

# BTA NEWS



Better Together Alliance Newsletter  
prepared by Sandy Gunn

October 2016

## Better Together Alliance

### Term IV 2016

Into Term IV with the Alliance, and the term is full of great programs and initiatives. Looking forward to 2017, planning is well underway for Shared Resources and student choice of subjects across the Alliance as well as programs and activities on offer across the Alliance.



### Virtual Classrooms

During 2017, we will be trialling some Virtual Classrooms in conjunction with our Shared Resources (Travelling Students). Currently, students don't travel on Wednesdays for the single periods, however our trial will address this, with four of our BTA teachers setting up Virtual Classrooms for these travelling students on Wednesdays during 2017. Working with Gary Schultz (Virtual Learning Project Officer – Learning and Teaching Branch) and Jenny Ashby (Virtual Learning Coach for NEVR), we will ensure that the technology supports our endeavor and that our staff are well supported with training and ongoing technical advice and back up.

### Cybersafety Sessions

Young people have access to a virtually limitless world and understanding digital citizenship, at all levels, is about understanding their confident and positive engagement with digital technology. Students require skills and understanding of being a good digital citizen, one who has the skills and knowledge to effectively use digital technologies to positively participate in society, communicate with others, stay safe, and create and consume digital content. Online interactions are becoming part of the norm for our world. Therefore for young people, learning how to manage online relationships, treating people with respect online, and being a good and safe digital citizen is important. In late November and early December, 15 Cybersafety Sessions will be conducted across the Better Together Alliance and additionally at GVGS and Notre Dame through a partnership of BTA and Word and Mouth. The sessions will include a panel discussion around the following Intended topics : Definition, Cyberbullying, Sexting, Tagging and inappropriate photos in regards to employment, The law, and Staying Safe Online.

*“We will do  
better for  
young  
people by  
working  
strategically  
together”  
BTA Focus*



### Upcoming Events

- Induction 2017 BTA travelling students – Nov 16th
- Cybersafety Sessions – Nov 24<sup>th</sup> – Dec 8<sup>th</sup>
- BTA Production – Sing'a'long day – Nov 24<sup>th</sup>
- Network Meetings – Week 5
- Virtual Classroom Training – Nov 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>



## Network Meetings

The next network meetings will be conducted during Week 5, Term IV. McGuire College is hosting the meetings, to be held through negotiation with team members from each Learning Area. Thankyou to McGuire College for taking on this new approach to the Network Meetings with great enthusiasm and professionalism.

## 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 for March 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.

Induction Day – Feedback early on in the year with students who travel to complete subjects at another Better Together Alliance school indicated that they would like to have an induction session at their new host school. An Induction day has been set for **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November** in preparation for the start of 2017 where students from each school will spend an hour at their new host school, being provided with important information about attending their host school in 2017 including ICT, Code of Conduct, Tour, and signing of a Student Agreement.

BTA Community Forums – Through discussions with individuals both in the Better Together Alliance Schools and with community groups, some important issues have been raised that impact our youth across Greater Shepparton. The proposal to address some of these issues is 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 has been planned for March 2017 focusing on Digital Citizenship (CyberSafety). The BTA has engaged the services of Susan McLean (top Australian expert in CyberSafety). Event has been booked for **March 14<sup>th</sup> 2017**.

Cultural Tours – Thanks to the outstanding partnership with the Lighthouse Project, a two day program for the BTA schools in their end of year programs has been offered for the **8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of December**, where students will visit different cultural communities and spend time hearing about different cultural groups in Greater Shepparton.



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

## BTA Production

Planning is well underway for the 2017 BTA Production. It is an absolute pleasure to welcome Laura Cooney to the team as our Director. The Production committee have set an Info, Sing and Play Day to introduce the Production and meet the interested students and staff on **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November** at Shepparton High School.

