



2020

Learn Local Awards Virtual Gala Series

Shining the spotlight on outstanding
learners, trainers and programs.

Proudly brought to you by the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board



About the Learn Local Awards

The Victorian Learn Local Awards are held annually by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board and celebrate the success of individuals, programs and training providers across Victoria.

Although 2020 has been a challenging year for many, these Awards continue to represent the Learn Local spirit. Instead of a physical gala, this year's finalists and winners were celebrated in the 2020 Learn Local Awards Virtual Gala Series featured across the Learn Local social media channels.

You can view these videos by visiting:

 facebook.com/learnlocal

 youtube.com/learnlocal

 twitter.com/learnlocal

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/learnlocalawards>

www.learnlocal.org.au

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Chairperson's Message

On behalf of the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board, it is my pleasure to present the 2020 Learn Local Awards Virtual Gala Series.

The Victorian Learn Local Awards offer an opportunity to acknowledge the extraordinary commitment Learn Local providers demonstrate to learners and communities across Victoria every year.

This year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, our celebration of the Learn Local sector has moved to an online format. As we come to the end of one of the most challenging years that Victoria has ever faced, the importance of celebrating the spirit of the Learn Local sector has never been more important and we are thrilled to be able to still celebrate and recognise the inspirational efforts of individuals, programs and training providers.

Every finalist who has been featured in the 2020 Virtual Gala Series videos is an exemplar of hard work and commitment to learning or providing a wonderful education and training experience. Congratulations to all our finalists, you should be proud of your achievements.

Through pre-accredited programs funded by the ACFE Board, the Learn Local sector plays a pivotal role in ensuring learners who are most in need can access the necessary training and skills for further education and work.

This year the ACFE Board released our 2020-25 Strategy, which sets out a framework to fulfil the important and ambitious goals and aspirations of the 2019 Ministerial Statement on the Future of Adult Community Education in Victoria 2020-25. The Statement outlined a comprehensive plan for our sector and gave Learn Locals their rightful place and role in the state's education and training system.



In our work to deliver on the Strategy, the ACFE Board has been incredibly proud of our Learn Local providers. Our wonderful sector has proven emphatically, through the ongoing work they do and the impact they have, the value we provide and the role we play to help learners reach their full potential in study, work and life.

On behalf of the ACFE Board, I wish to acknowledge our partners for your support and collaboration with our sector which we hope to continue to strengthen in the future. To our providers, you are needed now more than ever before; please keep up your extraordinary work. And finally, to our learners, congratulations on your achievements; you are the reason we exist, and we wish you success as you continue your learning or work journey.

I look forward to a time soon when we can all celebrate in person all the wonderful things that make the Learn Local sector great in Victoria. Based on what we've seen from this year's finalists, I'm very optimistic about the future of our sector.

Maria Peters
Chairperson
Adult, Community and Further Education Board

Minister's Message

Victoria's Learn Local sector offers a world of possibility and inspiration to adult learners who want to build their confidence, learn new skills, meet new people, and expand their horizons.

With more than 250 providers across Victoria, Learn Locals are helping to build more connected cities, towns and regions, enriching the Victorian community as a whole. They offer innovative programs that bring people together, as we've seen once again in the Learn Local Awards - congratulations to all finalists and winners.

In this year of challenge and change, first through bushfires and then coronavirus (COVID-19), Learn Locals are also playing a vital role in Victoria's economic and social recovery – whether it be building community capacity and resilience, or helping grow our skilled workforce.

More than ever, our Learn Locals are an important bridge to further training and skills for Victorians who have lost work, playing a crucial role in training people for the frontline workforces we need now.

By being embedded in their communities, Learn Locals draw upon the skills and knowledge of local trainers with industry experience who are committed to helping learners build new, real-world skills and improve their lives.

This is what drives our continued commitment to our providers, and why I hope you take this opportunity to learn more about our vibrant Learn Local sector.

No matter who you are or where you live in Victoria, there's a Learn Local nearby waiting to open a new door, create an unexpected opportunity, or change a life.



A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Gayle Tierney'.

The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP
Minister for Training and Skills
Minister for Higher Education

Victorian Learn Local Pre-accredited Pathway Program Award

This award recognises the capacity of Learn Local programs to engage learners and create pathways to further education, training or employment. The winning Learn Local program will be a pre-accredited or foundation program that can demonstrate the creation of pathways for individuals to engage successfully with learning and employment (paid or volunteer) as a result of their participation in the program.

The program will demonstrate the calibre of programs that the Learn Local sector delivers and its expertise in supporting learners to engage or re-engage with learning. It will be an exemplar of an approach to program development, design and/or delivery that reflects the particular pedagogy and approaches that characterise the work of the Learn Local sector.

The winner of this award receives a trophy and \$10,000. The two finalists for this award each receive a framed certificate and \$1,000.



For people experiencing alcohol and drug dependence, mental health issues, a criminal history, and trauma, the experience of getting there can be a pie in the sky concept. However, the Getting There program at The Centre for Continuing Education (The Centre) in Wangaratta is breaking the cycle of disadvantage.

