

CEO Chatter

Dear all,

As we approach the end of 2024, I want to take a moment to reflect on the past year and the many activities at WRCC. Our college continues to focus on our organisational purpose: building, strengthening, and reducing marginalising barriers within the communities we serve through education.

I want to emphasise that WRCC is a not-for-profit community asset, centred and owned by the community. It is your college, and I am pleased to provide a brief outline of how our 2024 activities have focused on enhancing the community through education.

Global social research highlights the socio-economic benefits of participating in education and formal learning activities. In essence, the more individuals or communities engage in learning, the greater the socio-economic benefits. There is a direct correlation between educational achievement and the health and well-being of the community.

With this in mind, the table below shows the total number of students who participated in college activities during the 2021–2024 calendar years:

2024 Educational Activity 01/01/2024 to 05/12/2024

Year	2024	2023	2022	2021
Total Students	2,786	2,437	2,332	2,268

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You will note the significant growth in student numbers from 2021 to 2024. However, the College continues to rebuild from the impacts of COVID-19, where student numbers peaked at 3,000. Additionally, we worked with over 500 businesses across the Western Riverina to assist with workforce skills development.

I believe the numbers presented highlight the positive impact of the college's actions in supporting socio-economic growth in the Western Riverina communities. Despite the challenges of inflation and increased living costs, and without increases in government funding for Vocational Education for many years, the college has not increased fee-for-service course costs during 2024. This decision has been challenging, but our focus remains on supporting the community.

I wish you all the very best for the festive season and look forward to seeing you at the college in 2025.

Best wishes,
David Martin, CEO

VET Manager's Report

This year has been incredibly busy, with growing demand for our vocational courses not just locally, but across a wider region. Our trainers have travelled over 200km to deliver training, bringing opportunities to small communities that deeply value access to education in their own towns.

We continued to offer two full qualifications: **Certificate III in Fitness** and **Certificate III in Individual Support**, the latter remaining a popular choice for students. For the first time, we introduced rolling enrolments for Certificate III in Individual Support, allowing flexible entry and exit points throughout the course.

Short courses such as **RSA, RCG, First Aid, CPR**, and various **High-Risk Work licenses** have seen steady participation, reflecting ongoing demand for these essential skills.

This year, we welcomed new trainers: **Justin Snaidero**, who is training and assessing in Forklift operations and White Card courses, and **Dusty Rogers**, also training Forklift courses. With the addition of **Louie Doon** as a SafeWork assessor, we now have a team of five dedicated trainers and assessors and four SafeWork Assessors for Forklift operations.

We also delivered customised programs for Kurrajong Waratah, a Disability Support Service. Participants gained valuable skills in areas such as First Aid, Food Hygiene, Customer Service, Coffee Preparation using a Coffee Machine, and Hosting Events/Lunches.

Our trainers dedicated significant effort to designing these programs, ensuring they were tailored to meet the unique needs of the participants and deliver the best possible outcomes. Their hard work and commitment truly made a difference in equipping participants with practical, real-world skills.

Congratulations to Luke Bootes, a finalist for the Skills for Study and Life Award at the CCA Student of the Year event. This award celebrates learners who have developed essential foundational skills for study and life.

Identified by SSO Sophie Bozic for his determination and commitment, Luke (pictured with David Martin) worked hard to gain the competencies needed to achieve his goal of securing employment. Thanks to his dedication, Luke not only met his goals but is now thriving in a job within the hospitality industry. Well done, Luke!



Looking ahead, **2025** will bring significant changes with the introduction of new **RTO standards**, effective from **1 July 2025**. While these updates will require RTOs to align all systems and processes with the new standards, the impact on trainers and assessors will be the same. The focus will shift towards a stronger emphasis on demonstrating and maintaining **industry currency and updating qualifications and licences**. Trainers can achieve this by:

- Subscribing to relevant newsletters.
- Being members of industry groups.
- Engaging in tasks or activities that maintain and showcase their skills, such as casual or part-time work or volunteer roles.
- Access training with an independent RTO to update qualification e.g.: First Aid.

