

DOXA is a Greek word meaning GREATNESS, which recognises each individual is important and the community person is given an opportunity to develop their full potential. DOXA is a philanthropic organisation that provides disadvantaged young people. DOXA'S programs are targeted at giving special attention to those who have been denied a full opportunity for development. DOXA is a Greek word meaning GREATNESS, which recognises each individual's responsibility to ensure that every young person has the opportunity to develop their full potential. Its mission is to create opportunities for disadvantaged young people.



creating opportunities for disadvantaged young people

DOXA School Bendigo opens its doors

With students coming from as far away as Kyneton and Echuca DOXA School Bendigo opened its doors for the first time at the start of third term. Led by Principal, John Russell, the teaching staff are Ros Bradbury and Jodie Long. Ros has vast experience in the special education field and has been a past principal of the Bendigo Special Development School where she was highly regarded as an innovative leader. More recently Ros has worked with unemployed young people through her leadership and establishment role with Salvation Army Employment Plus. Jodie has previously worked at FCJ College Benalla as a Year 9 coordinator, and also has fantastic experience in special settings having been employed as a co-director of the Wollangarra Outdoor Education Centre and a Program Leader at Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre.

Tony White and Mike Flood make up new Youth Work Team. Tony's work experience has included working as a training supervisor with CVGT in Bendigo and many years as a Program Coordinator and Support Services Coordinator at Future Connections working with school leavers and unemployed teenagers. Tony's recent work has been with Peter Harcourt Disability Services in Bendigo. Mike has most recently worked with the Youth Programs Team at Westgate Community Initiative Group in the western suburbs of Melbourne and in this role was seconded to two secondary schools as a Managed Individual Pathways case manager. He has also worked as a School Liaison Officer in the Jobs Pathways Program and much of his work in these roles involved the individual case management of at risk students.

The School successfully applied for a capital grant of \$500,000 from the federal Government for building works, and this together with funding from the Sandhurst Diocese

has been directed towards the refurbishment of the old Marist Brothers College which will be the home for DOXA School Bendigo. It is expected that this work will be completed shortly, which will allow the staff and students to move from their current temporary accommodation to the new 'state-of-the-art' purpose built school. An official opening will occur in October.

It has been a tremendous achievement to get the school operating and we are appreciative of the involvement of the Marist Brothers and the Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst Diocese. We look forward to hearing more about the wonderful work being undertaken at DOXA School Bendigo in providing opportunities for students having difficulty in mainstream education.

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A new start - Operation Newstart changes lives

After providing initial funding for one year, the DOXA Board has committed to funding Operation Newstart Victoria for a further two years. This followed a satisfactory independent evaluation of Operation Newstart Western, the first Operation Newstart program to be established. A further three Operation Newstart programs have been introduced across metropolitan Melbourne, with the four programs forming Operation Newstart Victoria.

Operation Newstart Victoria is an innovative partnership between the Department of Education and Training and Victoria Police. It functions as an alternative school program targeting young people at risk, who engage in enjoyable, challenging outdoor, vocational, recreational and therapeutic experiences supported by a strong team of dedicated professionals from education, police and mental health.

The evaluation of Operation Newstart Western examined the experiences of the over 200 young people (ages 14-18) who have participated in the program since it commenced in April 1999. A significant positive effect on participants is strongly evident, as outlined in the following findings:

- participants experience a significant improvement in self-esteem and self-reliance and a decrease in depression;
- parents and teachers reported participants having fewer behavioural problems following the program;
- parents report improved social and interpersonal skills following the program;

- participants who returned to school after the program demonstrated improved attitudes towards their school and teachers, less behavioural problems, and significantly less absenteeism.
- students who completed the program (80%) demonstrated significantly better employment and training/apprenticeship outcomes than those students (20%) who dropped out of the program early;
- two years post-program found that graduates made significantly less court appearances and had fewer convictions than those who did not complete the program.

