Celebrating 20 Years

Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education
Inc. No. A0032713Z    TOID 4036    ABN 93 736 262 050
PRACE is a registered public benevolent institution.

PRACE
2013 ANNUAL REPORT
Mission Statement

Through the provision of accessible education opportunities that engender self-reliance and hope, we shape the community of tomorrow and break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage to enable people to improve their quality of life.

Vision

PRACE strives to develop dynamic, responsive and innovative educational programs, teaching and learning experiences.

We aim to encourage the concept of lifelong learning and recognise the life experiences that all people bring to the organisation.

PRACE will support and advocate on behalf of the community to ensure equitable access to resources and services that will work to strengthen the capacity of all people to participate fully in their community.

Organisational Structure and Funding

PRACE is a registered not-for-profit charitable organisation which was founded in 1993. Over its 20 year history PRACE has increased significantly in size and scope of activities and currently receives funding from a range of local, state and federal government departments. It is governed by a voluntary board of management with strong representation in all key operational areas.

PRACE also manages the Merrilands Community Centre on behalf of the City of Darebin, supporting over 30 community groups who access the Centre. The PRACE program, both education and community development, operates across two main sites in Reservoir as well as in a range of other community venues across Darebin.
It has been a year of growth and achievement at PRACE. We now have a stronger governance focus and we have tightened up our policies. We have a new constitution that provides a solid framework for our work and decision making. We offer high quality programs for a community with multiple needs, we have embraced many opportunities as they arise and we have strengthened our networks. It has also been a year that has seen major improvements to our capital assets and our IT systems.

We now have PBI charitable status with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission that opens up new revenue raising opportunities and this is thanks to the hard work of our consultant Robert Kelly and the persistence of our secretary Cheryle Michael.

Another exciting outcome during the year was the development of our new strategic plan with the help of our consultant Meg Montague. It was a great process which will position PRACE well for future years and it was most impressive to see our staff, students, stakeholders and the board participate so willingly and provide input leading to a high quality forward looking document which gives priority to our people, our courses and programs, our infrastructure and our resources.

I would like to thank the Board for its hard work over the year. Directors have shown great dedication and commitment and the diversity of expertise we possess has proved invaluable as we come to grips with issues of governance, finances, personnel, infrastructure and relationships with our community. I would like to particularly acknowledge the contribution of Anne Dunn who is leaving us and has been a great champion of the students and staff. Anne has been a hard working, thoughtful and cheerful member of our committee/board over a number of years and was there for the setting up of the Reservoir Neighbourhood House and the Sliding Door Café. We all wish Anne well for the future and she will always be welcome in our PRACE community for which she has worked so hard.

To Executive Officer Paddy and our marvelous team, many thanks. Your passion, your forward looking outlook and your consummate professionalism along with a heartfelt commitment to the well being of our students and our community helps PRACE stand out as a truly responsive, high quality and professional institution which is highly valued in our community.

It is perhaps a bit of a cliché to say we live in challenging times but we do. However, we are actually managing to thrive in a difficult environment of change and resource constraints. This is a credit to our wonderful PRACE people and is certainly something I am proud to be associated with. I look forward to a successful 2014.

David Redfearn OAM
Chair
PRACE Board of Management
EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT

Let me take this opportunity to thank all the staff and volunteers who have contributed an incredible amount of time and effort to make 2013 one of the most productive and prosperous in PRACE’s twenty year history.

PRACE was successful in extending our reach and impact beyond the Reservoir community, delivering programs in a range of locations including Thornbury, Thomastown, and Mill Park. PRACE has built on existing programs, established new programs, pursued innovation and advocated for our participants on a range of service challenges.

PRACE has worked with over 600 students and 30 community groups. It is estimated that the organisation has engaged with over 2000 people in 2013. Feedback provided from our participants was very positive, with many indicating that staff are caring, supportive and responsive to student needs.

PRACE celebrated our 20th year with a community event that bought both its past and present people together to reflect on the great work the organisation has conducted in the northern and broader community.

The success of 2013 is due to the commitment, skills and hard work of our staff and volunteers, the leadership of our Board and the support of partners.

I thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this organisation and look forward to a very productive 2014.

