

working together

to build futures for young Victorians



Careers Month 2003

Report and Evaluation

8 October - 7 November 2003



grampians pyrenees
regional development board



Testimonials of Careers Month 2003 from some of the participants...

"East Grampians Health Service's overall impression of Career's Month was that it is a great initiative worthy of our support"

- *Danielle Clark*
Professional Development Officer
East Grampians Health Service

"Gason will benefit from Careers Month in the future...we have already received interest from students due to Careers Month 2003"

- *Alan Bright*
Human Resources & Training Maintenance Coordinator
A.F. Gason Pty Ltd

"Regarding Careers Month, my impression is that it is a great idea from both employer and personal perspective"

- *Greg Nicholls*
Manager
Frewstall Abattoirs Stawell

"Overall impression - great concept. Please continue with it! The wide range of businesses that you were able to engage into the program was great"

- *Jacqui Coleman*
Careers Teacher
Lake Bolac College

1. Overview

Careers Month 2003 was held from Monday the 8th of October to Friday the 7th of November, and was hosted by the Central Grampians Local Learning and Employment Network and the Grampians Pyrenees Regional Development Board. Its main focus was to highlight the variety and number of employment opportunities that exist in the Central Grampians region.

- Approximately 1,000 secondary school students were offered the opportunity to participate in Careers Month.
- Approximately 520 students, Years 9 to 12, from four secondary schools in the Central Grampians region (Ararat Community College, Lake Bolac College, Marian College and Stawell Secondary College) toured 12 workplaces (private business and government-run agencies) and participated in 4 workshops.
- Participating businesses were situated in Ararat, Stawell, Great Western, Landsborough and Beaufort and the workshops concentrated on employment entry skills. By showcasing these employment opportunities and conducting these workshops, the desired outcome was to attract young people to stay living and working in the Central Grampians region and to strengthen the workforce of local business.
- The project was completed, from the planning phase to its execution, within a period of approximately 6 weeks. As it was the first Careers Month, it was treated as a pilot year by all those involved and therefore can be considered a success within this framework.
- Careers Month operated within the total budget allocated.

Careers Month 2003 can be considered a successful venture based on feedback by the many people involved, employers and teachers alike. It has opened up communication pathways between the various groups concerned with the career outcomes of young people and resulted in a large number of students being exposed to the variety of industries, and the occupations and career pathways that exist within these industries, in their own region.

2. Outcomes

2.1 Objective

The objective of Careers Month was primarily to open the eyes of secondary school students in the age range of 14 to 18 years (Years 9 to 12) about the industries and careers that exist in their own region by showcasing local business through students tours.

- This objective was part of a wider strategy to encourage young people to stay living and working in this region and providing employers with the opportunity to recruit new and suitable young people into their work team.
- In addition to this, our objective was also to educate future tertiary students about the opportunities that exist locally once they complete their education further a field.
- I believe that we have achieved the fulfilment of these objectives. The feedback I have received from some of the participating businesses have indicated that they have had students who toured their business apply for an apprenticeship (Gason Pty Ltd) and work experience (Stawell Regional Health).

Although not a primary objective, Careers Month 2003 has undoubtedly created bonds between various community stakeholders involved in employment and education or strengthened this bond where it already existed. It has brought various groups together such as schools, employers and training providers and opened up the avenues of communication and understanding between them, and this in turn has highlighted various issues in the placement of school-leavers in the workplace that one group may have been aware of from their perspective, but not necessarily the other.

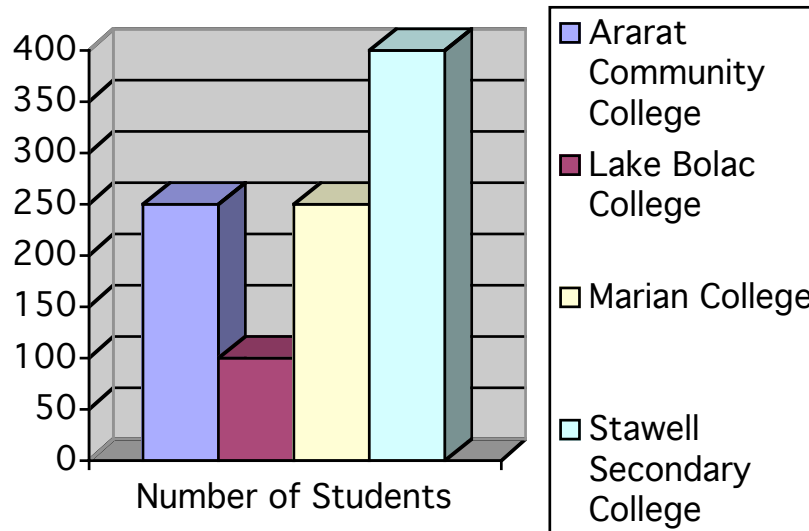
3. Partnerships

3.1 Students

Across the four secondary schools involved in Careers Month, there are approximately 1000 students in Years 9 to 12, in the following groupings, shown in the table and graph below.