DOXA is proud to be associated with such a successful program; one that, as the evaluation states, holds young people and their families “in a network of healthy, positive and healing relationships that develop new skills, new opportunities and ultimately ... a new start”.



Operation Newstart Western leaders Phil Wood (left) and Leading Constable Matt Mudie enjoying the great outdoors on camp.

The Community Small Grants Scheme continues to expand

Since our last newsletter, several more grants have been made through DOXA's Community Small Grants Scheme. All these grants focus on providing tangible, practical support to schools, community agencies or, in some cases, individuals. Submissions for funding projects that have an educational focus are received most favourably by the selection committee.

DOXA has made the following grants of up to \$5,000 in the period from March to July this year:

- to the Self Help Addiction Resource Centre (SHARC), for computer and video editing equipment to enable young recovering drug users to develop a public art installation for display in public spaces such as health centres, government offices, youth centres and conferences. The project will enable participants to explore the issues that have led to their drug misuse and to communicate these to the broader community. Hopefully, this will help to break down stereotypes while also providing a public face for those affected by drug dependence;
- to St Joseph's Corner Inc., to establish Merrijig Place in Yarraville, so that troubled young people can meet to establish the centre and participate in a range of activities, including gardening and art and craft projects. Volunteers will work with the young people, getting to know them personally, and help them realise their potential to contribute to our community;
- to Stonnington Primary School for the Literacy Support for Third Wave Students Program. The program aims to increase the literacy level of students aged 9 to 12 years who are at risk due to being at reading levels two or more years below their age level. DOXA's funding will contribute to the employment of two literary aides to work with the children;
- to the Centre for Adult Education following an application from the Lighthouse Foundation. This grant contributed to the education expenses of a young woman who has experienced severe trauma and who is now striving to live a stable productive life;
- to Monash Medical Centre to provide musical equipment for a portable recording space to be used by young people who have cystic fibrosis. They will record their experiences of multiple hospital visits while also learning to maximise lung capacity by singing and using wind instruments;
- to Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE for the Youth Access Program's Zoo and Surf Adventure which targets 15-19 year old young people who are at risk of not completing their formal schooling or who have already left school and are unemployed; and
- to Sacred Heart Primary School Preston to assist in the establishment of a mentor program to support children aged between four and eight years old who are having academic, social and emotional difficulties. DOXA's funding will be directed towards the training of volunteer mentors and paying for police checks for the volunteers.

Helping young children back to School

DOXA has joined forces with the Pratt Foundation and Target Stores to support the Back to School Program, an initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal.

The Back to School Program provides practical assistance to families who are struggling to meet the basic costs that are required of students at the beginning of each school year. Target vouchers to the value of \$50 are distributed to the families of these students in January and this money is directed towards the purchase of uniforms, books and stationery.

DOXA's contribution has helped the program grow from its initial \$150,000 in 2005 to \$312,000 in 2006, enabling the program to extend its reach to Ballarat, Bendigo, the Bass Coast and Eastern Victoria.

Local community agencies distribute the vouchers, with some agencies adding to the vouchers from their own budgets. Staff appreciate the enormous benefits in the simplicity and practicality of distributing vouchers, particularly because they aid families when it is most needed.

The DOXA Board recently committed to a further two years' funding for the Back to School Program. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the other philanthropic organisations and Target, all of which continue to be committed to this excellent program.

Tribute to Roy Higgins

Together with Fr Joe Giacobbe, Roy Higgins, one of Australia's most famous jockeys, was pivotal in the establishment of DOXA Youth Foundation. On Friday 10 March, more than 650 people attended the Roy Higgins Club lunch to honour the contributions of Roy to both DOXA and to Australian racing.

In partnership with the Victorian Racing Club (VRC), DOXA held the lunch at The Atrium at Flemington Racecourse. The afternoon was hosted by Bryan Martin and featured guest speakers Bruce McAvaney and the Hon. Andrew Peacock AC.

