

THE BRIDGE

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FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends of Western Chances,

We are already past the 1st quarter for 2007 which is hard to believe! We trust that the year has started out as successfully for you and your businesses as it has for us at Western Chances.

A big congratulations to the many students and scholarship recipients of Western Chances for achieving their VCE in 2006. We feel very proud that through our scholarships we have been able to play a role in assisting these talented young people in achieving a major milestone. We wish each of them well as they pursue the next stage of their life and look forward to hearing of the progress in their endeavours.

As one Scholarship Recipient said "without the support from Western Chances I would not have had the VCE texts to study with or been able to attend the extra VCE lectures. I do believe that the availability of this support has helped me achieve my great Enter score."

The first couple of months for this year have been particularly busy for Western Chances with the planning and implementation of a new initiative known as the Young Western Leaders Summit. This program is a feature of this edition of The Bridge. Read on to learn about this program and the valuable skills our scholarship recipients obtained from attending the 2 day summit. Special thanks again to Leader Community Newspapers for investing in their talents.

Another major and new initiative to be launched on May 2nd this year in conjunction with our annual anniversary celebrations is the Western Chances Supporter Network. Networks is targeted at further developing our already strong network of supporter organisations and individuals with the concept to bring together business, government and community partners, and provide a forum for like-minded organisations to network and build community opportunities in the West through Western Chances. We look forward to seeing many of you there!

Following the launching of Networks is the fabulous opportunity program through Orchestra Victoria which enables 40 young people to rehearse and perform for 2 full days alongside 12 of Orchestra Victoria's professional musicians, who all have a passion for educating young people.

So, with a big year ahead, enjoy and see you soon.



Terry Bracks
Chair

Young Western Leaders Summit

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Western Chances scholarship recipients from western suburbs secondary colleges and tertiary organisations had a once in a life time opportunity to take part in the 'Young Western Leaders Summit' on the 2nd and 3rd March at Footscray Community Arts Centre.

The summit, organised by Western Chances, in association with Leader Community Newspapers, gave 35 young people a chance to hear from and interact with an array of presenters. These included former western suburbs resident and Oarsome Foursome member Mike McKay, Tim Marshall, owner of the communication growth business StreetSmarts and The Times Editor Rick Edwards.

Mike talked about his background, Olympic experience and urged participants to realise their potential. Tim Marshall, talked about the parts of the brain which determined people's thinking styles while Rick Edwards was part of a six-member panel for an Insight to Leadership discussion during the summit.

Terry Bracks, said the summit was a unique opportunity for students to develop and strengthen their abilities in leadership and communication.

"This fun and interactive two day program encouraged students to foster team building skills and identify necessary skill sets for employment and education," Mrs Bracks said.

During the course of the two days students gauged the importance of leadership, learnt more about communication styles, developed their presentation skills, built a curriculum vitae and learnt The 'Do's' of Interviews.

"These are essential life skills and Western Chances in conjunction with Leader Community Newspapers are proud to have been able to offer this initiative to our young people in the west," Mrs Bracks added.

Buckley Park College student Didem Caia said the summit taught her that anyone could follow their dream. "There's not really much stopping you from achieving your goals if you want it bad enough," she said. "We just need the right amount of guidance and the right amount of support."



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Young Western Leaders Summit

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Didem, 16, said the summit taught her to feel more confident about herself.



"Mike was telling us he was from Footscray and people in Footscray were regarded as lower class but I think it doesn't matter where you were from or how much money you've got, there's always opportunities. "You need to look for those opportunities like this summit to help you achieve your goals."

Didem, who has a Western Chances acting scholarship, is well on her way to achieving her goals. The year 11 student, who wants to get into either the National Institute of Dramatic Arts or the Victorian College of the Arts, has already had bit parts in the television shows Neighbours and Blue Heelers.

Western Health Executives Lead the Way at the Young Western Leaders Summit



Western Health is the main public healthcare provider in Melbourne's West and encompasses three public hospitals - Western, Sunshine and The Williamstown Hospital. Western Health has a staff of over 4500, most of whom live in the West. Western Health services a catchment that includes 600,000 people and these people also have the highest rates of mental illness, obesity related diseases including diabetes and cardiovascular disease and drug and alcohol problems.

Western Health has been a great supporter of Western Chances since its inception 4 years ago. Providing office space within the Sunshine hospital grounds, as well as administration and IT support has been and continues to be an invaluable part of their operation.

Last week that involvement extended to providing two keynote speakers to the Young Western Leaders Summit. Executive Director of Finance, Tim Hogan and Director of Community Integration and Allied Health, Silvio Pontonio. Both of whom spoke about their career experience.

