



CEO Chatter



As 2025 comes to an end, I want to thank you for being part of the Western Riverina Community College. Your support has made this year truly remarkable.

We wish you a happy and safe festive season and hope that 2026 brings you success and good fortune.

This year at WRCC, we celebrated many achievements:

- **Expanded Learning:** We increased access to adult education, particularly in language, literacy, and numeracy.
- **Growth:** Student numbers once again exceeded expectations, showing the strong trust our community places in us.
- **Recognition:** Our influence was highlighted through participation in the Riverina Regional Skills Pilot and by receiving the Community Education Australia Legacy Award for contributions to adult and community education.
- **Innovation and Engagement:** We strengthened partnerships and built structures that continue to evolve in support of learners.

These achievements reflect our purpose, building and strengthening the communities we serve through education. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of the people at WRCC, who drive these successes every day.

Thank you for being part of our journey. We look forward to learning and growing together in 2026!

I look forward to seeing you at the college soon.

Best wishes,

David Martin
CEO, WRCC

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VET Manager's Report – Update by Sue Reynolds

Training Update: A Year of Growth & Achievement

What a fantastic year it has been at WRCC!

We've celebrated many student successes across both campuses, with learners proudly completing their Certificate III in Fitness and Certificate III in Individual Support. Their hard work—and the support of our dedicated staff—continues to shape the welcoming, positive learning environment we're known for.

At WRCC, the student journey starts the moment someone makes an enquiry or enrolls, and continues right through to the final stages of training and assessment.

Every staff member plays an important role in helping our students feel supported. From answering questions and planning courses to providing the right venues and resources, our team has worked tirelessly to give each learner the best possible experience.

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Our presence in the surrounding communities continues to grow. We're delighted to keep providing CPR, RAMOAP, and First Aid training to public schools throughout the Riverina district. The ongoing positive feedback—and repeat bookings each year—are a wonderful acknowledgment of the quality of our training and the relationships we're building.

This year also brought an important industry-wide change. In July, all RTOs were required to align with the new **RTO Outcome Standards 2025**, which place a stronger focus on a student-centred approach to training.

This means ensuring that our systems and processes genuinely support great outcomes for all learners. Understanding these standards is essential for every team member, as they guide how we operate each day.

Why Evidence Matters

Under the 2025 Standards, RTOs must be able to show clear and authentic evidence that they meet each requirement. This isn't just about compliance—it's about demonstrating real quality in everything we do.

(continued overleaf)

Understanding the RTO 2025 Standards

The **Standards for RTOs 2025**, which came into effect on 1 July 2025, introduce a more flexible and outcome-focused framework designed to strengthen the quality of vocational education across Australia.

These standards are built around three key components:

Outcome Standards – requirements that ensure training and assessment lead to high-quality, nationally consistent results.

Compliance Requirements – administrative obligations including Fit and Proper Person Requirements and correct use of the NRT Logo.

Credential Policy – rules covering how qualifications are issued and how assessment validation must be carried out.

The updated standards place a strong emphasis on quality—not just in training and assessment, but also in governance, student support, and the capability of the VET workforce.





VET Manager's Report – Update by Sue Reynolds

(continued)

Why Evidence Matters (continued)

Evidence is important because:

It shows that our training and assessment practices genuinely achieve the outcomes they're designed for.

It supports self-assurance, helping us identify risks early and continuously improve our systems.

It proves that our policies are actively followed—through records such as governance documents, trainer competency evidence, assessment validation, and student support logs.

It helps ASQA verify that our processes truly support learners, from identifying their needs through to successful course completion.

By keeping strong, consistent evidence, we ensure transparency, strengthen the integrity of our work, and continue delivering the high-quality training outcomes our students and communities expect.

As we look back, 2025 has been a year filled with growth, teamwork, and continuous improvement. A heartfelt thank you to everyone at WRCC for the dedication you bring to our students and our communities every day. Together, we've created learning experiences that genuinely make a difference—and that's something we can all be proud of.

In between all the hard work and compliance deadlines, there's been plenty of laughter and fun—and that's something we truly value. We're a great team, and we know how to enjoy ourselves while getting the job done, so let's make sure that never changes!

Leeton Centre Manager's Report

What an incredible year at our Leeton campus!

We've partnered with many local not-for-profit organisations to provide essential training for their volunteers, helping them continue their valuable community work. During **Youth Week**, we collaborated with **Leeton Council** to offer young adults training that opens doors to broader career opportunities.

Our **EARL (Employment All Rounder) program** was a highlight, with 10 students completing all six courses and earning their forklift licenses. Another six students are currently working toward theirs.

