



Benalla Flexible Learning Centre students with North East Artisans' Tim Bowtell surrounded by artwork created at workshops funded by our 2015 Tomorrow Today Grants program.

Evidence of Change

Tomorrow Today is working to achieve sustained improvement in educational outcomes for Benalla's young people, partnering with volunteers and organisations throughout the community. Ensuring all Benalla children arrive at school ready to learn is vital. This is the focus of our PEEP and Great Start to School programs, run with assistance from Benalla Health, Benalla Rural City, schools and pre-schools.

Every three years a nationwide survey, the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), measures five areas of development for children starting their first year of school. Children are assessed on their physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, communication skills and general knowledge.

The AEDC in 2012 revealed that almost one-third of Benalla's children were classed as vulnerable in one or more of these areas and that the figures were worsening.

The recently released 2015 AEDC report has provided crucial evidence that the Benalla community is achieving the change it wants to see. More of Benalla's children are now considered "on track" overall, and there have been great gains made in the areas of basic literacy and numeracy, thinking and reasoning skills, speech and communication skills and general knowledge.

These results bear testimony to the amazing collaborative effort taking place in Benalla to improve life chances for our young children. We look forward to redoubling our efforts as a community to build on these positive gains, so that increasingly Benalla's children begin school well equipped to learn and thrive.

The generosity of the Benalla and district community over the past year has been remarkable. Our 2015 'Challenge Appeal' was an outstanding success. Twenty local supporters each pledged \$5,000 to set the initial 'challenge'. This was more than met by the community so that overall we raised a grand total of \$201,229. As a result the Community

Fund is nearing \$1 million and providing increased funding for local projects that strengthen the community. Tomorrow Today brings together resources and applies them for community benefit. We have received very generous funding from the Dick and Vera Bertalli Educational Program to provide increased opportunities for local young people (read more page 3).

Through our Education Benalla Program, volunteers, donors, local organisations and major funding partners are all working together in an extremely positive way for the benefit of Benalla's kids. A very big 'thank you' to everyone who has contributed.

Sally Gamble, Chair



Parents are the First Teachers

Every week during school term 100 plus families are taking part in one of our 11 Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP) sessions. PEEP offers a myriad of experiences – singing, stories, outdoor play, health information, educational tips, support – but most of all it's about celebrating parents as their child's first and most important teacher and making learning fun.

Our Early Years staff and volunteers ensure that every family feels welcome and valued. Numbers in the program continue to grow as families spread the word to others on the benefits of attending.

The sessions are relaxed and fun. Behind the scenes careful planning ensures that critical learning outcomes for different ages and stages are met. We're proud to partner with many wonderful early years providers to inform and connect our families to the wide range of local services available.

For more information or to register for one of the groups, go to our website or phone 03 5762 1211.



A Great Year Ahead

Ten fantastic local projects will be undertaken in the year ahead with funding support from our 2016 Tomorrow Today Grants. In a record disbursement, over \$33,000 was awarded on May 6th for a diverse range of initiatives (recipients pictured above with Tomorrow Today Directors and Executive Officer).

The grants are possible thanks to the investment of funds received from generous local donors, a number of whom were present at the gathering. It was wonderful to hear representatives of the successful groups speak about their projects and the difference they hope to make in our community.

- Benalla Flexible Learning Centre (\$4,500) Student healthy eating and exercise program
- Benalla Health in partnership with St Vincent de Paul (\$4,500) Backyard wicking beds constructed so families can grow fresh produce
- Benalla P-12 College (\$2,000) Beacon Polish Program for job skills /employment opportunities
- Benalla P-12 College and FCJ College (\$1,000) Mental Health Forum for 14-16 year old students
- Coinda Village and FCJ College (\$2,000) Intergenerational music and storytelling project
- EdSpace Education and Training Centre (\$5,000) Dogs For Life literacy and wellbeing
- Living Culture Together (\$5,000) Winton Wetlands Aboriginal focus curriculum development
- North East Artisans (\$3,000) Door of Hope Art project to develop vulnerable residents' creative skills
- Ride Avenue Pre-School (\$1,080) Introducing preschoolers to Indonesian food and culture
- Victorian YMCA Community Programming (\$5,000) Training teenaged skateboarders as coaches to pass skills on to the next generation

Bertalli Family Giving Back

A generous family legacy is helping to encourage, engage and inspire local young people by providing funding to deliver more opportunities for them.