Silvio said he enjoyed the experience of being able to provide information which would help summit attendees prepare for job interviews and plan for a successful career.

Tim said the opportunity to describe how he had forged his career was enjoyable and he hoped he had inspired at least one person to think that accounting was not dull but provided for exciting career opportunities.



Congratulations from Western Chances for Australia Day Honours

A number of people in the West received Australia Day honours this year. We would particularly like to mention those who are involved in the work of Western Chances. They include our Patron - Justice Frank Vincent, Board Member - Lynne Wannan and long term supporter - Raymond Horsburgh.

The Honourable Justice Frank Hollis Vincent, Melbourne, was honoured with an AO for service to the judiciary and the law as a contributor to the reform of penal and parole systems, the rehabilitation of offenders, and Indigenous Australians involved with the criminal justice system; and to education as Chancellor of Victoria University including efforts to increase educational opportunities for disadvantaged youth.

Lynne Mary Wannan, Williamstown, was honoured with an AM for service in the areas of social policy development, education, and children's services through leadership and advisory roles with a range of government and community organisations.

Raymond Kenneth Horsburgh, Williamstown, was honoured with an AM for service to the steel industry and the community through organisations providing developmental and educational assistance to disadvantaged youth.

Further congratulations to Justice Vincent, Lynne and Ray from Western Chances!

Western Chances joins Westpac



to unveil new banking commitment to Melbourne's West

Terry Bracks joined Westpac's Group Executive, Business & Consumer Banking, Mike Pratt, to officially open Westpac's newly expanded Tullamarine Business Banking Centre on Thursday 15th February.

The opening comes as part of Westpac's ongoing commitment to revitalise business banking services in local communities and expand opportunities across Melbourne's rapidly growing western region.

For Adrian Hughes, Westpac's Head of Commercial Banking Victoria North West, who will head up the Tullamarine centre with colleague Eric Gauci, the new Centre allows Westpac to partner with businesses in Melbourne's West and help them realise their financial goals.

Mr Hughes says his team is also looking forward to making a positive impact in the local community and extending Westpac's partnership with Western Chances.

"Western Chances' vision to see the West working together as a proud and vibrant community is a cause Westpac is honoured to support. We commend Terry and her team for their wonderful work in assisting financially disadvantaged young people in the Western suburbs to realise their full potential. It was a fitting start to the new Centre that Terry was able to join us at our official opening last week," says Mr Hughes.

Offering customers increased access to more local business knowledge under one roof, and providing faster and seamless access to key people and services will be high on the agenda at the newly expanded Centre.

The official opening brought together Tullamarine's business community with local identities joining Mr Hughes, Mr Gauci and their team to hear about future business prospects.

"We're really excited about our area's strong population growth, its expanding industries and increasing business investment. This positive momentum is only set to continue over the next ten years, with greenfield sites close to the CBD making expansion possible. Such increases in population will inevitably attract new businesses into the area, which is ideally located close to Melbourne's three airports, ports and the Western Ring Road," says Mr Gauci.

"But it's not just about population growth and good transport links. Melbourne's West already has a thriving multicultural community life, a leading educational institution Victoria University, an excellent mix of business skills and price advantages in a range of commercial and residential markets.

"This all adds up to Tullamarine being identified by Westpac as a dynamic area for growth and we know that with the right support we can help Tullamarine business to reach their full potential."

The centre, which was designed by Geyer, and outfitted by Schiavello, one of Australia's leading international designers, will feature a series of hot desks with a selection of expert staff, bringing a wider range of specialised services, from business lending and financial planning to invoice and debt financing, as well as regular networking events to Melbourne's West.

Leesa's Story

According to Leesa Ward, balance is the key to being successful in life. The Western Chances scholarship winner balances her VCE subjects and school commitments with various extracurricular activities, including drama and callisthenics.

How does she juggle so many things at once? "If you want something done, ask a busy woman," she joked. Leesa is heavily involved with the Student Representative Council (SRC) at Kurunjang Secondary College, and has been since her junior years. This year she is the SRC secretary. Her role involves organising various events, and she is also the editor of 'The SRC Scribe', the student newsletter. "It takes up a lot of my lunchtimes, but it is very character building," she said.

After VCE, Leesa is interested in studying Psychology, in particular research, at the University of Ballarat. However for Leesa, that would just be adding another string to her bow. With a strong creative flair and a passion for learning, any path Leesa decides to follow, she is bound to succeed in. Interests in multimedia and web design are only some of her passions.

In 2006 she completed Certificate 11 in Multimedia as part of the college's Vocational Education and Training (VET) program. Her vector art work features throughout the 2006 school year book.

