

# THE BRIDGE

ISSUE THREE SEPTEMBER 2006



## FROM THE CHAIR

We kicked off the new financial year with a very successful Strategic Planning Workshop which was facilitated by Kevin Nuttall of Waterfield Consulting. The half day workshop involved the Board and Staff of Western Chances, and resulted in a 3 Year Strategic Plan. The new plan will strongly position the organisation as a differentiated brand for many years to come, delivering great value to the Western Melbourne community. Key objectives include:

- Being a well understood and trusted brand
- Supporting 800 young people with scholarships by 2009
- Having a sustainable financial base with investors who share our vision
- Having powerful partner relationships with value adding programs
- Having a fully engaged Alumni group
- Being a robust organisation
- Having evidence of creating a positive social impact.

A key theme which arose as part of our strategic planning workshop was the importance of our partnerships. I am very pleased about the development of some new and strategic partnerships which are all focused on delivering different outcomes, and are key to us achieving our objectives.

The first is a partnership with Victoria University which will combine the strengths of the WC Scholarship Program with the VU Access Program. This is a wonderful opportunity for talented young people to be supported through their secondary and tertiary education years.

Secondly, a 4-way partnership between Siemens, Western Chances, Siemens Science Experience and Victoria University highlights the value of collaboration. For the first time in a number of years in the West, 100 Year 9 students from a range of schools will be given the opportunity to participate in the Siemens Science Experience at Victoria University in December. The program, which helps young people learn what they can expect from a career in Science through a 3 day practical and informative workshop, extends the mix of our Opportunities Programs and will be officially launched in the coming weeks.

The third partnership is with Leader Community Newspapers who are playing a key role in promoting the success of 'Young Leaders' in the West by focusing on Western Chances scholarship recipients in a bi-monthly profile section. Keep an eye out for articles on our talented young people in the various Leader Community Newspapers and The Times across the West.

It is partnerships like these that continue to advance the value of Western Chances and I am very grateful for the support and inspiration we receive from all of our partners.

Cheers Terry Bracks

## Victoria University partnership: extending the Access



**VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW  
SCHOOL OF  
THOUGHT**

Western Chances and Victoria University have formed a strategic partnership which will bring VU's scholarships for young people to a deeper level through the reach of Western Chances.

VU's Access Scholarship Program was introduced in 2005 and is targeted at students in need of assistance. Through the partnership with Western Chances, approximately 35 students at Year 11 and 12 level (25 of which are aiming for higher education and 10 of which are aiming to attend TAFE), will benefit from the Access Program through Western Chances pre-selection.

Stephen Weller, Pro Vice Chancellor Student Services at VU, said 'The focus of Western Chances' program will strengthen the VU Access program with enhanced scholarship access for young people who have been typically under-represented in the VU scholarship application process.

The advantage of supporting students at secondary level who have already been identified as potential achievers, but who are in need of financial support, will significantly boost the opportunities for these young people in securing places at tertiary level,' Mr Weller said.

'This is a very important development for VU and we are very excited about the benefits it brings,' he added.

This sentiment is echoed by Terry Bracks who says there is a very strong strategic fit between the programs.

'The opportunity for WC to direct scholarships to additional students, and leverage the partnership's potential to also jointly obtain funds from interested investors for merit based scholarships for HECS payments, is a very exciting development for the future of our young people in securing places at tertiary level.

'This really is a strong model for supporting talented young people in need through secondary and tertiary level education,' Terry said

Please go to [www.westernchances.org.au](http://www.westernchances.org.au) for more information.

# Music Enters Classroom

AT DEER PARK NORTH



Students in Grade 3 and 4 at Deer Park North Primary School had the experience of a lifetime this term when music was added to their weekly curriculum.

Following on from an interactive performance in May by The Song Room at Williamstown Town Hall, six schools from across the West were selected by Western Chances and The Song Room to participate in a 10 week in-school workshop. Students who showed talent and enthusiasm in the musical area will then begin sessions of more intensive music classes with The Song Room.

The Song Room provided teaching artist Craig Nankervis to Deer Park North Primary to present a tailored, interactive workshop program. The aim was to enhance the students' engagement and learning outcomes. Mr Nankervis worked together with Western Chances to identify and provide new opportunities for talented students.

