This manual is designed to help you understand what it is we do here at the Snowy River Campus. It is also designed to help guide you with some of the professional expectations and assist with personal challenges of working with students who are located a distance away from you.
Welcome to the School for Student Leadership – Snowy River Campus!

The School for Student Leadership is a Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development school specialising in leadership education for students in Year 9.

The Snowy River Campus is situated on a secluded and secure 20ha space on the 400ha Marlo Airfield reserve in Far East Gippsland. Marlo was chosen among many reasons, including its location on the coast which represents another of the wonderfully diverse environs in the Victorian landscape. This will allow a unique outdoor experience that, will distinguish the site from the other campuses. The school offers a fully residential program for one school term with accommodation for up to 45 students in a purpose-built facility.

The School for Student Leadership (SSL) will accept student leadership teams from schools selected from metropolitan and country regions each term. This will enable students from different backgrounds to share the experience and opportunities provided through the program. The program develops student skills in leadership, enterprise education and team based learning using a community-learning model.

PURPOSE

The School for Student Leadership Campuses will deliver accessible, innovative and high quality residential leadership, personal development and project-based educational programs to year nine students from Victorian Government Schools. The programs will actively promote community-based leadership behaviours in the Victorian Community. There are three campuses. The Alpine School is located at Dinner Plain in the Victorian Alps. Snowy River Campus is near the mouth of the Snowy River at Marlo in east Gippsland. The third site, Gnurad Gundidj is in Glenormiston near Camperdown in Victoria’s Western District.

Students apply to attend the programs through a process that links their application to a proposed Community Learning Project (CLP). The CLP is the curriculum thread that runs in an adjoining and continuous manner through the program. It provides the purpose for attendance and the motivation for departure. Students symbolically are wedded to their projects, which aim to deliver an action outcome of their learning into their home communities. Underlying the educational rationale is and must be a significant and contemporary understanding of adolescent psycho-social stages of development.
Students live, eat, work, play, get ill and recover, socialise and emotionalise at our place 24/7, the total care and wellbeing of our students is number one. Understanding how to care, love, attend to and support students undertaking a significant separation and *rite of passage* is the first priority of the success of the schools.

While much about our larger organisation is data driven and analysed, much about the program and its outcomes may not easily be done so. The concept of delivering the missing “*rite of passage*” to contemporary Gen Y students is still an evolving art and one in which our schools strive to lead the way. To measure such an outcome is unfathomable.

We believe that to fully create emotional, cognitive, social, physical and other elements of the whole person, and hence develop as a young adult, a form of *rite of passage* must be undertaken. This is missing in contemporary society and educational constructs of that society.

We strive to provide an excellent, caring and world class educational organisation that can meet these complex and continuously evolving needs. The school will operate in a responsible and financially prudent manner and continue to appropriately engage the local community.

**A Brief History**

The School for Student Leadership is one of Victoria’s and possibly Australia’s most innovative and exclusive schools. It is a Victorian State Government School! Only 45 students each term attend each campus. The School for Student Leadership is a State education alternative to the many residential year nine programs operated by non-government sector schools. This seems to be a peculiarly Victorian trend. Many of the schools activities involve outdoor educational and adventure activities for students who stay for short intervals. As its student and parent population is continually changing, its council has a special membership, with three DEECD members and nine Nominee members appointed by the Minister for Education.

The Alpine School Campus is situated on freehold land, the highest in Australia and the only freehold above the snowline. It is adjacent to the superb, unique and most unusual Alpine Village of Dinner Plain. Dinner Plain is the first new settlement in Victoria in more than 100 years. The Alpine School Campus was described in December 2001 in the Melbourne Age as “a place of liberty, light and learning”.

The Alpine School was a result of an unusual relationship between private enterprise and a government (education) department. Although business relationships are common (known as PPP or Private Public Partnerships), the venture philanthropic relationship here was unique. BCR Assets Management, through a subsidiary company, Mt Hotham Skiing Company, was at the time a substantial investor in the ski industry of Mt Hotham and the alpine village of Dinner Plain.

