Redfearn, Geoff Shacklock, Suzanne Crellin, Jess Sayers, Greg Williams
- b) Welcome to new Board members – updated information for the Board induction kit
- c) **Apologies:** Lindsay Round, Gerry Fogarty, Trevor Jenkins, and Stephen Ward.

2) CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- a) **Minutes of previous meeting – Wednesday, March 17th, 2010 confirmed**

Moved: Cheryle Michael
Second: David Redfearn

- b) **Declaration of conflict of interest - Nil**

3) CORRESPONDENCE March – May 2010

Kate noted that the Strategic Plan and the Environmental Scan had been sent into DEECD and they are currently being assessed. The Board acknowledged the team who put together the environmental scan as an impressive document that will be really useful for the future work of the LLEN.

Kate also noted that the new Rules of Association had been approved by the AGM and ratified by the DEECD and that a copy will be available as a reference at all Board meetings.

The BNLLN also sponsored the Bundoora Square Mosaics Art Project by students from Bundoora Secondary College, noted in the correspondence. The unveiling of the art works took place Saturday 8th May where all the students received certificates officiated by Mayor Cr Mary Lalios. The standard of the mosaics was outstanding and they are now a permanent feature of the Square. The art teacher at Bundoora Secondary College was Sandra Bain and the project was organised by Noella Jacobs on behalf of the Bundoora Traders Association.

4) BUSINESS ARISING

- a) **Election of Office Bearers**

All Positions were declared open. The following Nominations were:

- Nomination for Chair: Ian Harrop was nominated by David Redfearn and seconded by Suzanne Crellin, Ian Accepted
- Nomination for Deputy Chair: Cheryle Michael was nominated by David Redfearn and seconded by Suzanne Crellin, Cheryle accepted.
- Nomination for Secretary: Trevor Jenkins was nominated by Cheryle Michael and seconded by Suzanne Crellin. Trevor was not at the meeting.
- Nomination for Treasurer: There were no formal nominations but Suzanne Crellin agreed to be the acting Treasurer while other Board members were contacted to see if there was an interest.

b) Clarification regarding re-imburement of extra funds to supplement loss of LCP funding and MEAST initiatives DEECD Memo 185 - Paper B

Kate explained the Maximising Engagement Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST) funding and the commitment by DEECD in regards to the 2010 funding for LLENs that were also LCPs.

In a letter from Edmund Mission in November 2009 to the BNLLLEN and as noted in Memorandum 169, of the 8th of October 2009, DEECD said they would provide transitional funding to LLENs holding the LCP contracts to ensure that their aggregate funding level for 2010 was at least equal to the funding in 2009. Our LLEN received \$226,869.47 for its DEECD contract and \$201,118.00 for its LCP contract totalling \$427,987.47. Our total funding for 2010 from DEECD is \$397,374.00. This is a difference of about \$30,000 which the Government has said they will provide. At present the indicative budget is quite tight with a high percentage of the funding going towards salaries, but this will not be an issue with the additional transitional funding. Kate has been informed that a letter will be sent to LLENs shortly regarding the additional funding and that the money will come from the MEAST funding.

Kate also said that the Youth Transition Branch of DEECD has informed LLENs that if they are successful in the tender for the Workplace Learning Coordination Program which is a three year program also being funded through MEAST that the LLEN will have to refund that transitional funding to the Youth Transitions Branch. The BNLLLEN is the only LLEN in the Region tendering for this program and we have been shortlisted. There was some discussion regarding this situation but the Board agreed that no action be taken until we see if the tender is successful and if we have to return the funding.

c) Additional staff for new projects

Kate informed the Board that there are two other programs that have resulted in additional staff that the BNLLLEN is managing. The Health Industry Theme Project is funded by DEECD for the next two and a half years through Charles La Trobe Secondary College but the College has organised for the BNLLLEN to manage the program. Hari Nikolaou has been appointed as the Health Project Manager and she will be working from the BNLLLEN office but will be paid as a teacher by the school.

The second program, the L2P program, is in partnership with the City of Banyule and again the BNLLLEN is managing the program. David Redfearn from the City of Banyule provided a summary of the program which will involve 45 young people working with volunteers to gain their 120 hours of mandatory driving experience. The TAC and Vic Roads will be working together on this project and the Steering Committee has been set up including representation from Victoria Police, the Volunteers of Banyule and Neighbourhood Renewal. We need two cars (donated, cars hired?), volunteers from the community to supervise the driving and the young people. The co-ordinator of the program is Michael Light and he will draw on other areas who are also implementing the project; 51 councils are involved across the state. The project is not just about clocking up hours, it's also about driver attitudes etc. The project will be targeting marginalised youth who are between the ages of 16 and 21.

5) REPORTS

a) Finance Report – Papers C

Ian reported on the Finance Report, tabled. He noted the expense of \$4200 for the environmental that was not part of the indicative budget. This extra expense was approved by the Board at the March meeting.

6) OTHER BUSINESS

a) Structure of Board meetings and role of Board members

Kate explained her idea of developing the staff reports around the Strategic Plan and the Environmental Scan and reporting against the targets in the Strategic Plan. The suggestion was that this was done at every second meeting with alternative meetings focusing on a particular issue as agreed to by the Board. This idea was approved by the Board.



It was also suggested that Board members from the different Stakeholder groups could use meetings to inform other Board members about their sector to provide a sense of the different perspectives. Kate informed that Board that she was organising to meet individually with each Board member about their role on the Board, priorities and governance needs. She will report back on these meetings at the next Board meeting.

