

World examples in education

By Claire Fenwicke

AN AUSTRALIAN-designed education framework implemented at a Highlands school has spread across the globe.

Four Oxley College educators represented Australia at the Visible Learning Conference in Washington DC to demonstrate how the Visible Learning framework was working in their school.

Oxley College teachers Olivia Cox and Lara Sheils joined headmaster Michael Parker and deputy-principal Kate Cunich at the July conference.

There were 1000 participants from nine countries gathered at the conference to hear the latest educational speakers.

Oxley College is featured as a case study in the book 'Visible Learning into Action', a teaching method focused on student feedback in the classroom.

Mr Parker and Ms Cunich were speakers at the conference, and spoke about the ongoing journey of how the school was using evidence to inform teaching and learning cycles.

Ms Cunich said the framework was introduced to the school to provide the best education for students.

"It's about listening to the student voice and use their feedback to inform teaching," she said.

"It allows us to gather information on how the students learn, to help us recognise if they have learnt something and how they learnt it."

Ms Cunich said feedback from students

was positive.

"Students tell us they are more engaged and involved because of class discussion," she said.

"They feel more empowered about their learning."

Mr Parker said the framework provided a "more holistic system" for schools and education.

"The guess work is taken out of education," he said.

"It gets teachers thinking about the ways we hold lessons, particularly as we focus more on those reforms that have a greater effect size in the classroom."

He said the framework focused on the assessment of learning rather than assessment for learning.

"For example, instead of testing students at the end of a unit, what matters is checking where students are up to throughout and finding out what gaps there are," he said.

"So rather than using assessment to see how the students have gone, you're seeing how you've gone teaching the content and how they are progressing throughout the unit."

Many schools in Australia and globally are increasingly using the 'Visible Learning' framework.

University students studying to become teachers are being trained in the framework as well.

To learn more about 'Visible Learning', designed by Professor John Hattie, visit <http://visible-learning.org/>



Oxley teachers Olivia Cox, Kate Cunich, Lara Sheils and Michael Parker at the Visible Learning Conference in Washington DC. Photo supplied



Centennial Vineyards winemaker, Tony Cosgriff has added yet another trophy to this iconic winery's collection.

Another win for winery

By Linda Lambrechts

ADDING yet another win to its belt is Centennial Winery in Bowral.

Winemaker Tony Cosgriff was excited with the news that his Centennial Barbera 2014 had won the Trophy for Best Red Wine in the "Other Reds" category at the Boutique Wine Awards.

This northern Italian grape is popular among wine producers looking for something other than the usual varieties.

It is on-trend with the move towards alternative grapes that suit cooler climates in Australia.

"I enjoy breaking away from the mainstream to offer our consumers something unique," Tony said.

"It's also great fun to work with different varieties to learn about their unique characters and interpret a suitable wine style in keeping with what the vineyard produces."

"The Barbera ticks all the boxes when it comes to a silky, smooth, medium-bodied

red wine."

Tony said the grapes for this wine were very ripe and flavoursome, and in pristine condition.

"The end result is a ripe, plump, rich and silky red wine," he said.

"The Barbera vines are now around 14 years old and produce some very good fruit for us each year."

The trophy for Best Other Red Wine is not the first time Centennial Wines has been honoured in this category.

"We have won before at various shows with this wine," Tony said.

"It's just such a satisfying example of a good red and obviously the judges like it."

Very little French oak treatment was given to the wine, allowing it to shine through on competition day, and showing distinctive fruit and spice characters.

Centennial Winery also took out a silver medal for their Tempranillo 2014 and a silver medal for the highly awarded Sparkling Pinot Chardonnay Meunier blend.

Rate help for community services

By Victoria Lee

TWO community groups will benefit from council donations that will offset the cost of their rates.

Council adopted its Rate, Water and Sewerage Access Subsidy Policy in November last year, under which local sporting organisations and religious groups could apply for rate subsidies.

Bong Bong Picnic Race Club Limited and Moss Vale and District AH&I Show Society both applied for assistance under the policy and were granted \$500 each.

However, both entities wrote to council this year to ask that the level of assistance be reconsidered.

Bong Bong Picnic Race Club requested a waiver of \$12,129 in annual rates for the 2015/16 year, while Moss Vale Show Society requested \$12,307 to be waived for the same period.

Councillors were required to decide whether or not to waive the rates of these groups at last week's ordinary meeting of council.

Mayor Larry Whipper said the decision to waive rates or make a donation to the clubs would be inconsistent with existing council policy.

"What I'm concerned about is that this is complete policy on the run," he said.

Cr Whipper said he would support a \$6000 donation for Bong Bong Picnic Race Club if the motion included that council would review its subsidy policy.

Councillor Duncan Gair moved a motion that council provide Bong Bong Picnic Race Club with a \$6,000 one-off donation, and Moss Vale Show Society with a \$12,000 one-off in order to assist each club with their rate expenses.

"The reason being that Bong Bong Race Club has already been paying rates, it's not as though this is out of left field for them," he said.

"But Moss Vale Showground has never paid rates, they've been slugged for the first time in their life: \$12,000, and that's where my sympathy is coming from."

Cr Gair said to find \$12,000 for rates and put on a show for the community would likely be a struggle for the community group and encouraged councillors to vote in favour of his motion.

"I think this is a one-off show of our support to the community," Cr Gair said.

Cr Gair's motion also noted that these donations were "contrary" to existing council policy and requested a review of the Rate, Water and Sewerage Access Subsidy Policy, to be carried out by the next council.

Councillors voted unanimously to support the donations.

News in brief

Petition presented

A PETITION with more than 15,000 signatures was presented to the Member for Goulburn Pru Goward.

The petition calls on the state government to protect the Southern Highlands from coal mining.

Battle for Berrima has coordinated the petition over the past six months.

The petition was presented to Ms Goward on the steps of the Berrima Courthouse.

Stephen Jones's new position

FEDERAL member for Whitlam Stephen Jones has been appointed to Labor's shadow ministry.

He has been appointed as shadow minister for regional services, territories and local government, as well as shadow minister for regional communications.

Mr Jones said he understood the importance of "boosting services available to people living outside of our major cities".

"I look forward to working closely with [the shadow ministers] to hold the government to account and provide positive alternatives for regional Australia," he said.