

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



JOINT CEO AND CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

"To improve lives through strategic collaborations..."Early in 2024 IELLEN ratified a Strategic Plan, with this new Mission and Vision Statement. We're pleased to report that the Vision and the Plan were translated into action, 2024 a year of additional activity, solid achievements, and great results.

A dynamic staff team engaged with over 300 stakeholders: schools, not-for-profits, employers, and LGAs. This engagement led IELLEN to exceed Key Performance Indicators in our School to Work Agreement. The Strategic Plan also helped inform efforts to growing our visibility and to explore ways to ensure our sustainability. Fortunately we were successful with several funding applications, which are outlined in this Report.

We're pleased to report that we did impact on young lives through strategic collaborations. The number of young people who interacted with our programs was 3,645. For a small organisation we made a big impact in 2024.

SCHOOL – INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

2024 was the second year of a three year Common Funding Agreement (CFA) with the Victorian department of Education (DE). 31 LLEN organisations across the state ("Vic LLENs") are contracted to provide school employer engagement services for the benefit of secondary school students: sourcing and promoting work place learning opportunities with employers, and running career-related events / activities.

Throughout the year we maintained the importance of exposing students to vocational careers, strongly promoting Work Based Learning such as Work Experience. IELLEN exceeded that KPI, facilitating 314 placements, 227 in Work Experience and 122 in Structured Workplace Learning. This result was 25% above target.

Career-industry events were varied, among them being mock job interview events; career and trade expos; classroom sessions with guest speakers / hands on activities; and workplace visits. Of the 19 school-industry events we conducted, 14 of them supported or promoted vocational based careers, including two non-traditional trade based careers events at an all girls' school for Year 10 students. IELLEN staff also secured vocationally-oriented stallholders for school based career expos, also focusing on Year 10 students.

All in all, it was a most successful year. Our reach and engagement with schools, and with industry, were both wider than ever. For example of the 45 schools in our catchment we now engage with most of them, and with regards government schools this engagement is 100%. In addition in 2024 we secured sixteen more employers to host student placements, and also found more industry partners to support tours, expos, and guest speaker sessions.

These results were supported by the Department of Education, another key stakeholder and supporter of the work we do. DE maintains a state wide portal, a valued central resource. During 2024 IELLEN continued positive relationships with DE regional staff, and we contributed to collaborative meetings, serving as a committee member of a School-Industry Roundtable, a well attended event that promoted Work Experience.

Throughout the year we also collaborated with other LLENs, regionally and statewide. We continued a productive partnership with BGKLLLEN, cohosting large events to support the VCE VM cohort and to promote VET pathways. As IELLEN has relatively small VCE VM enrolments, these joint events meant employers / partners had access to a greater number of students, ensuring the offerings were strongly supported. Feedback from schools and students was overwhelmingly positive. Joint events will again be offered in 2025.



**TO IMPROVE
LIVES THROUGH
STRATEGIC
COLLABORATIONS**



EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY NETWORKS

In 2024 IELLEN was an active member of key networks, with two highlighted here.

IELLEN stepped up as an existing member and into the Chair role of the Australian Apprenticeship Disability Network, AADN (previously the Melbourne Apprenticeship Disability Network, or MADN). This network aims to support and increase opportunities, with a particular focus on traineeships and apprenticeships. AADN has continued to grow, now with more than sixty members, all keen to improve employment outcomes for people with disability. Membership comprises apprenticeship disability, and industry groups, eg TAFE and private RTOs, Group Training Organisations, and Disability Employment Services.

Among AADN's achievements in 2024 was being invited to contribute to the Federal Government's Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System, the Incentive System provides financial support to apprentices, trainees and employers working in priority industries. This contribution was recognised with over 300 references to people with disability in the final report, and with the MADN submission being quoted a number of times. In 2025 AADN aims to increase its reach, improving sustainable outcomes for people with disability.

Another key network of which we are a member is the Yarra Careers Group (YCG). This comprises over 100 stakeholders, mostly schools (34 out of the 45 schools in our catchment) as well as tertiary providers. The YCG focuses on career pathways for secondary students, with meetings often including guest/industry speakers. Network meetings also address challenges for schools and industry, and issues raised helps guide IELLEN develop appropriate and relevant events.



NEW IELLEN INITIATIVES

Inner East VET Cluster

At the end of 2023 DE advised LLENs that the Department was looking for LLENs to lead VET Clusters in the long term, 2024 identified as a year of transition. New VET Clusters would be facilitated by LLENs in partnership with schools and LLENs. DE announced that funding would be allocated, LLENs being able to apply for Cluster Transition Funding coordination.

Prior to DE announcing that funding would be available, IELLEN had allocated staffing costs towards a part-time VET Cluster Coordinator. We recruited for and appointed a Co-ordinator in March. Penny Vakakis, who had long term experience overseeing the Inner Melbourne VET Cluster joined the IELLEN, enabling our organization to quickly able to lay the groundings for a successful start. Liaising with DE staff (Central and regional) we brought together Principals and other key players, to form a Governance Group. A funding application, a Terms of Reference and an MOU were developed, ratified and approved.



By the end of July IELLEN had completed key tasks to successfully establish the Inner Eastern VET Cluster.

DE funding enabled IELLEN to increase the Co-ordinator's hours and ensure all portal costs could be covered. Our Co-ordinator compiled and distributed a VET Handbook for member schools, and the Governance Group ratified utilisation of a portal for the Cluster. This portal, built by About Today, was launched in August with our VET Cluster continuing to liaise and consult with schools and RTOs during the second half of the year. The fruits of these efforts were significant. More than fifty schools became members, with over 200 students expected to benefit from VET courses during 2025.