For example, if delivering First Aid, trainers may need to show how they use First Aid skills in their job roles or community/volunteer commitments.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our administration staff and Student Support and Outreach Support Officers, who serve as the first point of contact for prospective students and employers seeking training for their teams. Their professionalism and commitment set the tone for the exceptional service WRCC provides.

At the heart of Vocational Education and Training is a student-centred approach, and this is where WRCC excels —putting students and their needs first in everything we do.

***Thank you for your dedication this year,
and here's to a successful 2025!***

Sue Reynolds, VET Manager



Compliance & Training Update

Key Updates

- **Trainer Matrix and PD Logs:** We're almost complete in trainer submission of resumes and PD logs 2024. Need help? Reach out to Manshant or Shivani for assistance.
- **Trainer Requirements for TAE:** The industry has reverted back to acceptance of the 2010 qualification for Trainers and Assessors, TAE40110, without the 2-unit updates from 2018. This will allow previous Trainers the freedom to re-enter the industry, by relaxing the requirements somewhat.

Success Stories

- **Validation:** Fitness units, Forklift, FSK and Aged Care Networks at the VET Managers Meeting in November 2024.

Important Dates

- **Compliance Check:** November 15th
- **Professional Development Day:** December 17th
- **Implementation of the new Standards to come into action on 1 July 2025**



CCA Conference

The Community Colleges Australia (CCA) 2024 Annual Conference took place in Sydney on October 21-23, 2024.

The 2024 Conference theme was *“Creative Resilience: Adapting and thriving in an uncertain world”* and was attended by CEO David Martin, VET Manager Sue Reynolds, Outreach Support Officer Kiara Duncan and two of our board members, Alex Davies and Jasmine Hussain.



Moving back into 23 Hickey Crescent

During October / November WRCC Staff moved all our equipment, furniture and materials from “over the road” at East Griffith Shops following the move of WRCS (School) to their new location. Gradually we re-found our place in the WRCC building, and got a new coat of paint in the training rooms. Admin Staff are enjoying more room for storage and personal workspaces.



Leeton Campus Report

First of all, I would like to thank everyone at WRCC for being so supportive, patient and kind.

I was here at the Leeton office back in 2018 and then Covid hit us ... but, I'm back!!! It's only been 4 weeks, but it's been great.

There's still so much to learn but I'm excited to be taking on the role of Leeton Office Manager.

I've been out and about, cruising the streets of Leeton, meeting lots of people to find out what their needs are and what we can do for them. I plan to venture out further in the new year.

I had my first road trip with Kiara. We visited Deniliquin, Finley and Berrigan. Our trip was very successful and I learnt a lot from being her sidekick for the day.

Our classes in Leeton over the last few weeks have been very successful.

I am hoping for a great 2025, with lots of students entering our doors and for us to be able to help those in need to grow their skills and confidence to enable them to move forward.

I'm very grateful to have been given this opportunity. I'm looking forward to what's ahead and making a difference.

Kim Handsaker, Leeton Campus Manager



WRCC farewells Ron Arel and wishes him all the best in his new role in Learning and Development with Mawson's in Leeton.

High Risk Work Courses at WRCC

A White Card Course for speakers of English as a Second Language course was a great success this term, thanks to the hard work of Trainer Sue Reynolds and Student Support Officer Sophie Bozic.





WHS & Mental Health – Preventing psychological harm

Safework correspondence this October centred around requirements to consult with workers about work health and safety.

Consultation is more than talking to workers, it is a two-way process where workers can have a voice to inform decisions on how to make their workplace healthier and safer.



Scan or click
for more

Preventing Psychological Harm: First Steps for Small Business sets out three things businesses can do to help protect mental health at work:

1. Talk to your workers
2. Think about your experiences with your workers
3. Make changes to work.

The resource is based on the principle of good work design, or 'fixing the work, not the worker'. This means changing things like rosters, deadlines and facilities to make work safer, rather than changing workers' behaviour.



Scan or click
for more

Consulting your workers about psychosocial hazards and risks fact sheet gives more detail on how to talk to workers about what's impacting their mental health at work.