Number of Students in the Central Grampians Region in Years 9 to 12

School	No. of Students
Ararat Community College	250
Lake Bolac College	100
Marian College	250
Stawell Secondary College	400



Of those 1000, 800 students were issued with a questionnaire listing the businesses that were offering tours of their workplace. The results from these questionnaires appear in the following tables.

Numbers of students from each school indicating interest in touring local business via questionnaires

Legend: ACC represents Ararat Community College, LBC - Lake Bolac College, MC - Marian College and SSC – Stawell Secondary College.

Business/Organisation	School and Number of students from each				
	ACC	LBC	MC	SSC	TOTAL
AME Systems Ararat	28	4	17	29	78
Australian Wine College Ararat	29	9	16	16	70
Eventide Homes Stawell	28	4	17	29	73
Fishers IGA Stawell	0	0	0	19	19
Frewstall Abattoirs Stawell	6	2	16	36	60
Gason Pty Ltd	19	13	17	26	75
Horvat Estate Winery	6	11	9	27	53
Landsborough					
Lyco Industries Beaufort	5	8	9	39	59
Northern Grampians Shire Offices	4	10	10	17	41
Seppelts Winery Great Western	50	32	48	70	200
Stawell Gold Mines	44	6	56	87	193
Stawell Regional Health/East	21	13	17	66	117
Grampians Health Service					

Numbers of students from each school indicating interest in attending workshops via questionnaires

Legend: ACC represents Ararat Community College, LBC - Lake Bolac College, MC - Marian College and SSC – Stawell Secondary College.

Workshops & Talks	School				
	ACC	LBC	MC	SSC	TOTAL
School-Based New Apprenticeships	15	9	15	4	34
Regional Development Victoria: Starting A Small Business	20	5	8	13	46
TAFE Ararat & Stawell: Campus Orientation & Course Information	22	10	15	23	70
WorkCo: Resume Writing & Interview Skills	18	9	11	20	54

The actual numbers of students attending these workplace tours and workshops are as follows in table and graph format (numbers are approximate in some cases):

Total number of students from each school attending tours of local business

School	Number of Students
Ararat Community College	111
Lake Bolac College	23
Marian College	178
Stawell Secondary College	205
TOTAL	517

Actual number of students from each school attending each tour of local business and workshop

Business/Organisation	School				
	ACC	LBC	MC	SSC	TOTAL
AME Systems Ararat	12	23	12	15	62
Australian Wine College Ararat	0	0	15	15	30
Eventide Homes Stawell	12	0	0	15	27
Fishers IGA Stawell	0	0	0	3	3
Frewstall Abattoirs Stawell	0	0	0	10	10
Gason Pty Ltd	12	23	25	20	80
Horvat Estate Winery L'borough	10	0	10	15	35
Lyco Industries Beaufort	0	0	12	10	22
Northern Grampians Shire Offices	0	0	10	17	27
Seppelts Winery Great Western	25	23	25	25	98
Stawell Gold Mines	0	0	44	40	84
Stawell Regional Health/East	20	0	15	10	45
Grampians Health Service					

Please Note: Due to Occupational Health and Safety Issues, Seppelts Winery could only host a maximum of 25 students per session.

Workshops	School				
	ACC	LBC	MC	SSC	TOTAL
Highlands LLEN: School-Based New Apprenticeships	0	0	5	5	10
Regional Development Victoria: Starting A Small Business	0	0	0	15	15
TAFE Ararat & Stawell: Campus Orientation & Course Information	10	0	5	10	25
WorkCo: Resume Writing & Interview Skills	0	0	0	0	0

Please Note: Due to geography and time constraints, Lake Bolac Secondary College chose one day to attend 3 tours across all industries. 23 Year 10 students toured Gason Pty Ltd (manufacturing), Seppelts (viticulture), and requested a tour of East Grampians Health Service (health). This was not possible, so they also attended a tour of AME Systems (manufacturing.)

