

THE BRIDGE

ISSUE FIVE DECEMBER 2006



FROM THE CHAIR

Dear friends of Western Chances,

To think a year ago we launched our first edition of the Western Chances e-Newsletter – The Bridge and even more momentous is that Western Chances is almost three years old.

Since our inception we have:

- invested over \$600,000 in scholarships and programs in the West
- supported 480 young people through our core scholarship program, with 80% of recipients renewing their scholarships each year
- provided an average scholarship payment of \$1,000 / year / student with an ongoing capacity
- supported scholarship recipients from an average age of 16 years and 9 months

We are very proud of our successes to date and thank each of you for your valued contribution.

It is extremely positive to see our scholarship renewal rate is still very high which indicates the value of our scholarships in making a real difference to young people's lives. More importantly, individuals are playing an active role in progressing their own talents. Equally, we received 115 new applications for our recent scholarship round which is terrific.

Our programs for 2007 are looking exciting with some new initiatives on the horizon. These include the Variety Club Bash Car project which gives young people the chance to participate in the building of a special vehicle and the Young Western Leader's Summit which is a two day workshop with various sessions including interviewing and presentation skills, motivational speakers and team building.

Stay tuned for the official launch in March next year for the Western Chances Networks – a networking club which will bring together business, government and community partners.

Our other varied and successful programs will continue into 2007, including Free Debate, The Siemens Science Experience, Crusaders, Lord Somers Camp, Orchestra Victorias' mOVE program, ACMI digital screenings, and the LINKS program.

All of our brilliant programs would not be possible without our many partners so a big thank you to you all. We look forward to continuing to grow our partnerships and build successful journeys for our young people in 2007 and beyond.

Finally, to the Board and team at Western Chances, thank you for your commitment and hard work and here's to another successful year ahead.

Enjoy the festive season and see you in 2007!

Terry Bracks, Chair

2006 Women in PR Luncheon

Western Chances was delighted to have the support of the Public Relations Institute of Australia (Victoria) Women in PR lunch and fundraising auction held on Friday 8th December at the RACV Club. Funds raised will enable Western Chances to provide a PR scholarship to a young person from the western suburbs.

The 220+ guests were inspired by the passions, leadership secrets, and success strategies of two of Australia's high profile business women – Janet Holmes á Court AO, Chairman of Heytesbury Pty Ltd and Belinda Yabsley, 2005 Sydney Business Women of the Year. Media personality Jill Singer was the compere.

Western Chances scholarship recipient Gemedo Adem captured the audience with his story. He highlighted the background of his country Oromiyaa (within Ethiopia) and talked about his future ambitions particularly in relation to helping his people who are currently fighting for basic human rights. Gemedo aspires to Nelson Mandela quoting, "Education is the most powerful weapon with which you can change the world." He concluded thanking Western Chances for their ongoing financial support.

The live auction kept everyone on their toes with a variety of desirable items whilst the silent auction offered stylish fashion, spa and lifestyle items.

Guests experienced gourmet food and wine from North East Valleys Victoria.



The Siemens Science Experience (TSSE) 2006

SIEMENS



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

Western Chances, in partnership with Siemens, The Siemens Science Experience and Victoria University have provided 100 Year 9 students in the Western suburbs the opportunity to participate in The Siemens Science Experience program.

Siemens presented their \$30,000 investment to the program at the official launch on Tuesday 24th October at the University's Footscray Park Campus. The Hon. Dr Barry Jones AO, one of Australia's "National Treasures", was the key note speaker who discussed the importance of science in education.

The investment provided by Siemens is to support The Siemens Science Experience and has enabled Western Chances to identify students with talent and motivation in the area of Science/Engineering.

Terry Bracks said the opportunity to participate in the Science Program provides these students with an avenue to pursue their science interests outside of school.

"Each student will gain a valuable insight into the fields of science and engineering during this program.

"This opportunity not only gives them practical, hands-on experience but will also help them

to decide what field of science they might like to pursue as a profession," she said.

