

# Giving Matters

Stronger together

Winter 2021



Students learning about digital tools used by the CFA.

## From our Chair

Ten years ago our major project - the Education Benalla Program - was rolling out its many activities with schools and other organisations to improve healthy child development and children's educational outcomes. Now, we are seeing significant improvements in children's school readiness and the rate of transition to work or study post-school. This is a wonderful demonstration of what can be achieved with the goodwill and generosity of so many people and organisations within Benalla and beyond. We will be celebrating this 10-year milestone later in the year - I hope you can join us.

Despite the positive results to date, there's a great deal more work needed to ensure all of Benalla's young people have the opportunity to thrive. We are delighted that the Victorian government has recently announced significant Program funding, partnering with philanthropic and local donors to help meet Program costs for the next two years. This comes at a critical moment as Benalla faces the impacts of Covid and we redouble our efforts to support children and young people in need. We ask that those in a position to do so please consider donating to support our important work at this vital time.

Sally Gamble

If you can give,  
please give generously

## Local jobs for local students

After a year of restricted activity, students were full of energy and excited to be out engaging with the community at our recent Careers Day. Local businesses and training providers were just as keen to showcase opportunities to study and build careers in the region.



It's really cool how many job opportunities there are in one building.

FCJ College Student

Careers Day is an annual event coordinated by Tomorrow Today, in partnership with local schools, businesses and training providers. It's popular with students who are keen to learn about future training and work options.

Young people had the chance to participate in varied and interesting workplace visits such as:

- > Witnessing animal check-ups at Rose City Veterinary Hospital
- > Learning about the use of medical equipment and treatments at Benalla Health
- > Observing the operation of heavy machinery at Thales, Schneider Electric and D & R Henderson
- > Learning about and operating the latest gym equipment at Primal Health Club
- > Observing the daily activities at Benalla Racing Club.

Students could also participate in workshops on science, art and design, and engineering presented by The University of Melbourne Dookie Campus, Charles Sturt University, Benalla Art Gallery and La Trobe University.

"It's really cool how many job opportunities there are in one building. The place I visited (Schneider Electric) had engineers, mechanics, electricians, admin and heaps of other roles too." - FCJ College Student.

# Vouchers ease the burden

School can be expensive. Purchasing new books, shoes, uniforms and stationery can be particularly stressful for families struggling financially. Thanks to the wonderful support of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) and the generosity of local donors, Tomorrow Today distributed 390 Back to School vouchers worth \$19,500 to eleven Benalla and district schools. School principals and welfare staff distribute the \$50 Kmart, Target or school uniform shop vouchers to families experiencing financial hardship. 2021 is the seventeenth consecutive year that Tomorrow Today has worked with FRRR to assist local families with back to school expenses. In that time over \$300,000 worth of vouchers have been given to local families. Our sincere appreciation to FRRR for their commitment to assisting rural communities like ours; and to the people locally who give so that extra vouchers can be secured.



Students capturing footage for their digital stories.

## Let me tell you a (digital) story

When Covid forced students to stay home and attempt self-paced learning, it raised concerns. Would there be students feeling isolated, who may disengage with formal education altogether and not return once schools reopened? Tomorrow Today partnered with Benalla P-12 to come up with a project that would be so exciting that students would be keen to return to school and reconnect. That project was Digital Storytelling, where students participated in workshops to develop ideas they wanted to share through video, and then learnt how to capture and edit these ideas to share with the community.

Along with learning new skills, the students reported that they enjoyed

making new friends at school and connecting with family and friends outside of the school community who often became the subject of interviews and short films.

“He has loved the project and has learnt a lot about our family history by talking with his Nan.”

“He’s much more confident and happy to be at school”

“The more she did it the more she enjoyed it. Seemed happier as the term went on”

Local film makers, Jake and Sam Bowtell were engaged to create a short film of the students’ digital storytelling journey. Take a look at the film on our website.

[www.tomorrowtoday.com.au](http://www.tomorrowtoday.com.au)



Kids getting into the swing at our recent Come and Try day.

## A chance to try new activities

Many young people look forward to the weekly outlet of an out of school activity such as football, Guides or basketball. With all activities cancelled in 2020, Benalla’s young people were keen to get active and mix with and make friends.

Tomorrow Today partnered with Benalla Rural City Council and Valley Sport to offer a Come and Try Day. Seventy-seven excited

and energetic young people had the opportunity to try activities offered by eleven local clubs.

Regular participation in sport and cultural activities in the community positively impacts on health and wellbeing, social skills, and engagement in learning. To ensure all Benalla students are able to participate in an activity they enjoy, Tomorrow Today offers financial assistance for registration costs to families who need a hand.

### Tomorrow Today Board Directors

> Sally Gamble: Chair [0428 755 138]

> Georgina Burston

> Melinda Lawley

> Martin Smith

> Marsha Watson

> Liz Chapman OAM

> Louise Pearce

> Nick Taylor

> Florent Thivillier





Marsha Watson is proud to donate to Tomorrow Today.

## Locals who give

Local pharmacist Marsha Watson sees the impact Tomorrow Today is having in our community every day. She also knows that this year in particular will be one where demand for services provided by Tomorrow Today will increase and funding may be a challenge. "I'd known about the work Tomorrow Today was doing in the community, but once I became more involved I was amazed at the depth and breadth of programs and services they provide," says Marsha.

The past year has been tough for many families and businesses, and Marsha says she feels fortunate to own a business that was classed as an essential service. She recognised that she was in a position to donate to Tomorrow Today, and is encouraging

others in a similar position to give generously.