Initially, for many Getting There learners, the prospect of having a better life couldn't be further from their aspirations. But Getting There trainers look beyond someone's personal difficulties to see the best in them.

A holistic approach is taken that attends to their spiritual, physical and education needs. They build self-awareness and inter-personal skills so they can better relate with the world around them. Alongside this they teach functional language, literacy and numeracy.

Trainers help participants set clear, achievable goals and support them to take responsibility for their own learning and development.

Learners who attend The Centre may not have completed their early years of high school, yet many continue into Certificate III or higher industry qualifications at either The Centre or TAFE. Getting There elevates the spirit of each individual so they can realise their potential and develop the skills and confidence to become valuable, contributing members of their communities.



FINALIST – Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education (PRACE) – Carpentry Trade Taster course

The Carpentry Trade Taster Course created by Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education (PRACE) is providing intensive support to disengaged learners.

The 50-hour program is designed to enable CALD learners and those experiencing issues such as learning difficulties, mental health, drug and alcohol addiction, and low language and literacy skills, with the confidence to pursue work and accredited training.

PRACE created the course in response to a general lack of uptake and retention in pre-apprenticeships in Victoria. It was developed in partnership with Melbourne Polytechnic’s Trade Division and focuses on practical, experiential learning that provides an overall taste of an apprenticeship.

Small classes enable trainers to be mentors who provide extra one-on-one support when needed. Learners construct practical items that can be used in the trade such as a wooden toolbox or saw horse and have the opportunity to see carpentry in action through site visits.

Learners demonstrate a tangible sense of accomplishment and pride on completing a project. They report that their improved numeracy, problem-solving and communication skills are making a difference to all aspects of their lives. The outcomes are significant with 60 percent of participants enrolling in the Carpentry/Joinery pre-apprenticeship qualification at Melbourne Polytechnic in 2019.



FINALIST – Sandybeach Centre – Mentoring Program

A sky’s the limit approach is taken in the Mentoring program developed by Sandybeach Centre. Their goal is to empower adults with a disability to find employment or volunteering opportunities.

Mentees have a range of abilities and literacy levels - from limited written and verbal communication to intellectual disabilities including Downs Syndrome. Some have never worked, and some have worked in supported workshops.

Mentors, come from an array of backgrounds and industries such as building, trades, aged care, engineering and mental health. Their enthusiasm and genuine desire to share their knowledge led to every mentee reaching their goal. Working one-on-one, the mentors begin by supporting their protégé in the exploration of types of work available to them in the open market. (Inclusive employer options are carefully selected.)

They determine their preferences and develop a toolkit of job skills that includes a resume, cover letter, business card, references and 1-minute elevator pitch.

The hard-working participants leave the program job-ready with the confidence to communicate with employers and keen to participate in life’s opportunities. Everyone involved in the program has continued into further training, employment or volunteering, proving that given the right environment, people with disability can grow and thrive.

Victorian Learn Local Creating Local Solutions Award

This award recognises the achievements of a Learn Local program or project that is creating solutions to local training needs. This program or project will have been developed by a Learn Local provider in partnership with other organisations, business and industry or the community to provide solutions to local training needs. This program or project will demonstrate the use of different expertise, technology or program arrangements to create local solutions.

This program or project will enable learning for its participants and will demonstrate how the Learn Local sector provides flexible, quality and tailored training that meets local needs. The winner of this award receives a trophy and \$10,000. The two finalists for this award each receive a framed certificate and \$1,000.



Gippsland's allied health services are getting much-needed stimulus from the Kick Start Your Career in the Health Industry program. Kickstart grew out of a collaboration between Heyfield Community Resource Centre (HCRC), Central Gippsland Health Service (CGHS), and TAFE Gippsland's Skills and Job Centre.

Forecasts predict a 24 percent growth in staffing needs by 2024, making the health sector Australia's largest employer. Alongside this, Gippsland is experiencing skills shortages across nursing and allied health.

As the major health and aged care provider in Wellington Shire, CGHS regularly recruits entry-level staff, however there's a general lack of financial, digital and workplace literacy. The Kickstart program was designed to address these gaps through learning in the workplace.

Simultaneously, it provides opportunities for casual workers including those who are socially disadvantaged and unemployed, to either enter the workforce or undertake further studies.

The Kick Start Your Career in the Health Industry program feeds directly into local TAFE courses where there's a strong focus on health including further studies in aged care, allied health, nursing and massage. CGHS has identified that learners who come through the course are better equipped for success in their roles, especially those who have entered employment for the first time.



FINALIST – Wyndham Community and Education Centre – Wyndham Neighbourhood Hubs

The City of Wyndham is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia. Almost half of the residents originate from 162 countries and a third of those speak another language. A partnership program between Wyndham City Council and Wyndham Community & Education Centre called, The Wyndham Neighbourhood Hubs - Meeting Diverse Needs, is addressing significant gaps in the provision of adult learning.

Meeting the education needs of such a diverse community is not without its challenges. A critical component is strengthening foundation skills including language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy. Place-based, flexible pre-accredited programs are tailored and delivered to the needs of people across the seven Wyndham neighbourhoods.

