

EdConnect Australia NEWSLETTER



Chat with the CEO

We chat with Craig Stewart, Chief Executive Officer of EdConnect Australia

A belated welcome to the first EdConnect Newsletter of 2016. I can't believe how quickly time has flown this year particularly as we are almost halfway through the school year. As usual it has been a busy but productive start to the year for the EdConnect team with a number of important projects either completed or nearing completion which we would love to share with you in this newsletter.

The first exciting project completed is our suite of training packages thanks to the support of Lotterywest and Robert Munce our training coordinator. It has been hard work, but worth it, with some fantastic training resources now at our disposal. Additionally, we also have implemented our online training packages which are currently being trialled with a select group of volunteers ahead of a wider roll out.

Our website has also been updated with a bright new look with lots of useful and engaging information and resources. This is supported by our ever growing Facebook page which we would love you to have a look at and hopefully like. It helps spread the message about

EdConnect and will hopefully attract more people to our cause. In the background we have also had a lot of IT improvements happening which is helping us reduce costs and become much more efficient (note spotlight on a funding partner for details).

On the staffing front we have welcomed Stella Freitag who has taken on the role of Social Impact Coordinator thanks to the support of the Newman's Own and Kimberley Foundations. This is a very important role and one that will support our efforts in evidencing the positive differences that we are making, and importantly communicate these to all of our stakeholders. We were also pleased to engage the services of Meredith Davies who has taken on the role of our East Coast trainer which for the first time has enabled a dedicated high quality focus on training in our East Coast communities. We have also been recruiting for a new Liaison Officer both in WA and Moreland and hope to announce the successful candidates soon.

I am also pleased to announce a partnership with the Roy Hill Foundation for the delivery of



Above (L to R):
Jeanette Hasleby (Roy Hill Foundation),
Hon Cheryl Edwardes (Chair EdConnect),
Craig Stewart (CEO EdConnect)

our programs in Port Hedland, WA. The Foundation has entered into a three-year sponsorship which will result in the delivery of our Mentor Me and Learning Support program initially commencing in St Cecilia's Catholic Primary School. At a recent launch of the foundation held in Port Hedland we were treated to a tour of the school followed by a tour of the Roy Hill facilities both of which were fantastic. I would like to welcome St Cecilia Catholic Primary School and the Port Hedland community to the EdConnect family.



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...

Our Impact - Spotlight - National Awards
Visibility in Schools - Website Update

Our Impact

Underpinning everything we do is evidence of change for young people, schools and volunteers.

With over 50,000 registered charities in Australia, we continuously monitor ourselves to see what difference we are making and whether we remain relevant. We use a range of tools to measure this including independent evaluations, school and volunteer surveys, interviews, video recordings, consultations and quarterly data collections from our Liaison Officers.

All of this information helps us to determine if our services are on track, what improvements we can make and importantly that our services are wanted, needed and really do make a meaningful and positive difference. After all, if we weren't making any real difference we would simply shut up shop. As a public charity we are accountable to all of our stakeholders and take our responsibility seriously. Keep an eye on our website for details of the positive differences we are making.

AT A GLANCE:

We have a network of over **1,300** mentors and volunteers – currently in **260 schools** nationally

We are reaching over **6,000** students of which over **970** were directly engaged in our one-on-one mentoring programs

We provide on average **2,300** support hours per week

SPOTLIGHT ON A FUNDING PARTNER



Present
G R O U P

Present Group has been a long term supporter of EdConnect Australia and over the past number of years has supported our work in numerous ways, ranging from volunteering in our schools (Mentoring and Learning Support), providing financial sponsorship, assisting with governance (Board Membership), implementing workplace giving and of late providing extensive support to improve our Information and computer technology (ICT).

Cobus Bothma who is the Enterprise Systems Manager for Present Group has brought his expertise to bare, bringing EdConnect up to date with our ICT. For quite some time we have been managing with hardware and software systems that were out of date, causing us ongoing challenges to operate and increasing costs to simply maintain. We were finding it painful to keep spending money to simply keep our systems going when we have other more pressing needs to support young people and our volunteers.

Over the past nine months Cobus has worked with us intensively to both develop and enact an ICT plan that has seen us transition to the most up to date software, migrate our email system into the cloud, implement a cloud based intranet, introduce us to skype for business and bring to bear the support of the Present Group's ICT helpdesk – all at no cost to EdConnect.

Cobus' passion and commitment to help us leveraging on his skills and experience has been



Above: Cobus Bothma

outstanding and of enormous benefit to us. Cobus has very much become a valuable member of the EdConnect team and often drops in to check how everything is going. Our journey continues on the IT front with Cobus driving us on to better and better improvements which we are more than up for. On behalf of EdConnect Australia, thank you Cobus for all of your hard work and efforts and to Present Group for your ongoing support and passion for our work.