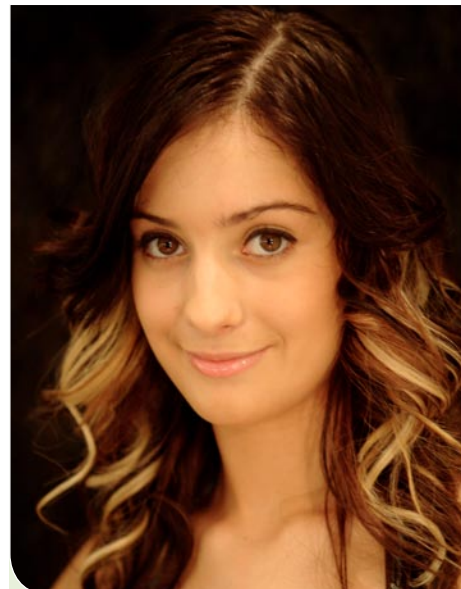
Western Chances Founding Chair, Mrs Terry Bracks, believes this workshop program not

only gave the students an enhanced musical experience but also helped to identify students with particular talents.

'Western Chances, in this partnership with The Song Room, aims to provide the school community with greater access to music and arts education, inspire creativity and encourage talented students to enhance their skills. This has been achieved in leaps and bounds through the comprehensive program we have delivered with The Song Room this year,' Mrs Bracks said.

Stage 3 of the program will follow for 30 selected students who have shown potential and talent from the Stage 2 workshop programs. Intensive workshops will be held in the September school holidays at Footscray Community Arts Centre.

Western Chances will also provide scholarships to talented students emerging from Stage 3 to encourage and enhance their musical abilities.



## Rian's Story

Rian is currently studying a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Psychology and Media Studies which she is due to complete in June 2007.

Whilst attending high school, Rian was always asked what she wanted to be when she was older. She used to respond 'a criminal lawyer', having always been interested in what makes a person commit a crime, and what goes through their mind the second they choose to go through with the act. Then Rian realised law was not for her, it was Forensic Psychology that held the answers to what she refers to as 'her bizarre questions'.

In 2004 when Rian was in year 12, she applied for a Western Chances Scholarship which she successfully obtained. For the past two years Western Chances has continued to assist her to reach her goals by providing the funds for her university text books.

'By having this extra support I am able to attend university without my economic status holding me back,' Rian said.

'The Western Chances scholarship has encouraged me to pursue my dream to become a Forensic Psychologist which will now enable me to achieve my full potential in life.

'Thank you Western Chances for all of your support,' she added.



# Free Debate

## BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING AND REASONED DEBATE

Creative expression is a theme which underpins many of the programs Western Chances brings to young people in the West and Free Debate is a new program which delivers just that.

Launching at Bayside College Junior School in August/September 2006, a group of Year 9 students are learning skills in communication and persuasion through a fun and effective coaching program, delivered by not for profit organisation Free Debate.

Founded by a group of friends who all have a strong background in debating, public speaking and academia, Free Debate operates with the aim of helping schools and students to develop confidence in public speaking, as well as critical thinking skills that allow for articulate and reasoned debate.

Michael Redding, Teacher at Bayside College said: "The inclusion of this debating program in the Year 9 curriculum over a 4 week period is the perfect complement to other academic activities.

'It will help students learn to formulate and clearly articulate their opinions, as well as teaching structure and discipline that is applicable in all aspects of education.

'It is a fantastic set of skills for students to develop and we are very pleased to have this support from such professionals as the team at Free Debate,' he said.

Tim Sonreich, Leader of the Free Debate program said: 'Victoria has a long history of excellence in both school and university debating, but the opportunity to participate successfully in the Victorian debating community has traditionally been denied to those students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

'We are thrilled that we can help open the door to this vibrant and challenging activity in Melbourne's West', he said.

Helen Worlidge, Executive Officer, Western Chances, who has brokered the relationship with Free Debate says 'debate training is an excellent tool for developing confidence, intellectual skills, teamwork and self-esteem for individuals, but it's also a fantastic way to build pride at the school and community level.

'This program is very aligned to the outcomes we are looking to deliver to schools and young people and we are very fortunate that the people from Free Debate who give up their own time to run these programs are so committed to working with Western Chances and schools across the West,' Helen said.

Programs can be set up with minimal logistical input and maintained indefinitely if desired at minimal cost. We encourage any schools who are interested in setting up a program to contact Western Chances.