The view of one of their Directors was to create a situation where a bequest of some of their property would be made to create a school. Someone else would build the school and it would indirectly and eventually benefit their investment in Dinner Plain.

This all happened some time in 1998 and 1999. The founding Principal, Mark Reeves was recruited in October 1999 and oversaw the final project management and recruiting, among other things with a Project Manager, retired Rubicon Principal John Margetts.
The second campus of the School for Student Leadership was established at Marlo in 2003, constructed in 2006 and opened in 2007. It follows a largely similar operational model to the Alpine School Campus. Marlo was chosen after a state-wide selection process. More than 50 sites were nominated by rural shires across Victoria, after a state-wide invitation to do so. 12 sites were short listed. The site at Marlo offered significant advantages and met the selection criteria, as had been established by a Ministerial steering committee. The surrounding environment caters for a range of unique outdoor activities to take place, including - surfing at Cape Conran, canoeing in the Snowy River Estuary System, caving at Buchan Caves, mountain biking in the Marlo Plains and hiking throughout the Cape Conran Coastal Park. The rich indigenous history of the local area is a key learning focus, as is our regular interaction with local community groups and schools.

The third campus is located in south west of Victoria in the lakes and craters area. The school is located at the base of Mt Noorat, offering a unique setting. After consultation with the local aboriginal community, the name Gnurad Gundidj was chosen. Gnurad Gundidj represents both the indigenous name of the local area and an interpretation of the statement “belonging to this place”.

It has been noted that many program aspects at Marlo and some of the facilities themselves would provide significant educational opportunities for a residential year nine program.

A rural learning campus should provide the opportunity for groups of students to access learning opportunities away from their usual school and home environments. These learning opportunities should provide experiences not normally available in their school settings. Such experiences could include leadership, teamwork, personal development, community focused projects/partnerships, theme based learning, ITC skills, adventure activities, activities of daily living including independence and interdependence.
OUR VALUES
Our ROLE is a school for leadership and we value;

RESPECT
- Respect for self and others
- Exercising rights and responsibilities
- Accepting accountability

SAFETY
- Experiential learning, creativity, adventure, challenge and fun
- A holistic approach to health and wellbeing

FAIRNESS
- Diversity and Inclusiveness
- Living Sustainably
- Equity and community living
- Opportunities for social, intellectual and personal growth.

These Values
- Provide the basis for decision-making and action.
- Shape the way we work together.
- Create shared expectations and norms.
- Keep us focussed on what is important.

Our School Goal
Our goal is the delivery of a high quality educational program to students from Victorian Government schools with the development of leadership, personal and community project capacities as a special focus.

Leadership and community learning project education will emphasise:
- Students taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Connectedness to programs and initiatives developed in the home school.
- Creation of links between the classroom and the outside world.
- Teamwork in learning inside and beyond the school.
- Self initiated appraisal of learning and outcomes.
- Use of technology as a tool for learning and communication.
- Self awareness and personal development.
School Life

Students will live and work in a very close environment with up to 45 of their peers; they sleep, eat, shower and do work under the one roof. There are separate sleeping and showering facilities for both genders. There are 11 rooms in each of the two accommodation wings. The accommodation wings allow for distinct gender separation. Two students will be allocated to each room and there is one triple room if there are an uneven number of participants in the program. The staff share the responsibility of supervision of each wing and are responsible for the care and wellbeing of the students. The school has staff supervision accommodation in each wing. There is a great deal of independence offered to the students. The students are responsible for helping maintain the school, organising rosters, for doing various jobs around the school and generally controlling the nature of their home and place of learning.

There are lessons on human relationships that will arise from this lifestyle. Great friendships are made, tolerance is learned and teamwork is created. It will be rare to find a School for Student Leadership student who will not be proud of his or her involvement or to find an ex-School for Student Leadership student who does not readily identify with the school. School life provides an excellent opportunity for bonding. Of course it would be wrong to mean that there are never tensions. Not many parents or teachers would think that living with teenagers is always blissful. Some teenagers need to be helped along the way to manage and keep appropriate their social relationships in one form or another. This is a very important component of their learning environment.