Almost all of these students were from Year Levels 9 and 10. VCE students had a study break and final exams at this time.

- In regard to gender, stereotypical gender associations became evident at most tours. For example, the bulk of students attending tours of the hospitals were female, whilst students attending tours of industrial businesses were predominantly male. However, there were exceptions to the rule and all businesses made a point of stating that career pathways existed for each gender within their field in an attempt to break down gender stereotypes. Workshops and winery tours attracted an even number of female and male students.

From this data the following assertions can be made:

- i. In the majority of cases, the numbers of students who indicate an interest on paper will not be commensurate with the number that attends the actual tour. The actual number will be reduced due to various factors such as students having a conflict of interest on the day of the tour and students indicating an interest even when a genuine one does not exist
- ii. In some cases, students seem to be most interested in touring businesses in their hometown. This is most likely due to the simple fact that they have been exposed to them previously and have a knowledge of their existence
- iii. Large and well-renowned employers such as Seppelts Winery and Stawell Gold Mine receive the largest amount of interest. Workshops for resume and interview skills have often already been done in schools so were not required for Careers Month
- iv. The wine industry generally is most popular across the board. The health industry is popular for students with specified career interests already established.
- v. From Careers Month, students gained a realistic idea of what it may be like to work in a particular workplace on a day-to-day basis. The questions that these students asked indicated a high level of interest from those who perhaps possessed an affinity with that industry to begin with. There were also a lot of comments indicating a lack of interest in a certain industry. I believe this to be of equal importance to the positive comments, because it shows that the students have received a real feel for a particular workplace and seen its true nature without it being 'glamourised', and whether or not they could truly envisage themselves working there.

3.2 Schools

The four schools of the Central Grampians Region involved in Careers Month 2003 were:

- Ararat Community College
- Lake Bolac College
- Marian College Ararat
- Stawell Secondary College

In total, 1000 students attend these schools at the Year 9 to 12 level. 800 students were issued with a questionnaire listing the businesses that were offering tours of their workplace. The remaining 200 could not be approached due to absence, class clashes, etc. but every attempt was made by staff to gather information from these students then forwarded to the Careers Month Coordinator at a more appropriate time.

Teacher's Comments:

Several views about Careers Month 2003 were similarly held by teachers from all schools. They are:

- **The Importance and Relevance of Careers Month**
Most importantly, each teacher emphasised how important and relevant Careers Month is, and with more time and planning they are wholeheartedly enthusiastic to get behind it in 2004. Many staff members lamented the fact that they could not attend tours that they themselves would have been interested in due to prior school commitments.
- **Timing**
Hold Careers Month at a different time of year. Begin the planning in February and hold it in either April or July.

"With a longer leading time schools could coordinate staff with specific skills, subject expertise and interest areas to attend specific tours. This would provide the increased opportunity of skill/industry networking to occur and forge valuable partnerships and links within the education and industry skilling areas."

"Create a school excursion, student permission form that is also the student choices survey, after the tour dates are set. This document would confirm more accurately the participation numbers of students. This would allow transport, staffing and efficient work place tour planning to occur from day one."

- **Travel Expenses**
The schools were very pleased with the fact that CGLLEN funded the out-of-town travel expenses and conceded that if it were not for this funding, their attendance of some tours would have not been financially viable.

They also recognise that this cost is great and supported the idea of sponsorship from one of the local bus companies.

- **Community Links**

Careers Month has undoubtedly created bonds between various community members involved in employment and education or strengthened this bond where it already existed. It has brought various groups together such as school, employers and training providers and opened up the doors of communication between them, and this in turn has highlighted various issues in the placement of school-leavers in the workplace that one group may have been aware of from their own perspective, but not necessarily the other.