A highlight of the lunch was a DVD presentation on Roy's career, narrated by Charles (Bud) Tingwell, which kept guests enthralled. It depicted the story of a phenomenal career spanning 5 decades, and spoke of the unsurpassable records that Roy still possesses. Roy was also honoured by his good friend Fr Joe Giacobbe and several other champion jockeys. Guests were also fortunate to witness Roy being inducted into the elite group of VRC honorary members.

Geoff Lane flew in from Hong Kong for the auspicious event. Past and present day superstars such as Scobie Breasley, Midge Didham, Pat Hyland and Damian Oliver took part in the Jockey Parade to pay their respects to the achievements of their friend and colleague.

The lunch will be an annual event occurring on the Friday before Super Saturday as part of the VRC Festival of Racing. Next year's event is on 9 March, with Freedman Inc. as the guests of honour, and is certain to be another grand occasion.



Roy Higgins (right) proudly receiving his Honorary Membership from VRC Chairman, Rod Fitzroy.

DOXA proudly supports Rumbalara

DOXA Board and staff members were delighted to attend the 10th birthday celebrations of the Rumbalara Football Netball Club (RFNC), one of Australia's leading indigenous sporting organisations, on 1 April. The occasion also marked the announcement by Professor Marcia Langton, Inaugural Professor of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne, of DOXA's partnership with Rumbalara. We have committed to provide financial support to the club for up to three years to help the club build a sustainable funding base.

In May RFNC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Diabetes Institute to undertake work on diabetes, which will add to the existing *Healthy Lifestyle* and *Leadership Programs* currently managed by the club.

The month of June saw the launching of RFNC's partnership with the Collingwood Football Club which brought an entourage of more than 30 Collingwood Football Club players and staff to Shepparton. The day was enjoyed by 1,000 students from around the Goulburn Valley and included a coaching clinic with Mick Malthouse.

RFNC also co-hosted the launch of *Be deadly & cool – stay at school*, a Hume Region Koori Student Attendance Resource Kit developed with the Department of Education & Training and part of the Indigenous communities' united approach to building a better future for all children.

Meanwhile on the sporting field, Rumbalara is proving competitive in both netball and football in its first year in the Murray League. We look forward to hearing about their continued success!



DOXA Board member Peter Maher (left), with Professor Marcia Langton (middle) and Rumbalara President Paul Briggs at the announcement.

Our DOXA Cadets embrace the challenge

This year we welcomed 17 new cadets into the program. They met each other for the first time in April at a weekend camp at Malmsbury and it was obvious that, by the end of the weekend, many new friendships had formed.

The new cadets and their sponsors joined our graduating cadets at the annual graduation ceremony held at the Victorian Club on 24 May. It was wonderful to witness the pride of parents and sponsors as they watched the graduates receiving their certificates.

Personal development training is an integral component of the cadetship opportunity, and senior cadets spent a day at Hotel Y in Swanston Street focusing on issues such as:

- understanding motivation in self and others;
- dealing with conflict and difficult situations; and
- life beyond university and graduate employment.

Led by Program Manager, John Cheetham and leading corporate trainer Dina Pozzo, and assisted by Jason Hine and Angela Hassett, the cadets engaged in a range of

group based activities that assisted them to understand motivation and individual differences and also to acquire some practical skills in being assertive and choosing appropriate responses to conflict situations. The cadets learnt that flexible responses to others have value, rather than seeing every situation as requiring a standard response.

The final activity of the day led by Neil Thomas, Human Resource Manager at Paperlinx focused on life after university. Neil shared his experience from a human resources perspective and also as a longstanding DOXA Cadetship mentor. It was a terrific addition to the session to have DOXA alumni members, Godwin Hili, Anna Howard, Yuki Simmonds and Sheree Wolsgrove interact with our present cadets and help to dispel some of the fears about moving out of the security of university life and into graduate employment.

The ultimate test of the relevance and effectiveness of the day was reflected in the anonymous feedback sheets that the sponsors completed, rating the day as 'highly valuable'. As one cadet wrote: "I feel revitalised."

