

Executive Officer Report



**Dale Harvey -
Executive Officer**

Welcome to the second edition of the Northern Mallee LLEN Newsletter for 2026.

Term Two has concluded, and the Northern Mallee team has delivered a wide range of work-based learning activities with senior secondary schools, industry partners and community organisations through the 2026 School to Work Program.

I have enjoyed my role as Executive Officer to date, including meeting the challenges of the reshaped 2026 School to Work Program and implementing the direction of the Northern Mallee LLEN Strategic Plan 2024–2027, which was reviewed and updated by our Committee of Management in November 2025.

In Term Two, the School to Work Program began to settle into a new phase. This included establishing targets for referred students in government schools, planning and delivering Years 7 to 9 work-based learning events and expanding use of the work-based learning app to improve placement arrangements across government schools. Non-government schools have also engaged extremely well with the program across a range of work-based learning activities.

Our VET Cluster Transition Program continues to support the uptake of students commencing in VET qualifications. Northern Mallee LLEN has worked with VET providers and cluster members to increase the number of study programs available in the region. In 2027, 28 study programs including new qualifications that respond to emerging workforce needs and provide students with even greater pathway opportunities are offered to our region's students. New qualifications in 2027 include;

- Certificate II in Conservation & Ecosystem Management (SuniTAFE)
- Certificate II in Sport & Recreation and Certificate III in Sport, Aquatics and Recreation (Red Cliffs Secondary College)
- Certificate III in School Based Education Support (MADEC)
- Certificate II in Animal Care (The Foundation Learning Centre/MADEC)

The VDSS Transport Fund continues to support 101 students who travel each week to attend VET certificate programs across the Northern Mallee and Mallee regions, including Tyrrell College at Sea Lake and TAFE at Wodonga.

I sincerely thank Principals, Career Coordinators, and VET Coordinators for their planning, time and support in delivering the objectives of the Department of Education funded programs managed by Northern Mallee LLEN this school year. The Northern Mallee region benefits from a united approach between the Northern Mallee LLEN, schools, industry, education and training providers, community organisations and the Department of Education Mallee Region. Together, we are helping students access relevant work placements, career guidance, and clear pathways into further education, training and employment, supporting every young person to transition successfully into the workforce.

Executive Officer Report

Continued....

I congratulate the hardworking, diligent and capable Northern Mallee LLEN team on their combined outcomes for Semester One. As we continue to transition fully into the School to Work Program and move forward with the VET Cluster Transition Program, our Semester One outcomes demonstrate the value of planning with schools, consulting and communicating with industry, and implementing internal strategies that align with Department of Education priorities. These efforts ensure our funded programs continue to support the future direction of the region's students, from study programs to career pathways.

The Northern Mallee LLEN team has delivered a strong 2026 event calendar to date in partnership with industry. Activities have included workplace visits, industry immersion experiences, simulated work-based learning projects, guest speaker presentations and careers events to support students from Years 7 to 12 in their work-based learning journey.

I was grateful to be invited to the graduation of Group 1 of the Northern Mallee Horticulture Immersion Program. The event, held at Chaffey Secondary College Farm, brought together students, parents, carers and industry representatives to celebrate the students' achievements. Congratulations to lead school Chaffey Secondary College, supported by partner schools Merbein P-10 College, Red Cliffs Secondary College and Mildura Specialist School, and to the 22 industry, education and training partners who provide workplace visits and immersion activities for students. Since its inception in 2023, the program has recorded 113 student commencements across nine groups.

I also visited the recent AG Venture Career Day at SuniTAFE SMART Farm, which provided an excellent setting to showcase agriculture and horticulture training, education and career pathways, while promoting STEM and the advanced technologies used by industry in our region. SuniTAFE SMART Farm is a significant community asset for the Mallee Region that as a regional learning facility is unrivalled in Victoria. Congratulations to the event partners and industry partners who showcased their organisations, and thank you to our schools for their strong attendance and support.

Alongside the Northern Mallee LLEN team, I look forward to Semester Two and working with our senior secondary schools, industry, education and training partners, and the wider community. Together, we will continue connecting students with industry, education and training opportunities that support their study and career pathway ambitions.

