

HANDS ON LEARNING

# NEWS

Quarterly

September 2022



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Community can do

54 reasons  
Part of the Save the Children Australia Group

# 54 reasons

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## Hands on Learning and 54 reasons

In July Save the Children revealed a new name for our work in Australia, 54 reasons, representing each of the 54 articles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, first drafted by the founder of Save the Children, Eglantyne Jebb, a teacher, over 100 years ago. The organisation listened to children and families, who wanted something of their own, distinct from the work Save the Children does all around the world.

As part of this new chapter we will be embracing 'Hands on Learning' as the primary brand that we engage with our community and migrating the email addresses for all members of the Hands on Learning support team to @handsonlearning.org.au later this year.

*The Hands on Learning team*



### Thank you Blundstone

Tasmanian HoL students from around the state are benefitting from the generosity of the 151 year strong Blundstone company. The Blundstone boot bank donated a pair of boots for every Hands on Learning student in Tasmania this year.



### Have a read

Partner [Wilcannia Central School's Sarah Donnelly](#) shares her teacher's heart and soul.

## Welcome to the HoL community

[Expanding access to HoL](#) – Term 3 2022

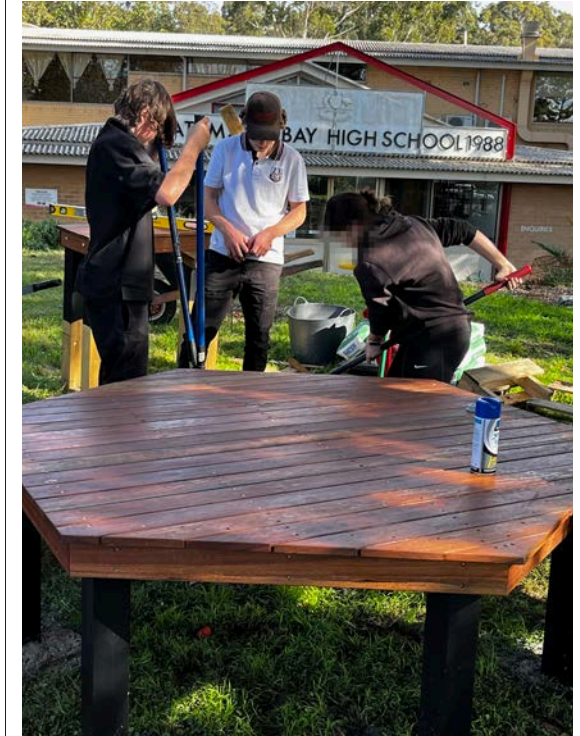
- Catholic Regional College St Albans, Vic
- Cedar Creek State School, Qld
- Dover District School, Tas
- Echuca East Primary School, Vic
- Echuca Twin Rivers Primary School, Vic
- Goodwood Primary School, Tas
- Manangatang P-12 College, Vic
- Mount Rowan Secondary College, Vic
- Tuggerah Lakes College, NSW



The energetic team at Hobart's Goodwood Primary School are learning to work well as a team, and improving each week. They have already made two sets of Giant Jenga for the school, helped a lot in the vegetable garden, with lots of cooking and eating in the mix too.

## Be seated

Families are welcomed warmly at Batemans Bay High School, with the Hands on Learning team approached to create an outdoor meeting place for parents. This stunning hardwood table was built and installed by the team, proudly embellished with the Hands on Learning logo.



### Our cover

[Kurunjang Secondary College](#) has received the inaugural Sowinski Community Projects award, after an action packed year refurbishing the Melton Central Kindergarten yard, and lending a hand tree planting with the Melton Botanic Garden Club and Melton Council.



### Toolbox talk

As part of our ongoing professional support to partner schools please see our latest Toolbox Talk publication where we highlight the power of purposeful projects.

# The wheel turns full circle

This mum finds extra joy celebrating her son's achievements.