Outside school, she is keen on acting, and even completed an acting summer school at National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). Staff member Chris Warke said Leesa gives so much back to the school. "Leesa is a fantastic role model," she said. "She sends out a great message to other girls at the school." Leesa balances her studies, her school commitments and her extra curricular activities with a supermarket job. She believes you get out what you put in.

"If you take advantage of the opportunities offered, there's no limit to what you can achieve," she said.

Special thanks to Leader Community Newspapers for their stories on our scholarship recipients...



L-R: Adrian Hughes - Head of Commercial Banking Victoria North West, Westpac. Terry Bracks - Founding Chair, Western Chances. Mike Pratt - Group Executive, Business and Consumer Banking, Westpac, Eric Gauci - Regional Manager Business Banking, Melbourne Metro West and Geelong, Westpac, Peter Hanlon - General Manager, Business Financial Services, Westpac



Background of a Western Chances Board Member

Lynne Wannan, is Deputy Chair of Western Chances and Chair of the Programs committee and brings to these roles experience as a social planner, policy analyst, manager, consultant and adviser to government at local, state and national levels over the past two and a half decades. Lynne also has extensive experience in the non government community sector having chaired Community Child Care Victoria and the National Association of Community Based Children's Services for several years. Lynne also has experience with small business having built and sold a successful retail business.

Lynne also currently chairs the Victorian Government's Adult Community and Further Education Board and Children's Council. Lynne is a member of the Federal Minister's Children's Services Reference Group, the Victorian Government's Learning and Employment Skills Commission, Qualifications Authority and Community Support Fund Advisory Council. These roles provide her with very current knowledge and involvement with policy debate at both the national and state levels.

During the 1980's Lynne worked as a community development officer and social planner with the Western Region Council for Social Development before becoming Community Services Manager with the City of Sunshine. Lynne was the inaugural Deputy Chancellor of Victoria University of Technology and, from 1991-1993, Convenor of the Victorian Women's Consultative Council.

As a consultant she has undertaken numerous projects across the community services sector in areas such as; program development and evaluation, management and systems review, feasibility studies, efficiency audits, developing business and strategic plans and forging new policies. Lynne's policy expertise is diverse and has covered children's services, health, education, social justice, youth, local government and the role of state Government. She wrote the first State Government palliative care policy and has been a major influence in the development of children's services policy in Victoria and Australia.



Jesse's Story

BAYSIDE Secondary College student Jesse Meredith-Jones prefers being behind the camera, rather than in front of it. But it is his photography skills that have put him in the spotlight for this story and earned him a Western Chances scholarship.

The year 12 student's aspirations to become a professional photographer began when he started taking photos of his friends. "And then it just became more than that," he said. "I could do photography at school and I just slowly started developing skills and it became a real interest."

Jesse lives in Footscray and is finishing a photography course at school this year. Last year, Western Chances awarded Jesse a scholarship which enabled him to buy a digital camera. "The camera has helped me so much," he said. "Instead of having to use the school's camera I can shoot whenever I want."

Western Chances offers scholarships to students over consecutive years, and this year Jesse is hopeful of getting a scholarship to attend a school photography camp in Tasmania and if there is any money left over, buy a tripod. "I've gotten a lot of tips about lighting and times of the day to shoot from my teacher," Jesse said. "I never used to use a tripod but I was advised to use one."

"At the moment I use the school one."

Jesse loves music and follows upcoming bands. To get some recognition, he wants to take photos of bands for them to use on their websites. Jesse has not yet decided what photography course he wants to get into when he finishes secondary school at the end of the year.

But he is sure of one thing he wants to do in his life. "I want to work for the Rolling Stone magazine," he said.

Bayside College year 11 and 12 student welfare co-ordinator Lynette Hansen said she admired Jesse. "Photography has developed for him and the extra help with the camera and the camp will help him to develop his passion and fulfil his goal," she said.



Upcoming Events Dates for the Diary in 2007

Scholarship Round 1

Opens Day 1, Term 2, New Scholarships 16/04/2007 Round N107

Scholarship Round 2

Open Day 1, Term 3, Renewal Scholarships 22/08/2007 Round R207
Opens Day 1, Term 4 New Scholarships 8/10/2007 Round N207

Supporter Network Launch & 3rd Anniversary Celebrations

Wednesday 2nd May, 6.00pm-8.30pm at the Basement Theatre, Footscray Community Arts Centre, 45 Moreland Street, Footscray

Orchestra Victoria's mOVe Program

Tuesday 29th & Wednesday 30th May.

Western Chances/ Victoria University/ The Siemens Science Experience Program

Tuesday 4th & Wednesday 5th & Thursday 6th December at Victoria University, Footscray Campus for one hundred Yr. 9 students from the West.