

SUNBURY

Axe falls on VCAL program

Anger at closure of Kyneton satellite campus focusing on practical learning

Barry Kennedy

A SUNBURY parent has slammed the closure of a tailored Macedon Ranges satellite learning program at the end of the year.

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) program, which provides practical work-related experience along with traditional education, has been backed by Kyneton Secondary College in recent years. It has 21 enrolled students.

Some of the students have learning difficulties and have experienced troubles at other schools such as bullying.

Parents spoken to by the *Leader* have condemned the decision to close the campus, Windarring, in Kyneton.

However, the college has vowed to help families affected by the decision.

Sunbury mother Kerrie Bradburn said her son Jack had been transformed since starting at the school.

"He didn't have confidence and wasn't doing well academically, but he has turned it all around a year," she said.

"It's very practical work-ready learning and he has picked building and construction to go on with next year."

Woodend father Tyson Gardiner also explained how his Year 11 son Lachlan had become "a different kid", now working two days in a Mt Macedon garden centre.

"Lachlan needed the stable environment, he couldn't cope with large classes and the VCAL program really settled him," he said.

"He is building his foundation and gaining life skills but transferring to Bendigo or somewhere else just isn't straightforward."

Woodend's Ross Carberry said his daughter, a Year 9 student, was bullied at mainstream school but "the less structured, non-rigid learning has turned her around".

Kyneton Secondary College principal Ana Rees said the college was unable to continue funding the program.

"The funding we get is for mainstream schooling and this sort of program requires significantly more to continue," she said.

"Our staff is working really hard to find solutions and is supporting each student individually."

Ms Rees said her college and Gisborne Secondary College would continue extensive flexible learning solutions which could be offered to many of the remaining satellite VCAL students next year.

A Department of Education and Training spokesman said support would "be provided for all students currently enrolled in the satellite VCAL program to ensure they smoothly transition to new education, training and work pathways next year".



Shay Downer and Bonnie Hanlon are holding a joint exhibition. Picture: ANDREW TAUBER

ARTIST DUO JOIN FORCES

A DOUBLE exhibition exploring the human condition and the universe by two Sunbury artists will officially open at the Gee Lee-Wik Doleen Gallery at Craigieburn on Wednesday.

Figurative and portrait artist Shay Downer works in charcoal and has called her show Visible Mending, while watercolourist Bonnie

Hanlon's exhibition, Chemical Chance, looks at the origins of life in the universe.

Both women were the winners of Hume Council's 2016 art award. Mayor Drew Jessop said the double exhibition at the gallery in Craigieburn's Hume Global Learning Centre showed the depth of local artistic talent.

"Both Bonnie and Shay

demonstrate high accomplishment in their respective techniques," he said.

Hanlon's paintings feature constellations while Downer's work includes an intricate close-up of clasped hands that appears three-dimensional.

The free show runs until October 15.

SUNBURY

Business plea to federal minister

Barry Kennedy

SMALL business owners in Sunbury are looking for leadership from the State Government as frustrations build over congestion and parking issues.

The call comes after several members of the Sunbury Business Association, and

representatives of larger retailer chains, home-based businesses and the Sunbury Community Health Centre, attended a forum on Tuesday with federal Small Business Minister Michael

McCormack and McEwen federal MP Rob Mitchell.

SBA president Michael Osborne said it was a chance for the Sunbury business community to speak up.

"We expressed our concerns over the cost of doing business which takes in things like payroll tax and the barriers to business like the cost of hiring and letting people go," he said.

Mr Osborne said when the talk came to congestion and car parking in the town centre, Mr McCormack referred the issues to the State Government.

He said it reminded business stakeholders of the inertia in decision making over key issues such as parking spots in Sunbury.

With two major precinct structure plans about to be developed for Sunbury adding up to 20,000 homes, businesses needed assurances infrastructure would be rolled out in a timely matter, he said.

The SBA participated in Monday's Business Expansion and Retention Program at Sunbury Community Health, which aims to turn around the fortunes of businesses.

FATHER'S DAY MINI CAKES

PRE-ORDER NOW

PERFECT FOR A MINI FAMILY

made with love

cheesecake.com.au

SUNBURY LEADER, Tuesday, August 29, 2017 03