“A strong synergy was created between each industry work place, their staff, school staff and the students on all occasions”

3.3 Employers

- Each business that participated in Careers Month is to be highly commended for their level of professionalism in both arranging the tour and the tour itself. They were extremely flexible about the setting and re-setting of their tour times to suit the schools and the tours themselves were of a high calibre. It was obvious that much planning had gone into each one and many staff members from each business gave their time and knowledge to the students to ensure a comprehensive view of each area of the business was provided.
- Generally speaking, the tours of local business went extremely well. Of course there were some minor upheavals in regard to school arrival time versus tour commencement time but this is to be expected when transporting such large numbers of students across such distances. The employers were generally very pleased with the conduct and level of interest received from students.
- As mentioned earlier, some positive outcomes from the tours have already resulted:
 - Ararat Community College students are currently participating in Work Experience at Gason Pty Ltd
 - 1 young person who did not actually attend the tour of Gason but heard about it via a visiting parent has since applied for a School-Based New Apprenticeship there
 - Stawell Secondary Students will soon be participating in Work Experience at Stawell Regional Health

Careers Month Brochures

Due to delays with the Careers Month brochure template, only two businesses have received their brochure at this time. The businesses that did not receive one were disappointed at the loss of this opportunity and have emphasised that these brochures should be produced before the actual Careers Month in 2004.

However, those who did receive them thought them to be:

- A comprehensive source of information regarding their business, and
- Visually striking and effective

It should be noted that factors outside our control resulted in the brochures not being available in the timeframe initially envisaged.

In 2004, employers would like to see the following occur:

- A guest speaker such as Graham Hyman speak to the employers BEFORE Careers Month to for employers motivate them and encourage empathy for young people
- Employers going out to the schools to speak to students about their workplace
- A formal request from CGLLEN for permission to conduct tours and outlining tour structure
- Student age groups: businesses can refine their tour for each age group
- Plenty of preparation time given

“One downside may have been the radical reduction in numbers of touring students...putting a lot of resources in we would always look to have a minimum number of thirty students to make it worthwhile”

EVERY business and/or provider that participated in Careers Month 2003 have indicated that they look forward to participating in 2004.

3.4 Networking

Careers Month 2003 incorporated some special events.

A luncheon for teachers was held at Seppelts Winery, Great Western on Thursday 6th November, 1pm-2.30pm.

Guest speakers included:

- **Mark Hogan, Grampians Pyrenees Regional Development Board:**
Mark discussed the importance of communication and linking the education and employment sectors.
- **David Frances, Greater Green Triangle ACC:**
David discussed solutions at a local level, the value of our region and the industries in which job opportunities currently lie.
- **Clyde Humphries, Northern Grampians Shire Council:**
Clyde discussed the qualities that school-leavers need to cultivate in order to find employment.
- **Ivan SurrIDGE, Ararat Rural City Council**
Ivan discussed the importance of letting young people have their own life experiences to then return to our region as well-rounded and productive individuals.
- **Andrew Eastick, Ararat tradesman/business owner**
Andrew discussed the need for government subsidisation of apprenticeships and the need for schools to instil knowledge about "life skills" in their students.

Sixteen people attended the lunch representing ACC, SSC, MC, TAFE and BRACE Employment.

A Careers Month Finale was held at Chalambar Golf Club, Ararat on Friday 7th November, 12.30-2.30pm

Professional motivational guest speaker Graham Hyman talked at this gathering about what it is like to be an adolescent in today's society, and how we can help them through this uncertain time in their lives. Many members of the audience praised Graham's address and would like to see him talk at future Careers Month events.

50 people attended the gathering representing most of the key participants in Careers Month: businesses and employers, teachers, students, parents, education and training providers, and the various government groups listed above were represented.

3.5 Sponsors

We are pleased to recognise the following organisations who sponsored Careers Month 2003.

Major Sponsors:

- Ace Radio
- Gason Pty Ltd
- Greater Green Triangle Area Consultative Committee
- Pacific Hydro
- State of Victoria

Other Contributing Sponsors:

- Ararat Rural City Council
- Colonial Lodge Motor Inn Ararat
- Fishers IGA Supermarket Stawell
- Pyrenees Shire

Without the support of our sponsors Careers Month would not have been such a success.

4. Project Management:

We went into Careers Month 2003 as a learning process for Careers Month 2004. Feedback from all participating organisations and stakeholders indicated that there is overwhelming support for the concept and was general satisfaction with the way Careers Month was conducted.