Kooper stands justifiably tall as he surveys his team's handiwork enhancing the Hands on Learning precinct at McClelland College. A generation after his mum was part of Hands on Learning, Kooper proudly conducts a tour for his mother Jackie and her former artisan-teacher, HoL Founder, Russell Kerr.

Reflecting on the impact of being part of the Hands on Learning crew at McClelland College, Kooper says while he loves sport, he used to find it harder to listen in class. "It makes a difference for me. My teachers say I'm improving, and I can focus now, no matter who I'm working with."

"It gives you space outside, and we got to do different things all the time. It felt so good. We were busy, we achieved so much, and we went back to the classroom refreshed," is the way Jackie sums up her own time in Hands on Learning in the early days at Frankston High School. Jackie went on to a mechanical pre apprenticeship, and then moved into early childhood education, and is now a proud mum of four children working at a local childcare centre.



*"The wheel turns full circle. It's so good to see a second generation son finding the same benefits in doing a day of Hands on Learning, just like his mother before him."*

**Russell Kerr, OAM**



Coincidentally both Jackie and Kooper rate building a bridge highly. "It took time, we didn't rush it, we upcycled heaps and added brick steps, Kooper says with definite pride in his team's efforts.



Joining the duo to celebrate the next generation of HoL bridges was a delight for HoL Founder Russell Kerr.

**Building bridges, changing lives**

STUDENTS from Frankston High's Hands On Learning Program have built a pedestrian bridge at Rosebud's William Hunter Reserve.

The project was part of a community partnership between Frankston High School and Mornington Peninsula Shire, which contributed \$4500 to cover materials, transport of the students to and from the site and a professional carpenter for on-site training.

The shire's conservation officer Simon Thorning was also involved - offering advice and supervision.

Mr Thorning said the program had been successful with the students learning new skills and the community benefiting from improved assets.

Schools on the Mornington Peninsula had seen how successful the program was and expressed an interest in getting involved in similar projects, he said.

Hands On Learning is an alternative curriculum program.

Teacher Russell Kerr said the program gave the students a break from normal classes one day a week, which often helped them to become better focused during the rest of the week.

"This program's success is based on giving these students an opportunity to be creative, problem solve and use their initiative in a real life situation," Mr Kerr said.

"We treat the students like adults on a work site and encourage them to respect their peers and the surrounding environment, and it works."

The students range from Year 7-10 with no more than 12 at a time taking part.

Year 7 student Robert Schilzler, who started in the program last term, said Hands On Learning was "better than school".

**Goodwill:** Frankston High students building bridges in Rosebud.



## Celebrating together again

After a hiatus of three years, the HoL community came together for the first face to face annual conference since 2019. Held in Melbourne in June, the day of professional development provided inspiration and support for key program and leadership staff working across the HoL partner school network. More than 120 people attended, with surveyed attendees (55) rating the conference as either Excellent (65%) or Good (35%).



Hands on learning is distinguished by the commitment our school partners make to put their own skin in the game and invest over the long-term.

### 10 YEAR + PARTNER SCHOOLS

Three new schools celebrate their 10 year anniversary with HoL this year.

- Murtoa College (10 years)
- Lara Secondary College (10 years)
- Narre Warren South P-12 College (10 years)
- Benalla P-12 College (11 years)
- McClelland College (13 years)
- Northern Bay College (13 years)
- Kurnai College (14 years)
- St Francis Xavier College, Berwick (15 years)
- Frankston High School (23 years)



### PEOPLE POWER

A live cross during the day delivered national recognition for Queensland artisan teacher Dennis Ward. For the first time outside Victoria, Lowood State High School's artisan-teacher was awarded the prestigious 'John Eldridge Medal', named in honour of the first HoL artisan-teacher and presented annually to celebrate an outstanding contribution.

### COMMUNITY PROJECTS

A new annual award named after Stephen Sowinski celebrates the community work of our partner schools.

