**Ticket to Work, a School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship (SBAT) program for students with intellectual disabilities, is the 2013 recipient of a Victorian ‘Education and Excellence Award’.  Ticket to Work won the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) ‘Outstanding Youth Pathways and Transitions Award’ after being shortlisted from amongst many other worthy secondary education nominees.**

Piloted by Berendale School and Montague Continuing Education Centre (CEC), Ticket to Work has now seen 25 students with disability undertake apprenticeships and traineeships whilst also completing their senior secondary studies.  Students have been employed by small and large businesses across a range of industries including horticulture, business administration, hospitality and automotive to name but a few.  Paula Barnett, Principal of Berendale School, said that “Ticket to Work has successfully broken down barriers with employers and parents concerned about the employment of students with disability and the success of the program is generating a lot of community interest”.

A wide range of organisations including Local Learning and Employment Networks, Disability Employment Services, Group Training Organisation, Workplace Learning Coordinators, National Disability Coordination Officers and representatives from the Department of Human Services have been part of the development of the Ticket to Work program.  Geraldine Charles, Principal of Montague CEC said that “Ticket to Work has been so successful because it is supported by partners who share our philosophy and also want to see more students with disability achieving the same outcomes as their peers without disability”.

The 2011 PricewaterhouseCoopers report ‘Disability expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia’ highlights the poor employment and poverty statistics for Australians with a disability.  This report indicated that only 50% of Australians with a disability are likely to be employed and that 45% of Australians with disability live in or near poverty, which is more than double the OECD average.

Ticket to Work is increasing employability options for young people with a disability, and in doing so is also increasing their opportunity to meaningfully participate in our economy and community in the future.

The schools and partners are thrilled to receive state-wide recognition of their unique program, and are also working with others to expand Ticket to Work into other parts of Victoria and Australia.