



BTA NEWS

Better Together Alliance Newsletter
prepared by Sandy Gunn

December 2016



Better Together Alliance

Congratulations to everyone involved in building on the strengths and the successes of the BTA this year. It's been a privilege to work with you all on such an important innovative, exciting and challenging community initiative. On a personal level, my new role as the BTA's Executive Officer, this year has been a positive and fulfilling experience and I'm very grateful to you and to Greater Shepparton for your warmth and acceptance of me into your community. I also give special thanks to all the fantastic organisations and individuals for the friendship, support and willingness to form and develop strong partnerships with the *Better Together Alliance* to ensure the ongoing excellence of public education in Shepparton for every young person.

2016 has seen the continuation of the great relationship between the *Better Together Alliance* schools, McGuire College, Mooroopna SC, Shepparton HS and Wanganui Park SC and I thank them all for their support. It's been a pleasure working together with the staff towards a more connected and unified way of providing the Greater Shepparton community with an integrated public education system. The quality and diversity of this education will be strengthened and safeguarded by the continuing practice of working together and being better together. While each school has its own individual special strengths to nurture, it's clear that by working strategically together, with careful planning and a strong partnership, the breadth of offerings will provide more options for student learning and improve educational / life outcomes for young people.

Of course the BTA's strong relationship with community enables the successful delivery of new initiatives, stimulating programs and activities for the students of Greater Shepparton. On behalf of the BTA, I would like to thank the following organisations and the individuals within these organisations for their support of, involvement with and continued partnerships:

Lighthouse Project
The Australian Ballet
Slap Tomorrow
Department of Education
City of Greater Shepparton
Teach for Australia
Shepparton News
Greater Shepparton Primary Schools

La Trobe University
Ethnic Council of Shepparton
The University of Melbourne
Hands on Learning Australia
Boundless
VicSRC
BTA Board

GoTAFE
GMLLEN
The Foyer
Word and Mouth

Upcoming Events

- Community Forums - 14th March 2017 (Cybersafety)
- BTA Production Auditions – Week 2 Term I 2017
- Network Meetings - Week 5 Term I 2017 (SHS)

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

BTA Focus



Network Meetings

The first meeting for 2017 will be led by Shepparton High School in Week 5 of Term I.

The benefits of collaboration recognises not just in the sharing of goods but in their creation too.”
(Smith, 2015)

The Year in Review

During 2016, there have been the continuation of sharing resources and knowledge across the BTA Schools and the introduction of a number of programs to enhance the great work of the schools including:

- Formation of the BTA Student Council
- Students traveling for subjects across the BTA for course choice
- Induction Day for new students travelling across schools for course completion
- Mentoring Program at McGuire College beginning with 20 Mentors and the planning for expansion in 2017 to SHS and sourcing up to 80 volunteers for mentoring with the Lighthouse Project
- Introduction of Carla Miles at SHS to assist with making connections between curriculum and industry through the Lighthouse Project
- Refining processes across the BTA Schools, drawing on the expertise and talents of each school and their staff
- Australian Ballet Out There Program with final showcase in September
- Inaugural La Trobe University OutReach Program for science in Shepparton
- Virtual Classroom training for the introduction of Virtual Classrooms on Wednesdays in 2017
- Initiation of a Transition Project with the Department of Education
- Cybersafety Presentations to over 100 students across Greater Shepparton with Word and Mouth
- Involvement in La Trobe University study on successful transitions between education and employment of youth in Shepparton Victoria.
- Inception of Cultural Diversity program from student feedback expressing an interest in learning about the Greater Shepparton's emerging diverse community and cultures
- The introduction of the Big Ideas Project through Slap Tomorrow and the Lighthouse Project
- Network Meetings across the BTA to share best practice being conducted each term and expanding the opportunities for staff to share across the BTA Schools
- Planning for The University of Melbourne, Dookie Camp for Year 9s in 2017 in partnership with Melbourne University and the Lighthouse Project
- Introduction of a BTA Production for 2017 with the engagement of external Director, Laura Cooney
- Launching of the Better Together Alliance Facebook page
- The alignment of a number of GoTAFE VET subjects into the Alliance timetable to allow for greater choice for student subject selections
- The initial conversations with Hands on Learning for the introduction of the program in Shepparton with a pilot at WPSC in 2017 through the GMLLEN
- Partnership with Teach For Australia for the August Hume Professional Development session and presentation at the October Wimmera session
- 2017 introduction of the BTA donation to the Liftoff Scholarships
- Planning for the NRG Program through La Trobe University for 2017
- Schools of the BTA sharing ideas and programs across the schools to enhance the opportunities and increasing the breadth of offerings doing better for young people by working strategically together



