

# 2024

# OPERATIONAL REPORT



Connecting **YOUth**  
to Success



[swconnect.org.au](http://swconnect.org.au)



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

South West Connect would like to acknowledge the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging of the Darug Nation and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.



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South West Connect works with young people aged 5-25 years and their families to discover pathways to a better future.

Our community is culturally diverse and has a combined population of 468,263 people, 49.13% were born overseas and 60% face socio-economic disadvantage.

Many of our young people are from low socio-economic, refugee and migrant backgrounds facing challenges of disengagement, generational unemployment and welfare dependency.

With a long tradition of welcoming refugees and migrants, our region is a uniquely vibrant and compassionate community. The region is home to many refugees and asylum seekers and continues to welcome new migrants. This number will rise as global tensions increase.

The construction of the Western Sydney Airport and the development of surrounding commercial and residential precincts and new suburbs will see a projected population growth to exceed 650,000 people by the year 2036.

This unprecedented growth and development brings opportunity but also a range of challenges for the youth in our community.

South West Connect aims to ensure young people vulnerable to these challenges are supported and have a strong foundation to build their futures.

SWC would like to thank and commend our Stakeholders, Host Employers, FBEP Board Members, School Staff, SWC Staff and Community Partners for the economic and social contribution they continuously deliver to Region E.



**SWC has a proven track record of empowering over 130,000 young people in South West Sydney to discover pathways to a better future for themselves and their families.**

### SWC WORKS WITH STUDENTS FROM 3 EDUCATION SECTORS



Catholic  
Schools  
NSW



South West Connect works with businesses, government agencies, community organisations, parents and schools to create initiatives that connect young people (5 -25 years of age) and their families to opportunities that enhance their life options beyond school.

### SWC SERVICES "REGION E" COVERING 3 LGA'S



LIVERPOOL  
CITY  
COUNCIL

SWC empowers young people to gain the skills, experiences and professional guidance to help them achieve a successful transition through school to further education, training or employment and become active and valuable contributors in the community.

## WORK PLACEMENT TEAM

*Work placement is a one week placement with a host employer providing students the opportunity to practice skills learned in the classroom.*

*It is a mandatory component of industry-based Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses, chosen by students as part of their studies for the NSW High School Certificate.*

*SWC organises a one week work placement in businesses for Year 11 & 12 VET students to improve their skills learnt in the classroom and to prepare them for the workplace.*



YEAR 11 VET WORK  
PLACEMENT READY &  
STUDENT GUIDE



STUDENT WORK  
PLACEMENTS



PREPARING FOR  
WORK EXPERIENCE



PREPARING FOR PART  
TIME EMPLOYMENT



YEAR 12 THE  
NEXT STEP



**Cathy Pellegrino**  
Work Placement  
Manager



**Jenny Mercuri**  
Work Placement  
Officer - 2IC



**Deb Cross**  
Work Placement  
Officer



**Rosa Reddy**  
Work Placement  
Officer



**Harley McGregor**  
Employer Liaison  
Consultant

## Fairfield Business Education Partnership (FBEP) trading as South West Connect (SWC)

The Fairfield Business Education Partnership Board provides governance and leadership in accordance with the Constitution and FBEP policies.

The FBEP Board of Directors has representatives from local industry, community, The Department of Education Senior Pathways Ultimo, The Sydney Catholic Schools Regional Office, TAFE and Association of Independent Schools.

The Board meets 5 times per year and interacts with the South West Connect team on a regular basis.

## Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)

South West Connect is a not for profit organisation and a registered charity with deductible gift recipient status, complying with the **Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission** framework. All donations over \$2 made to SWC are tax deductible. Further information of SWC's financials can be obtained from the ACNC website: <https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity>

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CHAIRPERSON** - Susan Turner (Industry)

**PUBLIC OFFICER** - Christine Shakya (Education Consultant)

**FBEP TREASURER** - Jayne Occhiuto (Industry)

**BOARD MEMBER** - Dr Kenneth Edge - School Principal (NSW DoE)

**BOARD MEMBER** - Luke Whalen (Industry)

**BOARD MEMBER** - Michael Morris (Sydney Catholic Schools)

**BOARD MEMBER** - Carol Amorim (AIS NSW)

**BOARD MEMBER** - Dean Bain (Senior Pathways, Ultimo)

**BOARD MEMBER** - Dominique Ghaby (Industry)





L-R: Dominique Ghaby, Harley McGregor, Deb Cross, Jayne Occhiuto, Cathy Pellegrino, Rosa Reddy, Jenny Mercuri

***2024 has been a year of building and strengthening relationships, resilience, innovation and adaptability for South West Connect.***

We have continued to build strong supportive relationships and provide an extremely high-level of customer service to all our stakeholders. You will see from this report that our staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that our contractual obligations for work placement provision have been fulfilled, and other value-add offerings attended by students, provided valuable effective information and resources to support them while transitioning through school to their future world of work.

**Cathy Pellegrino** in her role of the Work Placement Manager has worked tirelessly to ensure that the team, under pressure from the increasing number of work placements required, stay focused and on track with the provision of work placement while maintaining a strong work ethic and positive team culture.

The 2024 Thank You Evening was a highlight of the year with 220 attendees comprising of Host Employers, VET School Staff, RTO Staff, Board Members and DoE Work Placement Support Staff. It was especially pleasing to present awards to employers who have hosted work placement students for 10 and 20 years and videos made by students of host employers giving work placement ready tips. This is a special night for South West Connect, we relish the opportunity to thank the people we work with to facilitate excellent practical educational outcomes for the young people of Region E.

We said goodbye to a staff member **Nikola Nicoski** and wish him all the best for the future working in his family's business.

Finally and most importantly I would like to extend my deep gratitude to our Board of Directors especially our Chair Susan Turner and the South West Connect staff, Cathy Pellegrino, Deborah Cross, Harley McGregor, Jennifer Mercuri, Rosa Reddy and Dominique Ghaby for their ongoing support during another extremely busy roller-coaster year.

# OUR PURPOSE

## OUR VISION



To inspire young people and their families by connecting them to the resources, skills and opportunities that enhances their options and empower them to be their best.

To engage communities, local government and employers, to address the needs of young people transitioning into the workforce.

## OUR MISSION



- Empower young people to achieve their educational, social and employment potential.
- Coordinate work placements that allow students to develop industry specific competencies, employability skills and appropriate work attitudes in a work environment.
- Support students in career exploration, career decision making and the transition into work.
- Engage with and build relationships with schools and career advisers across our region to promote the importance of career education and workplace learning.

## OUR ACTION & COLLABORATIVE APPROACH



We achieve this through our Work Placement Program. We partner with stakeholders across all sectors (business, school, family and community), building community capacity and strengthening aspirations and resilience for all young people in South West Sydney so they can create their own pathways to a better future.

## OUR REACH



We work with 50 High Schools and 109 Primary Schools, engage with all 3 education sectors NSW Department of Education, Sydney Catholic Schools NSW and The Association of Independent Schools NSW. We operate in Fairfield and Liverpool LGA and also in parts of Cumberland and Canterbury-Bankstown City Councils.

## CONNECTING YOUTH TO BUSINESS & COMMUNITY

Through innovative initiatives SWC inspire young people (aged 5 to 25 years) and their families by connecting them to the resources, skills and opportunities that create pathways to achieve their educational, social and employment potential and ultimately empowering them to be their best.

Through our collaboration and established networks across the education, business and community sectors, we have created over 100 sustainable cross-sector partnerships and initiatives that focus on health & wellbeing, reducing youth unemployment, enhancing employability skills, transition and pathway options that will allow young people to create their futures.