Established by brothers Neville and Ken Bertalli in honour of their parents, the **'Dick and Vera Bertalli Educational Program'** has provided Tomorrow Today with \$300,000 over three years. The largest local donation of its kind to date, the gift was sparked by a desire to give back to the community that has supported the Bertalli family bakery business for over 60 years.

By providing funding, Neville said they hoped to see improved school retention, higher scholastic levels,

increased trade apprenticeships and less reliance on social benefits. 'Hands On Learning' is one of the activities to benefit from this vital support. It helps students who are at risk of disengaging from the classroom to enjoy success by working on practical local projects. Participating students have shown outstanding results with improvements in literacy, numeracy, wellbeing and reduced absenteeism.

The Bertallis' legacy has now received national recognition in Outback magazine's recent feature on rural philanthropy and place-based giving - ideals at the core of Tomorrow Today's aim to create a stronger and more resilient Benalla.



A Practical Way to Learn

Learning in different settings is producing outstanding results in Benalla. Introduced locally by Tomorrow Today, 'Hands on Learning' started at Benalla P-12 College in 2010 and FCJ College in 2012. It brings together students at risk of disengaging from school with artisan teachers. They work on practical activities that help them experience success and build self-esteem.

An important feature of the program is the opportunity to contribute to community projects such as the exercise stations around Lake Benalla, the Aboriginal Garden and construction of the seating (pictured above) ready to be placed in the new Rocket Park playground.

Last year's Benalla P-12 College 'Hands on Learning' participants reported higher wellbeing levels and ability to make meaning of what they learn than their mainstream peers. This is a major achievement for the students and it highlights a significant change in attitude towards learning.

Inspired to Act

Our Connect9 program received \$500 through AusNet Services Community Cornerstones Grant program.

AusNet Services employee and ongoing Connect9 mentor Lee Walter applied for the grant which will go towards activities connecting our young people with what's available in the town.

Connect9 relies on amazing volunteers such as Lee and it's especially pleasing when they're so impressed with the program that they help us to obtain funding.



Diary Date

Swanpool & District
Memorial Hall

Friday 19th August

Gala Launch of the

**2016
Bald Archy
Exhibition**

All proceeds to
Tomorrow Today

How You Can Help

All donations to Tomorrow Today's permanent Community Fund are solely for the benefit of the Benalla and district community.

The money is invested, with the income providing a reliable, independent source of local funding for community grants, year after year. Gifts over \$2 are tax deductible.

Please consider making a donation to support Benalla's Community Fund—details overleaf.



'Street Art' engages youth

Benalla's cultural standing is on the rise with nearly 30 pieces of world-class street art created over a two year period. Benalla Street Art Inc received \$5,000 from our 2015 Tomorrow Today Grant round towards this year's youth engagement components – the Youth Mural Art Prize, Benalla Street Party container art and the youth community wall.

Youth Art Prize winner Gemma Keating (pictured) was selected from a number of local contenders to paint alongside Australian and international street artists. Gemma's artwork created significant interest from festival goers and has improved the festival's reach with Benalla's younger population.

Benalla reads its way to a record

Local families have set a new record reading an amazing 46,235 stories to Benalla's young children last year during Tomorrow Today's annual literacy challenge.

The Let's Read Benalla initiative began in 2013 when research showed local families lagged behind Australian averages with regard to reading daily to their children.

Pictured right is the 2015 challenge winner, Bonnie, sharing a story with her children.



Tomorrow Today Foundation Board Directors

Sally Gamble (Chair 0428 755 138),
Adrian Aldous, Liz Chapman,
Bill Dobson, Nick Taylor



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GivingMatters

To make a donation please complete this form and send with payment to Tomorrow Today Foundation.

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