Responsiveness is key. To name a few; a demand for programs focussing on small business digital skills saw the delivery of classes in Truganina and Point Cook, before their popularity spread across the municipality.

Pre-accredited courses in Tarneit develops skills for the textile industry and the Introduction to Hospitality program delivered in Tarneit and Manor provides job seekers with practical experience of hospitality roles.

So far, almost 3,000 people have participated in programs across fast growing communities. Through innovative approaches involving communities working together, they've overcome complex local issues facing new settlers in Australia.



FINALIST – Wellsprings for Women – Cultural Cuisines

The focus of the women's only Cultural Cuisines cooking program is self-empowerment, and ultimately further education and employment. It's conducted at Wellsprings for Women, an organisation that works with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It's located in the city of Greater Dandenong, the most culturally diverse locality in Australia where a staggering 31 percent of families have no parent in paid employment.

Wellsprings Cultural Cuisines partnered with local agencies to access accredited training and a commercial kitchen for catering. The aspiration of the Cultural Cuisines group is to become a social enterprise offering employment to women who face barriers in accessing mainstream jobs.

Cultural Cuisines is designed to respond to women who experience complex circumstances such as family violence, trauma, chronic illness, mental health and financial issues. Their challenges are further compounded by low language, literacy and numeracy.

Beginning softly, and taking a flexible, learner-centred approach, the women cook together and share skills and stories about each other's cultures. From this comes employability skills such as, team work, learning strategies, equipment handling, and problem-solving. The confidence they build prepares them for further Learn Local courses and accredited studies for a vocation in catering.

As a result, 21 women have successfully completed the food handling certificate. Many of the participants have begun generating incomes, where they would otherwise have struggled to start a business on their own. They've developed wonderful friendships and connected to the community through food.

Victorian Learn Local Collaboration Award

This award recognises a collaboration between a Learn Local provider and other sectors that has resulted in improved pathways from pre-accredited training to accredited training. The approach taken by both parties to the collaboration will have resulted in them working together to achieve a shared goal and in some instances they may have had to change the way they usually work to ensure the success of the collaboration. There will be achievements and training impacts that have been made as a result of the collaboration.

The sustainability of the collaboration will be evident from the plans that are in place for the future as well as an indication of how the collaboration could be replicated or adopted in other settings. The winner of this award receives a trophy and \$10,000 (to be shared by both parties). The two finalists for this award each receive a framed certificate and \$1,000 (to be shared by both parties).



WINNER
Cloverdale Community Centre – The Gordon TAFE Collaboration

Learn Local and TAFE often find ways to work well together. Proof of this is a collaboration between Cloverdale Community Centre and The Gordon Institute of TAFE that demonstrated the benefits of joining forces in the co-design and delivery of courses for vulnerable learners.

The collaboration aimed to develop sustainable working relationships that would provide broader opportunities for those at risk of disengagement. When Free TAFE was introduced in 2019, there was an increased demand for courses at The Gordon. This highlighted numeracy, language and literacy deficits that were not addressed within classes.

Both organisations were nimble in response. When The Gordon's automotive trainers sought Cloverdale's help to provide contextualised literacy support for its Certificate II Automotive Vocational Preparation students, they co-designed and delivered Tools of the Trade, a pre-accredited literacy and numeracy program.

This gave students confidence, skills for the road into employment and well-being support that was otherwise not available to them.

Co-designed, pre-accredited Introduction to Horticulture, and Introduction to Community Services programs gave students the foundation skills to move into accredited courses at The Gordon and beyond to jobs or university. The collaboration was the starting point for all parties to develop a sustainable working relationship that's now a lifechanging instrument for growth.



FINALIST – The Centre for Continuing Education, Open Door Neighbourhood House and Villa Maria Catholic Homes – Pathways 2 Possibilities

The Pathways 2 Possibilities program proves that having disabilities doesn't equal having no ability. It's the product of a collaboration between Wangaratta-based Centre for Continuing Education, Open Door Neighbourhood House, and Villa Maria Catholic Homes. Together they crafted a program that addresses service provision in a sector that's fraught with poor understanding of the needs of people with wide ranging disability.

A high level of wraparound support caters for the diverse range of skill levels and behaviours. The project-based course delivers real-life skills that enables learners to achieve greater independence. One project explores bus travel. Students research travel options, timetables, payment, interactions with other passengers, and the issue of safety, i.e. what to do if something goes wrong. Skills are reinforced through repetition, videos, posters, pictures, discussion and interactive activities.

The focus on life and work skills spans money management, resume creation, online job searches, and workplace interviews. People experiencing Pathways 2 Possibilities achieve self-management skills and the confidence to enter further study, job training and volunteering, or the ability to live independently. In the true spirit of collaboration, the three organisations have been able to share resources and expertise, and deliver adaptable, responsive training to the disability sector.



FINALIST – Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre and Burke and Beyond

To create greater futures for people with a disability, Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre joined forces with disability service provider Burke and Beyond to create complimentary programs with powerful outcomes.

Burke and Beyond improves the lives of people with disability through social interaction, personal development programs and community participation. By providing their clients with direct access to Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre's (KewNLC) pre-accredited programs, learners could step into vocational training.