Since 2006, SWC has been the only organisation in the Fairfield, Liverpool and Cumberland City LGAs to work with all 162 schools from across the Government, Catholic and Independent sectors.

We also work with many community organisations to build their capacity in delivering a whole of community solution. SWC has assisted with connecting young people to thousands of part time, full time, casual, apprenticeships and school based apprenticeship opportunities, also through our partnerships, VET Work Placement Ready, Preparing for Part Time Work and Work Experience programs.

### IMPROVING WELLBEING

- Teach SEL skills for success to assist young people to better cope with stressful or challenging situations.
- Promote a connected community through initiatives that encourages volunteering inclusion and social cohesion.
- Promote resilience and empathy through positive Mental Health initiatives.



### ENHANCING LIFE & CAREER TRANSITIONS

- Assist in the transition from primary school to high school then on to tertiary studies or employment.
- Develop employability skills that are relevant and beneficial in school and beyond.
- Strengthen links between what is learned at school and what is needed in the workplace.
- Increase knowledge and create greater awareness of career paths and career information.



### ADVANCING COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

- Improve education, social and employment outcomes for young people.
- Break the cycle for young people who have experienced disadvantage.
- Community capacity building & collaborating for greater impact.
- Connect people to networks and resources that enable them to become active and valuable contributors in the community.



### LIFTING ASPIRATIONS

- Encourage young people to lift their aspirations and their goals.
- Improve leadership skills, self-esteem, self-awareness and self-belief to create a better future.
- Increase student engagement and diversify pathway options.
- Encourage goal setting and taking actions to achieve goals.



## INDUSTRY CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK COURSES

SWC organises work placements for VET students enrolled in the following courses:



PLUS A WIDE RANGE OF BOARD ENDORSED COURSES

Each year, South West Connect (SWC) coordinates and monitors approximately 6500 work placements for students from 40 high schools across Government, Catholic, Independent schools and 3 TAFE colleges studying Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses.

**SWC covers both Industry Curriculum Framework Courses (ICF) and various Board Endorsed Courses (BEC).**

SWC works with Education and Industry to provide work placement opportunities for Year 11 and 12 students in the Fairfield, Liverpool and Cumberland City Council (Local Government Areas) who are studying VET courses as part of their High School Certificate (HSC).

Work placement prepares senior school students for employment.

Students studying VET courses are given the opportunity to learn practical skills through experience and practice in the workplace. Courses include a component of mandatory work placement hours.

VET courses allow students to begin their industry training at the same time as studying for their HSC. It offers students a unique opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom and to experience the real world of work.

### SWC works with students from 3 Education Sectors



Catholic  
Schools  
NSW



SWC PLACED STUDENTS IN WORK PLACEMENTS FOR  
50 SCHOOLS/TAFE:



28



9



10

TAFE  
NSW

3

STUDENTS  
PLACED IN 2024

6011



WORK PLACEMENTS  
ARRANGED IN 2024

9078



Since 2013, South West Connect in partnership with Corptraining have combined resources providing students with information to ensure mandatory work placements are successfully completed by students studying Vocational Education and Training (VET) Courses as well as assist students with transition from secondary school into the workforce.

Our presentations expose students to a range of information designed to develop positive working relationships and meaningfully engage in the broader community.

We collaborate with the school to complement their VET Work Placement Ready, Preparing for Part Time Work and Work Experience programs.

Our presentations can benefit Years 9 to 12 students.

## YEAR 11 VET WORK PLACEMENT READY SESSION

VET Work Placement Ready information presentations provide Year 11 students important information relating to employer's workplace expectations prior to undertaking their first work placement. This also encourages a positive work placement experience for students and host employers.

This workshop information will assist students to prepare for their work placement and understand the value of completing it successfully. The information provides students with an overall awareness prior to their work placement of work-place expectations, how to successfully meet them and ways to positively contribute. All students attending sessions receive a free VET Work Placement Ready Student Guide.