Our cadets used the day to embrace the challenge to extend themselves and their understanding of people and life - they are now one further step ahead in their journey.



We are proud of our graduate cadets and wish them well as they embark on the next stage of their lives.

Thank You, Winning Post

Over many years, the Winning Post, well known as 'Australia's biggest-selling racing paper', has contributed all its profits to DOXA Youth Foundation. This has helped DOXA confidently develop new programs and continue to support flagship programs such as the Malmsbury camp.

As well as giving DOXA all the profits from Winning Post sales, the paper's dedicated staff have devised several other ways of raising money for our disadvantaged young people. In March this year, the paper introduced a sports betting column sponsored by bookmaker Michael Eskander. Paul Richards, a columnist at the paper, places weekly bets of \$200 on DOXA's behalf and keeps readers informed about his luck or otherwise in his 'Richo's Sports Bet' column. In five months, Paul has raised \$3,950 for DOXA. Similarly, in another column, journalist Tony Rickards places a \$250 weekly bet, courtesy of the Victorian Bookmakers Association. Over several years, Tony has raised more than \$7,000 for DOXA.

The Winning Post supports DOXA in many other ways. The 'Day at the Races' held at Moonee Valley in June each year is always well patronised. Racegoers enjoy lunch, entertainment and prizes and can participate in the popular Punters Club, whereby bets are placed on their behalf by Winning Post staff. Over eight years, this event has raised more than \$16,000.

Since 1999, the editor, Tony Kneebone, has written and produced a colourful book called *This Racing Year* which raises about \$30,000 annually. Sales of merchandise and posters, together with sales of Tony Kneebone's other books, have all added to DOXA's coffers. Tony's hugely popular book, *The Paynes*, raised the significant figure of \$50,000.

DOXA extends its warmest appreciation to the Winning Post staff for their generosity and commitment. They have made an enormous difference to the quality of support we are able to provide to our young people.



DOXA Chief Executive Julie Rolfe (left) with Winning Post Editor Tony Kneebone (middle) and journalist Paul Richards with This Racing Year.

New Accommodation for Urban Campers

Our Urban Camp participants are enjoying their stay in Melbourne's bustling CBD more than ever, thanks to the new central location at DOXA Social Club's Meeting Place in Elizabeth Street. The refurbishment of the second floor accommodation has transformed the rooms into a bright and

exciting space, with vivid new colours and lots of natural light, and is proving to be an ideal venue for the camps.

The new TV/Recreation room is equipped with large couches and comfy oversized bean bags in which to relax after a busy day in the city. Children can take the opportunity to wind down with board games, books or DVDs. Others may choose to take some time out and relax in the covered outdoor area. This will be equally warm and pleasant in winter as it is in summer, due to an outdoor gas heater.

Windows have been fitted with safety screens and Venetian blinds, and there is new carpet in all rooms. Specially designed storage units and coat hooks have been fitted in the children's rooms, while the teachers' rooms have built in robes, double beds and ensuites.

The popularity of this program has continued to gain momentum in Semester One this year. There was a total of seven camps, with schools visiting from Kangaroo Flat, Talbot, Ultima, Murrabit, Marlo and Orbost, Grevillea Park and Ardmona.



Children on Urban Camp enjoying the warm and inviting new outdoor area.

AFL Stars working with DOXA

Goal Assist, a joint initiative with the WorkSafe Victorian Country Football League, is gaining momentum with the training of 25 mentors from five communities occurring in June at the Lexus Centre, home of the Collingwood Football Club. Visiting such 'state of the art' facilities was a great experience for all those who attended.

The trained mentors are now being joined by Athlete Development Australia and AFL stars to work with young people in their local football club who require extra assistance to help them fulfil their potential in life through continued education, sport and community opportunities. The program also includes training for parents and schools.

The AFL stars working with the program are Brett Montgomery (Western Bulldogs); Matthew Stokes (Geelong); Jason Winderlich (Essendon); Justin Perkins (Kangaroos); and Ben Schwarze (Kangaroos).