You may have already received a brief outline of the program or informed yourself from our website and have some understanding of what we offer Year 9 students from Victorian regional and metropolitan government secondary colleges.

This guidebook is designed to help you understand what it is we do here at the Snowy River Campus. It is also designed to help guide you with some of the professional expectations and assist with personal challenges of working with students who are located a distance away from you.
So you’re a Liaison Teacher now

Being a Liaison teacher means exactly that, being the liaison between the Snowy River Campus, the home school, teachers and students. It’s an exciting role that opens up and offers many unique opportunities for you as a teacher to experience. Working closely with your Snowy River staff member, you will discover different ways of approaching the role of liaison teacher and gaining the most out of the process.

So....
- Come along on expo
- Join in the lessons for a day
- Develop a deeper relationship with the students
- Experience a unique educational setting
- Team teach via HDTV, or
- Think of ways you can enhance our teaching.

The Liaison teacher’s role is crucial in assisting students in their preparation for the Snowy River Campus and maximizing the transfer of learning from Snowy River Campus to the home community. You have the responsibility of
- assisting students in their task of identifying and designing a community learning project (CLP)
- preparing students to attend the Snowy River Campus
- supporting students during their time away
- spending time with students at Snowy River Campus and
- assisting students in re-integration and the promotion and transference of their experience.

There are also several expectations that come with the Snowy River Campus experience. They are as follows
- Attendance at the CLP Day – usually the last Wednesday of the 9 weeks.
- Communication between the liaison teacher and Snowy River Staff member.
- Ongoing school support of the Liaison Teacher and Students back at the home school
- Negotiating time allowance given to the Liaison teacher to fulfil their responsibilities.

There are 3 phases used to define the Snowy River Campus experience – Preparation, Separation and Reintegration.
Preparation is a big part of the Snowy River Campus experience, most students come with little or no expectation of what the program is about, and 9 weeks can seem like a LONG time. It’s important to help the students feel reassured and safe in the decision to attend.

There are a few ways you can help prepare the students for their SSL experience.

- Organise meetings prior to students’ departure to:
  - Discuss hopes and fears
  - Set goals for their time at the Snowy River Campus
  - Discuss how students will be supported by the school whilst at the Snowy River Campus.

- Organise a phone or HDTV conference with the staff at the Snowy River Campus and current students.

- Identify tasks the students can do to keep the home school informed of their experience such as:
  - Newsletter articles
  - Photographs
  - Weekly emails
  - HDTV conference with you the liaison teacher
Separation Phase

Support at Snowy River Campus
The job of the Liaison Teacher during the students’ absence is to support them in their CLP, keep in touch with them about major school happenings, and be a point of contact at anytime. They are also required to make at least one visit to the Snowy River Campus during the term.

Ways you can support students whilst they are away are:
- Regular emails and written letters
- Get school mates to write class letters or emails
- Make a notice board at school showing all the adventures at the Snowy River Campus
- Visit the students at the Snowy River Campus
- Attend expo
- Have a phone or HDTV conference
- Encourage other staff members to make contact with the students
- Ask regularly about their CLP or Passport work

Visiting the Snowy River Campus
Teachers are welcome at the Snowy River Campus at any time, in fact we strongly encourage teachers to visit and experience life at the Snowy River Campus. Liaison teachers are welcome to attend expos, which involve hiking, cycling and camping as well as attending any other on or off campus lessons.
Reintegration Phase

In the last week at the Snowy River Campus students are given strategies and information about returning to ‘normal’ school and their families. This can be a difficult time for some students as they readjust to their home school ‘rules’

Reintegration is experienced very differently depending on the individual needs and wants of the students. Some strategies we encourage the students to try are:

- Ask their friends about their term
- Share their Snowy River Campus Passport
- Present the CLP presentation to the school community
- Discuss options, choices and decisions with parents
- Suggest they set up a Facebook group for their term to use as a support system
  - Some Snowy River Campus teachers have teacher profiles as well and welcome ‘friending’ and can offer some support via social media as well.
- Hold a phone or HDTV conference with the Snowy River Campus staff if losing motivation to complete CLP
- Make home school teachers aware that the Snowy River Campus students may feel isolated and challenged upon their return
- Make staff aware that students are able or normally willing to share teaching strategies that help engage students into learning.
FAQ’s

Does the Snowy River Campus have the same curriculum as other schools?
No! The curriculum at the Snowy River Campus has been designed to enhance the education the students receive at their home schools. We do follow VELS and report against some of the dimensions that are applicable to our curriculum. The dimensions we report against are as follows:
• Building Social Relationships
• Working in Teams
• The Individual Learning
• Managing Personal Learning
• Leading Self & Others

Below is a breakdown of the areas we teach and the classes that fall under those categories:

- **Environmental Education**: Canoeing, Surfing, Cycling, Photography
- **Individual Learning & Reflection**: DEARR, POL, ILP, ILP Review, Passport
- **Community Citizenship**: Community Service, LLP, Indigenous Culture, Sustainable Living
- **Teamwork & Leadership**: Teams Day, Bridge & Raft Building, Marlo Challenge, GPS Navigation, Duck Production, Expeditions
- **Developing Personal Life Skills**: Thinking & Learning, Peer Skills, Beliefs & Values, First Aid Training & CPR, Safe Food Handlers
Will the students receive a report at the end of the term?
Yes. The Snowy River Campus will supply a report directly to the student at the end of term. The report will be based on the dimensions mentioned above and in line with the VELS progression points. The reports are moderated by staff then read and signed off by the Campus and School Principal.

This table shows the areas we report on and the expectations of what students will be able to demonstrate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building social relationships</th>
<th>By participating in our school program, it is expected a student will develop the capacity to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Show empathy in monitoring, and responding to the behaviour of others in diverse social contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistently respond appropriately with attentive listening and thoughtfulness in all contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistently acknowledge the different ways they manage conflict depending on the social relationship and situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use a variety of strategies when creating ideas and solving problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage all team members in group processes; for example, in the development of performance evaluation criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use strategies for motivating group members and working towards task completion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor and evaluate group processes and task performance is achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in teams</td>
<td>Apply thinking and learning style preferences to increase the effectiveness of their own learning, including less preferred styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-assesses work performance against achievement criteria such as personal learning goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independently use strategic learning behaviours to complete complex tasks; for example, clarifying, drafting and checking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organise time, resources and complex tasks in a timely manner and independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thoughtfully and independently set personal learning goals and be able to adapt goals independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apply a diverse range of coping strategies for problems with minimal supervision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual learner</td>
<td>Be aware of and apply individual strengths when given a specific role or task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing personal learning</td>
<td>Be aware of and apply leadership competencies in a variety of situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Be a part of developing a strong positive sense of community through active leadership by recognising opportunities and regularly applying their initiative to strengthen the community functioning and spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regularly take on responsibility for organising aspects of a community activity or a committee in the school or community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is a Passport?
Whilst at the Snowy River Campus, students design, create and work on a learning portfolio, entitled Passport. Passport is the documentation of their time and growth at the Snowy River Campus. The Passport is broken down into several criteria covering areas such as Leadership, Reflection, Teamwork and Indigenous Culture.

There is an expectation that students leave the Snowy River Campus with a completed Passport, although they all may look different depending on the student. Passports can be scrap booked filmed, digitalised, handwritten or even photographed. It is only limited by the student’s motivation and imagination.

When student return, ask to have a look. The Passport is usually a creative and detailed document of their journey at the Snowy River Campus, very enlightening at times.
What is the ILP?
The ILP is the *Individual Learning Plan* that the students develop with their teachers. It contains goals the students set themselves for the term. The ILP is reviewed during a teacher/student meeting where the student leads the conversation. The ILP is emailed to both Liaison Teacher and Parent around the end of week 3 for staff and parental input.