Paddy McVeigh
Executive Officer
PRACE

The Board of Management understands our responsibility for ensuring that the financial report is in accordance with the Accounting Standards, Consensus Views and the Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education Inc. constitution and confirm that the financial report is free of material misstatements, including omissions.

All financial details are provided in the FINANCIAL REPORT of Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education Inc. for the year ended 31 December 2013. The Board of Management endorses all material in this financial report.

Please see copy of Financial Report.
The data on this page represents statistics from 2013 student enrolments in Adult Community & Further Education (ACFE), Higher Education and Skills Group (HESG), the Skills for Education and Employment Program (SEE, formerly LLNP) and the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

Class Enrolments 1073
Total No. of Students 622
Male Students 172
Female Students 450
Total No. of Classes 70
PRACE’s 20th Anniversary

Celebrating 20 years

On Saturday, August 31st 2013 PRACE students and staff (both current and former) and members of the community joined in celebrating PRACE’s 20 years in Darebin with a community festival. We were given a gloriously sunny day to reflect on PRACE’s journey from very small beginnings in the East Reservoir Tenants Association Building to what you see today at Merrilands Community Centre.

Guests enjoyed wonderful entertainment and food: halal sausages, pizza baked in our very own pizza oven and spicy paella. Kids made fabulous badges and were entertained by a juggling clown as they waited patiently to get their faces painted. Many took part in our free workshops learning basic massage techniques, African drumming, a bit of ballroom dancing and some phrases in Arabic.

But our certificate presentation ceremony was perhaps a highlight of the day showing what PRACE is all about: connecting the community with opportunity. As we move into our third decade we continue our commitment to providing accessible education and training opportunities to those in our community.
Notable happenings & activities

PRACE and WHIN - A New Partnership

PRACE commenced an exciting new partnership in 2013 with Women’s Health in the North (WHIN) which aims to develop the financial literacy skills of some of our students. (pictured left)

The program is based on a WHIN resource – Managing Money: Every Woman’s Business, A Guide to Increasing Women’s Financial Capability. WHIN website can be viewed at: www.whin.org.au

PRACE sponsors West Preston FC Mentoring Program

As part of PRACE’s ongoing commitment to community well-being and support for youth, we agreed to sponsor the local club and this great initiative. WPJFC launched the Triple CCC Program in April 2013. The program underscores the importance of having positive role models for young people, role models that they can emulate in sporting life and beyond.

Driving lessons for ESL students thanks to the RACV Community Foundation

PRACE was one of 32 recipients to receive a grant from the RACV Community Foundation in 2013. The grant funds driving lessons for 15 PRACE ESL students. These students will be supported through the process of getting their driver’s license in 2014 by undertaking PRACE pre-accredited courses. Having a driver’s license will improve the students’ employment opportunities and also increase their potential to be involved in their community.

Network News.......  

In May 2013 PRACE hosted the first pre-accredited moderation workshop for ‘Learn Local’ organisations within our network. The workshop provided the opportunity for local practitioners to collaboratively review program designs, delivery and outcomes with a view to ensuring a high and comparable quality of programs across the network.

Representatives from PRACE, Thornbury Women’s Neighbourhood House, Jika Jika Community Centre, SPAN Community House and Preston Neighbourhood House attended the workshop and were keen to meet on a regular basis to continue and build on the process. (group pictured right)

PRACE continues to look for every opportunity to enhance the skills and knowledge of its staff and provide a quality learning experience for all students.
EVENTS

Grant from the Readings Foundation

With a grant which PRACE received from the Readings Foundation in June 2013, PRACE has purchased reading material that is suitable for adults learning to read and write as well as adults learning English as a Second Language (ESL). The adult appropriate readers are available for loan through the PRACE Community Library. We wish to encourage students to practice reading outside of class and share their learning with their families.

Thomastown West Primary School Community Hub Launch

The TWPS Community Hub, created through an innovative partnership between Whittlesea Community Connections, TWPS, PRACE and the Smith Family, was officially launched in October 2013 (photo left). The Hub is aimed at supporting and strengthening the children, young people and their families attending and connected to the Thomastown West Primary School community.