Scan or click to
read the Resources

Trainer News



Sheila Marcus took part in the Dublin Marathon on her November holiday to the Green Isle.

She had some close encounters with various celebrities, with Colin Farrell checking in on her social media and a photo op with Keith from Boyzone!

We're happy to have her back with us after all her adventures.



Birthday Celebrations

Happy Birthday to **Sheila** and **Kiara** (pictured with a trophy from the Bowling Championship)



WRCC and the Community

Digital Sisters AI Courses 2024

This term saw the wrap up of a series of four courses held from 22 August to 2 December at WRCC and Griffith Retirement Estate for women 55+ in the area of Digital Literacy, and specifically the emergence of new technologies in AI. Updating digital skills at every age and stage is essential for empowerment and continued use of / access to essential services and resources.

Participants really enjoyed the course content – **AI for Good** – and experienced that Artificial Intelligence is not all bad news, rather it has some very practical and positive applications for everyday life. AI for Good!



“
... the “Hey Siri – Find My Phone” command is now currently enhancing the time management and alleviating frustration for many women ...
”

The course covered where we are already experiencing the use of AI in our lives (but may not be aware of it!) for example chatbots on Energy/Insurance websites, Google maps, and suggestions for friends and watching on Facebook and Netflix.

We learned about Voice Assistants and how to use Siri and Alexa, how to access ChatGPT and what is generative AI. Participants also saw some apps to use for gardening, reminders, and health trackers that are powered by AI. We also covered staying safe online and in AI, and how to detect and report scams.

What people liked most about the course was Google Lens and Siri. They used the Google Lens app to point and snap with their camera and identify an object or a language and automatically translate it.

Many people loved turning on the torch automatically with their phones by saying “Hey Siri – turn on my torch” and turn it off again, no typing or passwords required. Great for use when finding your keys in a large, pesky bag.

Also, the “Hey Siri – Find My Phone” command is now currently enhancing the time management and alleviating frustration for many women all around Griffith.

*Thank you for the partnership between **WRCC and Soroptimist International** who provided learning support for the courses. Our much-appreciated Digital Mentors for the course, Gerry Rohan, Filomena Pingiaro, Will Mead and Patricia Clarke learned and worked all year to bring this program to fruition.*

*The course was funded by the organisation **Good Things Foundation** and was implemented by 20+ community organisations Australia-wide.*



Scan or click to visit
**Good Things Foundation /
Closing the Digital Divide**

WRCC and the Community



SELA – Speaking English for Living in Australia

In this our sixth term in the Women's only English program, we took the learning into practical skills and combined those with the production of readers that used the actions, people and vocabulary that were learned in the practical sessions. Participants learned how to make a greeting card, sandwiches and wraps, how to do simple exercises to be Fit for Life, how to use First Aid kits and make/go to appointments with Nurse Trish, and hand and face care. We also had a visit to Pat Cox's house for a garden visit and an experience of Aussie hospitality.

Our focus was task-based learning, learning while doing. The reader set we produced were used for homework, and practice at home with families. We also generated word cards for vocabulary and review each week, as well as having a lot of fun along the way.

We could not hold this program without the invaluable support of our partner organisations Soroptimist International Griffith, and Centacare Southwest. Our great appreciation to them, and the ladies who come to class each week and participate wholeheartedly in their learning journeys.

Kurrajong Youth Program

Cathy Ziliotto and Sophie Bozic attended the **Kurrajong Youth Employment Assistance Program (YEA Program)** Graduation this term, where they presented the students with their awards for their First Aid achieved during the year.

Cathy will continue working with them to do Barista Skills and FSK (Language, Literacy & Numeracy) Skills and Kristy Files will be assisting them with their RSA. It was a lovely morning had by all.



WRCC in Western Riverina: Outreach update

Kim Handsaker and Kiara Duncan (Outreach Support Officer) headed to Berrigan, Finley and Deniliquin to do some outreaching on Thursday 5th December to gather some interested businesses for First Aid to be held on 13 December in Deniliquin. They visited many locations (as always!), making connections at Berrigan Shire Council, Uniting Care Berrigan, Edward River Council, Sureway Deniliquin and Finley Regional Care.

