



PARTNERING FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Case studies of school–community partnerships in Australia

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INTRODUCTION

Schools across Australia are increasingly connecting with their local communities to create enhanced opportunities for their students. Teachers and school leaders are reaching beyond the school gates to build exciting and innovative partnerships that are having a demonstrable impact on student learning. ACER's research shows that, when schools and their communities share local decision making and responsibility for the education of students, outcomes improve.

Apart from the goal of improving student outcomes, one of the biggest motivators for establishing school–community partnerships is the desire to re-engage students with their learning. Partnerships are being formed to improve student motivation, reduce inappropriate behaviour, improve school attendance and reduce the numbers of students dropping out of school. These partnerships are enabling students to experience learning in hands-on environments, creating opportunities for staff to work with their students in new ways, and removing some of the barriers to learning for disaffected students. They are also making it possible for students to engage with training opportunities, access enhanced learning, improve their health and wellbeing, and connect with their local communities.

The case studies in this booklet illustrate the creative ways in which Australian schools are responding to local needs by establishing and building partnerships with community organisations and businesses. These partnerships

have been formed to share resources, both human and material. They are providing students with access to breakfast clubs, homework and tutoring programs, after-school fitness and sporting activities, and other programs designed to re-engage students. Local businesses that want students to know more about employer expectations and the realities of the workplace are providing work placements and work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships. Some schools are partnering with other educational institutions to further students' knowledge and improve post-school pathways; others have established partnership programs for 'at risk' students who are marginalised or who do not fit into mainstream education; and still others have partnered with community or business groups to enhance curriculum offerings.

Some schools profiled in this booklet have partnered with groups interested in the environment, local history, marine studies or wildlife. Some have partnered with theatre companies, radio stations and local councils to advance creative arts in the school. Others have partnered with educational, technical and industry groups to expand students' understandings of technology, science and mathematics, or to engage students in local industry by introducing cattle breeding, agriculture and farming programs. By accessing local expertise, these schools have been able to offer a broader and enriched range of learning experiences for their students.

Geoff Masters, CEO
Australian Council for Educational Research



PREFACE

It is five years since National Australia Bank launched NAB Schools First with its partners the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA). In that time, NAB has presented 529 awards to schools across Australia for the exemplary partnerships being developed with local communities to improve the educational outcomes for students. Since NAB Schools First was launched in 2009, 31 per cent of all schools in Australia have applied for an award.

The genesis of this social initiative was the desire of the NAB Board and management to take a more strategic approach to engagement with the community, and to create significant shared value. Education was chosen as a theme as it resonated with NAB and was perfectly aligned to the organisational purpose of 'helping others realise their potential'.

ACER and FYA put forward an innovative concept that was subsequently developed in partnership with NAB to become Schools First.

Underpinning the program was the belief that where a school has strong connections with its local community – whether through business, community group or local government – the educational outcomes for students are improved.

Essentially, this was the embodiment of the adage that it 'takes a village to raise a child'.

Each of the parties brought critical skills to the program: ACER – strong links with education and the capacity to develop robust frameworks to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of school–community partnerships; and FYA – the ability to work collaboratively on the ground with schools and local communities. NAB brought the resources and organisational skills to implement a large scale program across Australia, and of course the funding to make all this happen.

It is important that programs such as this continue to evolve so that they remain relevant. Here ACER has another key role in undertaking longitudinal research on the NAB Schools First award winners to understand what makes a successful school–community partnership.

The case studies showcased in this report illustrate the amazing talent and commitment of our school leaders, and the wonderful outcomes that can be achieved when they are supported by their local communities to help students realise their potential.

I am proud to have played a part in bringing this idea to reality, and congratulate those responsible for the inspiring partnerships that follow.

Michael Ullmer
Former Deputy CEO
NAB (2007–2011)



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WHAT MAKES AN OUTSTANDING SCHOOL– COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP?

In 2008, ACER's research¹ identified the characteristics of an effective school–community partnership and from these characteristics, five criteria for the *NAB Schools First* awards were developed. The case studies in the booklet are from schools that have been the recipients of a *NAB Schools First* Impact Award, having successfully addressed each of the criteria.

SUMMARY OF THE *NAB SCHOOLS FIRST* CRITERIA

Effective school–community partnerships are those that have been developed with businesses or community groups to address a specific student need or develop an educational opportunity. They are well-planned, sustainable, collaborative, and based on a mutual sharing of expertise, knowledge, resources and skills. There are clear roles and responsibilities for each group involved and there is an ongoing commitment to the partnership from the highest level in each organisation. The partners collaboratively develop a program of activities, which are closely linked to the goals of the partnership. There is tangible evidence to show that the partnership is having an impact on the learning outcomes of the students involved.²

Since 2009, ACER has researched school–community partnerships by analysing the data provided in the *NAB Schools First* Impact Award applications submitted by schools from across Australia. The research shows that many benefits can be derived from well-managed and well-resourced school–community partnerships. The case studies are examples of strong partnerships between schools, businesses and community organisations that have made a significant difference to improving outcomes for young people.