VET Certificate Presentation

Congratulations to all of the 2013 VET certificate recipients.

A certificate presentation was held at Merrillands Community Centre on 31 August in conjunction with the 20th Anniversary Celebration. The event showcased VET students’ learning achievements along with success stories in employment and further study. Approx. 30 students were present to accept certificates (pictured right) along with lots of supporting family and friends.

PRACE Featured in A House Around the Corner, series 2

PRACE featured in two episodes of Channel 31’s A House Around the Corner (series 2). One episode featured PRACE’s cleaning course and the other documented the wonderful work of our very own e-learning specialist Michael Chalk.
RESERVOIR NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

2013 has been an exciting year for Reservoir Neighbourhood House! We officially reached our independence as of the 1st of July and with continued support and mentoring from PRACE along with a fantastic community governance guru in Patrick Moriarty from OurCommunity, we have been able to grow from strength to strength! With this support, the House has built a robust 3yr strategic plan, all in keeping with the community as its central point of focus and intention then extended this to link to a strong and viable business plan to support the House to achieve its mission of; … ‘provide a welcoming community space that fosters and promotes the prosperity and wellbeing of local residents, to bring people together to develop and encourage employment prospects, support health and enhance belonging’…. for our community to enjoy now and in the future.

Next step, I’d like to introduce you to our Board members. Steve Plant (Chair), Jacqueline Giuliani (Deputy Chair), Jeremiah Temple (Treasurer), Gail Conlon (Secretary), Rawinia Carroll (Policy portfolio), Jian Xiao (Inclusion portfolio) and Lauren Ellis (Wellbeing portfolio). This has been an exciting learning curve for all of us as a team here at the House and we feel with involvement from our local community, it is a recipe for success!

In 2013 our House was supported by the community and local partners to deliver on a number of projects. These included the Men’s, Women’s and Senior’s health days, End of Year Community festival, quarterly Community Newsletter, Street Art VCAL program in partnership with PRACE along with the development of a strong relationship with NMIT for students attending the Diploma of Welfare to have the opportunity to access a range of community development initiatives within the Darebin Neighbourhood House network. We are hoping to continue these projects, grow in strength with our partners and the community involved at the House, as well as continue to recruit new faces to our ever growing program!

On that note, we encourage you to pop into the House, have a chat with staff and community, get to know our place and let us know your thoughts on how we can continue to support sustainable growth in Reservoir.

Here’s to a bright and happy future!

Angie Davidson-Slater
Coordinator
Reservoir Neighbourhood House

Reservoir Italian Pensioners Club Annual Bocce Competition

The club, which plays at Merrilands Community Centre four days a week, holds the competition every year with other pensioners’ clubs in the Darebin area.

Congratulations to the 2013 winners, pictured right with PRACE’s Jane Davey.

1st place: Giovanni Botta
2nd place: Emilio Scollo
3rd place: Nic Zippono
Gentle Exercise

Students at PRACE continued to enjoy gentle exercise classes in 2013 in partnership with Darebin City Council's Healthy Communities Initiative - Healthy Moves. The classes were conducted one day a week at Merrilands Community Centre. The low impact classes work on strengthening the body and improving participants' fitness and coordination.

The program will continue to be offered in 2014.

E-LEARNING

In 2013, teachers and learners continued to add a range of technologies to their classroom delivery. Teachers consolidated their knowledge and experience of systems that were set up in previous years, for example our learning management system (LMS) known as "moodle", as well as our exploration of wikispaces for the young mums VCAL and also for the main VCAL group.

By the end of the year, the main VCAL group had switched over to using Google Apps (also known as Google Drive) for sharing documents and assignments with students, with teachers reporting a much higher level of ease and access in that system. A social media group at the Thomastown Library learned through a range of technologies including Facebook, Twitter, blogs and more. Staff in the VET program trialled a form of web conferencing for having meetings at a distance (Microsoft Lync) – we are still searching for the ideal technology for this purpose.

The major changes were in the realm of infrastructure, as more teachers began to use the new internet hub in the front building at Merrilands, and large computer-enabled television screens were installed across several rooms in the two buildings. Infrastructure is a huge investment for a Learn Local organisation, and this takes careful long-term management. People usually don’t realise that behind the scenes we need large servers as well as banks of laptops and desktop machines. In the corporate world, most machines like this have a lifespan of 3 years.