BTA Student Council

The BTA Student Council's first event for 2017 will be a joint casual clothes day that will raise funds for the Lift Off Scholarships program. (Community Fund) in Term I.

facebook

www.facebook.com/BetterTogetherAlliance

The Better Together Alliance Facebook page was launched on the 1st of November. This social media page includes updates on events, activities and items across the BTA.

BTA Production

Auditions will be conducted in **Week II of Term I 2017** at each of the schools. This exciting BTA Production will be performed in July 2017.



Opportunities Ahead

BTA Community Forums

Discussions with individuals across the Better Together Alliance Schools and with community groups identified some important issues that impact our youth across Greater Shepparton. The proposal to address some of these issues is to conduct a BTA Community Forum once a term, where students, staff, parents and community members can gain access to expert advice from guest presenters on a range of issues. The first Community Forum will focus on Digital Citizenship (CyberSafety). The BTA has engaged the services of Susan McLean (top Australian expert in CyberSafety). This event will be held on **March 14th 2017**.



Celebrating Success

Cybersafety Sessions

14 Cybersafety Sessions were conducted across the Better Together Alliance and additionally at GVGS and Notre Dame through a partnership of BTA and Word and Mouth. The sessions include a panel discussion around the following topics: Definition, Cyberbullying, Sexting, Tagging and inappropriate photos in regards to employment, The law, and Staying Safe Online. I would like to thank Jim Gow from Word and Mouth for his partnership in organising these important session for the students of Greater Shepparton and to Jim, Kate Martin (Victoria Legal Aid) and Dean Lloyd (Victoria Police) for all of their time and expertise in presenting to our youth.



Celebrating Success con...



Cultural Tours

Thanks to the outstanding partnership the BTA has with the Lighthouse Project, a two day program for the BTA schools in their end of year programs was offered for the **8th and 9th of December**. Students visited different cultural communities and spent time hearing about different cultural groups in Greater Shepparton. Thankyou to Fiona Smolenaars (Lighthouse), Charlene Norton (City of Greater Shepparton) and the Ethnic Council of Shepparton for the hard work put into the organisation of this event. Some 150 students from across the BTA and Numurkah Secondary College in Year 7 were involved for the two days and some of their feedback is below:

- I found it really interesting
- Because I love learning about different cultures and religions
- I learnt new things
- I learnt about different religions
- Because I learnt about other cultures, made new friends and met up with old ones
- They cook really yummy food
- I like the food
- We got to meet new people
- It was fun learning different things
- I learnt that life in Australia is much easier
- I learnt about the mosque in Mooroopna and I learnt from my friend who were in different groups
- How different cultures do things
- I learnt that there are a lot of religions and cultures
- I learnt what being a refugee means and what happens
- I learnt about different cultures and the reasons for why they do something in a specific way
- I learnt about different cultures and religions and the different rules that they have
- I learnt that all the different cultures have different amounts of times you pray
- You have to pay cows to marry
- Learnt about different cultures
- I learnt a lot, like Turkish pray 5 times a day
- To respect other cultures



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

I would like to wish everyone a very safe and happy break over the summer. Enjoy your time with family and friends and I look forward to the continued successes of the Better Together Alliance in 2017.

Sandy Gunn