7) HOT ISSUE: Re-engaging the younger cohort using the Pavilion model **Steve Plant**

Steve presented an overview about the issue of re-engaging the younger cohort and then opened the discussion over to the board for questions and comments.

Steve began with a short history of the creation of the Pavilion which has become a best practice model for engaging young people at risk. The Pavilion started three years ago as a collaboration between the Banyule Nillumbik Youth Services Network (BNYSN) and the Northern Metropolitan Region (NMR) to support young people on the street who were disengaged from school. It was an evolution of the community VCAL program in Heidelberg West. The focus at the start was on the 15 to 19 post compulsory cohort and they used the community VCAL model for the funding. There was an awareness that education was only half the issue so the program uses an intense welfare support approach. It was an educational and therapeutic model with the backgrounds of staff being from both teaching and social work. At the start there were 20 students in the program and now the program has moved to East Preston and has 120 students with an annex starting in South Morang.

The model demonstrates that disengaged young people can become re-engaged and what it is that prevents young people from engaging in education. No students are expelled or considered a lost cause, and they are fully integrated back into work and/or education. All these students have personal and social issues that limit their capacity to perform. However with the focus not on their education but on addressing the barriers to learning the students can become re-engaged. The issue with the model is that it is built around VCAL funding and this assumes a reduced aspiration. It is also about letting schools off the hook as if a student is not doing well the school can send them to the Pavilion.

The aim is to use the learning from the Pavilion to look at how all schools can change their structure to offer students this welfare support as well as an education one. The nature of what is preventing young people participating in education is being looked at i.e. the social and personal issues that they are dealing with which limits their capacity to learn and produce results.

The Board discussed a number of issues on the structure of traditional schools and how this might change such as:

The homelessness research that shows there are considerable number of young people homeless and falling out of education and how we might get the data as evidence of this and how the Pavilion model can be used to keep kids in school.

Many of the problems are occurring much earlier than the post compulsory schooling which is now 17 and the issue is how we address this younger cohort. The Advisory Group of the Pavilion has agreed to widen their agenda to support this wider age group. They are now the Re-engagement Working Party. The Education Department loves the Pavilion (now) and is pushing it as model for alternative education but there are issues around the compulsory age such as duty of care.

The importance of documentation of what is happening with the Pavilion was discussed. Without this documentation the successes of the program will be lost. A key factor is to gather evidence of not only what works at the Pavilion but the quality of staff and the functionality of students. Documenting the goal of the Pavilion to allow some young people to develop the capacity to re-engage communicates to others who work in more traditional settings. Any

successful program that re-engages the disengaged is important in terms of what is success; or otherwise that information gets lost.

The Pavilion is a model of community empowerment, and the fact that it is no longer in West Heidelberg was discussed and the importance of it being in a non school setting. It is now in a better location, a previous primary school in East Preston, but the students rejected the school environment. The Pavilion is about a different relationship between teachers and students and this is about a different environment. The focus is about case management and the idea is to keep the young people connected to their community. A different environment is important. Must the location be attached to a school site?

The role of parents was discussed and what they want to happen in schools and how this is related to broadening options. Principals and schools are frustrated as they feel tackling the issues in the post compulsory years is too late. These young people have not only disengaged but they've re-engaged elsewhere – out of school into the community. They are already disengaged and engaged into something else which is far more powerful.

The LLEN could to be more strategic and shift its focus to younger students and use the case management model, the issue is keeping them connected to their community/school even if they do go somewhere else. For example year 8's are at risk of disengaging and the impact of their ability to engage with youth workers is very effective while they are still at school and have someone who they can connect with for extra support (youth/ social workers). Greg said that Diamond Valley College has used some extra funding obtained from the bushfires to employ youth workers in the school, and that this has been a very powerful support partially as the workers are not teachers. Schools tend to only address the academic outcome, not student well-being.

Staffing experience and skills are an issue as schools are being asked to do what is outside their skill base. Teachers are not social workers. Schools need to ask 'what are the roles we need?' There was also some discussion about teaching training and how we could encourage the uptake of double degrees such as Applied Science Disability w/Education or Youth Work/Social Work w/Education. Schools in the current structure are being asked to go beyond their ability, we are expecting too much from schools.

This led to a discussion about the advantage for some young people of the small setting. At Diamond Valley Learning Centre a small setting is crucial. Why can't small settings be owned by or part of schools so that when the students feel capable they still have the option to engage in mainstream classes?

Issues around isolation were also discussed. Young people in rural areas of Nillumbik have difficulty accessing alternative programs. There is a need to find local community solutions as it is not appropriate for Diamond Valley students, for example, to go to the Pavilion in Preston.

Possible actions to follow up on the discussion were considered in terms of brainstorming a new community model that goes beyond a school setting that could be possibly piloted. It was agreed that we should continue the discussion including the issue of evaluation and set up a working party that reports back to the Board at the June meeting.

8) STANDING COMMITTEES

Ian explained the function of the two Standing Committees, the Strategic Direction Standing Committee and the Risk Management Standing Committee and noted that each Board member needs to be a member of one of the committees.



ACTIONS:

- Kate to call for anyone interested in being involved in a Working Party to look at the issue of re-engaging the younger cohort before the June meeting.
- For Kate to organise for Board members to join one of the two Standing Committees and to aim to call a meeting of each of the two committees before the June Board meeting.

9) INVITATION TO THE NILLUMBIK YOUTH SUMMIT

Jess informed the Board about the Youth Summit in Nillumbik on Wednesday, May 19th where they are inviting young people to voice their views. She will send an email about the Summit to distribute to the Board.

Meeting Closed 8.45am

**Next Meeting: June 16th – 7.15 to 8.45 with breakfast
Diamond Valley Learning Centre**