Our IT support crew Razornet moved to a new online system for supporting PRACE staff, and this transition went smoothly. We continued to trial Google Apps and Google Drive as a way for staff to share files and strengthen communication between locations.

By the end of the year we were planning to invest in a new kind of technology, the portable tablet. Touch-sensitive screens and thousands of mobile apps would give our staff and students much simpler access to the worlds of connectivity and digital learning. We had compared a range of systems (Microsoft, Google Android and Apple iPad), and decided upon the Apple iPad. Stay tuned to find out what happened next.

Find out more on the blog: e-learning at PRACE: http://elearnatprace.blogspot.com/

Michael Chalk
Flexible Learning Coordinator
2013 was another amazing and wonderful year for our VCAL programs. It just keeps growing stronger and stronger.

**VCAL**

All of our students who completed their VCAL certificate have either continued with their education or have found full time employment.

Again, the focus of the course was the healthy minds, body, choices and lifestyle and we continued to supply breakfast and lunch so that the students could work to their full potential and successfully achieve their desired outcomes.

Subjects in VCAL included Literacy, Oral Communication, Numeracy, Personal Development, Work Related Skills, units from Certificate II in Hospitality and Retail. We also provided them with the opportunity to try different activities including roller blading, surfing, kayaking, raft building, boxing, tae kwon do, bowling, high ropes and swimming to name a few.

Students participated in the PARTY (Preventing Alcohol Related Trauma in Youth) which is a fantastic hands on and engaging program run at the Alfred Hospital. They also completed the Keys Please program run by Vic Roads and eligible students sat for their Learner License. Another great activity was the painting of the wall at the Reservoir Neighbourhood House. Students were asked to consult with the community to create the masterpiece and with the help of 2 artists, I’m sure that you will agree that the mural is brilliant (photo above right). If you get a minute, please go and have a look.

The year came to an end at a wonderful graduation ceremony followed by a ride in the pink hummer to dinner at the Docklands.

A huge thank you to our lead teacher Pam Hullin who has kept the students motivated with her engaging projects and kept the students in line when necessary, to David Van Wynen who has delivered some great projects in VET and to Matt Goldsworthy who is always there for the students.

Congratulations to Matt as well for successfully completing the Advanced Diploma in Community Sector Management.

**PreCAL**

PreCAL continued this year in 2nd Semester and was again a huge success. All of our PreCAL students have decided to continue to study VCAL at PRACE in 2014, which means that our VCAL class will grow to 20 students in the class. This is a brilliant result and a big thank you goes to David Van Wynen for engaging the students and motivating them so that they want to complete their secondary education.

**Young Mums VCAL**

Young Mums VCAL continues to get bigger and better. There will be a few changes in 2014, but the students and children had a wonderful year. Two of our students have gone onto further study and three students have started part time work after receiving their RSA (Responsible Service of Alcohol) and Barista certificates.

I would like to thank Maria Cacioli for all the wonderful work she has done. Maria is the VCAL and VET teacher for the Young Mums program and is always available out of hours to help and support the students.

Jane Davey  
Youth Programs Manager
PRE-ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

In 2013 PRACE continued to design, develop and improve its range of pre-accredited programs. Supported by ACFE (Adult Community and Further Education) funding, we were once again able to deliver over 24,000 hours of training to more than 400 students – providing our diverse community with access to a range of general and specific vocational skills. For many, pre-accredited programs provide the first step back into a learning environment and often pave the way to further/accredited study or employment.