We have learnt a number of important lessons which are outlined in the next section but I wish to highlight the following:

- **Staffing:** Rather than engage a casual employee to manage Careers Month I will be recommending to the CGLLEN Board that these duties be incorporated into the job description of an existing staff member. This will allow for greater continuity from one year to the next and spread the workload over a 12 month period rather than condensing all activity into a two month period.
- **Planning:** The decision to run Careers Month was made by the CGLLEN Board midway through 2003. As a result planning was largely "on the run" and we lacked the time needed to fine tune the program and attend to details that would have enhanced the quality of Careers Month. We have learnt from this experience and a comprehensive work-plan has already been prepared for 2004. This will enhance project management and tracking of tasks and clearly outline who is responsible for what and when.
- **Timing:** The dates for Careers Month 2004 must be determined early in the year so that schools can plan for greater student involvement. End of year exams, work experience arrangements, curriculum days and the like all had an impact on the availability of students and teachers to participate in Careers Month. By working with schools early in the planning process we hope to mitigate against such clashes with school timetables and activities.
- **Measuring Outcomes:** This year we achieved our primary objective of highlighting local career pathways to a large number of students. The project also resulted in a great deal of collaboration between stakeholders and in particular, between schools and employers. As part of planning for Careers Month 2004 a greater focus needs to be placed on our stated objective of seeing more young people follow pathways into local careers. A methodology for measuring this outcome will be crucial for determining the success of Careers Month 2004.

Attention to the above will enable us to more effectively manage this project and offer an even better experience for students in 2004.

David Wheaton
CGLLEN Executive Officer

5. Lessons for Careers Month 2004

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>
Collaboration	Careers Month will be successful provided that it is a collaborative effort from employers, schools, training providers and stakeholders.
	In 2004 it would be great to see CGLLEN Board Members take a more active role, for example, accompanying the students on business tours. This would have two purposes, one, as a gesture of goodwill and the creating of links between all participants, and two, to divide up the workload of touring as it is a time-consuming process.
	School teachers to assist in the writing of business brochures so that the employers will know what to say to target students as potential employees.
	There should be much more direct exchange and contact between employers and teachers rather than interacting exclusively through CGLLEN, to avoid break-downs in communication.
Involvement	There are several members of our community who are not enrolled in secondary school as such but are still of the relevant age group, for example, students undertaking the CGEA at TAFE. These students will bring more diversity to the event and can offer employers something that perhaps secondary school students may not.
Information	There should be several meetings between teachers and employers to ascertain what each group is hoping to gain from Careers Month and how this can be achieved through mutual give-and-take
	Run workshops and circulate guidelines for employers on how to engage young people
	Circulation: having employers speak to students at school and having a motivational guest speaker address the employers and teachers

Time Management	Have a meeting in February with all principals and careers teachers to peruse the school calendar and choose the ideal time for Careers Month to be held. Present this information to the businesses who can organise their tour to work around the school calendar.
	Schools to have the students excursion permission slips organised well in advance to overcome the problem of lessened numbers of students attending tours.
	Have Careers Month run at a time when there are no exams for Years 10 to 12 students so that each age group can benefit.
	Once all stakeholders have approved the Careers Month calendar, ensure the completion of function planning and related clerical work (invitations, etc.), the media releases, and the production of business brochures before Careers Month actually commences so everyone can relax and enjoy Careers Month and reap its benefits to the fullest!

6. Media and Marketing

6.1 Advertising Campaign

- Careers Month 6 Page Lift-Out
Ararat Advertiser and Stawell Times-News,
Friday 10th October
- Careers Month Half-Page Advertisement
Weekly Advertiser
Thursday 16th October
- Live Mixx FM Broadcast
LenZone!
Friday 17th October

6.2 Media Coverage

- Live Interview with Mark Hogan, GPRDB, Executive Officer
ABC Radio
Thursday 18 September
- Advertisement: "Careers Month: Expressions of Interest"
Ararat Advertiser and Stawell Times-News, Page 3
Tuesday 30 September
- Feature: "Careers Month: 6-Page Lift-Out"
Ararat Advertiser and Stawell Times-News, Page 15-18, 31-32
Friday 10 October
- Feature: "Careers Month: 1-Page Article and Advertisements"
Ararat Advertiser and Stawell Times-News, Page 18
Thursday 16 October
- Article: "Students tour Horvat Estate"
Ararat Advertiser and Stawell Times-News, Front Page
Tuesday 11 November
- Article: "Young people receive insight into council"
Ararat Advertiser and Stawell Times-News, Page 5
Tuesday 18 November
- Article: "Forging new employment links important for region"
Ararat Advertiser and Stawell Times-News, Page 16
Friday 28 November

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5 December 2003

7. APPENDICES

7.1 Press Clippings

7.2 Photographs from Careers Month

7.3 Sample Careers Month Business Brochure (Gason Pty Ltd)