FAST FACTS

Sponsorship:
\$10,000

Donation of time and expertise:
\$10,000

Savings achieved on ICT maintenance:
\$4,500

National Awards

Our awards for our volunteers and school coordinators have now gone national in keeping with our identity and reach.

This includes the Desmond Heenan Award for Excellence, Mentor Volunteer of the Year and our new category Learning Support Volunteer of the Year. This year our panel comprised of Michele Manook (Board Director), Joseph Hoe (Wealthwise), Julie Mullett and Kevin Inglis (EdConnect Australia) and life member Ailsa Rice. Competition for the grand finalists was tough with so many high quality candidates being nominated.

The awards evening held at The Rise was a great event. It is a great privilege and quite humbling to hear about the great work that our school coordinators and volunteers undertake to and the positive differences that they make. We were also proud to Acknowledge the Hon Tony Simpson MLA Minister for Local Government; Community Services; Seniors and Volunteering who was our guest speaker for the evening along with Mr Ian Hasleby. It is also a great pleasure to acknowledge Paul Heenan representing the Hon Desmond Heenan's family.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge all those who were nominated for their commitment to the EdConnect. Following is a list of winners and finalists for the three categories of awards:

Desmond Heenan School Coordinator of the Year 2015

- Cheryl Rooney, Bannister Creek Primary School - Winner
- Anja Schuette, Yennora Public School - Finalist
- Maggie McKenna, Clifton Hills Primary School - Finalist

Mentor Volunteer of the Year 2015

- John Glisenti, Kardinya Primary School - Winner
- Sally Kowal, Dalyellup Primary School - Finalist
- Julie Hicks, Como Secondary College - Finalist

Learning Support Volunteer of the Year 2015

- Ashok Bajaj, Parramatta North Public School - Winner
- Lisa Ray, Joondalup Primary School - Finalist
- Ian Scott, Manning Primary School - Finalist



Above (L to R): Paul Heenan (son of Desmond Heenan), volunteer Lisa Ray from Joondalup Primary School, The Hon Tony Simpson MLA Minister for Local Government; Community Services; Seniors and Volunteering; Youth, Craig Stewart, CEO EdConnect Australia

Left (L to R): Mentor John Glisenti with the Hon Tony Simpson MLA

Visibility in Schools

We are in the process of sending out new identity badges and EdConnect lanyards to all of our volunteers nationwide.

This helps schools staff, parents and students identify at a glance someone as an EdConnect volunteer which is really important in this day and age when working with young people. Our new badges are credit card sized and come with a safety lanyard with the EdConnect logo proudly displayed.



Later in the year we will be offering through our website EdConnect clothing, caps and bags at low cost that you can order and also wear in school. These will be great quality clothing at as low a price as we can negotiate with suppliers. Not only will this be great value but will look good as well.

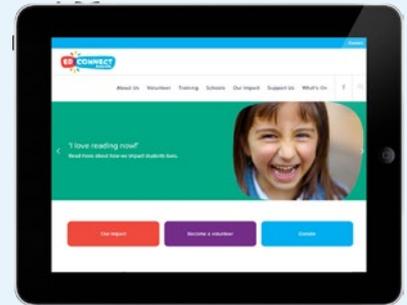
Share your story

Do you have an uplifting, quirky or interesting story from your time in school?

We would love to hear more about your experiences to share with others, even just a sentence or two would be great.

Website update

Since our last newsletter we have completed the switch of our website from that of Timehelp and The School Volunteer Program to EdConnect Australia.



www.edconnectaustralia.org.au

If you haven't already had a look, check out our new website. The site is more interactive and informative with lots of resources and information available for existing volunteers and stakeholders as well as those interested in engaging with us.

If you are already member of EdConnect Australia, you will shortly be receiving a password to access our secure portal. In here you will be able to see our various training manuals, research evidence, links to other sites of interest and relevance. If you come across any information you think is useful for either students, volunteers or other key stakeholders please let us know.

Facebook

In a relatively small period of time we have begun to extend our reach with more and more people accessing our Facebook site and liking our posts each week.



Help us spread the word by getting on our page and giving us a like, or send us an interesting article, video or link that we can put on that helps promote the type of work that we are doing and encourage more people to support us ... it all helps.

Flame Tree Digital have just come on board and are going to take the lead for us in developing our social media presence yet further.

Our Facebook page is www.facebook.com/EdConnectAustralia



Visit www.edconnectaustralia.org.au or follow us [facebook.com/EdConnectAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/EdConnectAustralia)

Call us on:
Victoria/New South Wales - 03 5277 3411
Western Australia - 08 9444 8646

Or email us at
edconnect@edconnect.org.au
and we'll be in touch.