Important milestones were achieved in 2019 with more than 50 Burke and Beyond students enrolled in five pre-accredited courses; such was their enthusiasm that many took multiple programs. Even more opportunities arose when partners Swinburne University and Box Hill Institute provided entry level courses that built on the pre-accredited programs.

Both organisations inspired each other to go beyond business as usual to help students realise their potential. Learner requests prompted KewNLC to expand their range of pre-accredited courses, which was a game changer for Burke and Beyond because it added to their program of life skills development.

Everyone involved with the students, including families and teachers, noticed significant personal transformations. Now learners are implementing their newly acquired motivation, confidence, and literacy and numeracy competencies into broader aspects of their lives.

Victorian Learn Local Practitioner Award

This award recognises the outstanding contribution that all Learn Local practitioners make to support learners in achieving outcomes.

It will go to an individual who demonstrates a commitment to the Learn Local sector and an ability to engage people in learning. The individual will have strategies and techniques in place that enable them to provide or support quality training to meet different learner needs and establish pathways for them to further education and/or employment (paid or unpaid). This individual will be a role model for colleagues and exemplify the dedication of Learn Local practitioners. The winner of this award receives a trophy and \$5,000. The two finalists for this award each receive a framed certificate and \$1,000.



WINNER
Vivian Della Valle – Centre for Adult Education (CAE)

Creative, warm and patient is how Vivian Della Valle's colleagues describe her teaching style. Vivian goes well beyond teaching the nuts and bolts of Information Communication Technology at the Centre for Adult Education, which is why students flock to her classes.

In her pre-accredited courses, 'Computers for Work - The Modern Office' and 'Introduction to Computers-Bridging the Gap', Vivian begins by working with students to plot a clear path towards further pre-accredited and accredited studies, so the endgame is always in sight. Employability skills are embedded in each session.

By encouraging and supporting learners to get involved with the community and local causes, Vivian facilitates networking for employment opportunities.

In turn, those community endeavours are used to develop classroom projects. For instance, one student volunteered for local council. Vivian had him create the required office documents as a course activity. Every task is tailored to individual abilities because she wants everyone to succeed.

Through health and personal challenges, Vivian's passion for her work has never wavered and she builds strong relationships with her students. Vivian goes out of her way to create a fun atmosphere where students take ownership of their learning, which makes them inherently engaged.



FINALIST – Susan West – Cire Services

Susan West first approached Cire Services three years ago offering to partner with them to create financial literacy programs for women. Her diverse financial management skills and compassionate mindset were a perfect fit, so she became a valued staff member. Ever since, Sue’s provided a vital education for women, many of whom experience family violence, financial disadvantage, abuse and discrimination.

Classes are tailored to student needs and with gentle words and a kind heart, Sue helps them restore their self-confidence. Her classes begin by developing trust and she nurtures them to have faith in their abilities, so they feel confident to make positive changes in their situations.

Cire created courses around Sue’s skill set to match learner needs. For instance, she’s taught the financial literacy and employability skills component for 221 women in the Women’s Warehouse pre-accredited course, where she demonstrates that with her help, they will progress to a better financial future.

Sue believes that everyone can understand financial matters if it’s taught in straightforward, plain language. This approach has empowered hundreds of women to make better choices and build better lives.

Overall, her programs have enabled 621 enrolments, which is testimony to the value, respect, and financial literacy education she provides.



FINALIST – Michelle Harrison – Phillip Island Community & Learning Centre / Women Connect

Phillip Island resident, Michelle Harrison employs her vast experience in teaching digital literacy, employability skills and career development to help disadvantaged women get the best out of life.

After 20 years in Melbourne’s adult education sector, Michelle moved to Phillip Island and joined Women Connect, an initiative of the Phillip Island Community and Learning Centre. Her pre-accredited courses, workshops and training sessions have set a new standard in relation to the needs of women in the region.

In her innovative award-winning Career Sessions workshop, she engaged key local employers, Job Actives and the GippsTAFE Skills and Job Centre, to present insights into the often-hidden job market. Participants built confidence to navigate the recruitment practices of local employers and discovered their employability strengths.

Career Sessions is now a flagship pre-accredited training course for Women Connect, and was recognised as a finalist in the NHVic Gender Equity Awards in 2020.

Michelle encourages learners to pursue realistic, achievable goals and empowers them with the tools to uncover their potential and the courage to pursue further study or private enterprise. Lives are transformed through Michelle’s dedication, caring and wonderful sense of humour. Her learners report feeling supported in every way as they venture towards economic security.

Victorian Learn Local Volunteer Team Award

This award will go to a group of volunteers that work in a Learn Local provider that is currently registered with the ACFE Board. The award will go to a group of up to 10 people who have worked together on a common project, demonstrating that effective or shared effort can achieve greater outcomes.

The winning team of this award receives a trophy and \$5,000. The finalist team for this award receives a framed certificate and \$1,000.



WINNER
Rosewall Neighbourhood Centre – Learning and Creative Team

The dynamic Rosewall Learning and Creative Team from Rosewall Neighbourhood Centre, are sowing the seeds for a successful life in their English Conversation and Sewing Group. This humble activity is paying big dividends for new arrivals from across the globe.