School improvement is part of the core business in all schools, and the *National School Improvement Tool* has been developed by ACER and the Australian Government to help schools in all states and territories review and guide their efforts to improve the quality of classroom teaching and learning, and subsequently improve student performance. The tool consists of nine interrelated domains that focus on practices most directly related to school-wide improvements and, ultimately, outcomes for students.

¹ Lonsdale, Michele and Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 'Schools First: Final Report' (2008). http://research.acer.edu.au/policy_analysis_misc/4

² www.schoolsfirst.edu.au

'The *National School Improvement Tool* brings together the findings from international research into the practice of highly effective schools and school leaders. The Tool assists schools to review and reflect on their efforts to improve the quality of classroom teaching and learning.'³

The ninth domain, 'school–community partnerships', encourages schools to actively seek ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by partnering with parents and families, other education and training institutions, local businesses and community organisations. By establishing strategic partnerships with external groups to address identified student needs, and with all partners committing to common goals and partnership activities, strong school–community partnerships are developed and improved outcomes can be achieved. The outstanding partnerships in this booklet have many of the characteristics outlined in the *National School Improvement Tool*.

Schools that are deemed to be outstanding in this domain share the following characteristics:

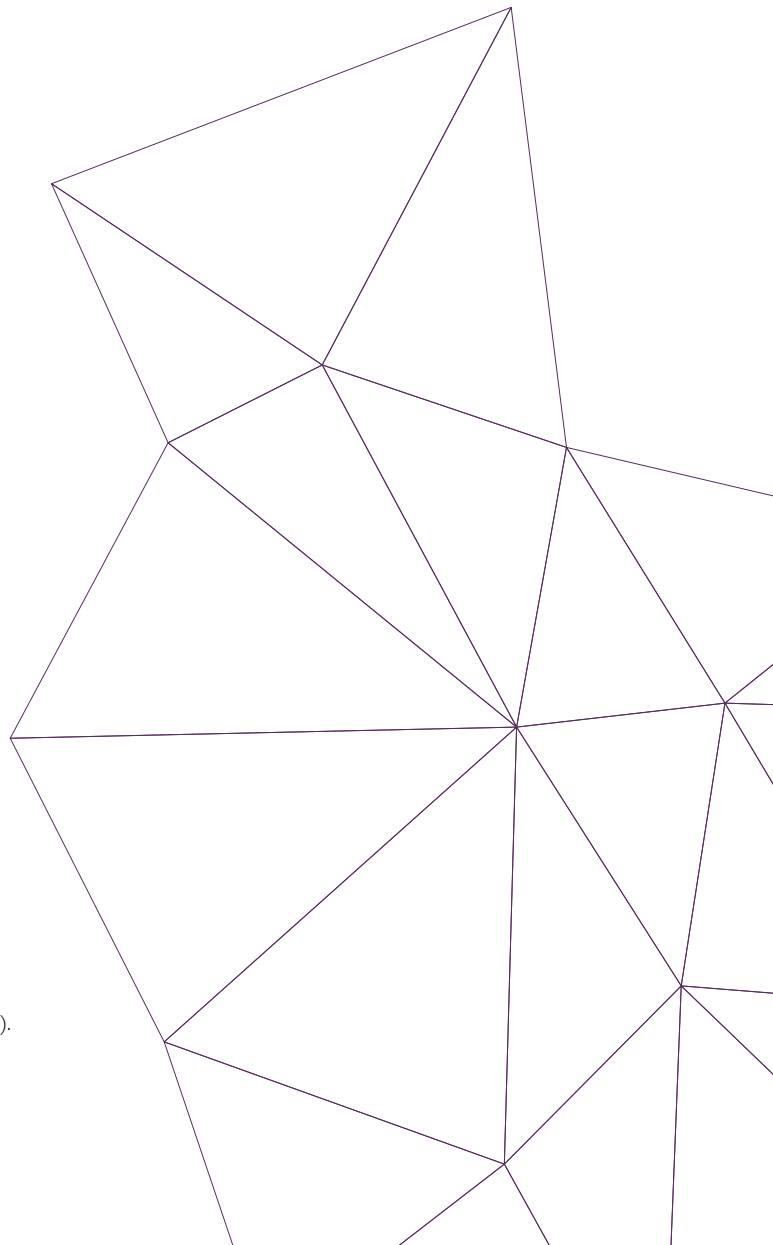
The school leadership team makes deliberate and strategic use of partnerships with families, local businesses and community organisations to access intellectual, physical and/or other resources not available within the school for the purposes of improving student outcomes. There is a range of currently operating partnerships, each carefully planned and designed to enhance student outcomes (for example, to broaden student knowledge, build new skills, develop more positive attitudes, increase engagement levels, create applied learning opportunities for students, or facilitate successful transitions to work or further education or training).