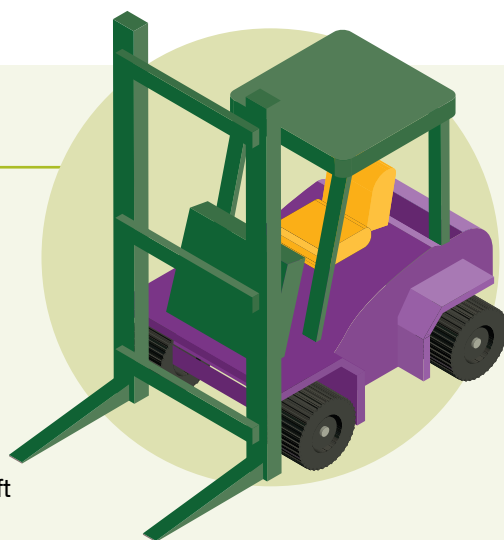
GPSO joined us for a 12-week program focused on road safety, complemented by cooking delicious lunches and creating stunning artwork for the Leeton Show. Looking ahead, **Kurrajong** will join us in the new year, with programs for all 18 students to learn, cook, create art, and—most importantly—have fun!

I was also honoured to attend the **2025 CEA Conference** in Sydney, an inspiring experience for which I'm truly grateful.

A heartfelt thank you to Jo and Dee for their incredible support throughout my first year at WRCC Leeton.

From all of us at the Leeton Campus, we wish you a joyful Christmas filled with love and festivities. See you in 2026!

Kim Handsaker, WRCC Leeton





CEA (Community Education Australia) Conference / 24-26 November



Kim Handsaker, Kristy Files, Sheila Marcus and David Martin, WRCC's CEA Conference delegates.



Kim, Kristy & Sheila at the CEA networking event.



David Martin receiving the Legacy Award at the CEA Conference.

Over two days, the CEA Conference delivered valuable insights from an exceptional group of speakers who generously shared their expertise. The event focused on key themes shaping the future of education and workforce development.

An emphasis was on the need for VET and tertiary sectors to work together to create the best pathways for individual students. This collaboration ensures learners have access to flexible, high-quality options that meet diverse needs.

While AI continues to advance, human skills remain essential. The conference highlighted practical strategies for integrating AI into education to improve efficiency, enhance work capabilities, and prepare students for a rapidly evolving world. AI is increasingly used in workplaces and everyday tasks, offering benefits across all walks of life.

There is strong demand for full qualifications in areas such as childcare, individual support, and business. Additionally, short, intensive courses—such as first aid and CPR—are highly sought after. Life skills training for entry-level roles, including phone etiquette and customer service, is also critical.

Ali Flynn, CEO and founder of Tri Altitude Performance and host of the podcast *Challenges That Change Us*, delivered a moving talk on resilience and overcoming life's challenges. Her session on burnout provided practical insights and strategies for maintaining well-being in demanding environments.

David Martin – Legacy Award

On November 25, as part of the CEA Conference, our **WRCC CEO David Martin** received a most deserved accolade from Community Education Australia. **The Legacy Award** is given for contribution and leadership in the adult education sector.

The award considered his key role in shaping the sectors' peak bodies as Director and Secretary of Community Colleges Australia and CEA.

He has also held leadership roles as CEA Chair and Vice Chair, helping to guide evolution of policy and advocacy.

This award recognises David's vision, service and transformative leadership.

Well done David – we hope the accolade brought home the impact of the work you do for our industry.

Spotlight on: AI & Learning

WRCC has been busy this term upskilling for the future of education and AI learning, attending workshops and training, and workshops at conferences held in Sydney and Melbourne. Here is a snippet of what we have been integrating, all with the goal of better serving students into the future.

AI in Training and Assessment: Embracing the Future

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the way we teach and learn. Rather than resisting this change, trainers and assessors should embrace AI to save time and prepare students for a workforce where AI-driven tools are essential.

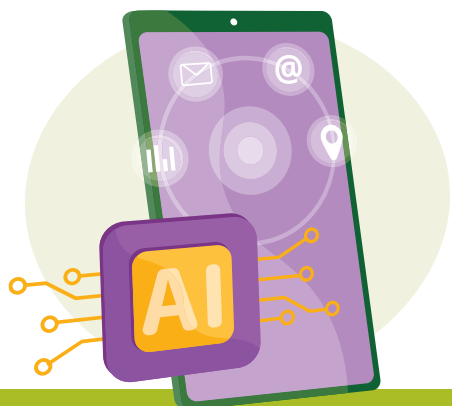
During the recent Rapid AI Learning Workshop I attended, we explored platforms like Gamma for presentations, Mentimeter for interactive polls, CapCut for video editing, and OpenArt for image generation. These tools, along with emerging technologies like Virtual Reality, offer exciting opportunities to enhance engagement and efficiency.