## PREPARING FOR PART TIME WORK

This workshop information will assist those students in Years 9 to 12 who wish to gain part-time employment.

The presentation covers the basic areas of resume building, preparing for the interview and outlining correct interview attire to improve their chances of obtaining work.

## PREPARING FOR WORK EXPERIENCE

This workshop will assist students to prepare for their work experience with an employer and provide them with an understanding of how to represent themselves and the school.

The presentation allows students to understand how work experience is an opportunity to build on existing skills, learn new skills, develop relationships, and improve chances of obtaining part-time employment.

**BOOKINGS, QUERIES & CONTACT DETAILS**  
Nikki Heald - [nikki@corptraining.com.au](mailto:nikki@corptraining.com.au)

## THANK YOU EVENING

South West Connect (SWC) appreciate and acknowledge our Host Employers for their time and dedication given freely to our students and also to our VET teachers who assist in preparing students for work placement.

The 2024 South West Connect Thank You Evening welcomed Host Employers, Teachers, Volunteers and Stakeholders in person for their support and contribution over the past 12 months.

Together we celebrated the success and achievements of our combined efforts. Host Employer of Year Awards were awarded to Host Employers nominated by our schools, and we acknowledged Host Employers who have been hosting students for 10 years and 20 years.

## HOST EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

**PETER WARREN AUTOMOTIVE GROUP** - Automotive  
**HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL** - Business Services  
**BUNNINGS HOXTON PARK** - Construction  
**VACCARO GROUP** - Electrotechnology  
**SHOWTIME PRODUCTIONS** - Entertainment  
**UFC GYM WETHERILL PARK** - Fitness  
**3W CATERING PTY LTD (BISTRO 1925)** - Hospitality Cookery  
**THE SHED CAFE - Ed Square** - Hospitality Food & Beverage  
**UFC GYM WETHERILL PARK** - Fitness  
**BOSSLEY PARKSIDE** - Human Services  
**NATIONAL TECH** - Information & Digital Technology  
**CALMSLEY HILL CITY FARM** - Primary Industries  
**ST VINCENT DE PAUL - MT PRITCHARD** - Retail Services

## 10 AND 20 YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

10  
YEARS

- EVER DESIGN GROUP
- RP TAXATION

20  
YEARS

- A1 FINISHES
- BEST & LESS - Wetherill Park
- BEST & LESS - Fairfield City Central
- CABRAVALE DIGGERS
- CLUB MARCONI
- FAIRFIELD RSL
- NOVOTEL DARLING HARBOUR
- HEALTHSHARE
- KASS KITCHENS
- SAVANAS RESTAURANT

## WORK PLACEMENT AWARDS FOR STUDENTS

Host Employers can nominate students for **Work Placement Awards**. SWC prepare these awards on behalf of the employer for the students for their outstanding effort whilst on work placement. This is an overall achievement award which acknowledges, effort, dress, behaviour and willingness to learn. From January 2024 - December 2024, 237 Work Placements Awards to given to students across 37 schools. A fantastic effort from our students. Awards are sent out at the end of every term to the school Principal for presentation at a school assembly.

## VET STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Every year South West Connect like to recognise the talents and achievements of students and offer a **VET Student of the Year Certificate** and a *gift card* to one Year 11 student from each of our schools offering VET courses. The lucky recipient is chosen by their Principal in consultation with the VET Teachers. The award is presented to the student at the schools' end of year award ceremony.

## OUTSTANDING WORK ETHIC AWARD

The **Certificate of Achievement for Outstanding Work Ethic** is awarded as a way of offering our support in recognising Strong Student Work Ethic. Each year, SWC asks every school in Region E to select a student who has consistently demonstrated that they try to achieve their personal best in a diligent and respectful manner. The award is presented to the student at the school's end of year award ceremony.





Proud member of the



South West Connect (SWC) has been an active member of the Youth Futures Network (YFN) for the past 7 years. The YFN is an association comprised of 16 organisations with a business model that focuses on the youth of NSW.