Each partnership has been established in response to an identified need. Considerable effort has been put into understanding students' needs, identifying appropriate partners to address those needs, planning the details of partnership programs and clarifying partner roles and responsibilities.

Careful consideration has been given to the benefits of the partnership to each participating partner. Explicit processes are in place to ensure ongoing and effective communication – sometimes across networks of partners – and there are documented plans for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of each partnership. The school's partnerships are being successfully implemented and appear to be adequately resourced and sustainable. There is clear evidence that partnerships are having their intended impact.⁴

³ Masters, Geoff N., 'Measuring and rewarding school improvement' (2012).

⁴ <http://deewr.gov.au/national-school-improvement-tool>





Why are schools partnering?

The main reason for schools forming partnerships with local community organisations and businesses is to improve student outcomes. School–community partnerships are succeeding in this by re-engaging students with learning, by providing access to resources and opportunities that would be difficult or impossible for schools to provide alone and by broadening students' experiences. There are many kinds of partnerships that are being established to achieve a wide range of student outcomes: social and interpersonal, health and wellbeing, vocational and industry-specific, and academic and curriculum-related.

Key reasons why schools are partnering

to connect students with their communities

A growing number of schools are focusing on connecting students with their communities and thereby building their social capital. In these partnerships, the aim is often to reduce feelings of isolation experienced by students and to encourage a stronger sense of belonging to a community.

to enhance the health and wellbeing of students

Some schools are forming partnerships with medical organisations, universities, businesses and other community groups where volunteers have been trained to mentor and tutor vulnerable students. As well as addressing students' physical health, many of these partnerships are concerned with the social, mental and emotional health of students.

to broaden vocational options and skills

Many schools are forming partnerships to enhance vocational offerings or training opportunities for their students. Businesses and industry groups are sharing their skills and expertise with schools through mentoring, work experience, hands-on activities and skills-specific training. Through experience in work environments, students are being given opportunities to connect with industry and to develop skills for work and life.

to improve learning outcomes for students

Other schools are forming partnerships to develop educational programs that enhance and enrich the school curriculum and expand student learning opportunities. Some partnerships are enabling students to participate in creative and academic endeavours that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

The schools in the case studies that follow have developed creative ways to address student needs by implementing school–community partnerships that share the expertise, knowledge and skills found in the community. These schools work collaboratively with partners outside the school to develop strategies for school improvement, with the shared goal of improving learning outcomes for students.



Sharon Clerke
Senior Project Director for NAB Schools First
Australian Council for Educational Research



CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES

These partnerships are enabling students to make connections with their communities and to build social capital by partnering with various health, welfare and community organisations. Partner organisations with expertise in working with ‘at risk’ students or vulnerable students, such as health and welfare services, youth organisations and charities, are working with schools to develop a range of programs.

By volunteering and providing much needed services to disadvantaged groups, students are also developing social and life skills. Some schools have formed partnerships to share their resources and skills with their communities. In all instances, the benefits are mutual. Not only are marginalised and disadvantaged groups benefiting, but students are developing self-esteem, self-confidence and a sense of self-worth through being able to make these connections.



TURNING GRAFFITI INTO COMMUNITY ART «
Adelaide Hills Vocational College/Mount Barker High School

SERVICE TO OTHERS REALLY MATTERS «
Avondale School

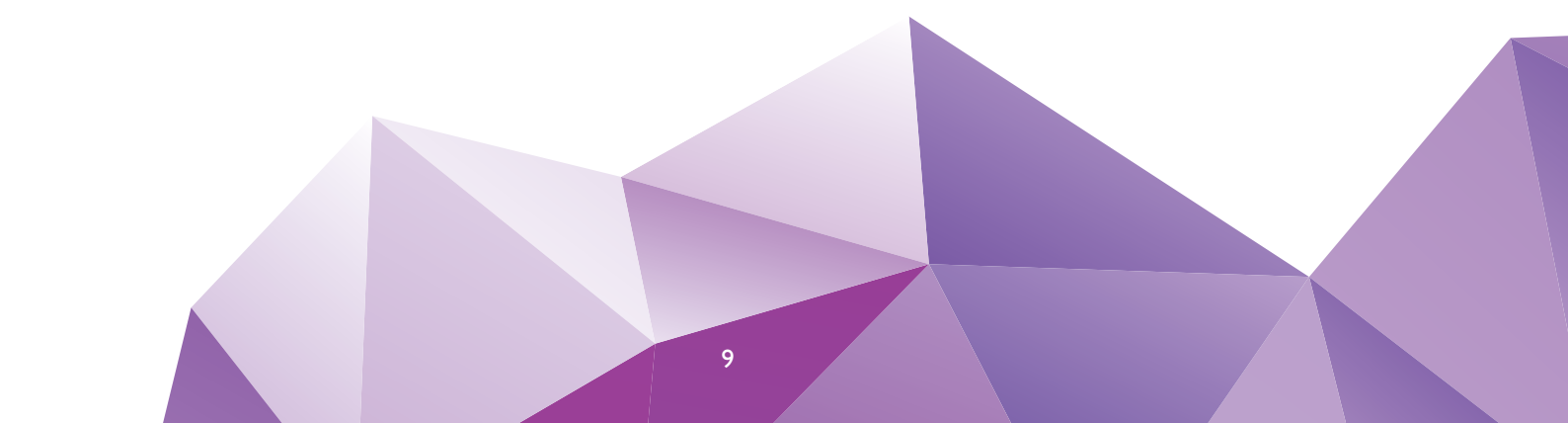
ABORIGINAL GIRLS MAKING A DIFFERENCE «
John Willcock College