Dale Harvey
Executive Officer



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VicLLENs

SCHOOL
TO WORK



Department
of Education

Vision:

Career pathways leading to education, training and employment.

Mission:

Facilitating strategic partnerships with stakeholder groups, to improve outcomes in education, training and employment for young people.

Values:

Integrity: Respectful, responsive, and reliable in all our actions

Accountability: Responsive and independent in all our actions

Innovation: Creative thinking identifies opportunities.

Education: Support young people to access and participate in industry focussed training



EMERGENCY SERVICES DAY 2026

CAUTION



HAIDEE JONES - SCHOOL TO WORK COORDINATOR



School to Work Program

Term 2 was a fast-paced and highly productive period for the School to Work Program, marked by strong engagement and meaningful opportunities for students across the region. Most notably, we are proud to highlight that work placements have now been successfully established with partnering regional secondary schools, Government and Non Government. This is a significant milestone at the mid-year point and reflects the strength of our partnerships and commitment to ensuring every student has access to real-world learning experiences.

Throughout the term, we delivered 10 work placement ready workshops, equipping students with valuable insights into career pathways, employability skills, and industry expectations. These sessions have played an important role in building student confidence and preparing them for Work Experience.

We also represented the program at two major expos, participated in the VIC VICE initiative, and travelled throughout the region as part of the GET VET Roadshow in collaboration with training providers, Skills and Jobs Centre, and Headstart. These events provided students with opportunities to connect directly with training providers and industry professionals, helping them explore future pathways and make informed decisions.

Our team continued to strengthen connections with schools through regular visits across the region, including Chaffey Secondary College, Ouyen P-12 College, Robinvale College, Indie School, Henderson College, Merbein P-10 College, and Mildura Specialist School. These visits enabled tailored program delivery and meaningful career conversations with students in their own learning environments.

A major highlight of the term was the inaugural AgVenture Expo at the SMART Farm Campus. Delivered by the Northern Mallee LLEN in collaboration with SuniTAFE, the Mallee Regional Innovation Centre, and the Skills and Jobs Centre, the event was a tremendous success. Students from across the region participated in hands-on industry immersions, gaining practical insight into agriculture and related industries.



The Northern Mallee Horticulture Program also continued to provide exceptional industry exposure, with students attending site visits to key employers including AVL, Southern Cross Farms, Mildura Fruit Company, Mildura Fruit Juices, Sunbeam, Mildura Rural City Council, Lower Murray Water, and the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens. These experiences highlighted the wide range of career opportunities within the horticulture sector. As term 2 concluded, we celebrated an important milestone, with Semester One students graduating on Thursday, 25 June 2026. Congratulations to all Group 1 students for their dedication, growth, and achievements.

HAIDEE JONES - SCHOOL TO WORK COORDINATOR



Continued....



Northern Mallee LLEN is excited to welcome our new host employers on board and thank you for partnering with us to provide valuable workplace learning opportunities for our local students.

- Country Tyres and Automotive
- Shine Bright Kindergarten Irymple

To our existing host employers, thank you for your continued commitment and support. Your ongoing investment in our region's young people makes a lasting difference, and we greatly appreciate the opportunities you provide for students to engage in meaningful workplace learning. Your support helps young people build confidence, develop employability skills, and explore future career pathways year after year. Together, we're helping shape the future workforce in our community.

The School to Work Program has supported our partnering schools to connect students with work placements of interest, ensuring equitable access to Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) and Work Experience. Northern Mallee LLEN continues to play a key role in connecting schools and local industry, coordinating placements, industry tours, and guest speaker opportunities, while supporting businesses to engage their future workforce and empowering young people to confidently plan their careers. Term 2 has reinforced the power of collaboration across our network and the growing enthusiasm of students as they explore their future pathways. We look forward to building on this momentum in Term 3 and continuing to deliver impactful opportunities for young people across the region.