One key takeaway is that AI's effectiveness depends on the quality of prompts we provide. Clear instructions and critical thinking are vital, as AI can produce inaccurate information (hallucinate) or reflect human biases. Establishing guardrails ensures safety and compliance, making tools like Copilot ideal for secure business use.

We also learned about Agentic AI—intelligent assistants that can manage tasks like scheduling and email. By leveraging these innovations, we can automate time-consuming processes and focus on higher-value work.

Report by Kristy Files

(prepared with AI assistance of course 😊)



Harnessing Gen Ai – Learners need skills to use AI

We know that there is an emerging AI divide, not caused by lack of access to it, rather *how we use technology*. It is about gaps in understanding and confidence.

We know that learning is about the social context. Therefore, how can we give our learners key skills to talk about the limitations, dangers and possibilities of these powerful AI tools arriving in our teaching, learning and working environments at a rapid rate?

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Research shows that most people who use AI believe what it tells them. It also shows that the majority do not know how it works. Literacy practices can address these gaps, and teach students to apply AI to everyday tasks, leisure pursuits and professional activities. It is critical for us to discover what people do and what they can't do on AI.

Teachers are beginning to create what they call “bounded corpus”. This is a dedicated AI for students learning, a controlled assistant that won't “hallucinate”. Hallucination is when an AI model invents data because it doesn't have up to date information or details. It is designed to “generate”, therefore create based on patterns and use language to make all answers sound real (they are trained to use language well). A ‘bounded’ AI puts barriers around the information provided, which is already fact checked and is sound. It knows how much AI students use and when, it knows all the work the student has done before. If students don't read certain papers, or use the AI, they risk failing their course. These are ways that educators are “taming and harnessing” AI tools for students benefit.

From ACAL Conference lecture – ‘Bridging the Gap – Empowering adult learners through AI literacy education’ – Dr Katrina Tour, Dr Edwin Creely and Dr Peter Waterhouse, Monash Universities, and ‘Literacy in the time of artificial intelligence’ – Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis.

WRCC & the Community

This term has seen the delivery of some inspiring and well-received courses held in the local community.

Barista Skills & Art for Kurrajong Waratah

Cathy Ziliotto delivered two courses for Kurrajong Waratah – *Coffee Skills Ready* and *Planning an Art Event*. The Coffee course gave participants the tools to make and serve coffee and included customer service skills, and all the necessary experience to hold a Community Café. Planning an Art Event will continue until May 2026 at the Griffith campus.



Cathy Ziliotto, and student work from *Planning an Art Event*.



Skills for Life: Empowering Communication and Digital Literacy

Commencing in Term 3 and continuing through Term 4, WRCC and trainers Sue Reynolds and Manshant Kaur launched *Skills for Life*—a program designed to support both native English speakers and individuals for whom English is a second or additional language.

This course provides a structured and supportive environment for participants seeking to strengthen their reading, writing, listening, speaking, and digital skills. It encourages personal goal setting while fostering collaboration and communication through engaging group activities.



Looking ahead, *Skills for Life* will continue in 2026 as part of the National Skills Agreement (NSA) commitment to literacy and numeracy development. This ensures the program remains adaptable to participants' needs through a combination of accredited Foundation Skills units and tailored non-accredited modules, creating pathways for lifelong learning and personal growth.

Speaking English for Living in Australia

This term saw more beautiful collaboration with the Pakistani ladies, WRCC, Soroptimist International and Centacare. This term we worked on speaking skills for common interactions and used these in an embroidery project which the ladies and support staff completed in class and at home.

This work will be stitched together to form one large piece to be displayed. Watch this space in 2026 for the finished product!



Griffith Career and Employment Expo

In October, Student Services Officer Kiara Duncan represented WRCC at the *Career and Employment Expo*, hosted by the Griffith Business Chamber.

The event was a resounding success, attracting school leavers from all regional high schools as well as members of the public. Attendees had the opportunity to explore a wide range of local and regional career pathways, highlighting the diverse and rewarding options available for professional growth across the Western Riverina region.



Kiara Duncan at the Expo.

Full Qualifications – Spotlight on Aged Care

NEW INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT CLASS Commenced November in Leeton

Alison Quinn and Shirley Shirdon commenced team teaching a new day class in Leeton on 4 November. There are 17 students in the class, a large group, who have to date completed their First Aid units and a communication unit already. They are from all walks of life, working towards the same goal, coming together building great relationships.



Griffith Individual Support

The 2024-26 group are now in their last units of study and are completing their work placement hours. The class got together for a Christmas party (pictured) on 16 December and are now off on a well-deserved break for Christmas and New Years. They return in 2026 for course completion.



A new class for Griffith is planned to start in 2026 with interest building for Term 2.