DIGITAL LEARNING FOR OLD AND YOUNG «
Kincoppal-Rose Bay School of the Sacred Heart

COMMUNITY NETWORKING «
Murrumburrah High School

INTERGENERATION BUDDIES «
St Charles Borromeo Primary School

SHARING HISTORY THROUGH THE GENERATIONS «
St Mary of the Angels





TURNING GRAFFITI INTO COMMUNITY ART

Adelaide Hills Vocational College / Mount Barker High School, Regional Development Australia and others

The partnership between Adelaide Hills Vocational College and a number of community groups aims to reduce the impact of graffiti on the community and provide opportunities for the young perpetrators to develop skills, understanding and tolerance. The partnership engages young people with education and the community in a positive manner, increases their educational attainment levels, and decreases their negative contact with the justice system.

THE SCHOOL

Adelaide Hills Vocational College is an off-site campus of Mount Barker High School and was developed to engage young people from the Adelaide Hills, in South Australia, who are either at risk of disengaging from school or who have already disengaged. The College offers young people the chance to complete their South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) using adult learning principles in a flexible learning environment. Wherever possible the learning has a direct correlation to career options or future pathways and ensures that young people develop a sense of belonging to their community.

THE NEED

The local council was concerned about the rising cost of repairing vandalism and the South Australia Police, Mount Barker Crime Prevention Unit was recording increased incidences of

tagging and graffiti occurring in the area. The number of young people entering the justice system had also increased and many young people had disengaged from the community and the school.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The following organisations have established partnerships with the school: Regional Development Australia in the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island; Adelaide Hills Community Health Service; District Council of Mount Barker; Adelaide Hills Council; South Australia Police, Mount Barker Crime Prevention Unit; and Adelaide Hills Youth Sector Network. These groups provide education and training, positive interaction strategies for youth and links with other services in the community. A counselling and mentoring program initiated by the Adelaide Hills Community Health Service

allows young people to access community services when necessary and to develop the skills required to work successfully with other young people.

The local council presented information to help participants understand the actual cost to the community of tagging and students collaborated with stakeholders to develop an understanding of the impact of tagging on individuals and the community. The partners work together to find public artwork spaces for the students and organise graffiti clean-ups. The *Urban Art Project* was seen as a chance to develop an innovative learning program that would engage reluctant learners and enrich curriculum offerings for young people in the area.

The Regional Development group members provide funding opportunities for the partnership, organise the program, develop networks with community agencies and work with community members to identify artwork opportunities for students. The police unit is invaluable in establishing more effective relationships with young people through positive policing. They work together with the students to improve their overall wellbeing; help to ensure there are fewer juvenile justice issues; show an understanding of the impact on the individual of being charged with offences; and help students in their dealings with the justice system. Community health partners contribute to the partnership by focusing on promoting student wellbeing through a peer mentoring program and offering counselling.

South Australia Police, the local council and members of the Family Conference Team of Juvenile Justice have developed learning activities for the students to engage in and the students have undertaken general induction training so that they could participate in local community clean-ups with council workers. As part of the *Urban Art Project*, students have worked with a professional artist to learn art skills and, after the initial skill development phase, have completed a range of well-received murals located in public spaces within the region.

This partnership has helped students to gain an understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the community and has provided opportunities for them to showcase their art

in public spaces in a more appropriate way. Members of the wider community have changed their negative perception of youth in the area and appreciate the students' contribution to building community connectedness.

THE BENEFIT

The *Urban Art Project* has been responsible for improved educational outcomes for all of the participants and continues to engage young people in a positive manner in education and community. Since its inception, 45 students have successfully completed a Stage 1 SACE unit. Participation in the project has increased students' educational attainment levels and decreased their negative contact with authority. Besides improved SACE results, the cost to the community has been reduced and there is less vandalism, fewer juvenile offences and increased attendance at the College. The students have developed positive relationships with staff from a range of agencies.

Since the partnership has been established, the College has recorded improved student retention rates each year and continues to track training outcomes. There has been increased student participation, better job outcomes and the wellbeing of each student has improved. Students have developed literacy and numeracy skills as they undertake tasks associated with budgeting, completing approval processes and negotiating with community members.