Safer Families Project (Vic Police Partnership)

Throughout 2024 IELLEN continued to build on its partnerships and strategic collaborations. Since 2021 IELLEN has had an MOU in place with Victoria Police, whereby members of the Pro-Active Policing Unit refer young people and or their families to us, ie when it's identified that community supports / services would be appropriate and of benefit. As IELLEN had previously been unable to secure external funding to support such a service, the Committee of Management agreed to draw on accumulated savings to underwrite costs of providing this project. In 2024 there was some good news. IELLEN secured a grant from Metro Trains to help fund the Safer Families project into 2025. The project is now providing assessment of people referred by Vic Police, enabling us to offer individually tailored responses. Once again, our thanks go to Metro Trains. We look forward to offering these services until at least the end of June 2025.



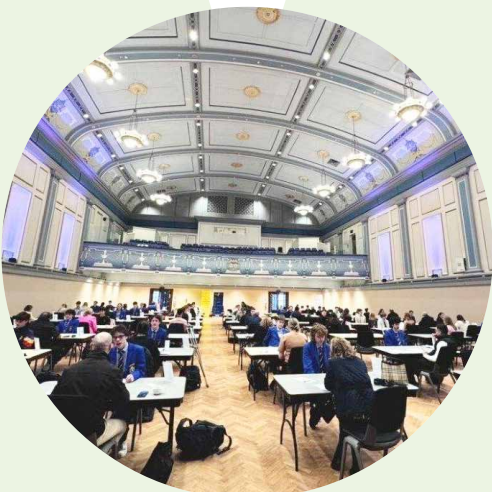
Young Carers Project

Another way we utilise partnerships is to improve lives of specific cohorts. There are thousands of young carer students across the state. While many have high levels of resilience, they can often face challenges to stay in school or find and maintain work. Late in 2024 we sought and won a small grant from Carers Victoria under the Victorian Government "Connecting Carers in their Community" program. This funding will enable a unique IELLEN school – partnership initiative through a Young Carers project which will be provided in 2025.

headspace

As 2024 ended IELLEN was welcomed as a Consortium Partner for a new headspace site in South Melbourne. We look forward to supporting lead agency Access Health and Community, along with other partners, to oversee the new service. headspace South Melbourne is to support young people aged 12–25 years with mental health, physical health (including sexual health), and alcohol and other drug services. IELLEN staff will offer secondary consultations, especially with regards work and study support.





SUMMING UP 2024 AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In summary 2024 has been a most successful year.

As an organization with less than 7 EFT staff, IELLEN can claim a big impact in 2024.

IELLEN was among the first LLENs to receive VET Cluster Transition Funding. The IE VET Cluster was quickly established, attracting 50+ member schools, with VET courses confirmed for 2025.

With regards to the School to Work Program we exceeded KPI 1 and KPI 2 by 30%.

A dynamic team engaged with over 300 stakeholders: schools, not-for-profits, employers, and LGAs.

The number of young people interacting with our programs was 3,645, a significant figure.

We can proudly state that a dedicated team helps meet community needs and improve lives.

At this point we wish to thank and acknowledge the 2024 team:

Monica Mandy, Erica Page and John Broughton, for valuable support work across the organization, contributing to 2024 outcomes;

Penny Vakakis, who was lured out of retirement to drive the successful establishment of the IE VET Cluster in its first year;

Dennis Cindric and Tracey Fenton, who have been with IELLEN for more eight years, and with their considerable experience made 2024 another notable year of achievement.

Finally we acknowledge the Committee of Management for strategic oversight and vital contribution and input into our new Strategic Plan.

One of the actions under the Plan is succession planning. In 2024 we bade farewell to two CoM members, Karen Kim and Nathan Chisholm. We thank them both for their service.

We were pleased that we successfully recruited three new CoM members in 2024, welcoming Maria Di Dio, Elise Hilton and Michael Coate.

We extend our gratitude to the Executive Committee: Bronwen Thompson, David Paton, and Gary Buckeridge for another year of voluntary service, and to TAFE representatives Philip Javier, and Lilly Smolenskaya for their keen involvement and support.

IELLEN is indeed made up of a talented and highly skilled groups of people, whether its our dedicated paid staff or volunteer Committee members.

We are proud to be making a difference.

**Andrew Neophytou (CEO) and
Sam Joukadjian (Chairperson)**

IELLEN ANNUAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

Our AGM & Awards breakfast is always a highlight, and last year seventy people attended our May event. Andrew Neophytou (CEO) announced the winners, with IELLEN Chairperson Sam Joukadjian presenting certificates, our student winners also receiving gift vouchers.



The nine awards recipients were:

- Oakwood School (Caulfield campus), which was presented with a Partnership Award for its work with the IELLEN on the successful Cooking to Connect project.
- Citywide, Heritage Care (Epping), and South Yarra BMW, all of which received "Employer Recognition Awards" given "for their ongoing commitment and support of student industry placements, and a willingness to support students who may have additional needs."
- Five young people who were recognised with Student Recognition Awards. They had attended these schools: Loreto College, Melbourne High, Siena College, Prahran High, and Youth2Industry College. All five were acknowledged for their resilience, notable achievements, or positive contributions. Congratulations once again to Georgia, Sam, Majella, Isabella, and Abdek.

300

Number of stakeholders
(schools, not-for-profits, employers,
and LGAs) engaged

3,645

Number of young people
interacting with IELLEN programs



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