Haidee Jones
School to Work Coordinator



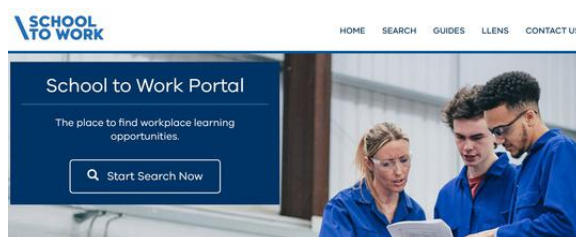
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SCHOOL TO WORK PORTAL

The School to Work Portal connects our region's students to industry and offered vocations (open placements) in Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning and School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships. The portal is supported by 200 active Host Employers currently offering 224 Structured Workplace Learning and 173 Work Experience Opportunities. To research or review the School to Work Portal opportunities please go to the School to Work Home Page.



Portal Linkk: <https://workplacements.education.vic.gov.au/>

On the search page enter the following details.

Postcode: 3500 (select Mildura 3500), Radius: select 100km.

Select work placement type, SWL or WE.

Proceed to Industry & Courses, under Any Industry select the Industry relevant to your search or enter a business name (using a keyword)

Then select Search to find an opportunity of interest or the business (and opportunities) as listed and select.

To search for opportunities, you must select a suburb and search radius at a minimum, or you can enter the opportunity code directly.

WHERE	MILDURA, 3500	100km
OPPORTUNITY TYPE	☒ SWL (Structured Workplace Learning) ☐ SBAT (School Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship) ☐ WE (Work Experience)	
INDUSTRY & COURSES	SPORTS & RECREATION AND/OR Any Course	
Keyword		
OR FIND USING OPPORTUNITY CODE	Enter Opportunity Code	
Search Now		

Work Based Learning Events

TYPE OF EVENT	TOTALS
Industry Guest Speaker and Presentation	18
Workplace Visit	17
Work Readiness - Mock Interview	6
School to Work - Portal: Workshop	8
VIC VICE VR Display Industry Immersion	21
Work Placement Preparation - Referred	8
TOTAL EVENTS	78



Bookings open for Year 7 & 8 students to experience VIC VICE!

From 3 August to 25 September, Year 7 & 8 students can jump into virtual reality career experiences and explore real workplaces without leaving the classroom!

It's a fun and engaging way to get students thinking about:

- 👍 Positive behaviours (Year 7)
- 👍 Careers and future pathways (Year 8)

👁️ We're also looking to run a staff demo session – let us know if your team is keen!



Spots are now open – get in touch to book your session!



<https://nmllen.com.au/programs/vic-vice-vr-industry-experience/>

SUZIE CHRISTENSEN - VET CLUSTER COORDINATOR



The VDSS (VET Delivered to Secondary Students) Providers Working Party which consists of staff members from Red Cliffs Secondary College, Riverside Trade Training Centre, Deakin Trade Training Centre, SuniTAFE and MADEC have been working on finalising the 2027 VDSS Courses Guide and Flyer Offerings. A huge thank you goes out to the above VDSS providers who have taken time out of their busy schedules to work together and contribute to all aspects of putting this together.

For any senior secondary school student thinking of enrolling into a VET course in 2027, they are encouraged to chat with their school VET Coordinator or Careers Pathway Advisor to explore all options and be guided through the enrolment process. **Online Expression of Interest will open July 1 and close September 1 and must be completed with the support of your student's school.**

Suzie Christensen
Northern Mallee VET Cluster Coordinator

 0447 130 617  suzie@nmllen.com.au

SHARON MORRELL- INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

Students are really enjoying industry site visits across our region. These visits give them the opportunity to see real workplaces in action, connect what they are learning in the classroom to real-world careers, and gain a better understanding of the opportunities available locally.

Meeting employers and workers, asking questions, and exploring different workplace environments helps students learn more about a wide range of industries and career pathways. Many students enjoy getting out into the field and experiencing workplaces they may not otherwise have the chance to visit.

These experiences are engaging, memorable, and often inspiring, helping students build confidence and make more informed decisions about their future education, training, and career options.

We are excited to welcome on board 12 new employers, year-to-date helping provide even more valuable industry connections and opportunities for local students.

Interested in organising a site visit for your school? We'd love to hear from you—get in touch!

Sharon Morrell
Industry Engagement Officer

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AI Unlocked: From Hype to Hands-On



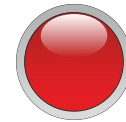
Discover how artificial intelligence can work for your business, organisation and community.