As a result of the success of the *Urban Art Project*, the partners organised an art exhibition and community members had the opportunity to purchase student art. Students have since been commissioned to provide artwork for community organisations, local businesses and individuals. Positive articles in local newspapers have promoted these young people in the community and extolled the benefits of the partnership. Seven murals have been painted in the local area and the project also won the *Advantage Adelaide Youth Award 2010* for Adelaide Hills Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

vocational, connecting with community

TARGET GROUP:

disengaged students in an alternative setting



SERVICE TO OTHERS REALLY MATTERS

Avondale School and Cobar Community Council

The partnership between Avondale School and Cobar Community Council links the school to the country New South Wales towns of Cobar and WeeWah. The partners developed StormCo (Service to Others Really Matters), where students spend a week in the towns performing a variety of community services. StormCo sees the students working with residents, especially children, who do not have access to the kinds of positive influences and opportunities that the students at Avondale School are offered.

THE SCHOOL

Avondale School is an independent Kindergarten to Year 12 Christian school in rural south-west Lake Macquarie, New South Wales, with a population of just over 1000 students. A very high percentage of students complete Year 12 and continue on to further education and training.

THE NEED

The school identified an opportunity to develop social capital among students and serve the wider community through a community service project – *StormCo*. The partnership was created to link the school community to the remote country towns of Cobar and WeeWah, 700 km inland from the school. The Cobar Community Council was very keen to participate in the initiative and partner with the school to overcome some

of the challenges facing these remote towns, such as social isolation, and lack of services and transport.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The towns of Cobar and WeeWah host *StormCo* teams each year and provide enthusiastic support. The Avondale School community participates in annual fundraising drives run by students, and local small businesses provide sponsorship for critical elements of the project, such as transport and materials.

This voluntary community service initiative has been part of the school program since 2000 and each year around twenty-five senior students from the school are involved in delivering a range of services in each of the towns for one week.

The focus is on children, youth, the chronically ill, the disabled, the vulnerable and the elderly, as the partners found that these groups often lacked family or other social support systems. Town Council Welfare Officers, the school administration and local church members collaborate to provide a list of community projects that can be undertaken by the student volunteers. The student team is divided into small groups to coordinate the different elements of the program.

The *StormCo* team works with the Cobar Community Council in planning each service trip and students provide help to shut-ins and people with reduced mobility, all of whom benefit from the students' energy. Some of the activities include mowing lawns, completing minor maintenance tasks and carting away loads of accumulated rubbish. The local aged-care facility also works with the team to provide entertainment and some of the students engage one-on-one with the elderly residents. At the local Base Hospital the students visit wards to chat, play music or listen to stories. The Council Welfare Officer works with the *StormCo* team to help them gain media exposure and to source necessary equipment for the partnership.

The collaboration, cooperation and communication between Avondale and personnel in the Cobar Community Council ensure that activities are appropriate, safe, well-resourced and supervised. The success of *StormCo's* annual visit relies heavily on access to local knowledge and expertise to guide the pre-expedition planning. A key goal is to train the local youth to be future leaders who will continue the community support that *StormCo* provides.

THE BENEFIT

StormCo contributes to student leadership development as the team members often become school leaders through Years 10, 11 and 12. They help with local community projects, peer-to-peer support and become heavily involved in school activities, both on and off campus. Many students have undergone personal transformations through witnessing firsthand the hardships experienced by both young and old in remote towns and recognising the extent of their own privilege. The students are placed in positions of responsibility, experience the value of teamwork and see what can be achieved through genuine collaboration.

These remote communities have benefited from the partnership: the local Council has been able to extend its community services; the aged care facility has had its requests for improved services met and local youth centres have reported an increase in the use of their venues and services after *StormCo* visits. The Avondale students are role models and the local children and youth are able to see community service in action. There are lasting benefits to the students who participate in *StormCo* through the stories they bring back, the relationships that have been built and in seeing the value of making a contribution.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:
volunteering

TARGET GROUP:
senior secondary students

“Personal commitments are at the heart of the sustainability of *StormCo* since it is ultimately individual passion that is needed to translate the concept into reality.”

Dr David Faull
Principal, Avondale School



ABORIGINAL GIRLS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

John Willcock College and Uniting Church Homes Hillcrest

SHINE is a one-of-a-kind experiential, values-based program for teenage Indigenous 'at risk' girls. SHINE fosters partnerships within the community to develop valuable connections, build trust, to raise awareness and to create accountability. Key partnerships in SHINE's success include Uniting Church Homes Hillcrest, Geraldton City Council and the Women's Health Resource Centre.