#### HONOURABLE MENTIONS

- Echuca Primary School
- Warrnambool East Primary School
- Benalla P-12 College

#### WINNER

- Kurunjang Secondary College  
Kurunjang's triumph was also celebrated in the [local newspaper](#) and acknowledged, [in parliament](#), by [Steve McGhie MP](#).

### FABULOUS PHOTOS

Portland North Primary School took home the annual photo competition's people's favourite.



### PAST STUDENT

Frankston High School HoL alumnus, Julie Dal Santo returned after 20 years to share her journey from Year Nine to Founder and CEO of [My Career Capital](#), an online platform that empowers young people to take control of their careers.

### GUEST SPEAKERS

Conference participants heard from a range of guest speakers including HoL Founder Russell Kerr, BackTrack Founder Bernie Shakeshaft, and Wilcannia Central School Deputy Principal, ARIA award winner and author Sarah Donnelly.



### PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS

Practical tips, advice and information are a conference feature.

# Celebrating five years of commitment

The heroes of Hands on Learning are the people involved. An impressive group of artisan-teachers who began in 2018 and are now in their fifth year of nurturing students in HoL. Thank you for what you do every day, week in week out, to support the students.



**DONNA BALDOCK:**  
DIMBOOLA MEMORIAL  
SECONDARY COLLEGE

Donna's diligence, patience and care with students pays off. Donna works with her colleagues and school leadership team to ensure the students have the best support they can provide. She generously shares her practice with artisan-teachers in other schools. Donna actively seeks opportunities for the HoL team to connect and give back to the local community, and ensures the students have fun on their day together.



**BRETT DOMASCHNEZ:**  
MOUNT CLEAR COLLEGE

Brett is an exceptional HoL practitioner and advocate, helping to not only entrench HoL at his school, but grow HoL in his local region. Brett is organised, patient and always has the development of the students in his care as his primary focus. His ability to reflect on his own practice and program has driven Mt Clear College's HoL program from strength to strength.



**BROOKE KING:**  
PORTLAND NORTH  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brooke is someone with the ability to develop a rapport with all kids. She is always aware of what the students' needs are and a genuine team player. Very engaged in the school community Brooke is always looking at ways to develop and promote the school in the local community. She always finds a way to look positively on life and focus on the small things. And while Brooke is flat out caring for others, she will always find time to "stop and smell the roses".



**DEBORAH  
MIDDLETON:** HEYWOOD  
CONSOLIDATED PRIMARY  
SCHOOL

Deb has a very caring nature and the support she gives the students in Hands on Learning at Heywood Consolidated Primary is fantastic. She is always trying to improve the student's confidence and help develop their soft skills. The students relate to Deb and genuinely feel safe and trusted in the HoL space. She will have a go at anything and is a fantastic mentor to the students. Deb is always encouraging the students "to be the best you can be".



**ROEL PAJE:** BROOKSIDE  
COLLEGE

Roel's calm, positive, supportive, jovial, patient and kind nature would make any space a supportive one for students.

Year after year Roel has nurtured, encouraged, and fostered the self-esteem of his students.

On behalf of the Hands on Learning Program we want to acknowledge and thank Roel for all the work he has done in supporting the young people of Brookside p-9 College.



**DONNA SCOTT:**  
CAMPERDOWN COLLEGE

Donna gains the trust of each student in HoL. She provides love and compassion when needed and has a smile that radiates and warms everyone around her. Donna's sense of humour and genuine listening skills are the key to her winning the hearts of the HoL crew at Camperdown College. Fair and firm, the students understand their boundaries and where they stand. Donna is always thinking of others and her giving nature is appreciated throughout the local Camperdown community.



**STEVE SMITH:** IPSWICH  
STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Steve Smith will go down in Hands on Learning history as one of the key figures in the program's growth into Queensland. At Ipswich State High School, one of Queensland's first HoL programs, Steve has been a steady and constant figure since day one. Always smiling, his laconic and happy go lucky nature belies a tireless work ethic. Steve is loved by his colleagues, and HoL students with whom he has an amazing rapport.