New and continuing programs included:

- **Computers**: basic and advanced classes in Microsoft programs, internet, email and a pilot ‘Introduction to Social Media/Networking’
- **Introduction to Office Skills** (administration and computers). Participants were all given the opportunity to pathway into a Certificate II in Business qualification (TWNH/Darebin City Council /ERNR project) which offered potential employment in the Council’s casual administration pool or other entry level administration support positions. Two of our participants were accepted onto the project, with one successfully gaining employment in the Council’s casual administration pool. A work placement with local business/community organisations will be a component of PRACE’s Office Skills program in 2014.
- **Horticulture** - including a program for learners with a disability in partnership with Merri Community Health
- **Workforce Directions** – an employment preparation and job search program supported by industry guest speakers
- **Retail Industry Placement Program** – including a supported work placement
- **AUSLAN** (Australian Sign Language)
- **Introduction to Massage** – including community-focused workshops and demonstrations
- **Making Connections – Skills for Working and Living** (disability). Several participants transitioned from this program into employment or further study opportunities at the end of 2013.
- **Adult Literacy** (evening classes)
- **A series of work-related programs for English (CALD) students**: ‘An Introduction to the Australian Workplace’, ‘Pathways to Employment and Study’ and ‘Preparing for Work and Further Study’
- **Hospitality - Barista and Food Handling Basics**

**Student Feedback 2013**

**Introduction to Massage**

“...a very thorough and competent teacher. Yes, it was what I wanted... learnt a lot about muscles and bones...can confidently give a seated massage.”

Nicole

“I am learning how to connect with people...learning new things and challenging my mind to remember.”

Participant

**Feedback from Partners**

**Introduction to Gardening Program**

“Feedback from residents was extremely good. They all really enjoyed it. For (staff) it was also a very good experience: they were very pleased to see their clients so engaged. It is certainly an experience that we would like to repeat.”

Andrea Bottini-Evans
Team Leader - SAVVI Supporting Connections
(Savvi (Merri Community Health))

Pictured above: Introduction to AUSLAN students & teacher
Established partnerships continued, with PRACE engaging in and contributing to many activities at Reservoir Neighbourhood House including planting and maintenance of the RNH garden, Community Days and the End of Year Festival. In November 2013, PRACE was presented with a ‘Community Work Partnership Award’ by Community Correctional Services (CCS) in recognition of the success of our pre-accredited partnership program. We were also the beneficiaries of a grant ($5000) sourced by CCS to support and resource the program to ensure its longevity. The pre-accredited partnership extended from one program in 2012 to two successful programs in 2013. A Pathways Support Worker has been appointed to further support and develop this partnership in 2014 and assist Community Correctional Services’ clients with the transition to work and study.

New partnerships were formed with Thomastown Neighbourhood House and the Thomastown West Primary School Community Hub (Thomastown West Primary School, Whittlesea Community Connections and The Smith Family) which has allowed PRACE to extend delivery into these communities.

ACFE introduced moderation of pre-accredited programs in 2013 and PRACE fully embraced the practice which will provide greater opportunities to assess and improve the content and quality of our programs. A number of moderation workshops were organised by PRACE throughout the year and attended by both PRACE teaching staff and our network partners.

A Community Programs Support Worker was appointed in March 2013 to support the continued growth of the pre-accredited area. Going forward, this support will allow us to continue to provide quality programs and the high standard of support for our learners that we pride ourselves on. The addition of a Support Worker will also provide extra time and resources to source and engage in partnership and community opportunities that will result in positive training and employment outcomes for our community.

Fiona Muscat
Community Programs Coordinator

Student Feedback 2013

Introduction to Office Skills

“I would love to do more courses. I love studying through PRACE. A truly caring organisation.”

Mary

“Our trainer Nadine was an excellent trainer, understanding our needs and addressed all our questions. I am far more confident now after doing this course.”

Sonja

“When I started this course I knew nothing about an office environment now I have the skills to work in an office.”

Vivian

Pictured above: Making Connections students participating in a City of Darebin Healthy Communities Initiative in which they learned about hygiene, food safety, and preparing healthy meals.
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING (VET)

2013 was once again another successful year for VET at PRACE. VET government funding was primarily divided into 2 divisions in 2013. ACFE funded Pre-accredited delivery totalled 24,107 Student Contact Hours (SCH) and HESG (Higher Education Skills Group) funded Accredited Delivery 113,386 SCH (this includes accredited VET, VCAL & Foundation courses).

Accredited VET courses in 2013 incorporated delivery from the following qualifications: Cert. II in Retail Services, Hospitality, Cleaning Operations, Advanced Diploma in Community Sector Management and Cert. III in Education Support (in partnership with Meadow Heights Learning Shop- MHLS for Semester 1 only).