The six volunteers warmly receive women from places such as Afghanistan, Iran, Cambodia, Africa, Israel and Pakistan. Many of them have been victims of persecution in their home country and are faced with marginalisation in Australia.

As they're taught to sew, they develop their spoken English, literacy and problem-solving skills. Financial literacy comes from exploring moneymaking ventures and developing their long-term career aspirations. Some of the sewn items are sold through Rosewall's small sales table and Torquay Community House.

Funds raised are used to buy haberdashery and food vouchers for needy participants. Importantly, friendships develop as participants work as a team and connect with community.

Rosewall volunteers have a diverse range of complementary skills from sewing machine mechanics, to sewing, crafting, and delivering ESL courses. Their annual combined contribution totals 4,560 hours. With personal attention and care, they've created a robust, enduring program that boosts the confidence, morale and employability of women who might otherwise be disengaged and isolated.



FINALIST – Zoe Support Australia – Childcare volunteers

Childcare volunteers at Zoe Support provide a vital service that enables the organisation to meet the unique needs of young, disadvantaged mothers in the Sunraysia community. High levels of attendance would be impossible without volunteer childcare because many of these mothers are without family support and cannot afford regular childcare.

The life experience of the volunteer pool gives Zoe clients further exposure to a range of positive role models whose careers include retail and hospitality workers, teachers, business management, paramedics and child protection.

Zoe Support programs give young mothers the confidence and skill to continue on to accredited study or employment. In 2019, 16 clients completed the food handler's certificate. This was facilitated not only by the volunteer teams' provision of childcare, but also through providing mother's with transport.

Their flexibility and a willingness to do whatever is needed has an impact across the organisation. The volunteers venture beyond the childcare centre to support Zoe employees. They'll help in the kitchen, provide tutoring support in literacy and numeracy classes, and lend their skills to the baking and sewing programs.

Providing a trusted and secure environment for the children means that mothers aged between 13-25 can break the cycle of welfare-dependency.

The Ro Allen Award – Recognising Pre-accredited Learner Excellence

This award recognises the achievements of people aged between 25 and 65 years participating in ACFE Board-funded pre-accredited programs at Learn Local providers across Victoria. It will go to a learner that has established pathways for themselves into further education, employment or volunteer roles as a result of their participation in an ACFE Board-funded pre-accredited program. The learner will have demonstrated a high level of engagement with their learning and be actively developing new skills and enhancing their knowledge.

The learner will demonstrate a commitment to continuing their learning journey and be a role model for other people of what can be achieved by participating in a pre-accredited program. The winner of this award receives a trophy and \$5,000. The two finalists for this award each receive a framed certificate and \$1,000



Colleen Forbes, an indigenous woman of the Kurnai clan, grew up in an idyllic traditional environment with her people on Lake Tyers. The land sustained them and they learned the wisdom of their elders. Things changed when she attended a school outside the settlement where she experienced bullying and racism. It became impossible for her to focus on learning so she gave up, dropped out, and joined the long-term unemployed.

The sudden passing of her husband and brother got Colleen thinking that there must be a better life worth striving for, especially for the sake of her daughter.

In 2019, with courage and determination, she undertook a Learn Local Kickstart in Hospitality and Retail course at Community College Gippsland. In the beginning of the six-week program of pre-accredited and accredited learning, Colleen's confidence was low.

However, welcoming staff made her feel at home and she soon transformed into a confident, motivated student. Now she's happily employed and flourishing at the checkout at Woolworths.

Colleen loves being part of a team that helps people and is exploring leadership opportunities within the company. The positive learning experience also ignited a long-term goal of becoming a Koorie educator and advocate, and leader of her people.



FINALIST – Jason Barbour – Bridge Darebin Neighbourhood House

Long term unemployment, a lack of self-worth and depression left Jason Barbour feeling directionless and hopeless, to the point where he rarely left his house. However, in 2019, everything changed. Through the caring, support and programs delivered at Bridge Darebin Neighbourhood House (BDNH), he gained new skills and the confidence to move forward in an unexpected new vocation.

Pre-accredited courses at BDNH upskilled him in Microsoft Office suite and prepared him for the world of work. He honed his internet skills for job searches and further studies, learnt how to write effective resumes, and present well in job interviews. Jason learnt fast, frequently finished tasks ahead of other students, and set about assisting others.

Then came the surprise element. Beyond his technical skill, Jason realised he was adept at teaching his classmates. His help was actively sought, both inside and outside the classroom.

Energized with renewed confidence, Jason proved himself to be a wonderful teacher and mentor. Opportunities were created for him to assume the role of teaching aide. In 2015, Jason was told by an employment trainer that he would never get a job. Now his focus is clearly set on the accredited Certificate III in Education Support.



FINALIST – Haylee Mackintosh – Cire Services

Haylee Mackintosh's story is one of resilience and triumph. Traumatic experiences during childhood led to psychological issues and drug abuse. To aid her recovery, Haylee approached Cire Service's Tech Hub in 2019. This would facilitate her return to education, and connection with community.