# Going beyond together



Principal Stacey Beu (right) and Deputy Principal Sherree Soanes celebrate with artisan-teacher Dennis Ward.

There's a vibrant positive buzz at Lowood State High School as the school community gathers to celebrate artisan-teacher Dennis Ward as the 2022 John Eldridge Medallist and the national recognition of his outstanding contribution to Hands on Learning. While Dennis's contribution and the practice excellence he and fellow artisan-teacher Kerry Hetherington foster is obvious, the universal excitement about the outcomes of Hands on Learning from students, their parents, and the school's leaders is omnipresent.

As always, students easily capture the mood. "It's fun. It is good to work all together. It's fun to have ideas coming from other people, everyone contributes their opinions in here and it turns out into something you all love." "I love it, being here all day, it's amazing. It's a great chance to get your creativity going." "You form really great friendships here. You work with people you wouldn't normally talk to, but you get to know them in HoL and they turn out to be really great people." Year Nine student, Jade, adds.



## Hugh, and his dad Ian

"It's the soft skills that students develop in HoL that makes all the difference to your employability." While Hugh's improved practical skills might be on full display, his dad Ian says it is the way Hugh's communication and teamwork abilities have improved that will really shape his future."



## Brock, and his mum Heather

"Brock is focusing more in class now, he's getting some decent grades, especially in those core subjects that really count. His confidence is growing."



## Jonas, and his mum Michelle

"They are part of a team here, you work with your team, just like we do in life. This program gives kids responsibility and commitment to work together to finish the job and if they are having a bad day, they learn to ask for help. It's a safe environment."





# Ingredients for success

Sharing fresh kingfish caught on your dad's boat with your fellow 'Holsters' from Years 6 to 10 is one of the secret ingredients of HoL at Tin Can Bay P-10 State School, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

"I can't speak highly enough about how much these students share and work together, and the way the older students step up and support the younger ones and work as a team," says artisan-teacher Jayne Schwajhardt.

What a tight crew they have become. Joel the resident fisherman, says he has picked up lots about how to work with others that will be handy back in the classroom. Tylah in Year 10 describes being part of HoL as motivating her to want to come to school more. Luxie, also Year 10, thinks HoL is a cool opportunity to do something different. "I'm more positive about working with other people too." "I like more hands on stuff, being outside, and living real," says Laney in Year

10. "We check in every morning on what's happened during the week, the good and the bad. Alex from Year 9 adds, "It makes the school week better because you get that excitement for Friday to happen. It means you can work on stuff you really enjoy and with this group of people." For Zane, "It's good because sometimes you get stuck on stuff, but the group gives you feedback to help you to solve what you are stuck on. They give me ideas on what I can do and how to do it."

The impact in a few short weeks is summed up by classroom teacher, Danny Wilson who stops in to visit. "They are all calmer up here, they are getting along, there's such positive atmosphere." Deputy Principal, Sandy Lewis, adds "The mentoring of the older kids is amazing. We have really enjoyed exploring what is possible. We have noticed improved relationships across the board. The barriers are broken down here, we too can converse with the students at a different level."

## Now we have the recipe

"This program is made for our school," Joanne Stocks, Head of Curriculum, Cedar Creek State School, says after day one. "One of our mums came in to tell us her son just can't stop talking about what a great day he had." Principal, Mike Meier adds, "I've always been a 'hands on' person. I know the enjoyment of working with your hands, and the sense of achievement when you see the finished product. We had the right people to run this program, and organically we've put a lot in place with artisan-teacher Shevaun Russell establishing such a fantastic environmental hub at the school. It was a no brainer to add the HoL framework, resources, data collection and materials to enhance the way we support our students to grow and develop at Cedar Creek State School." Shevaun sums it up best, "We had all the ingredients, but we didn't have the recipe."