THE SCHOOL

John Willcock College is a government middle school in regional Western Australia, specifically catering for Year 8 and 9 students. The College has a culturally diverse student population of around 600, of which 28 per cent are Aboriginal. The College promotes academic excellence in all areas but, because of the age of the cohort, faces many challenges pertinent to attendance, literacy and numeracy and student behaviour. The College has a sub-school structure, which promotes a team focus and is designed to develop closer relationships between teachers, students, families and caregivers.

The *SHINE* program has been developed at John Willcock College for Year 9 Aboriginal girls who were becoming disengaged from school.

THE NEED

The College identified that Aboriginal female students had poor physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing, were disengaged and had low retention and participation outcomes.

Year 9 Aboriginal girls at the College had become a marginalised group in terms of education, attendance and achievement. There were large numbers not transitioning to Year 10 at the Senior College and missing out on access to further education and workplace training opportunities. The major impetus for *SHINE* came from the need to significantly raise attendance and positive behaviour statistics, levels of student engagement, confidence, self-esteem and educational outcomes for Aboriginal girls.

THE PARTNERSHIP

In order to expand and strengthen *SHINE*, the College fostered partnerships with an aged-care facility, the local council and a health service to develop valuable connections, build trust, raise awareness, and to create accountability. These key partnerships have contributed to *SHINE's* success. The Uniting Church Home is an aged-care facility that *SHINE* girls attend as part of their regular scheduling with the aim of developing respectful relationships between the young and the old. The *SHINE* girls pamper

the residents in different ways, some of which include listening and engaging with their wisdom and knowledge, walking together and giving residents hand massages and foot spas. These interactions, through connection and human touch, foster and nurture acceptance and respect. *SHINE* students have worked with Hillcrest on a regular basis from the beginning of the project.

The City of Greater Geraldton connects the *SHINE* girls with the community-based mobile *SHINE* workshop, which operates from the Council's bus. The bus is parked in town and attracts young people from the region. The girls interact and display their *SHINE* skills, further improving relationships and the perceptions of Aboriginal youth. The 'City-bus' partnership has benefits that are far-reaching as the *SHINE* girls create a fun space in the middle of town to practise applying makeup, doing nails, hairdressing skills and mentoring.

The Women's Health Resource Centre partner with the *SHINE* students to develop their physical and emotional health and wellbeing, particularly sexual health and improving respectful relationships, empowering the girls to make better informed decisions in relation to sexuality and health.

THE BENEFIT

The *SHINE* program generates much positive media coverage (written and visual) for the school, as well as attracting awards and recognition for its school-community partnerships, and also for its innovations in Aboriginal education, attendance and engagement programs. John Willcock College receives almost daily communication relating to *SHINE* including ministerial visitors, student visitors from other schools, members of the public, corporate interest and traffic through its designated web address.

Attendance at the College has improved for these Aboriginal students; they are more motivated to engage with learning and their attitudes to work and to school have become more positive. These benefits impact on the rest of the student population and engender positive relationships within the school community by improving teachers' capacity to successfully achieve better outcomes for all students. Additionally, the students are now focused on remaining within the secondary education system so that they may achieve better employment opportunities. This is illustrated by the increase in the numbers of Aboriginal girls transitioning from Year 9 at John Willcock College to Year 10 at nearby Geraldton Senior College.

After participating in the *SHINE* program with the community partners, 22 girls enrolled in courses at the local TAFE, Durack Institute of Technology. This was an unprecedented number. John Willcock College and the partners are now increasing the number of *SHINE* groups to five, which will rotate through a six-day timetable, and cater for fifty Year 9 girls.

As a result of their participation in *SHINE*, students have developed strong networks of support within the wider community, with external agencies and with each other; they have an increased sense of community, as illustrated by their willingness to assist others, and demonstrate increased measures of confidence, self-esteem and connectedness to the wider community.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

wellbeing, connecting with community

TARGET GROUP:

disengaged Year 9 Indigenous girls





DIGITAL LEARNING FOR OLD AND YOUNG

Kincoppal-Rose Bay School of the Sacred Heart and Woollahra Municipal Council

The partnership, between an independent school in Sydney and the Woollahra Municipal Council, provides computer literacy programs to senior citizens. The partnership brings the school and community together with students working collaboratively and creatively, tutoring older adults, increasing the students' Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills and providing them with an opportunity to volunteer in the community.

THE SCHOOL

Kincoppal-Rose Bay School of the Sacred Heart, a Prep to Year 12 Catholic Independent school, is located in metropolitan Sydney. It comprises a coeducational primary school and a girls' day and boarding school from Year 7 to 12. With a student population of 860, the school is part of a global network of schools in 44 countries. All students are expected to make a contribution to the school and community, and the school maintains a strong commitment to its Social Justice program. Students are challenged to take risks with their learning, to stretch their imaginations, to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life and to become well-rounded citizens. Kincoppal-Rose Bay School fosters a sense of wellbeing in the students and provides a spiritual foundation for personal and emotional growth.