Determined to get her life back on track, Haylee disciplined herself to attend classes regularly and on time. She embraced the pre-accredited program, Future4Me, which focuses on general technology as well as literacy and work ready skills.

Haylee even gained a first aid certificate and was supported to regain her driver's license after a serious accident four years prior while driving under the influence of drugs.

Through the development of agile problem-solving skills, Haylee learnt to make sound decisions that enriched her personal development. Her communication and interpersonal skills flourished to the point where she supported other students. In 2020 she became a respected volunteer mentor in the Future4Me program. Haylee's an inspirational woman who's immensely proud of what she's achieved.

She's living a happy life, free of substance abuse, employed in a meaningful full-time job at a bakery, which she loves, and has a strong sense of belonging to the small Yarra Junction community.

Victorian Learn Local Young Pre-accredited Learner Award

This award recognises the achievements of people aged between 18 and 24 years participating in ACFE Board-funded pre-accredited programs at Learn Local providers across Victoria.

It will go to a learner that has established pathways for themselves into further education, employment or volunteer roles as a result of their participation in an ACFE Board-funded pre-accredited program. The learner will have demonstrated a high level of engagement with their learning and be actively developing new skills and enhancing their knowledge.

The learner will demonstrate a commitment to continuing their learner journey and be a role model for other people of what can be achieved by participating in a pre-accredited program. The winner of this award receives a trophy and \$5,000. The two finalists for this award each receive a framed certificate and \$1,000.



Taking the Noweyung Kick Start Your Career in Health course was a big step for Bryanna Paynter-Harvie, but the effort paid off big time. It helped her overcome difficult trauma and health issues and she developed the confidence to work towards her ultimate goal of becoming a primary school teacher.

The impacts of the 6-week course ran deep and showed her just how capable she really is socially and academically, and from an employability perspective.

The course was delivered on site at the Bairnsdale Regional Health Service and provided learners with job ready skills and genuine experience in their nominated allied health field. Bryanna blossomed from a quiet learner into a confident, enthusiastic student who could work effectively in a team.

On the final day of the program she wowed her trainers when she spoke at a public forum about her experiences, and the skills she'd gained from the course. Everyone was impressed by her mature, confident presentation.

The future is looking rosy for Bryanna as she embarks on a Certificate III in Education Support through TAFE Gippsland. However, what's also outstanding is that Bryanna no longer views her mental health issues as a barrier to education and personal growth.



FINALIST – Georgia Benham – Zoe Support Australia

Mother of two young children, Georgia Benham, became a champion learner at Zoe Support and built a strong foundation to achieve success in future academic studies. Georgia demonstrated a high level of engagement with her learning through regular and punctual attendance at programs.

The wrap around support she received helped her tackle tasks and embrace learning new skills that she could apply in her personal, academic and professional life. The studies helped reduce her anxiety and enabled her to find her voice and the confidence to share her opinions.

In the 'Earth to Table' and 'Contemporary Cakes and Small Business' programs, Georgia learnt about food hygiene and cookery techniques and importantly, how to cook a variety of healthy meals for her family. It also solidified her interpersonal skills as she worked alongside tutors and peers to create products and solve problems.

Alongside this, her commitment to pre-accredited literacy and numeracy courses enabled her to complete her Certificate IV and Diploma in Community Service and she recently gained employment in disability assistance at the local TAFE campus.

Georgia plans to continue learning and engaging with Zoe Support Australia services while she tackles the new challenges of her career.



FINALIST – Rebecca Cupitt – Zoe Support Australia

Young mum, Rebecca Cupitt left high school at 15 and ended up in a troubled and violent relationship. At 17 she was pregnant, alone and at risk of homelessness. When she was referred to Zoe Support her life transformed.

Aiming to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills, Rebecca worked diligently to complete pre-accredited literacy, numeracy and financial literacy programs and gained the confidence in her own academic abilities to enter formal education.

Rebecca's achieved a Certificate IV in Community Services, and a Certificate IV in Mental Health under her belt, and recently she completed her first year of a Bachelor of Human Services and Masters in Social Work.

There's no stopping her now. For the future, she's embarking on more certificate courses and leadership programs as well as being lead volunteer in the Zoe Pride netball team and encouraging other young mothers to join and embrace the team sport experience.

Rebecca's been an inspiration to fellow students and enthusiastically assists others who are beginning the journey of re-engagement in education. One of her most important drivers is to be a wonderful role model for her young son, so that he too will understand the value of education.

Innovation in a time of COVID Acknowledgement Award

The ACFE Board is grateful for the hard work and commitment of the Learn Local sector, particularly as COVID-19 has presented so many challenges. There have been many instances of significant innovation, through different high-quality programs, resources and learning experiences created to support and engage learners.

To acknowledge this and celebrate the work of the sector through this time, the ACFE Board added a special Innovation in the time of COVID Acknowledgement Award category to the 2020 Learn Local Awards. This Acknowledgement Award has been introduced this year to help celebrate innovative programs and the providers and practitioners from the Learn Local sector who have gone above and beyond to deliver innovative solutions, in order to ensure ongoing delivery and ongoing connections with our learners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recipients of this award will each receive \$2,000 and a framed certificate.