This training has been well received by the community in Deniliquin who have not had opportunities in their town since May this year due to a lack of Trainer. New trainer Alison Leulf is delivering in these locations for WRCC and looking increasing training events for next year 2025 to service demand.

Kristy Files and Kiara went to Hay to deliver RSA and RGS on the 9th and 10th November for Youth, organised together with Hay council. There was a high demand, so Kristy went back out on the 13th November for another RSA for the remaining interested students.

WRCC has since organised RGS for 22nd January for the other students who missed out. It was found there was also a need for Individual Support courses in outlying communities.

Outreach funding is nearing its end, but the department is hoping for future funding to keep the outreach support position going as there is a high need.

What has been achieved this year in NSW by the Outreach Program overall:

- 4,681 learners supported
- 390 learners referred to Wrap Around Services
- 2,502 new enrolments supported by OSO
- 2,457 learners retained in study
- 1,085 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 1,325 CALD
- 1,045 Disability
- 474 Mental Health
- 1,154 -24yrs
- 1,801 LLNDE
- 2,425 Economic Disadvantage
- 108 Domestic Violence
- 589 Vulnerable Youth

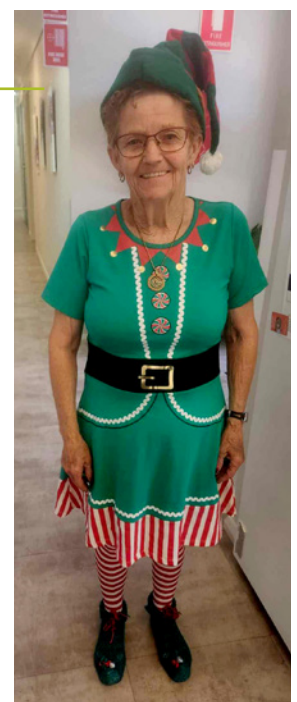
Christmas Celebrations

Happily, we have seen some good fun and cheer at WRCC in the lead up to Christmas and Holidays. Our friendly Christmas Elf visited (coming out of retirement for a special appearance) – Di Duncan spreading festive vibes.

Individual Support class – Griffith held a beautiful potluck Christmas dinner together, bringing delicious dishes to share from the many different cultures involved in the course. Trainer Alison Quinn was grateful to her class for all the presents they brought. It's been a fantastic year of growth for these students with so much achieved.

WRCC will shut down from Friday 20 December COB, returning to work on Monday 6 January.

Happy holidays everyone!!



CHRISTMAS COOKING

with Jo Simpson

Mars Reindeers



I made these this week for gift bags for my son's basketball team. The kids loved them. They are yummy as well as cute.

INGREDIENTS

4 Mars Bars

3 cups Rice Bubbles

90g butter

180-gram block of milk chocolate

Red M&Ms

Pretzels

Icing eyes (from Coles cake decorating section)

Black icing optional (I used a tube from Coles)

METHOD

1. Line a 28cm x 18cm (7 x 11inch) slice tin with baking paper.
2. In a medium saucepan, add butter and roughly chopped Mars Bars. Stir over a medium-low heat until melted and combined.
3. Place Rice Bubbles into a large heatproof bowl. Add Mars Bar mixture, stir until combined.
4. Press mixture firmly into prepared tin using the back of a spoon. Place in fridge.
5. Place chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl. Place bowl over a medium saucepan of simmering water (don't let water touch the base of the bowl); stir until chocolate is melted and smooth. This can also be done in the microwave in short bursts.
6. Spread chocolate evenly over the slice. Refrigerate for approx. 2 hours or until set before cutting into 12 pieces: 3 across, 4 down.

TO DECORATE

Work on one piece at a time. Heat a teaspoon in hot water and rub the back of it onto the two top corners of a piece of slice to melt the chocolate, stick on the pretzels for the antlers. Do the same to stick on the nose and eyes. Do the mouth with the black icing. Place in a gift bag with extra Christmas treats. Enjoy!