## Transform EdX- Better Together

On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October I spoke at the Teach for Australia Professional Development forum held in the Wimmera at Horsham Secondary College. Speaking on the work of the Better Together Alliance in Greater Shepparton, I very proud to present the work that is being done here in Greater Shepparton by the four Better Together Alliance Schools. I was also pleased to facilitate groups on working Better Together during the PD. Thankyou to Teach for Australia for a fantastic PD and allowing me to speak on behalf of the Better Together Alliance.

# NRG

## Program

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toGether

The NRG Program is an initiative of the Better Together Alliance together with La Trobe University, Shepparton. The program has been designed to address the following principles:

- Providing an integrated program for students with identified potential for learning.
- Partnerships and shared responsibility between schools, parents and tertiary providers support quality engagement of students with potential for learning
- All learners have the right to access to educational programs which meet their specific learning needs and abilities

Student selection process will begin during Term I, 2016



## facebook.

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

[www.facebook.com/BetterTogetherAlliance](http://www.facebook.com/BetterTogetherAlliance)

## Celebrating Success

### BTA Student Council

On Wednesday 26th the BTA Student Council met at McGuire College to continue their discussions and planning for events and ideas for 2017. The group of students were enthusiastically engaged in completing SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analyses of each of their previous ideas. Following this the students ranked the 8 ideas to narrow the focus and increase the output. Students have decided to work on looking at BTA Camps / Excursions, a Fun Sports Day and a possible Schools' Festival. During 2017 students from the BTA Student Council will work on these three ideas and work towards successful outcomes of them. An additional discussion was held around a joint Casual Clothes Day in Term I 2017, where the funds raised from the event, will be put towards a Lift Off Scholarship through the Community Fund. This Scholarship will be a BTA Scholarship for a student from the BTA to assist with their transition to University in 2018.

### Year 7 Mentoring Program

The Lighthouse Project Mentoring Program is proving to be a great success at McGuire College. Mentors and Mentee meetings are ongoing and students involved have been providing positive feedback about their connections made with their Mentors. With this success, BTA and Lighthouse Project are looking to expand the program and currently in the recruiting of further Mentors from the community to be a part of this program in 2017. In the coming weeks there is a plan to get the mentors and mentees together with families to cook and share a meal together. Thankyou to the Lighthouse Project for the amazing work with the program, the Mentors for their commitment to their mentees and to McGuire College for taking on the challenge of piloting this exciting program.

*"A lot of people have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they could."*

- Unknown



## Celebrating Success con...

### Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA) Conference

In mid August two students from Mooroopna Secondary College were sponsored by Rotary Mooroopna to participate in the annual Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA) Conference in Canberra. Michelle Parker and Elise Westphalen (MSC Teachers) accompanied Molly Tancred and Jonothan Clarke to the 2 day event where schools from across Australia participated. Each school representing a country in the United Nations General Assessembly to debate world issues. The MUNA conference introduced students to the intricacy of international relations and the diversre political positions of countries from around the world. Michelle and Elise are keen to bild the MUNA program in 2017 with the running of a BTA MUNA in Term II. Details to follow. Below is a report written by Jonothan Clarke about his and Molly's experience this year.

*In mid August, Molly Tancred and I went on a three day trip to Canberra to attend a Rotary supported MUNA (Model United Nations Assembly). Arriving on the Friday we were introduced to the other schools and they explained what would be happening over the weekend. We were separated into countries and then blocks according to what countries we represented. We voted on 18 resolutions to be debated over the weekend until we ended up with just 6 resolutions. Over the next two days we listened and debated these topics with the other schools from around the country.*

*The country we represented was Saudi Arabia so when we spoke we had to present a Saudi Arabian view on the topics. Over these two days both Molly and I spoke on topics of the Rohingya people in Myanmar, climate change and nuclear disarmament. On all topics we put forward Saudi Arabian views speaking as if we were a delegate from the country. After each topic had been debated countries were asked to stand either for, against or abstain from supporting the resolution. The resolutions were debated within the House of Representatives in Old Parliament House.*

*The experience was unique, offering a chance to meet people from other schools from all around Australia. It also offered us the chance to see inside Old Parliament House and be involved in a realistic debate."*



## 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