Learn Local practitioner/individual

Leslie Snart – Laverton Community Education Centre

Leslie Snart is the trainer for the Stepping Forward to Independence program at Laverton Community Education Centre. The program is for young people with a permanent cognitive impairment or intellectual disability. Most of the current students have autism and require routine and structure.

At the start of COVID-19, the students were becoming quite stressed and anxious about the situation. Laverton Community Education Centre wanted to support the students to keep learning. Leslie came up with the idea of personally delivering resources to the student's homes to create some sort of normalcy and continuity for the students. With a COVID Safe Plan, she began delivering the resources to students and spent time outside with them explaining the work.

When Stage 4 restrictions started, Leslie was no longer able to visit students in their front yards. She was determined to keep them learning though and so although a very difficult process, she managed to get them all participating in online learning.

She eased them into using Zoom by starting with informal catch ups and gradually including some learning into the sessions. As students became more confident, Leslie adapted the modules so they could be taught online. For example, the students were sent seed kits, allowing them to participate in the lesson as well as planting their seeds online during the horticulture module.

With the implementation of Zoom sessions, the students become more settled and were able to continue classes as well as discuss their fears face to face.



Learn Local program

Digital Matters Program – Phillip Island Community and Learning Centre (PICAL)

Early on, it became clear that COVID-19 would require a higher level of online connectivity. PICAL found themselves confronted with a large cohort who had no previous computer experience and who were at risk of being further isolated and marginalised. The cohort mainly consisted of blue-collar labourers and others who lost their jobs in the first wave of the pandemic. All of them needed to re-skill, if they were to stay connected during the lockdowns, and to secure new jobs when restrictions eased.

PICAL worked with other Learn Locals across Gippsland to develop a program that quickly and safely provided face-to-face familiarisation with computers; arranged for a library of donated spare desktops and laptops to be serviced and upgraded, so they could be taken home by students; provided students with skills and knowledge to navigate the online world; and introduced students to various video-conferencing software platforms, so that their ongoing education could be continued online and virtually.

In addition, PICAL also set to work on identifying the transferrable skills and competencies that learners could apply to other industry sectors, such as administrative roles and small online businesses.

When each new learner need was identified, a new component was added to the training course and/or a new piece of information was imparted. Soon a comprehensive series of learner modules had been devised; starting at beginner level right up to sophisticated online marketing and e-Commerce modules. This series of modules eventually became the 'Digital Matters' ACFE Learn Local program.

PICAL is now delivering the third tranche of the 'Computers for Beginners' module and several of the first students have now advanced into the higher modules that look at how to use technology in the new world of work brought about because of COVID-19.



Learn Local provider

Wellsprings for Women

Wellsprings for Women responded quickly to COVID-19 restrictions by putting in place measures that highlighted the important role of community-based, locally connected organisations such as theirs. This included direct communication with over 500 families connected to Wellsprings. They undertook advertising on Facebook, Instagram and their website to keep the community informed on important COVID-19 messages and updates. They also participated in weekly meetings with the local council and other Learn Local providers to ensure they were directly involved in the local response and recovery phase of the pandemic.

Wellsprings transitioned all of their ACFE Board funded programs online and kept in touch with their learners via phone and WhatsApp. Some learners transitioned to online learning well but some needed extra support and Wellsprings made sure that they received it. They secured funding from a third party in order to be able to support 80 women continue their learning by providing them with a laptop, internet access and IT helpdesk. The women were trained in how to use the computers and how to use Zoom to join their classes online.

Wellsprings were able to deliver all of its ACFE funded courses online in Terms 2 and 3 and were able to even increase enrolments. They also responded to local community needs for assistance with home schooling and started weekly online study support sessions for primary school kids. They also implemented a number of online engagement opportunities to keep learners engaged socially as well. One of these was 'At the well' which ran for 90 minutes each week and helped to keep learners and volunteers connected.



Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre

From the start of the pandemic, Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre (GEALC) responded quickly to ensure continuity of its pre-accredited programs and other service delivery. More than ever GEALC was committed to supporting its learners with core education and skills to build their confidence, knowledge and be ready to take the next step once restrictions eased.

During Terms 2 and 3, GEALC engaged over 160 learners in online learning via Zoom and Google Classroom. They also conducted over 60 online interviews to assess new students and offered over 40 hours of 1:1 student support over the phone or Zoom. Learning packs for lower level students and for anyone struggling to complete their work digitally, were mailed out with pre-paid envelopes to return work.

An important part of GEALC's success in online delivery was the support it provided to tutors. This included online webinars and regular team meetings to give tutors the opportunity to share their teaching experiences and modify their practices and develop their skills.

The GEALC community were provided with weekly newsletter updates (with current information about COVID-19, services, support, program information) and GEALC even managed to host several online community events including the annual Biggest Morning Tea, virtual Adult Learners Week excursion and end of term parties (an online dance performance and a silly hat party).

Throughout the pandemic, GEALC continued to build its relationship with community network providers to explore opportunities for greater innovation and flexibility to respond to changing, emerging or more complex client needs and to develop strategies that result in better service integration.