2013 witnessed further reductions in government subsidies for certain qualifications. This generated uncertainty. However, as indicated below, the final results were still pleasing. New delivery strategies are currently being piloted in 2014 to compensate for further subsidy reductions scheduled.

Summary of PRACE’s Student Contact Hour Report
outlining ACFE & HESG funded delivery over the past 3 years. Fee for Service Delivery has also been included.

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<td>Delivery: Profile (Accredited) &amp; ACE (Pre-accredited)</td>
<td>113,766 (HESG/Skills Vic.)</td>
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<td>Fee for Service (FFS)</td>
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Student Feedback 2013

Cert. III in Education Support
“Fabulous Teacher. She made classes fun & was always full of encouragement.”

“Had an awesome time.”

Retail Industry Placement Program
“Teacher & Staff are very enthusiastic and friendly. This is a blessing for a community. Keep it up.”

“Excellent Learning Experience.”

Barista Basics
“Loved it – It was fun using the coffee machine.”

“Excellent Teacher.”

Cert. II in Cleaning Operations
“Everyone involved in a cleaning business should take this course.”

“Industry guest speakers provided a snap shot of the world of cleaning.”

“A very friendly environment with good instruction and I was made to feel welcome.”

“It was awesome.”
2013 VET Highlights & Outcomes

- In Semester 2, 2013 the Cert III in Education Support qualification was formally extended onto PRACE Scope of Registration. The original delivery partnership with Meadow Heights Learning Shop (MHLS) greatly supported this transition. Outcomes & student feedback were all extremely positive. 66 full certificates were issued & employment success stories eventuated in both the primary & secondary school sectors, along with special schools and kindergarten.

- The introduction and successful delivery of pre-accredited & fee for service programs in Retail & Hospitality. This included new program partnerships with St Clare’s Primary School in Thomastown and Whittlesea Community Connections.

- Further continuous improvement strategies for VET in particular with the introduction of the new streamlined training package framework. All Industry Skills Councils are working towards ensuring that all training packages are reviewed and comply with the new standards by Dec. 2015. Development of an Action Plan will take effect in 2014 outlining a timeline that balances the needs of our learners, transition requirements and resources available.

- 2013 VET courses also established/strengthened community links and pathways with: NMIT Preston - Hospitality Department, Melbourne City Mission, Northland Youth Centre, Various retail & education support Host Employers offering practical placements along with local Job Service Providers – Centrelink Epping, WISE Employment (Projects Team - Nth Melb), CRS Bundoora, Job Prospects Preston, Sarina Russo Preston, North Star Epping & Matchworks Preston.

- Industry engagement/consultation was ongoing in 2013. Thanks to the following employers who contributed to the training quality and/or offered career support to students: - Cleanforce Preston, Astute Property Services, Fitted for Work, Waratah Special Development School & Northern School for Autism.

- Professional development opportunities for teachers and staff continued to be undertaken & promoted along with the sharing of ideas and resources. This included certain staff satisfactorily completing the unit TAELLN401A – Address Adult Language, Literacy & Numeracy Skills (a new core unit of the Cert IV in TAA), via the VET Development Centre & a career & pathways workshop presented by Alison Templar – Regional Career Development Officer NW Vic Region DEECD.

Thanks must go to PRACE teachers, students, administration staff, co-ordinators, management and community partners. Without their support, commitment, efforts and hard work none of the above would have been achieved.

Ancy Kurban
VET Coordinator
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

ESL Enrolments

In 2013 PRACE continued to provide English as a second language classes through Skills for Education and Employment (SEE, formerly LLNP), Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) funding and the Higher Education Skills Group (HESG).

ESL for Community Detention-Asylum Seekers

PRACE was privileged to run the English as a Second Language classes for people in community detention who are not eligible to access other government-funded English classes. Students were enthusiastically learning English so as to be part of their new community and have now become a large part of the PRACE community. This program offered English as a Second Language for 9 hours per week over a 5 week block and was funded by Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).

Events

Speakers

Speakers in the ESL classes in 2013 included Diabetes Victoria, Melbourne Fire Brigade and Rubella Prevention.

