

EdConnect Australia NEWSLETTER



Chat with the CEO, Gerri Clay

I'm new to EdConnect Australia, new to the Education Sector and new to open plan office living. Perhaps an unusual hat trick but one that I can assure you fosters enthusiasm, innovation and a genuine appetite to grow EdConnect Australia. Four months into the role of CEO, I can report that organisational enthusiasm and passion is running high.

The real stories volunteers share about students growing, learning, thriving and feeling connected to their community is humbling and reinforces our purpose "to prepare and connect intergenerational volunteers with disadvantaged or at risk young people for education success and well-being." As for the open plan office experience, I'm working on this one and know there is much to learn from our east coast and rural workforce who are mobile and home based.

There is so much to report on that I am forced to be selective. 2018 kick started with plans to expand the Victorian operations following our first ever grant from the Victorian government's Department of Education and Training.

The new funding was launched on 19 February 2018 by the Minister for Education Hon James Merlino who visited Bayside P-12 College in Williamstown to meet EdConnect mentors and their student mentees, and see firsthand the great work we do. At Bayside P-12 College a number of volunteers are engaged in learning support, including a retired industrial chemist who encourages students in science and a nurse who supports Year 9 boys with their literacy skills.

The Labor Government's \$300,000 investment over three years will mean EdConnect can expand into north-west Victoria, allowing us to help more students through our learning support and mentoring programs.

The Member for Williamstown, Wade Noonan, attended the event along with many long term supporters who were part of the transition of the Victorian program Timehelp to join WA's The School Volunteer Program forming the national group EdConnect Australia.



Top: John Wylie (John and Myriam Wylie Foundation), Wade Noonan (Member for Williamstown), Sam Hayward (Electorate Officer for Wade Noonan), Tom Forde (Tanarra Philanthropic Advisors).

Above: Lisa Kingman (founder Timehelp), Gerri Clay (CEO EdConnect Australia), Narelle Laing (General Manager Vic NSW EdConnect Australia).



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...

National EdConnect Awards
Sponsors - What's new

WA Community Volunteer Organisation of the Year!



It truly has been an amazing year for awards. EdConnect Australia was awarded the 2018 WA Community Volunteer Organisation of the Year Award on 24th May 2018. It was a wonderful night celebrating the marvellous work of Volunteers, Volunteer Managers and Volunteer Organisations in our community.



The EdConnect Team at the WA Volunteer Awards night.

This award is presented in celebration of a volunteer involving organisation that brings innovative leadership and through good practice volunteering, brings about positive and enduring change to their community.

For more than 20 years EdConnect has been providing support to the Western Australian community, winning this prestigious award acknowledges the significant contribution of our hundreds of volunteers – thank you! Our Chairperson Norma Jeffery, CEO Gerri Clay and WA Liaison Officers

Julie Mullett, Sarah White and Karen Vincent were there to accept the award from the Governor Kim Beazley.

The Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools, led by Mr David Gonski was released in March this year. It is encouraging to realise that the work EdConnect performs is an excellent fit with the priorities and recommendations outlined in the review and affirming to know that our volunteers are contributing to the future direction of education in Australia.

Of Interest:

Gonski's top priorities are to

- deliver at least one years' growth in learning for every student every year
- equip every student to be a creative, connected and engaged learner in a rapidly changing world
- cultivate an adaptive, innovative and continuously improving education system.

A very sound case for the expansion of EdConnect to reach more schools in Australia.

What's new

Port Hedland Expansion

The Roy Hill Community Foundation are funding EdConnect to expand the program to more schools in Port Hedland and for the first time employ a part time liaison officer based in the Pilbara town. We are excited to be part of this initiative and will be further growing our workplace volunteering model to support schools in this region.

Girls in STEM Pilot Program

In Victoria we have commenced a Girls in STEM project, funded by Gandel Philanthropy. The first step is to gather evidence of best practise in this area before piloting and evaluating a mentoring project with girls in year 10, in the lead up to choosing subjects for their final years of schooling. The program will also support VCE students to remain confident in STEM subjects and encourage career opportunities in STEM.

EdConnect Australia Awards 2017

The 1000 plus volunteers who deliver the program in schools are a very dedicated, highly committed and passionate group of people who give of their time freely, giving back to their community and particularly to those vulnerable and at risk students in our schools. Each year we recognise two volunteers who support the two volunteer programmes we run – learning support and mentoring.