Nominees

The ACFE Board would also like to recognise all the nominees of the 2020 Innovation in a time of COVID Acknowledgement Award. All nominations were of a very high standard and the ACFE Board would like to thank all nominees for their commitment and innovation during COVID-19. You are all fantastic examples of the Learn Local spirit.

LEARN LOCAL PRACTITIONER SUB-CATEGORY

Ajanta Judd – Phillip Island Community and Learning Centre

Karen Mitchell – Zoe Support Australia

Petal Goodman – Cheltenham Community Centre

Renee Cooke – Cire Services

LEARN LOCAL PROGRAM AND PROVIDER SUB-CATEGORIES

Access Australia Group

Alamein Neighbourhood and Learning Centre

AMES Australia

Cire Services

Community College Gippsland

Djerriwarrh Community and Education Services

Emerald Neighbourhood House

Gippsland Employment Skills Training

Phillip Island Community and Learning Centre

SpringDale Neighbourhood Centre

Springvale Neighbourhood House

Wyndham Community Education Centre

Zoe Support Australia

2019 Victorian Learn Local Award winners

Chithrika Senanayake – Wellsprings for Women

The Ro Allen Award – Recognising Pre-accredited Learner Excellence

Rory Madden – Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre Inc

Victorian Learn Local Young Pre-accredited Learner Award

Josie Rose – Noweyung

Victorian Learn Local Practitioner Award

Women Connect Hotspot Office Volunteers – Phillip Island Community & Learning Centre

Victorian Learn Local Volunteer Team Award

Creative Enterprising Women Program – Wellsprings for Women

Victorian Learn Local Pre-accredited Pathway Program Award

Moon rabbit “bridges” the gap – The Bridge

Victorian Learn Local Creating Local Solutions Award

Kinglake Ranges Employment and Enterprise Program – Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House & Ellimatta Youth Inc

Victorian Learn Local Collaboration Award

2019 LEARN LOCAL LEGENDS

Bacchus Marsh Community College

Nominated by ACFE Grampians Regional Council

Carringbush Adult Education Centre

Nominated by ACFE North Western Metropolitan Regional Council

Cloverdale Community Centre

Nominated by ACFE Barwon South West Regional Council

Paynesville Neighbourhood Centre

Nominated by ACFE Gippsland Regional Council

Wellsprings for Women

Nominated by ACFE Southern Metropolitan Regional Council

Access Australia Group (Access Skills Training)

Nominated by ACFE Loddon Mallee Regional Council

Cire Services

Nominated by ACFE Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council

Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau

Nominated by ACFE Hume Regional Council

For the full list of previous Learn Local Award Winners please visit:

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Sara James, Master of Ceremonies



Sara James is an Emmy Award-winning broadcast journalist and author. Sara has covered significant news events in Australasia for NBC, CNN and PBS.

Sara is a featured commentator on Australia's ABC News Breakfast. Her "American in Oz" segment provides detailed analysis of the US political landscape.

Sara is on the Australian Board of Directors of the American Australia Association Limited and the Australian-American Fulbright Commission. She is also on the board of KCNQ2 Cure Alliance.

She advocates for people living with KCNQ2 encephalopathy and other genetic epilepsies. Sara produces the annual New Horizons in Science Dinner in Melbourne to raise money for scientific research to find better treatments for KCNQ2, a rare disease that causes seizures, an intellectual disability and autism. She is a founding member of GETA, Genetic Epilepsy Team Australia.

Journalism: Prior to moving to Australia in 2008, Sara was based in New York City for NBC News for more than a decade. Her reporting duties took her to all fifty of the United States and around the world, including Somalia, Sudan, Bosnia, Israel, China, Japan and the Khyber Pass. She also travelled to the wreck of the Titanic in the submarine Nautilus. Sara served as a substitute newsreader on the NBC Today Show and guest anchored on many NBC news programs.

Sara has been honoured with a Headliner Award for her report on a victim of the September 11 attacks, a Gracie for her story about methamphetamine addiction in women, an Emmy for coverage of the massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado, a National Press Club Award for her story on Sudanese slavery, and the Overseas Press Club of America Citation of Excellence for her report on Australia's Stolen Generation.

Acknowledgements

The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Training and Skills Minister for Higher Education, the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board and the Department of Education and Training acknowledge and appreciate the generous contributions made by learners, practitioners, institutions and organisations towards the success of the 2020 Learn Local Awards.

The Learn Local Awards would also like to extend a warm thanks to all finalists, businesses and their organisations for their assistance in bringing together a state-wide filming project during these challenging times.

While we have all had to adapt and respond to the challenges of the year, all of this year's winners and finalists are wonderful examples of the Learn Local spirit.

Your flexibility and patience as we navigated pandemic restrictions across Victoria was highly appreciated and we encourage you to continue sharing videos from the 2020 Learn Local Awards Virtual Gala Series with your networks, friends and family.

If you've been inspired during these awards and you know a learner, practitioner, volunteer or program that embodies the extraordinary power of Learn Local, make sure you nominate them for the 2021 Learn Local Awards!

Video and design production of the Learn Local Awards campaign and Virtual Gala Series was delivered with the assistance of ADZ Collective.

Congratulations to all the 2020 winners!





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