Bicycle Confidence Course

Held in December 2013, the City of Darebin funded a Bicycle confidence course at Merrilands Community Centre to provide information and practical training related to riding on the road in Australia. Students developed their cycling skills and confidence to ride responsibly and safely on shared paths and on public roads in the free 5 hour program.

PRACE ESL student—making the most of opportunities in a new country

Betty Weyhee, an ESL student at PRACE, had her story celebrated in print in October 2013 when the Australian Financial Review published an article on the Brotherhood of St Laurence’s Stepping Stones program.* The program offers mentoring and training to migrant and refugee women who are interested in starting their own businesses. It can also arrange for micro-finance loans.

Betty was interviewed about her flight from war in her native country Liberia and her settlement in Australia in 2005 after almost 10 years living in refugee camps.

The article goes on to describe how Betty took up classes in ESL and earned certificates in Child Care and First Aid and then enrolled in the Stepping Stones program in 2011. Upon completion of the course Betty says, “... I got a loan to start a home business to import food goods from Africa. This has helped me to support my family... I now live in Reservoir and run my small business. I love Australia because my children can go to school and there is no war. There’s food to eat and even with my disability I can make a living.”

Morning Teas

We continued to offer our Morning Tea and AMEP expo program on the final Thursday of each term. Each morning tea has a theme and affords the students with an opportunity to gain information from the specially invited representatives of local organisations and government bodies.

The themes for morning teas in 2013 were:

- Term 1 – Communication – the students enjoyed a visit from The Lafter Lady and a certificate presentation was held in which a number of students received their completed certificates

- Term 2 – Leisure – The Shenanigans played music and students had the opportunity to learn bush dancing. After working with their teacher Eleni and volunteer Shelagh, the Preliminary English class sang at the morning tea.

- Term 3 – Australian Law – Coinciding with the federal election, students learned about the democratic process and held mock elections. Congratulations to Antonia, the winner, (pictured below) whose campaign platform of supplying baked goods to share every week was a real sweetener for the voters.

- Term 4 – Australian Culture and Society – students got into the mood of the festive season with food and entertainment

The success of these events was again made possible by the hard work of our AMEP Settlement Co-ordinator, Zoe Phillips.

Volunteers

Volunteers in ESL classes continued to provided added value for students throughout the year. We would like to acknowledge the commitment of the following volunteers for 2013:

San Long  Kaye Middleton  Matt Vella
Anna Pearson  Lorraine Smith  Andrew Wilson
Amir Ali

Libby Barker
Education Manager
The PRACE PageTurners series of small easy-to-read books for adults learning to read has continued to grow. PRACE PageTurners are now regularly sold in Canada, the USA, England, New Zealand and all Australian states, and bring in a good profit. PageTurners have also brought continuing kudos to PRACE as a centre of innovation and learning excellence.

**Series Seven**

We are currently preparing our seventh series — ten new stories on a variety of general interest topics that will appeal to our international as well as our Australian audience.

The topics covered include a spider adventure, the difficulties of driving in a strange city, problems with technology, identical twins, the importance of following your dreams, superstitions and more. These stories are for all ages and interests, are fun to read, entertainingly illustrated and good for a class discussion afterward.

**Titles:**

**Level 1:**  
The Spider  
Late for Work  
The Drink Machine is Evil

**Level 2:**  
Are We Lost?  
Double Trouble  
Banana Boat

**Level 3:**  
The Dancer  
Emergency Rescue

**Level 4:**  
The Lost Dog’s Home  
Scary Story

With the launch of Series 7, PageTurners will have 68 titles available -- 67 of them in book form, one on-line story on the web and one story, BILL’S SECRET about a man who learns to read late in life, which is a free downloadable in pdf form.

**PageTurners On-Line**

Michael Chalk, the technological member of the team, has continued to expand the PageTurners website, through which many of our sales come. The website also has free on-line stories, free downloadable worksheets and our newest titles have free downloadable audio.

We also have a blog: http://pracepageturners.blogspot.com.au/  
and a Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/anne.pracepageturners

We are working toward installing a clickable buy system on the website, which will also calculate the cost of postage. This should facilitate sales.

