



# BTA NEWS

Better Together Alliance Newsletter  
prepared by Sandy Gunn

August 2016

## Better Together Alliance

There has been some amazing events occurring in August and it is pleasing to report on these great things happening in Greater Shepparton for our students.

### School's Regional Constitutional Convention

The School's Regional Constitutional Convention ("Should we recognise Indigenous Australians in the Commonwealth Constitution?") was held at Shepparton High School on the 19th August. Students were presented with a traditional dance performance to open the day followed by a panel discussion on the Constitution. Students were engaged in the panel and asked some well thought out questions of the panel. Students then split into groups to discuss different items on the agenda, including Invasion Day vs Australia Day, which I attended. This group was led by Sharman Stone, who talked students through the history and students formed opinions about the 26<sup>th</sup> January from these discussions. Students then returned to the whole group and gave feedback about what they had learnt in each group. The event was well received by the students. Watching the learning and understanding of Indigenous Australians being recognized in the Commonwealth Constitution by the students was fantastic. Students from the BTA schools now have the opportunity, through Principal recommendations, to attend the Schools Regional Convention in Canberra. Congratulations to the team, Zarina Fleming, Cam Reid, Amanda Neilson, Leonel Cruz and Linda Miller, at Shepparton High school for their work in organising and running the very successful event.



*"We will do  
better for  
young  
people by  
working  
strategically  
together"*

*BTA Focus*

### Future Voices

A targeted community based approach to build young peoples' skills, aspirations and connection to the community. The programs of Future Voices are based on an independent learning model further developing the following skills: Cognitive skills, Metacognitive skills, and Affective. Participants attend workshops locally and interstate during the year long program. These create a sense of self-worth and inspiration as participants see and hear firsthand what is possible for them. Schools have been provided with the application forms and are working with students who would like to apply.



### Upcoming Events

- Subject Selection finalisation
- Debating – Sept
- Out There Program – 5<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Sept
- Induction for 2017 BTA travelling students – Oct
- Big Ideas Presentation Night – 21<sup>st</sup> Oct



## BTA Student Council

On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> of August the first BTA Student Council meeting was held with students from each of the 4 schools at Mooroopna Secondary College. The students from Shepparton High, McGuire College and Wanganui Park SC arrived together to meet with the students from Mooroopna SC. Students discussed the Better Together Alliance and how, as students, activities and events could be organised across the four schools. Students presented enthusiastic ideas which they developed into plans of action around joint socials, school festivals, dance galas, sport days, social justice groups and fundraising for Greater Shepparton. The BTA Student Council will meet once a term and then return to school in their own Student Councils to carry out tasks for successful outcomes. Thank you to all students for their keen and willing input into this new Council and wanting to work together for the benefit all of students in all schools in Greater Shepparton.

## Network Meetings

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August the BTA Network Meetings were held at La Trobe University, where teachers had the opportunity to experience what La Trobe Shepparton Campus has to offer. After the Learning Area meetings, staff were provided with an afternoon tea and Sue Nalder (Head of Campus) addressed staff about the great collaboration between each other, and La Trobe and the BTA. Staff completed a feedback sheet during the meeting to further improve our Network Meetings. Thank you to staff for attendance and to La Trobe for the use of their facilities.

## TransformEDx- Student Wellbeing & Transitions

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> August, Teach for Australia held their TransformEDx PD at Wanganui Park Secondary College supported by Better Together Alliance. There was a great turn out, with participants hearing presentations and workshopping items around Student Wellbeing and Transition. Participants included Teachers, Education Support Officers, Community Organisation Leaders, and Department of Education Leaders. Discussions were robust and great connections were made. The sharing of practice and the collaboration created a great buzz in the rooms. Thankyou to Ben, Shannon and Oscar (students from WPSC) for giving up their time to cook a great BBQ for the participants. Thankyou to WPSC for the use of their facilities and to Smeeta Singh (State Manager-Teach for Australia) and Teach for Australia for the extremely successful and beneficial event.