Join businesses, industry professionals, students and community members from across the Mallee for AI Unlocked: From Hype to Hands-On, a practical forum designed to explore the real-world applications of AI and its potential to drive innovation, improve decision-making and boost productivity across our region.

Hosted at La Trobe University, Mildura, on Tuesday 28 July, the event will feature a hands-on workshop, expert speakers, practical case studies, panel discussions and networking opportunities. The forum will conclude with drinks and canapés showcasing locally inspired food and beverages curated by Verdict Catering.

Delivered in partnership with Regional Development Victoria, La Trobe University, Mallee Regional Innovation Centre, Mildura Rural City Council, Mildura-Wentworth Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and SuniTAFE, this event is ideal for anyone interested in understanding how AI can be applied responsibly and effectively in their industry or workplace.

Whether you're new to AI or already exploring its possibilities, this is your opportunity to learn, connect and be part of the conversation shaping the future of our region.



Tuesday 28 July



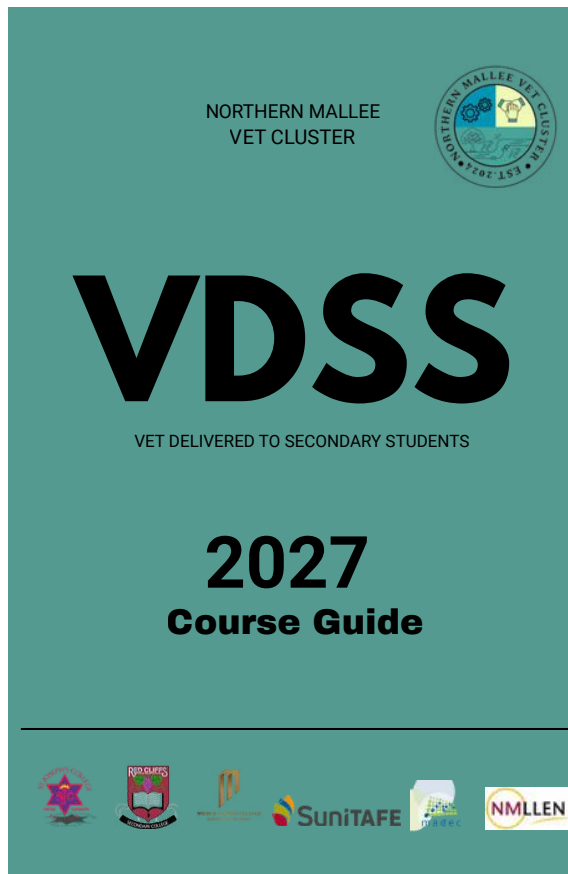
La Trobe University, Mildura



Registrations essential



The 2027 VDSS Course guide has landed !



Get a head start to your career with a VDSS course

VDSS combines VCE, VCE VM or VPC studies at school with practical hands-on experience and training.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

- VET enables students to gain qualifications for all types of employment and industry specific skills to help them in the workplace, therefore developing employability.
- Undertaking a VET subject at school allows you to combine classroom learning with hands-on training to start working towards your career goals.
- VET programs are typically completed over two years and provide students with a certificate or partial completion of a nationally recognised qualification.

You need to be at least 15 years old to apply for a VDSS Program.

LOCATIONS AND CONTACTS



Riverside Trade Training Centre
St Joseph's College, Mercy Campus
Hayley Wilson - Vocational Pathways
Coordinator
E: careers@sjcmca.vic.edu.au



Deakin Trade Training Centre
Mildura Senior College
Gabby Robertson - TTC & VET
Coordinator
E: vet@mlsen.vic.edu.au



Red Cliffs Secondary College
Linda Snoxall - Careers and Pathways
Advisor
E: linda.snoxall@education.vic.gov.au



SuniTAFE - Mildura Campus
Nicole Wright - School Coordinator
E: skillsandjobs@sunitafe.edu.au



MADEC Australia
Jess Drummond - National RTO Manager
E: jdrummond@madec.edu.au

The Northern Mallee VET Cluster is a partnership with Northern Mallee LLEN and 14 schools to offer a wide range of Vocational Education and Training Delivered to Secondary Students (VDSS) courses to provide skills in both traditional trades and emerging industries. The Cluster Group was established to increase the proportion of students completing Year 12 or equivalent and to enhance pathways to further education and training.