The innovative program took place on the 5th, 6th and 7th December at Victoria University's Footscray Park campus. The program included activities such as producing your own solar cell using anthocyanin dye – a new alternative energy, building the tallest building and then testing it in a wave tank to see if it can withstand a tidal wave and making your own photographic paper then developing a photo using it!

Participating schools included Bayside Secondary College (Junior Campus), Braybrook Secondary College, Brimbank College, Debney Park Secondary College (Flemington), Deer Park Secondary College, Gilmore College (Footscray), Kealba Secondary College, Laverton Secondary College, St Albans Secondary College and Sunshine Secondary College.

Through our Links Program, Western Chances will also work in partnership with Siemens to value add to these scholarship recipients as they go on to achieve VCE and transition to tertiary/further education in the Science/Engineering disciplines.



Thomas's Story

Generally, I consider last year (2005) and this year to be my lucky years because I got into programs that I have always wished to get into, thanks to Western Chances Scholarships.

Last year I applied for NYSF (National Youth Science Forum) and made it through the interviews, but I was still not sure that I was going to go to Canberra and into this valuable program, because it cost a lot of money. I was so happy when my teacher, Mrs M. Tassigiannakis sent my application to Western Chances and they supported me financially to become a part of this great program.

Now that I am in Year 12 with a lot of homework every night, I don't know what I would have done without my text books. Once again Western Chances renewed my scholarship and I was able to buy my text books for this year.

Words cannot describe how thankful I am for what these wonderful people at Western Chances have given me. I guess these people love me. Or is it my luck? I don't know, but whatever it is, it is great. They once again have put something in for my future studies. That is, they have given me the means to buy books for University next year. Wow! Are these people good or what?

On behalf of myself and all the other students who received the scholarships, I would like to thank Western Chances Scholarships for their support. I hope you will continue to open more doors to students in need.



An evening of musical entertainment

WITH ORCHESTRA VICTORIA AND WESTERN CHANCES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT HRISTIJAN SPIROVSKI



Hobsons Bay
CITY COUNCIL

Orchestra Victoria proudly presented a free concert in association with Western Chances and Hobsons Bay City Council at Williamstown Town Hall on Tuesday 24 October.

The performance was under the baton of esteemed Australian conductor Mark Summerbell who led the orchestra in a wonderful programme of music including works by Weber, Mendelssohn, Khachaturian and Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 2 in A Major which featured award-winning young pianist Ke Lin.

Western Chances scholarship recipient, Hristijan Spirovski, commenced the evenings' program by performing a solo piano piece Toccato for Piano in E flat minor.

Hristijan Spirovski received a Western Chances scholarship at the end of 2005 to assist his musical education. Though born in Melbourne, Hristijan settled in Macedonia at an early age. He commenced music studies at the local School Centre for Music Education in the Republic of Macedonia, focussing on piano and solfège.

In 2001 Hristijan participated in Best Instrumentalists competition and received the first prize. In 2003 Hristijan and his family returned to Australia, and he continued music studies at The University High School

in Melbourne from then until the present. Hristijan has recently completed his VCE in which his two major studies were Music Performance Solo and Music Styles.

"Western Chances has worked very closely with Orchestra Victoria to identify and encourage musical talent from the Western Suburbs, creating a great network for the young people. Orchestra Victoria has created a wonderful opportunity for Hristijan to develop skills and practice performing publicly tonight" said Terry Bracks.

"Orchestra Victoria and Western Chances enjoy such a strong partnership because our aims are well matched. Through our collaboration on the mOVE! Program we provide access and opportunity. Our joint concerts feature the fruits of this activity and are also occasions to publicise and celebrate our partnership.

Orchestra Victoria looks forward to continuing this marvelous relationship" said Peter Garnick, Managing Director, Orchestra Victoria.

Feedback from guests was very positive with one attendee noting the following: "What a special evening – you were all a real blessing to the people of Hobsons Bay. The 2 soloists were a joy to listen to – very gifted. A most enjoyable evening – thank you so much."