In addition to being a Work Placement Coordination program service provider, network members have delivered a variety of workplace programs and services to schools, industry and communities in their regions for over 20 years.

The YFN provides opportunities for students to obtain the skills and workplace learning experiences they require to make sound personal, educational and vocational choices to ensure they have the best chance of thriving in their future workplaces.

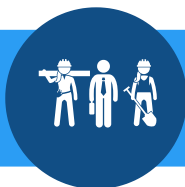
YFN members are unencumbered by alliances to out of region influences ensuring the management is local, the staff is local and the services are local.

## ACROSS NSW THE YFN WORKS WITH



**16 REGIONS**

Including rural, regional and metropolitan



**60,000+**

Annual placements



**200+ EMPLOYEES**

Working with YFN



**20,000+**

Host Employers



**780**

High Schools

**SWC WORKS WITH STUDENTS FROM 3 EDUCATION SECTORS**



**SWC SERVICES "REGION E" COVERING 3 LGA'S**



# DigiVAN

## South West Connect Facilitates Dynamic VET Work Placement with Skilled Creative's DigiVan

### ***ENTERTAINMENT STUDENTS SHINE IN INTERACTIVE VET WORK PLACEMENT WITH DIGIVAN***

Throughout 2024, South West Connect, in partnership with Skilled Creative, organised an engaging two-day and three-day work placement for entertainment students from several schools, including **Bossley Park High School, Fairfield High School, John Edmondson High School, Fairvale High School** and **Lurnea High School**. This immersive experience was made possible through the innovative "DigiVan," a mobile creative hub that brings the world of live film production and podcast creation directly to students.

This mobile entertainment studio, served as the hub for this interactive placement, allowing students to delve into the world of professional content creation. Students had the chance to visit host employers to conduct interviews and create podcasts. Students captured valuable employer insights into daily operations and career opportunities of a range of VET courses while gaining confidence practicing entertainment industry skills.

This successful placement demonstrates South West Connect's commitment to facilitating meaningful work placements for students across Region E in Southwest Sydney, ensuring they are well-prepared for their future careers. By providing such dynamic and interactive opportunities, South West Connect continues to play a pivotal role in offering students unique opportunities to develop essential skills and explore potential career paths.

South West Connect anticipates even more exciting placements in the coming year. We invite Region E schools and businesses to explore our work placement opportunities.

**To learn more or to express interest in participating in a DigiVan placement in 2025, please contact us at 9822 9370.**

**Join us in shaping the future workforce with hands-on experiences that inspire and empower.**





Bossley Park High School Entertainment Students

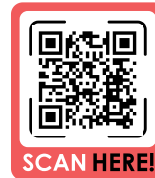
WE INVITE YOU TO VIEW THE VIDEOS CREATED BY THE STUDENTS HERE



**YouTube**<sup>AU</sup>  
**Holiday Inn Warwick Farm**  
*Chef Salindra*  
*Hospitality Cookery*



**YouTube**<sup>AU</sup>  
**Holiday Inn Warwick Farm**  
*Khalil Srour*  
*Business Services*



**YouTube**<sup>AU</sup>  
**RAMs Cafe**  
*Morris Oraha*  
*Hospitality Food & Beverage*



**YouTube**<sup>AU</sup>  
**Officeworks**  
*Katie Crisafulli*  
*Retail, Business Services*



**YouTube**<sup>AU</sup>  
**Vaccaro Group**  
*Cameron Bruzzese*  
*Construction / Electrotechnology*



**YouTube**<sup>AU</sup>  
**National Tech**  
*Spiros Missiakos*  
*IDT*



## WORK PLACEMENT REFERENCE GROUP BREAKFAST MEETING

South West Connect (SWC) meets with our VET Co-ordinators and teachers 4 times per year. These meetings give VET teachers and SWC the opportunity to discuss procedures, common achievements and/or issues that arise regarding all aspects of work placement across all sectors. DoE, SCS and AIS representatives also come along to give updates. Meeting minutes are sent to all VET Co-ordinators and VET Teachers in Region E.

## THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DOE)



South West Connect (SWC) has worked in collaboration with the NSW Department of Education (DoE) since 2006, delivering over 83,000 student work placements in that period. SWC partners with Business & Industry on a range of initiatives to help young people successfully transition to work.

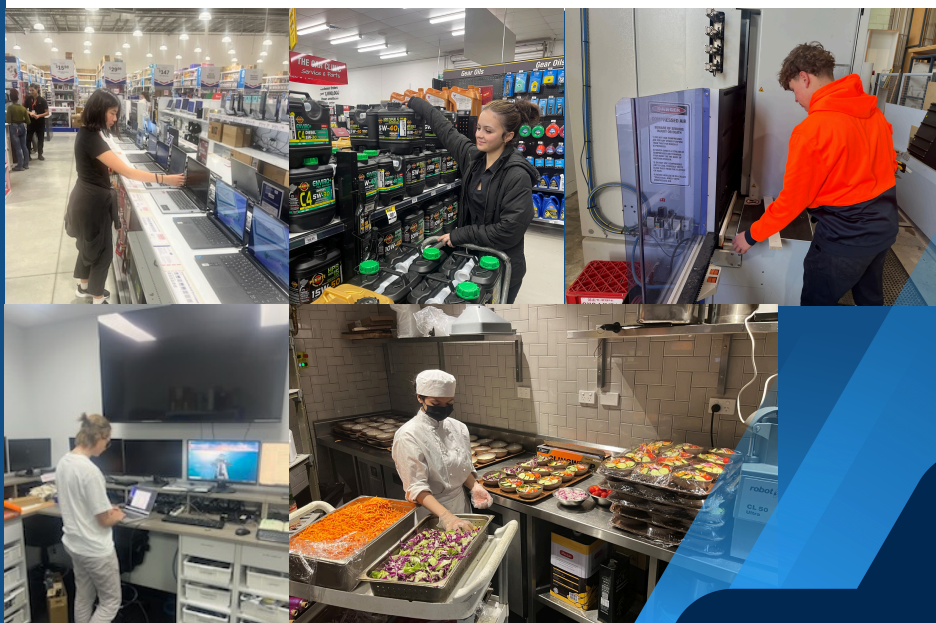
## EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS PROGRAM (EPP)

The EPP is an innovative program designed to give students a better sense of what lies beyond the school gates and provide them with more personalised and targeted careers advice. The initiatives centre on helping students into school-based apprenticeships and traineeships through mentoring and support.

## APPRENTICESHIP EXPO



The 2024 Apprenticeship & Traineeship Expo gave the opportunity for young people to meet with potential employers, training providers and organisations that provide support services for young job seekers.





Throughout 2024, South West Connect continued to strengthen our long standing partnership with Fairfield City Council (FFCC) providing work placements across several VET courses.

FFCC hosted many work placement participants at multiple sites providing HSC students with opportunities to improve practical knowledge of their VET course, their employability skills and boost their resumes



## LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL

South West Connect also strengthened our long standing partnership with Liverpool City Council (LCC) during 2024, with council sites providing work placement opportunities across several VET courses.

LCC hosted many work placement participants at multiple Liverpool Pre-Schools providing HSC students with opportunities to improve practical knowledge of the VET course, their employability skills and boost their resumes.



# How You Can Help



Your generous contribution to South West Connect will help us continue to support young people to achieve their educational, social and employment potential.