THE NEED

The school's ICT Strategic Plan identified the need for students to become problem solvers, to work collaboratively with others and to confidently use a range of increasingly complex technology. The school identified an opportunity to expand its Social Justice program by connecting with Woollahra Council. The Council's approach to community development and its recognition of the importance of building strong networks and high levels of involvement with local residents, schools and organisations was aligned with the goals of the school.

THE PARTNERSHIP

In 2009 Woollahra Council conducted a series of community consultation meetings with various groups in the local area. They received an

overwhelming response from seniors wanting to access training in ICT. The Council responded to the demand for this training by identifying possible partnership opportunities within the Municipality. To this end, the Council and Kincoppal-Rose Bay School became project partners. The school saw the opportunity to enhance the learning and ICT expertise of its students, as well as enabling them to contribute positively to their local community.

Woollahra Council works closely with the school to deliver ICT programs to senior citizens in the local area, by engaging with teachers and students to deliver the *Easy PC Program*. The initial *Easy PC Program* offered a six week beginners' course of weekly one-hour sessions commencing with afternoon tea. Woollahra Council, represented by its Community Liaison officer, works with teachers and students to develop programs using notebooks and iPads and trains students to guide senior citizens in technology in the twenty-first century.

The sessions cover basic computer literacy, use of the internet and email. Woollahra Council advertises the courses, communicates with applicants, assesses and manages participants' needs and maintains the profile of the project at Council and community level. Ongoing promotion and administration assistance is also the Council's responsibility. The school reviews and evaluates feedback material from participants and the student-tutors create workbooks, notes and practice exercises to support their lessons.

Student achievement and personal development is at the heart of this program, and students meet with the program coordinator on a regular basis outside the *Easy PC Program* days. They are trained not only in the technologies they teach to the senior citizens, but are supported personally to build their confidence and self-esteem. School staff complete a Microsoft Mentoring Program enabling them to train students to be mentors. Students meet with the teachers for debriefing sessions following *Easy PC* lessons, and discuss any issues and challenges they face. Students share instructional strategies, develop worksheets and templates, identify appropriate software and translate technical terminology into accessible language for older learners.

THE BENEFIT

The *Easy PC Program* has been embedded into the roles of the school's ICT teachers and has become a valued part of the school's Social Justice strategy. Students participate voluntarily through the Student Leadership program. Students who have participated in *Easy PC* have a greater understanding of ICT and have developed their interpersonal and intergenerational communication skills. The students have formed an ICT committee to train and mentor other students. This fruitful partnership brings the school and community together regularly with a significant educational and social purpose. Senior participants have welcomed the opportunity to overcome their fears of technology, to enhance their computer literacy and to maintain social interaction with their peers and young tutors.

The *Easy PC* and *Easy iPad* programs have become an established part of each organisation. The success of these programs has resulted in three other independent schools in the council area joining the partnership informally and offering more programs to meet the increasing demand from senior citizens for training in technology.

The students, especially rural boarders far from home, have formed new relationships with an older generation of men and women and many of the students have maintained these relationships. Students have consistently reported that having to guide their senior partners through technology processes has strengthened their own ICT skills, and encouraged them to find creative solutions to problems. Students comment they have developed greater patience and tolerance by being able to help the senior citizens learn challenging new technologies.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

volunteering, connecting with community

TARGET GROUP:

primary school students



COMMUNITY NETWORKING

Murrumburrah High School and Murrumburrah Harden Show Society, Harden Shire Council and Harden Community Bank

The school–community partnership is between Murrumburrah High School and the Murrumburrah Harden Show Society, the Harden Shire Council and the Harden Community Bank. Students volunteer to work with community groups to promote events, also assisting to organise and run them. It is a whole school effort that is mutually beneficial to not only the school and the partners but the whole community.

THE SCHOOL

Murrumburrah High School is a small coeducational government high school in regional New South Wales. The school has a population of 167 and caters for students from Year 7 to Year 12, many of whom have special needs. The school's strengths are the bonds between students and staff, its ability to cater for individual educational needs and the willingness of the wider community to become involved in school activities.

THE NEED

There are many challenges facing the school, with one being a lack of employment options in the town, which limits students' opportunities for work experience. In 2006 the local town experienced severe drought, leading to increased unemployment and low community morale. Much of the vandalism around town was blamed on the high school students, who had become disengaged from academic work and were exhibiting antisocial behaviours. Staff at the school identified a need for the students

to develop stronger connections with the community, to improve their sense of self-worth and to change the community's perception of them and of the school.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The main partner, Murrumburrah Harden Show Society, is a not-for-profit organisation and the custodian of the Showground, where it hosts a wide variety of community events. It not only runs a two-day Springtime Show but encourages weekly use of the grounds by schools, community groups and clubs. The Showground is a valuable facility, but one that had fallen into disrepair and had been under-utilised for many years. Another community partner, the Harden Shire Council, provides expert staff to run partnership meetings, providing technical and legal advice and acting as a conduit to other community groups. The third partner is the Harden Community Bank whose board was enthusiastic to see a regeneration of community facilities and was also keen to engage the local students in actively caring for their environment.