City West Water

LINKS WITH THE WEST



One of the West's icons, City West Water, is working with Western Chances on its LINKS program, to provide summer vacation placement opportunities for young people with interests in the water industry.

As part of its Community and Social Involvement Strategy, City West Water, which is owned by the State Government, previously took part in the first LINKS trial to provide work experience to two young students from the west, giving them a chance to learn about the industry first hand.

The program provided opportunities for the students to develop an understanding of the water industry, develop networks of mentors within the business and to apply some of their prior learnings. It gave them a glimpse into how professional organisations operate and the expectations placed on employees, providing a real learning curve for the students.

City West Water is also committed to a range of other community and social involvement programs to contribute to its licence area, which stretches from Richmond in the east to Melton in the west. These include a speaker's circuit, a program to provide short – term work for young people at risk, and providing assistance to community organisations in their service area.

Using less water is high on the agenda for City West Water, both for residents and industry. It partners with many of its customers to reduce their water use year round, including the likes of Qenos, who have saved millions of litres over the past three years. In addition, with Melbourne in the midst of drought and heavy water restrictions, City West Water, it is more important than ever to use less water.

For information on water restrictions, go to citywestwater.com.au



Bash Car and the Variety Club

EXPRESSIONS FOR THE FUTURE

An exciting project, The Bash Car, is underway to further strengthen the existing relationship between Western Chances and The Variety Club (children's charity). Ten selected young people from Western Chances and 10 young people from Open Family have been given the chance to participate in the building of a special vehicle. Upon completion (estimated to be the middle of 2007) it will be raffled with the proceeds benefiting The Variety 'special needs children' in Victoria.

Participants will gain valuable hands-on insight into working in the automotive industry and will be taught how to build each

part of the car including body building and spray painting, engine building, transmission repair, differential repair and general mechanical repairs.



Leaders in the West

Leader
COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS
locals love Leader

Leader Community Newspapers have been invaluable to date in creating community awareness around Western Chances and profiling our scholarship recipients in their Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham papers.

To further strengthen the relationship with Western Chances, Leader is proud to invest in 30 young leaders from Year 11 onwards to attend a 2 day summit. The summit, known as the Young Western Leaders, to be held in March next year, is about developing and building participants' communication which will in turn assist them to gain employment and/or further education. The various sessions will be insightful and include success stories from people in Melbourne's West as well as examining particular communication styles.

Western Chances are extremely thankful for Leader's continued support in sharing scholarship success stories and further investing in their talents.

Background of a Western Chances Board Member



Western Chances currently comprises of 11 Board members all offering an array of invaluable skills. Many of these members are also part of subcommittees such as Finance, Marketing and Development and Programs.

Rosie Salvaris has been a member of the Western Chances Board and the Programs Committee since its inception. Rosie, who is the Campus Principal at the Paisley senior campus of Bayside College, has recently announced her retirement after 11 years as a principal and after 41 years of dedicated service to the state education system. Rosie

is committed to expanding educational opportunities for students in the west. Her philosophy has always been to aim high and work hard. She is proud of her association with Western Chances and is pleased that a number of Bayside students who have been supported by Western Chances scholarships have progressed to university.

Western Chances congratulates Rosie on her retirement and wishes her all the best in her future endeavours. Special thanks for Rosie's ongoing contributions with Western Chances and students in the west!

Western Chances Networks...

STAY TUNED...

The concept of the Western Chances Networks initiative is around bringing together business, government and community partners, and providing a forum for like-minded organisations to network and build community opportunities in the West.

Stay tuned for the official launch of our Networks Program in mid-late March 2007 and for details on how your business can become a member!

UPCOMING EVENTS/ DATES FOR THE DIARY IN 2007

Scholarship Round 1
Opens Day 1, Term 2

Scholarship Round 2
Opens Day 1, Term 4

Young Western Leader's Summit (2 days)
Friday 2nd & Saturday 3rd March

Networks Launch
Mid-late March (date tbc)

Orchestra Victoria's mOVE Program
Tuesday 29th & Wednesday 30th May