

# Growing Together Initiative



**Organisation:**

**Teach Learn Grow**

**Website:** <https://teachlearngrow.org.au/>

**Focus:** Youth

Laverton is a remote community, 950km north-east of Perth with a population of around 400. At Laverton School 68% of students fall in the lowest quartile of Socio-Educational Advantage, 73% of students are First Nations, 54% speak English as a second language. The Traditional Owners are the Wongutha people, and the town is also home to First Nations people from other language groups.

After successfully connecting with Laverton students during the first part of the project, Teach Learn Grow (TLG) staff visited Laverton to conduct two days of workshops with their high school classes.

## Approach

Teach Learn Grow took a flexible and culturally informed approach in promoting inclusive volunteering and volunteer management. The workshop content that we had developed for other groups was adapted to take into account the cultural, social and economic context of young people living in Laverton, as informed by consultations with classroom teachers, research and TLG's previous experience working with Laverton School during programs.

Recognising the importance of building trust with the students, the TLG presenters arrived a day early at the school and supported the students during some of their other lessons, to break the ice and establish positive relationships, which helped make students feel more confident during the workshops.

Students were provided with various ways to engage throughout the sessions, to suit a diverse range of preferred learning styles and ensure all students were included regardless of their level of literacy. This included group discussions, creating visual tools like brainstorming and posters or filming videos around the school.

## Outcomes

- Discussions showed the students had a lot of knowledge about how those in their community are involved in volunteering and community giving in the Laverton context and the various reasons why people volunteer
- The program empowered students to take ownership of their ideas. Students displayed high levels of creativity and community focus and the resulting projects included a community recycling drive, clean-up initiative, and a student-led boxing club. Collaboration with the local community through the school ensured students have continued support beyond the program for making these ideas happen, along with some funds provided by TLG via the school.

## Key Learnings

- A flexible and culturally informed approach is required for promoting volunteering in this sort of context. Working in partnership with the school is an effective way to ensure the content delivered is relevant and accessible to the target group.
- Opportunities for formal volunteering is very limited in remote communities, especially for young people, therefore students will need to design their own initiatives, rather than join a local organisation.