## Rewarding peer mentoring

As the jets from nearby Amberly Airforce base fly overhead, Liam Year 9, at Ipswich State High School, mentors his younger peers as they relocate some paving. Liam reports he wants to be a pilot, so he needs to stay a school to make it into the air force. "I'm different now. I get to be up here once a week, away from classes and people, it's peaceful up here, no one really bothers us. I feel refreshed back in class. I'm more able to ask questions when I don't understand. It feels so good to have a day learning without the curriculum, you understand so much more when you actually do it."



**AMAZEing:** Jackson School

A big shout out to the students and staff of Jackson School in Melbourne's West who have been busy upcycling pallets and a previously unused space into a colourful maze and all out fun experience for patrons visiting the Animal Land Children's Farm in Diggers Rest.

# Blitz'n it

The sky is the limit for the innovative ways HoL teams are lending a hand across their schools and community.



**Planet savers:**  
Newcomb Primary School

What a promise to the future. Great work Newcomb Primary School, those seedlings planted alongside the Bellarine Rail Trail will add beauty and shade for generations to come.



**Growing green for community:** Benalla P-12 College

Rising costs of living and the spiralling price of fresh produce mean Benalla P-12 College's mega community project couldn't be timelier. With a grant from the Central Hume Primary Care Partnership to expand the 'Benalla Grow Your Own' project, Benalla Health teamed up with HoL who are providing the building nous to produce wicking beds, so families in the local community who are experiencing financial hardship or food insecurity can grow vegetables in their backyard. "It has been inspiring to witness the way the students have worked together, problem solving and producing a wooden elevated support structure design to make the wicking beds more accessible," Benalla Health Dietician, Ashleigh Knott said. And it is not only the community that feels better. According to Year 10 student Finn, being part of HoL is the highlight of his week. "It's such a good culture and good vibes in HoL. I learn better outside and working with other people." "It's so fun, it feels like the day goes so quickly", Ben, Year 8 reports. "Instead of having a pen and pencil you have a drill and hammer," Toby, Year 8 adds.







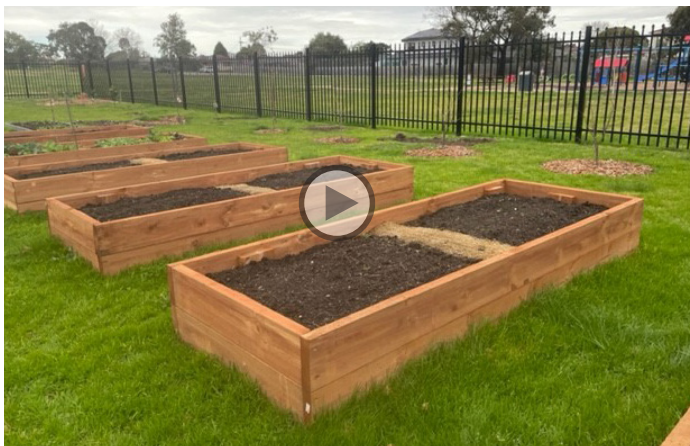
**Connecting with primary:**  
Padua College, Tyabb

Padua College's Hands on Learning crew from its Tyabb campus travelled to Somers Primary School to install seating to create an outdoor classroom and vertical garden beds adjacent to a multipurpose room deck. The seating and garden beds were built in their Tyabb workshop, and the plants were propagated in their hothouse from seeds that were gathered in their precinct's wetlands. Most inspiring of all was way students worked together as well-oiled parts of the HoL machine, demonstrating teamwork and leadership.



**What a team:** Noble Park Secondary College

Great work Noble Park Secondary College and thank you for your support, Bunnings and Ozito. Fabulous to see you join forces to install new garden beds at the Maralinga Community Garden in Noble Park, and transform the outdoor children's space at the Aspendale Gardens Community Centre.



**Thinking outside the box:** Brookside College

Loving the 3D printed HoL Café stencils designed and crafted by Brookside College HoL Café students . Looking good, and no doubt tasting even better!

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