A good spread of clubs across Victoria are involved with *Goal Assist* for 2006: Corio/Geelong North (South West Victoria – Geelong); Broadford (Central Victoria);

Golden Point (Western Victoria – Ballarat); Korong Vale (Central Victoria – Bendigo); and Ramajyuk (Eastern Victoria – Sale).

Apart from the training, each club also will take on a project decided on by the group of mentors and young people as a way of contributing productively to their local community. Those involved with the program will also attend an AFL match and have the opportunity to visit the rooms to meet the AFL player working with them.

The feedback from the local communities and football clubs has been most positive and the enthusiasm towards *Goal Assist* at a local level is outstanding.



Attending the workshop in Broadford were trainers Craig Biddiscombe, Athlete Development Australia (left) and Brett Montgomery, Western Bulldogs (middle right) with Graeme Allen, Victorian Country Football League (middle left) and Julie Rolfe, DOXA (right).

Praise for the DOXA School West Melbourne

Recently the DOXA School received a visit from Elinor Brown, Associate Professor of Education at the University of Kentucky U.S.A. In addition to her work at the University, Ms Brown presents internationally at conferences focusing on the educational needs of students at risk. When she wrote to thank School Principal, Megan Moore, for her visit, she made the following comments about the program:

The lecturer at the Australian Catholic University spoke so highly of your program that I was anxious to visit. As a teacher educator from the United States, I am very interested in successful educational strategies that focus on reintegrating students who do not connect to traditional educational settings. Your program would be of great interest to many educators as it is proactive and creative.

Ms Brown's comments and her enthusiasm when visiting the school served to remind us of the important work being done at DOXA School West Melbourne as the school endeavours to offer hope and a chance to re-orient learning and living pathways for their students.

Fifteen students graduated from the school in June together with another 10 who have completed the full 18 months program. Semester Two welcomed 19 new students from 17 referring schools. This is the largest enrolment since the school opened in 2000. DOXA wishes them all the best as they work with school staff and their families to make positive changes in their lives.



Students with their teacher Lisa Williams at DOXA School West Melbourne.

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UPDATES

Malmsbury refurbishment

Work is progressing on the upgrade at the Malmsbury camp, with the Planning Permit for the refurbishment of student and teacher accommodation having recently been approved by the Hepburn Shire Council. The building work will go out to tender in September, and it is anticipated that construction will commence in October and finish around May next year.

All the recreational facilities and other camp buildings will be painted in October in colours that will blend in with the new accommodation units. The existing cabins are being donated to Kunexion, a not-for-profit organisation that supports new arrivals to Australia and other disadvantaged groups. Kunexion will use the cabins to house itinerant workers in the Harcourt fruit growing district.

Board Departure

Peter Maher, a director since February 2004, retired from the DOXA board in May to take up the Chairman's role with DOXA Social Club. Peter has been a tireless supporter of DOXA and his vision, enthusiasm, and commitment will be missed. However, we look forward to his continued involvement through the Social Club.



*New DOXA staff members
Grace Anamourlis (left) and Meghan Horwood.*

Staff Changes at DOXA

We are delighted to welcome two new staff members to DOXA – Grace Anamourlis as Office Manager and Meghan Horwood as Senior Book keeper.

Grace has moved across from the Winning Post where she was working in the advertising area. Prior to this, Grace held a number of administrative roles including Administration Manager, and store manager at McDonalds at two different sites. Grace's skills and broad experience will be a real asset at DOXA, and have already been put to good use!

Meghan Horwood is a qualified accountant who started with DOXA in late July. Prior to her current position, Meghan ran her own business providing book keeping services to small to medium sized companies. Managing all of DOXA's books, Meghan's accounting expertise will be invaluable to DOXA, particularly given our current program expansion.

Maree Tehan has left her position as DOXA's Program Director to take up a role in the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner. Maree made a wonderful contribution to DOXA's new directions and we wish her every success in her new job.