Learning Support Volunteer of the Year

Yong Wong, Glenroy Secondary College, Vic

Yong has worked with senior maths students at Glenroy Secondary College for 7 years. He is a very fit retired maths teacher, who cycles most days to the schools where he volunteers.

He makes a point of getting to know all of the students in the class personally and academically so he can cater to their individual needs, always working with students until they fully understand a maths concept. One of his students shared that if it hadn't been for Yong she would have given up maths in year 9 and she is now starting year 12 maths with confidence. He has kept her positive and explained things in different ways until she understood. 87% of students at Glenroy Secondary College come from a low socio economic background.



Raymond Richards and Therese Gorton (Kinross Primary School).

Mentor Volunteer of the Year

Raymond Richards, Kinross Primary School

Over the past 5 years, Ray has mentored 30 students at Kinross Primary School in WA. He is a retired engineer who has that innate ability to develop strong, positive relationships with children, particularly boys and has worked with some troubled students who have relied upon him as a positive male role model in their life. He has used his strength in mathematics to tutor students, playing practical maths games and identifying real life situations where maths is relevant.

Teachers have noticed improvement in student's attitude and behaviour when they have the opportunity to work with Raymond. Raymond shared his personal experience with cancer to support a student who was diagnosed in 2017; he developed a strong connection with him and the student was able to open up and share his feelings and

thoughts in a safe and comfortable environment.

Desmond Heenan School Coordinator of the Year

Clare Clayton, Kent Street Senior High School

One of the volunteers at Kent Street Senior High School nominated Clare for this award as she goes out of her way to build and develop strong relationships with her mentor volunteers creating strong bonds. Interacting with them on their visits to the school, being positive about the contribution they make; is responsive, prompt, courteous and helpful, always willing to go the extra mile for her students and volunteers.



Clare Clayton and Paul Heenan.

The Desmond Heenan Award for Excellence celebrates and acknowledges the dedication and passion of our School Coordinators who give that extra effort to ensure that our program operates successfully in schools and results in positive student outcomes.



Yong Wong and Anne-Maree Crivelli (Principal Glenroy Secondary College).

OUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

We have a network of over 1200 volunteers currently in 220 schools nationally reaching 12,000 students of whom nearly 1,000 were directly engaged in one to one mentoring

What schools told us in 2017 were the top 5 benefits of having EdConnect at their school

- Being able to offer one to one assistance to those who need it most
- Supporting children who do not have English as their first language
- Being able to extend those children who have particular abilities
- Having a positive older role model for children to interact with
- Being able to introduce a program/project that would otherwise be difficult without help from EdConnect Australia volunteers

Thank you to our sponsors

Our funding model is dependent upon the generous support from the Department of Education in WA and more recently funding from the Victorian government. These funds provide a core base of funding and in order to run the program we must seek supplementary funding from corporate sponsors, philanthropic trusts and other forms of in kind support.

WA Government - Department of Education

Victorian Government - Department of Education and Training

The William Buckland Foundation

The Kimberley foundation

Sidney Myer fund

City of Mandurah

The Good Guys

Alcoa Foundation

Roy Hill Community Foundation

Gandel Philanthropy

Collier Charitable Fund

Give Where You Live Geelong

The John and Myriam Wylie Foundation

Vaddis Consulting

Tanarra Philanthropic Advisors

Staff movement on the East Coast



On the staffing front we have expanded our School liaison officers in Victoria with the appointment of Rhonda Velkovski who will oversee the program in the West North-West. We also welcome Viv Sercombe who joins us as the project officer for the newly funded Girls in STEM pilot program funded by Gandel Philanthropy.

Narelle Laing manages the east coast activity supported by her team of Liaison Officers and is always keen to hear from potential schools and community partners.



Visit www.edconnectaustralia.org.au or follow us facebook.com/EdConnectAustralia

Call VIC/NSW - 1800 668 550

Call WA - 08 9444 8646

Email us at edconnect@edconnect.org.au

How to support us

Continue volunteering with us - time is a highly valued gift to children

Help us recruit more volunteers; tell a friend about the rewards of volunteering with EdConnect

Tell us about ideas for sponsorship or opportunities on the horizon