

ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

YARRAWONGA NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE – A SKILLS FIRST TRAINING PROVIDER CASE STUDY

Yarrawonga Neighbourhood House is a small but vital education provider in its local community. To enable its staff to continually improve their teaching practices, the Neighbourhood House uses online platforms as a form of professional development.

These online platforms allow the Neighbourhood House's trainers to connect with colleagues online and access and share a range of professional development opportunities and resources.

E-Learning Community of Practice

Executive Officer of the Neighbourhood House, Pauline Wilson, says the organisation's trainers work in their respective industries and have a strong understanding of the practical skills and knowledge that students require. The trainers also attend as many professional development opportunities as possible.

However, many professional development workshops and seminars are located in Melbourne and require significant travel and time. Therefore, it is not always possible for trainers to attend. This is a common challenge shared by other smaller training providers in the Upper Murray region.

A key way these training providers have overcome their geographic isolation is through the North East e-Learning Community of Practice. This collaborative online portal links training organisations and trainers through an online portal using a webinar classroom platform.

Yarrawonga's trainers are among 20 individuals who participate in the North East e-Learning Community of Practice. Trainers can access and share a range of professional development opportunities, including resources from the VET Development Centre.

"Our online community and resources give trainers access to a professional network and greater learning opportunities."

Pauline Wilson, Executive Officer, Yarrawonga Neighbourhood House

The e-Learning Community of Practice has also enabled trainers across the Upper Murray region to strengthen their professional and learning networks by collaborating and sharing resources and knowledge.

Tutor Network

Yarrawonga Neighbourhood House also operates an online Tutor Network. This is an internal resource for the Neighbourhood House's trainers and provides a range of information that management and staff have built up over several years. For example, the Tutor Network provides information on VET regulatory requirements, adult learning theory, e-learning technologies, and how to facilitate webinars. This Tutor Network complements the e-Learning Community of Practice.

The forums that the Tutor Network supports are highly valued by trainers. The forums enable a trainer to post professional development resources or information they wish to share online and discuss with other trainers. Pauline says this type of reflective learning is one of the most powerful learning avenues for staff.

Building trainer skills to for better outcomes

The E-Learning Community of Practice and Tutor Network have enabled Yarrawonga's trainers to develop knowledge and skills that improve how

they teach and the operations of the Neighbourhood House.

For example, one trainer has expanded her capabilities in developing Moodle Courses. This trainer has developed an entire course for Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care in the Neighbourhood House's Moodle Learning Management System. This has allowed students greater flexibility with how and where they study.

"Online platforms offer a variety of ways to provide professional development to trainers they otherwise couldn't access."

Pauline Wilson, Executive Officer, Yarrowonga Neighbourhood House