## TYPICAL PROGRAM

### Week 1: Introduction to debating

- Teaching students the difference between an argument and opinion (assertion)
- Getting all students to speak
- Introducing students to rebuttal

### Week 2: Cases and Teams

- Introducing the 3 on 3 format
- Explaining how effective team splits work
- Teaching students how the different speaker roles operate

### Week 3: Research and preparation

- Teaching students how to research topics
- Teaching students how to prepare a debate (Case, Definition, Model)
- Advice on issues or techniques for the different sides of the debate

### Week 4: Manner, Debate and Graduation

- Teaching students to speak persuasively
- Conducting complete 3 on 3 debate (3-4 minute speaking)
- Providing detailed feedback from experienced adjudicators
- Providing students with certificates

## CPR

### THE PERFECT PROFILE BUILDING PARTNER

When Western Chances was founded in 2003, an original board member believed one of the keys to success was to drive positive media and profile the achievements of young people in the West.

Kelvyn Lavelle was that board member who invited CPR, a communications and public relations firm he worked for at the time, to get on board and help out. CPR began to assist with creating a media presence for Western Chances within the western suburbs and Melbourne metro areas on a pro bono basis and hasn't looked back.

The aim was to build awareness within industry, education, local government and small business sectors. To date the media presence has been successful in bringing the organisation to the attention of many potential investors and partners, the lifeline of Western Chances.

Recently CPR facilitated a relationship with Leader Newspapers and The Times, to assist Western Chances with a strategic 'Young Leaders' profile section in their newspapers. This new section has become a bi-monthly feature within the Melton, Moonee Valley and Brimbank Leader publications, profiling young people who are achieving outstanding success.



CPR Adviser, Jaki Colgan, believes that media relationships are vital to creating community awareness around Western Chances and generating a positive profile.

'By involving the media and highlighting the wonderful achievements of both Western Chances and the young people involved, it has become possible to engage new investors and program partners which directly benefit scholarship recipients.

'Western Chances is an organisation we are proud to be supporting,' she said.

Terry Bracks applauds the support CPR provides to Western Chances and says 'without CPR, attracting media support from Leader Community Newspapers, The Times and also mainstream press, The Age and Herald Sun, it would be much more difficult for a very lean organisation like Western Chances.

'We are extremely thankful for CPR's continued support in assisting us to generate publicity which allows for the word to be spread about great success stories and highlights the Best of the West!' she concluded.

# ACMI: Western Stories

EXPRESSIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Sponsored by Village Roadshow, the ACMI Digital Storytelling project allowed ten students from three secondary schools in the Western Suburbs to create an autobiographical 'mini-movie'.

In consultation with Western Chances, the students for the first program of 2006 were selected by their schools for their creativity and potential to pursue further education in media studies. Ten students and three teachers participated in a workshop at ACMI's studios at Federation Square that took place in the June school holiday period.

Each student was introduced to the tools of digital recording by ACMI facilitators. They learned a range of skills including design, scripting, filming, editing and producing.

The students wrote their own stories – the subjects were people, places and experiences that are important to them. By combining the visual elements of photography with a

personal story and voiceover, the students produced compelling and engaging three-minute stories.

The stories were played in the ACMI screen pit on the evening of 25 July in front of the students, their families, friends and Western Chances sponsors.

Western Stories: Expressions for the Future, is an inspirational collection of work from young people which demonstrates their concerns, motivations and ability to learn the skills of digital media.

The stories were uploaded to the ACMI Memory Grid on 19 August so they can be viewed by any visitors to ACMI.

We hope their introduction to a new creative discipline will encourage them to build their own Bridge to the Future.

The second WC-ACMI Program for 2006 will take place in the Term 3 September holidays.



## Sunshine college speech of thanks

TUESDAY 8TH AUGUST 2006

Mrs Worlidge and the Board of Western Chances, Donors and Supporters.

On behalf of the recipients of Western Chances scholarships, we wish to thank you for the opportunities you've made available to us as scholarship recipients. Your generosity and hard work will not go to waste as these opportunities enhance and support our talents, helping us to get one step closer to achieving our individual goals.

In addition, we wish to thank our teachers who believed in our potential and nominated us. We hope you continue to support us in our journey to achieve our goals.

Most of all we would like to thank the many generous sponsors who fund the scholarships and help make dreams come true. May we see continued support from you in the future.

In closing, I wish to say a very big thank you to Western Chances for making this possible.

Student at Sunshine College