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are of great benefit to students for their learning and development. They also provide more supportive evidence of students’ achievements and outcomes to both home school staff and parents/guardians. Developing and implementing ILPs ensures all individuals are valued and accommodated within the school environment and promotes student self-determination, positive growth and recognition.

Headings under which students write their goals are:
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Building Social Relationships
- Managing Personal Learning & Reflection
- Developing Mental & Physical Wellbeing
- Develop a skill of interest (optional)
- Choose your own adventure (optional)

What is a CLP?
A CLP or *Community Learning Project* is a project the students come up with to make a change, a difference or impact on their local community. It’s a project that they are passionate about and that they will find success with.

There are 3 phases to the CLP which are:
- Before the Snowy River Campus - brainstorming, deciding, ground work.
- During the Snowy River Campus - developing the project Masterplan and presenting it to the community.
- After the Snowy River Campus - putting the project into action.

Students are expected to have the planning and promotion of their project completed upon leaving the Snowy River Campus but may not practically implement this project until they return to their communities. The implementation phase of their projects is often undertaken once they return and may involve the rest of their home school community or year level. Students are required to develop a comprehensive action plan prior to leaving the Snowy River Campus. A major focus for projects is on the process and students are required to regularly reflect on this and plan to implement necessary changes.

Ideas for CLP’s are limited only to the student’s imagination and motivation. Some successful CLP’s we have seen have been:
- School Socials or FREEZA
- Teaching primary school students about health, bullying, peer skills etc
- Raising awareness of teen issues such as suicide, depression, peer pressure
- Tree Planting
- Upgrading walking tracks
- Fixing cricket nets
- Revamping ‘special needs’ room…. Etc. etc. etc.
When is the next years’ expression of interest due?
Keep an eye on the websites!
Expressions of interest close at the end of the second term each year.

When does the school need to pay for the program?
You will be invoiced during your attendance term; no money is required before then.

Do the students really need all that gear?
YES! The gear list is current and unless stated optional, will be used during the course of the program. Past students are a great resource to use when questions of gear come up – they are the experts!

I have to drive a long way to visit – Can I stay the night?
Yes it is possible to stay on campus.

**Staying the night**
Liaison Teachers need to let their Snowy River Campus contact staff member know in advance of their planned visit. If there is a spare male or female room teachers of the same sex may use this room. There is no cost for this. We will make every effort possible to accommodate visiting teachers but in the rare instance where they cannot stay at the school, the school can provide advice about other available accommodation. The Snowy River Campus will not be responsible for any costs associated with this accommodation. Staff who stay at the Snowy River Campus will need to stay in the Students’ wing. This means that visiting staff will need to follow the same guidelines as Snowy River Campus staff members. The building is locked down for the evening at approximately 9.30pm and all staff need to be back in the building at that time. Visiting staff need to be very conscious that they are at the Snowy River Campus to spend time with their students. The consumption of alcohol and having a night on the town whilst being accommodated at the school is not appropriate.

**While at the Snowy River Campus, Liaison teachers need to be fully aware of the rules and procedures governing the operation of the Snowy River Campus. Any action outside Standard Practice of the Snowy River Campus could jeopardize themselves, students and the reputation of the Snowy River Campus. Refer to New & Visiting Teachers Manual.**

If I come on expo... what’s entailed & what do I need to bring?
Our expos are designed to challenge our students but also for them to find success. They are a combination of bush/beach hiking and canoeing, with a pack roughly 20kg in weight.

The Snowy River Campus is able to supply some equipment such as pack, sleeping bag, sleeping mat, trangia (camp stove), bike (if needed) and wet weather gear. You will need to bring warm comfortable wear. Please remember it gets cold here even in summer so thermals are a must!

Most importantly bring along, good sturdy shoes and an adventurous attitude! And for the best possible experience on expo, please discuss your plans with the Snowy River Campus staff.