"I know the money donated is directly benefiting the people I interact with every day in my business," Marsha explains. "Now is the time that our community needs our support the most, to secure the future of our children and young people. To those individuals and businesses that can, I urge you to consider donating to a local organisation with a long history of providing effective programs targeting local needs."

If you or your business are in a position to donate to Tomorrow Today, please head to our website to donate online or fill in and return the form over the page.



Tahlia Allen (pictured at PEEP) is now training in Early Childhood Education and Support.

## Apprenticeship inspires career

Tomorrow Today proudly offers an annual school-based apprenticeship within our Early Years programs. Local student Tahlia Allen took up this opportunity in 2020, while completing her Year 12 studies at Benalla P-12 College.



**I know what I'm doing with my life now. I didn't know that before I came here (Tomorrow Today).**

Tahlia Allen

Tahlia was no stranger to Tomorrow Today. In 2017 Tahlia did our Connect9 mentoring program, then our Great Start to Work program in 2018. In 2019 she participated in work experience in our PEEP room, returning as a volunteer in 2020.

Tahlia has a natural rapport with children and our staff saw her potential to continue her studies in the area of early childhood development.

Tahlia is now engaged in Early Childhood Education and Support training at GOTAFE.

"I know what I'm doing with my life now. I didn't know that before I came here (Tomorrow Today)."

## PEEP takes a walk

Tomorrow Today found new ways to support families during the Covid lockdowns. As we couldn't run groups, we offered 'Walk and Talks' in the park. Our PEEP Walk and Talks enabled families to talk to another adult outside their household. Some needed advice and referrals

to local services while others just needed the chance to share their thoughts, worries and challenges. Our PEEP team met with 49 families for 120 Walk and Talks. Many parents expressed their deep appreciation for the opportunity to connect with a trusted person outside their family.



**15 PEEP groups run every week**

PEEP Walk and Talks in the sunshine.



# Volunteer Spotlight

Our volunteers are a vital part of our work in the Benalla community. 'Kinder Pals' volunteers visit Benalla preschools each week. They read to children and talk to them about books and kinder activities. Two of our new Kinder Pals volunteers, Jenny and Sheryl, shared their experiences.

Why did you choose to become a Kinder Pal?

Jenny: "I like to

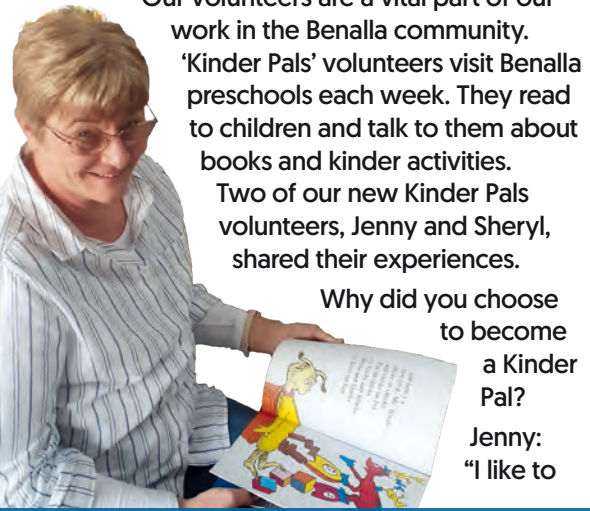
give back to my community and I thought it would be a nice thing to do. I think it's very satisfying helping younger children and I love to read. The children just loved the Hairy Maclary book I took in."

Sheryl: "I thought it would be fun and I wanted to give back to the younger community. I also love reading."

What is the most rewarding aspect of being a Kinder Pal?

Jenny: "Definitely the most rewarding thing is when I can engage the kids in a good book."

Sheryl: "It's very rewarding just being with young children. They ask you so many questions and they are so interested in everything. I love just talking with them."



Kinder Pal volunteer Jenny loves reading with children.



## Tomorrow Today Foundation

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# Time to take off

Sensational weather made for perfect gliding conditions as twenty-two local Year 9 students soared above Benalla, thanks to Tomorrow Today's Connect9 community mentoring program.

Connect9 is a free ten-week program that matches Year 9 students with a volunteer community mentor who is their 'buddy' throughout the program. The young people and their mentors connect to new skills and hobbies, people and experiences, as well as opportunities to explore careers and set life goals. There

are two intakes each year and each program concludes with a glider flight over Benalla.

Covid restrictions changed the way Connect9 was delivered in 2020. The young mentees and their community mentors showed terrific attitude and spirit, trying a range of virtual and face-to-face community experiences enthusiastically supported by the Benalla Art Gallery, Benalla Scout Group, GOTAFE, CSU, Galen College VEX Robotics team and the Gliding Club of Victoria.



Ready to take flight.

**Tomorrow Today.** Our children learning. Our young people achieving. Our community thriving.

# Giving Matters Yes, I want to support the work of Tomorrow Today in Benalla.

### I wish to support:

- Work of Tomorrow Today, area of greatest need
- Other (please contact us)
- Community Fund for local grants

### Please select your payment option:

**1** **DONATE ONLINE** by credit card [www.tomorrowtoday.com.au](http://www.tomorrowtoday.com.au) and click on **DONATE NOW**

**2** Or, you can donate by one of the options below (return form to Tomorrow Today)

Please accept my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- EFT to Tomorrow Today Foundation  
BSB: 083-541 Account No: 78-993-7916
- Cheque payable to Tomorrow Today Foundation
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Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### My Details

Name: .....

Address: .....

Phone: .....

Email: .....

Thank you for your donation. A receipt will be sent to you.

- Please send me information about becoming a Regular Donor
- Please send me information about leaving a Gift in my Will

All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

If your business would like to provide sponsorship, please contact our office and a tax invoice will be issued.