Graduates from Aged Care qualification

In December, four students from the Leeton 2024-25 class were awarded their Certificate III in Individual Support. Congratulations to Salote, Rafidah, Sevuloni and Mary. We look forward to more successful completions in the New Year, and more qualified professionals in the Aged Care and care industries in our region. Also, congratulations go to Trainers Shirley Shirdon, Raye Martin, Lynda Rhodes and for marking, Alison Quinn. The group has been beautifully supported for Foundation Skills by Jo Simpson and all staff at Leeton Campus throughout their journey.



News in the Aged Care Sector: New Aged Care Act Commenced 1 November 2025

The Australian Government's new **Aged Care Act** came into effect on 1 November 2025. The legislation introduces a rights-based framework that places older people at the centre of care and responds directly to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The act introduces clearer mechanisms for upholding the rights of older people, including improved protections for whistleblowers and stronger governance requirements. The reforms will apply across home, community and residential aged care settings with the new **Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards** and **Support at Home program** forming key pillars of the change.

Single Units – RSA – Responsible Service of Alcohol Liquor & Gaming Industry News

Liquor & Gaming NSW released a standardised RSA suite of materials in November 2025, hosting webinars to support their standardisation. The webinars provided an opportunity for discussion and covered supporting documents for the model, training materials, assessment system, virtual delivery options, and key implementation dates. WRCC looks forward to using the new learning and assessment resources from February 2026 onwards.

Lifestyle & Leisure Courses

Italian Language

Italian language with Teacher Liam continued this term – Level 1, with another full capacity class. Liam will continue next year in term one with Level 2, with a waitlist ready for practice and more learning in 2026.

Discover the Flavours of Thailand

Our *Discover the Flavours of Thailand* cookery course was another fully booked success! Under the expert guidance of Chef Liam, participants learned to prepare—and enjoy—a vibrant menu showcasing authentic Thai cuisine.

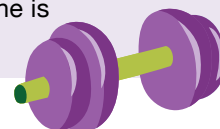
The class focused on creating bold, flavourful dishes using traditional techniques and the freshest seasonal ingredients.

The menu featured Som Tum, a refreshing green papaya salad (subject to seasonal availability); Pad Thai, classic stir-fried noodles served with fresh salad; Massaman Gai, Thailand's renowned chicken curry; and Mango Sticky Rice, a sweet finale combining rice, mango, and coconut.



Fitness Certificate III Graduate – Brian Bortolin

Brian Bortolin's student journey through the Fitness Certificate III with WRCC was a personal one of overcoming obstacles and showing great commitment. We were pleased to present Brian with his certificate at a small ceremony in December, honouring the achievement. Brian is looking to create fitness, health and wellness spaces for men's groups in Griffith and region, giving opportunities to particularly over 50's. He is a passionate advocate for staying fit, flexible and mobile at any age. We look forward to seeing how his projects progress now he is a fully qualified Fitness Instructor. *Congratulations Brian.*



Sheila Marcus

Staff & Trainer News

Our Student Support Officer role has had a few changes this term with the departure of Jacinda Pittari in October, and temporary appointment of Mark Montnager to the position. Mark will be filling in for us until January as SSO.

WRCC is currently actively recruiting for the position, with applications received on the website or directly to eo@wrcc.nsw.edu.au



WRCC celebrated lots of birthdays this term!

31 Oct – Kiara Duncan, 10 Nov – Kim Handsaker, 2 Dec – Sheila Marcus, 3 Dec – Mark Montnager. A lot of cakes and celebrations!

SEASONAL COOKING with Jo Simpson

Korean Beef

This is a new favourite!

We can get 2 meals from this.

Serve with rice and some Asian vegies.
So quick and easy.

I know adding the cucumber salad to the hot meat sounds a little different, but it freshens up the dish beautifully. Trust me!



INGREDIENTS

500 grams Minced Beef
1 tablespoon Vegetable Oil

Sauce

2 cloves Garlic, finely chopped or grated
1tsp Ginger, finely chopped or grated
2 tablespoons Light Soy
1 tablespoon Brown Sugar
1 tablespoon Gochujang or Siracha
1 tsp Sesame Oil

Cucumber Salad

½ Red Onion, cut into thin wedges
1 large, long Cucumber, sliced
1 tablespoon Rice Vinegar (or ordinary)
Pinch of Salt

Garnish (*this is necessary*)

¼ cup toasted sesame seeds
2 spring onions chopped

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine cucumber salad ingredients in a bowl and set aside.
2. Combine sauce ingredients in a bowl and set aside (even ginger and garlic).
3. Heat vegetable oil in pan and brown mince over high heat for 5-7 minutes.
4. Add sauce mixture and cook for 3-4 minutes till it thickens slightly.
5. Mix cucumber salad through beef mixture just before serving.
6. Sprinkle with spring onions and sesame. Yum.
7. Serve with rice and some quickly tossed Asian vegies (optional) also a chilled white (mandatory). 😊