**PageTurners e-newsletter**

We launched a PRACE PageTurners e-newsletter to further promote the books. Two issues have gone out.

We would like to thank Libby Barker, the PRACE administrative staff (especially Amanda Cosstick who handles enquiries and sales), Ken the PRACE bookkeeper and the PRACE Board of Management for their on-going support.

Anne Dunn, Chris Malakar, Moira Hanrahan, & Michael Chalk
We would like to acknowledge and thank all of the people who contribute to PRACE’s success and on-going commitment to educating the community.

2013 Board of Management
Chair                                      David Redfearn
Treasurer                                  Bruce Johns
Secretary                                  Cheryle Michael
General Members                           Anne Dunn, Christopher Garcia, Ian Harrop, Maria Pisan

Staff
Executive Officer                          Paddy McVeigh
Education Manager                         Libby Barker
Youth Programs Manager                    Jane Davey
ESL Coordinator                           Jennifer Nathan
Wellcomm Project (Asylum Seekers) Coordinator Debra Vallely
VET Coordinator                           Ancy Kurban
Community Programs Coordinator            Fiona Muscat
Administration Staff                      Rita Al-Mourani, Amanda Cossticke, Angela Iaconessi, Maria Tomazos, Amity Bennett-Hullin
Flexible Learning Coordinator             Michael Chalk
Marketing Coordinator                    Lauren Rizzacasa
IT Technicians                            Fraser Lorimer, Ron Thomas
Waste Manager                             Aubrey Jansz
Youth Support Worker                      Mathew Goldsworthy
Community Programs Support Worker         Nadine Mulquiney
Cleaner                                    Sandro Mariotti, Walter Sfar
Compliance Consultant                     Jude Newcombe

Reservoir Neighbourhood House             Angie Davidson-Slater, Donna Carpenter, Chris Cowie

Teaching Staff
Marie Atlee, Maria Cacioli, Belinda Carelli, Cathryn Collins, Carmel Di Marco, Rita Di Simone, Nilanthi Dona, Nick Draganovic, Sia Gazis, Margaret Gardner, Pam Hullin (Bennet), Louise Jade, Rohan Kioney, Kate Muir, Yvonne Jelley, Pat Lac, Chris Malakar, Barb Matthews, Christine Mooney, Nadine Mulquiney, Robin Parker, Emma Patterson, Zoe Phillips, Eleni Prineas, Arthur Schmidt, David Van Wynen, Katherine Underhill, Debra Vallely, Tina Vlahos, Paula West, Soheir Youssef

Volunteers
We are truly blessed to have such an enthusiastic team of steadfast volunteers who have enabled us to deliver more individualised programs in the classroom. We wish to thank them for their important and valued contribution.

Amir Ali, John Brodie, San Long, Youssef Malak, Kaye Middleton, Anna Pearson, Lorraine Smith, Matt Vella, Andrew Wilson, Board of Management members as listed above.

Farewells
We said farewell to a number of staff in 2013. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and commitment.
PRACE would like to acknowledge the support of our funding bodies and partners. Training is delivered with Victorian and Commonwealth Government funding:

- Adult Community & Further Education Board (ACFE)
- Higher Education and Skills Group (HESG)
- Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE—formerly DEEWR)
- Department of Human Services, Victoria (DHS)
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

We would also like to acknowledge funding support from City of Darebin, Readings Foundation, RACV Community Foundation and our partners listed below:

Northern AMEP, Northern LLANS, Northstar Specialist Employment Services, Community Correctional Services, Northland Youth Centre, Meadow Heights Learning Shop, Merri Community Health Services, Thomastown West Primary School, Smith Family, Whittlesea Community Connections, Thomastown Neighbourhood House, Darebin Neighbourhood House Network

We would also like to thank organisations that have offered other kinds of support & assistance:

Diabetes Victoria, Melbourne Fire Brigade, Nelson Alexander Real Estate Preston, Rubella Prevention, Centrelink, the Lafter Lady, Hoyts-Cinemas Northland, Bunnings Thomastown, Darebin City Council, Reservoir East Supa IGA, Spotlight, The Salvation Army, SecondBite, and Reclink.