Names for photograph

Annie Hinton, Beacon Foundation with Beacon Student Ambassadors; Alexandra Allan, Hattie Cowan-de Bondt, Brooke Carron & Penelope Dodsworth

MEDIA RELEASE: Castlemaine Businesses Go Back to School

14 March 2011

Castlemaine business men and women are invited to attend the breakfast launch of Castlemaine Secondary College's Beacon Foundation Program on Tuesday 22 March at 7.30am. Held at the Castlemaine Town Hall businesses will enjoy a delicious breakfast whilst they learn how they can partner with the school to support practical, hands-on pre-employment training for students.

Castlemaine Secondary College is being actively supported by The Beacon Foundation, Central Victoria Solar City, the GLLEN (Goldfields, Local Learning and Employment Network) and CVGT in its commitment to career pathways for young people. The event marks a great opportunity for local businesses wanting to foster relationships with potential young employees and share their business expertise.

The objective of the Beacon partnership is to ensure that all students pursue further education, training or employment upon leaving school. Beacon currently operates in 127 schools across Australia, and has worked with 55,000 students since 1995. Beacon relies on local business and industry supporting an array of practical hands-on programs to inspire and motivate students. The program provides avenues for business, community organisations and the College to build partnerships and work together.

Breakfast attendees will learn about the many opportunities existing for Castlemaine businesses wishing to be involved in their community's education. One opportunity is 'Speed Careering' which is like 'speed dating', with employers conducting quick chats with students about possible career options. Another opportunity for businesses to work with the students is the 'Polish' program, a self development program, which emphasizes career skills and includes students sitting down to lunch with community partners. The list goes on, from mock interviews held at the employer's workplace, industry tours through to enriching curriculum by inviting business into the classroom. Apart from networking opportunities for the businesses involved in the project they will gain a fresh perspective from students, all the while giving back to the local community.

Central Victoria Solar City Project Director, Leah Sertori, will be keynote speaker at the breakfast. Leah will talk about the purpose of Central Victoria Solar City's support for Castlemaine Secondary College and the relationship between a robust public education sector and business prosperity in Regional Victoria.

"Our aim as a business is to draw connections between student led projects such as the solar car challenge and the work we do developing renewable energy infrastructure such as our solar parks. Students at the school are working on challenging industry based projects that enhance their numeracy, literacy and capacity to think creatively and solve problems. We want to highlight the importance of those skills in industry and celebrate and promote the great work the school is doing in that area."

Leah will also explain the benefits to other businesses interested in supporting students.

"Our business services one third of the state and is based in Castlemaine. Supporting students to grow their skills as enterprising thinkers has a direct benefit to our business. In mentoring students on work experience, participating in the Polish program and the solar car challenge our staff strengthen their leadership and mentoring skills and derive satisfaction from having passed on knowledge and experience."

The possibilities of the Beacon Foundation Program will be explored at the Business Breakfast held in the Castlemaine Town Hall on 22 March beginning at 7.30 am. The event will conclude by 8.45 am and a $10 donation per person is encouraged.. For details email: castlemaine.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au or telephone: 5479 4222.