## All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

Fairfield Business Education Partnership Inc. (trading as South West Connect) is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR). It is covered by the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

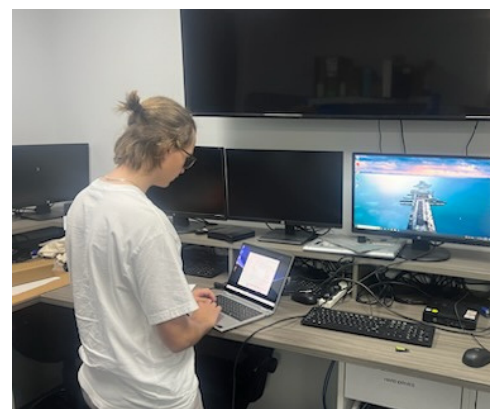
### Workplacement

Do you want to influence young people's educational outcomes and help them to prepare for the world of work? Your organisation can make a significant difference by hosting a HSC student for workplacement.



### Volunteer

If you would like to volunteer your time or resources to help one of our projects or initiatives, please contact South West Connect on (02) 98229370.



### Corporate Partnership & Sponsorship

Join us in a partnership that could make a genuine and positive difference in the local community.

Please see our website [www.swconnect.org.au](http://www.swconnect.org.au) for further details about the innovative and impactful projects and initiatives that may align with how you or your organisation would like to contribute to our community.

## 2 EASY WAYS TO DONATE

I would like to contribute to the programs that help South West Connect's Local Community.

**Amount Enclosed:** ☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ Other amount \_\_\_\_\_

### Donation Details:

Name	Telephone
Address	Suburb
E-mail	Post Code

#### 1. MAIL

Please make cheque payable to:  
**Fairfield Business Education Partnership Inc.**

Send Cheque or Money Order to:  
**PO Box 68, Edensor Park, NSW 2176**

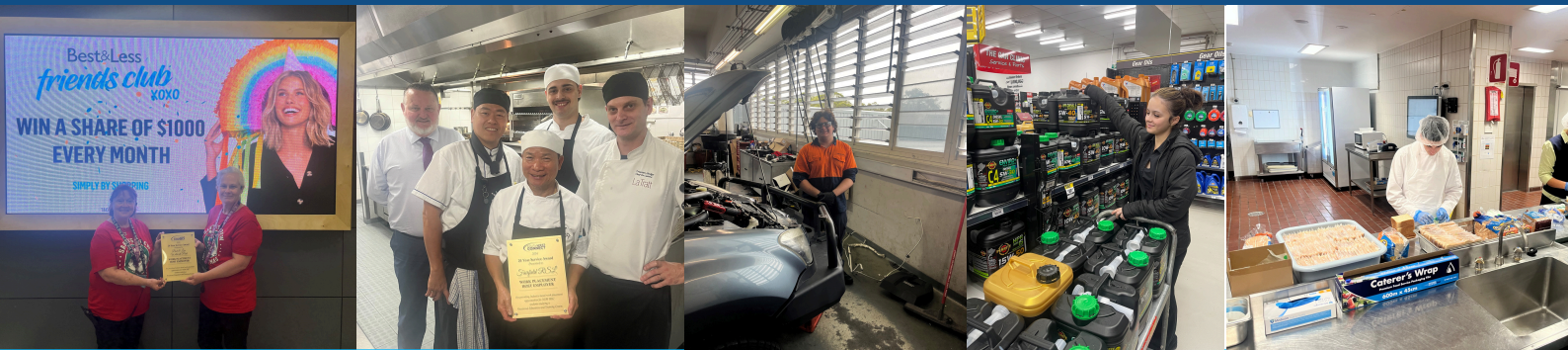
OR

#### 2. INTERNET BANKING (EFT)

Our bank details are as follows:  
**Commonwealth Bank**  
BSB: 062 736  
Account No: 1006 4734  
Account Name: **Fairfield Business Education Partnership Inc. (Please mark ref: Donation)**

**For further information on how you could financially assist our services please contact Jayne Occhiuto on 9822 9370.**

# CONTACT US



*SWC would like to thank and commend our Stakeholders, Host Employers, FBEP Board Members, School Staff, SWC Staff, and Community Partners for the economic and social contribution they continuously deliver to Region E.*



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