*The benefits of collaboration recognises not just in the sharing of goods but in their creation too."*

(Smith, 2015)

## Opportunities Ahead

Year 9 Dookie Camp – Planning is continuing for the opportunity to offer an agricultural link camp to Year 9s in the future. Mooroopna Secondary College are in the current planning to trial the camp in 2017. Thankyou to MSC for their eagerness to make this an opportunity for the BTA. Thankyou to Lighthouse Project and Melbourne University for the chance to make this happen.

Out There (Australian Ballet) – Beginning on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September the Out There Program with the Australian Ballet will be here to work with the four BTA schools for two weeks. Students will be involved in workshops (total of 10 hours) over the two weeks culminating in a Showcase of performances on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September. Thank you to the schools for your enthusiastic interest in this program.

## Feedback from Network Meetings

Feedback and recommendations are being sent to Principals for discussion with Leadership teams.

- Being able to share ideas with other teachers is a great experience
- I like the sharing of best practices, it gives me more ideas on how to discuss topics
- Meeting others from schools and sharing resources
- Solid, positive connections with teachers and a forum to discuss VCE content
- Inspiration to try out new things
- It has increased my confidence in handling VCE subjects



## Feedback from La Trobe Outreach Program

- Today I worked with Curiosity Bots, it was fun and we learnt lots
- I enjoyed what I learnt today
- It was interesting to see how engineering is used for pretty much everything in our everyday life.

## Celebrating Success

Outreach Program (La Trobe University) – For National Science Week, the Better Together Alliance worked with La Trobe University to hold the first Science Outreach Program in Shepparton for Middle School and VCE revision. Shepparton High School provided the excellent facilities for the two day event and students from the other BTA Schools came across to attend workshops. Students were offered a range of workshops in Science, Maths and ICT including Cool Nanoscience, Get into Genes, Create your own App, Graph Colouring and Curiosity Bots. Students at Shepparton High School attended two sessions on Wednesday 17th August and the buzz during the workshops was exciting, students learning with expert lecturers from La Trobe University. Thank you to Shepparton High School for their facilities and staff for their assistance to help make the event a very successful one.



Teach the Teacher Program – on Friday August 5th Shepparton High School hosted the Teach the Teacher Program. Teach the Teacher is a student-led professional learning program for teachers, where everyone has a voice. The students involved in the session were provided with training to be confident in running a constructive and judgement free PD with the teachers at their schools to create a positive learning community for all. Students were engaged in the process and were keen to follow through with the program. Thankyou to SHS for the organisation of the program and use of facilities, it was a great morning had by all.





## Celebrating Success con...

Year 7 Mentoring Program – the Lighthouse Project Mentoring Program began at McGuire College in August. Mentor Training was conducted with the 20 Mentors under the guidance of Hamish Flecker. On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August the Mentors and the Mentees (students) met for the first time at McGuire College. The Mentors and Mentees enthusiastically engaged with one another for the whole morning and then enjoyed a nice lunch together. The following Monday, Parents/Guardians met with Lighthouse Executive Officer, Lisa McKenzie, to answer any questions about the program. The Program will be reviewed and reflected upon throughout the pilot. It is so fabulous to have a group dedicated and skilled 20 community members volunteering to assist our young people. Thankyou to Lighthouse Project for the brilliant partnership to get this program underway, to all of the volunteers for their commitment, to McGuire College for their support and involvement in the program, Susan Kerwin (Transition and Pathways Leader) for all of her work with the students, and the Students for being willing to be involved in the program.



ICI Conference – On Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August 3 students from our Alliance Schools were selected to attend the International Congress of Immunology (ICI) Conference in Melbourne. Leaving bright and early, students had an opportunity to meet scientist from around the world and experience a conference on an international level. Students meet leading Immunologist and discussed working in research and the field of immunology. Their final part of the program for the day was to hear from Nobel Laureate, Professor Peter Doherty. It was a great day of learning and opportunity.



## Contact Us

Any news or concerns, please contact

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General Placement

Mondays—Shepparton HS

Tuesdays—Mooroopna SC

Wednesdays—Wanganui Park SC

Thursdays—McGuire College

Fridays—Community of Greater Shepparton