Murrumburrah Harden Show Society began the partnership with the school as a mutually beneficial program on a small scale. The school wanted to take students out of their comfort zone, encourage them to become involved in community life and take ownership of activities. Originally the partnership started with ten students volunteering on Show Day to collect and display Pavilion entries. Since 2006, the student involvement has increased to include working at events throughout the year for many different showground users and culminating in a whole school involvement in the two-day Springtime Show. Students are invited to create programs, design activities, take responsibility for events and be public relations spokespersons.

The partnership has been accepted as part of the school and has grown considerably each year with students from all age groups contributing and gaining a sense of ownership of what happens in the community. When assisting with events such as the Springtime Show, the Gold Trail, the Kite Festival, the Picnic Races, trivia nights, sporting events and Youth Week, students are involved in a wide range of event management tasks from preparing the grounds, repairing and maintaining facilities to working at the event in roles such as public speaking, judging, ring stewarding, selling food and beverages, collecting entry money, and designing logos and programs. Students volunteer for activities and are mentored by teaching staff, partner volunteers and tradespeople. The students are actively engaged, increasing their skills base and socialising with a wide range of community members.

THE BENEFIT

Anecdotal evidence indicates that since the inception of the *Community Networking* program, students at Murrumburrah High School are more focused at school, are working harder towards

developing career goals and are happier. The community's perception of the students and their abilities has changed and is evidenced by the increase in community requests for assistance from high school students to help run events.

The community has a more positive attitude towards the students, and parents are delighted that their children are actively involved in the community. The social networking has provided a better public profile for the school and now there are several employers who contact the school whenever a vacancy occurs in their industry. A significant benefit for the students is the networking between community members and the school, giving them a chance to interact with business leaders, tradespeople and citizens from an older generation.

One of the success stories is the design and organisation of the Southern All Breeds Youth Heifer Show that is now held as an annual event with competitors coming from Sydney, Victoria, Goulburn and the Hunter Valley. With mentoring from two community volunteers, the students were able to take their idea and develop it into a three-day show that is fully planned and organised. Students had to write sponsorship letters, design t-shirts, seek funding, arrange prizes, judges and meals, and liaise with people in the cattle industry.

The benefits to the students are evident in the pride they take in their involvement, their mature approach to volunteering at events, the positive manner in which they conduct themselves, the increase in employment, especially part-time for junior students, and the high regard in which the community now holds the school.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

connecting with community, vocational

TARGET GROUP:

disengaged secondary students



INTERGENERATION BUDDIES

St Charles Borromeo Primary School and Roseville Retirement Village and The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

Grade 5 students at St Charles Borromeo Primary School and Roseville Retirement Village residents are buddied together and meet twice a term. The buddy relationship endeavours to meet the residents' desire to contribute to their community and in particular to the lives of the students. The residents do this through story-telling and sharing history, and encouraging the students to live the values that the school teaches.

THE SCHOOL

St Charles Borromeo Primary School is a small Catholic primary school on the outskirts of suburban Melbourne in Victoria with an enrolment of 240 students. The school has a strong sense of community and community spirit is engendered through a well-developed buddy system, which brings together students, staff and parents. The Student Representative Council provides a voice for all students, with clear avenues for parental involvement available through the Parents and Friends Association and School Advisory Board.

THE NEED

An opportunity was identified to provide the aged residents of Roseville Retirement Village with a means of sharing their knowledge and experience with a younger generation. After surveying members of the community and collecting data from a range of sources, including residents from Roseville, Grade 5 students at St Charles Borromeo identified the residents' desire to be more active in the community, and saw a need in which they were uniquely positioned to assist.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Roseville Retirement Village is an aged-care facility located near the school. The Village consists of manicured gardens, has a relaxed friendly atmosphere and caters for a variety of different living needs. Residents in the low care section of the facility, who live independently in their own rooms, are buddied up with the Grade 5 students.

The school formed a partnership with Roseville and developed *Be My Buddy*. The students actively participated in modifying the schools'

“My time with my buddy from Roseville was the best time last year. I loved hearing his stories and learning what he did when he was my age. Now I am in Grade 6 it is great that I hear from his buddy this year how he is.”

Stephen
Grade 6 student

existing Better Buddies program with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, a children's charity aimed at keeping children safe from violence, to accommodate the needs of the residents. The students aim to develop respectful, caring, friendly relationships with residents and extend the values of empathy, responsibility, valuing difference and creating an inclusive community.

The residents of the aged-care facility are paired with the students and meet formally twice a term, once at the residents' village and once at the school. Parents and Roseville staff attend each session to provide support and assistance. The students incorporate current areas of study into these sessions and the aged-care residents are informed in advance of topics currently under discussion. Other activities include morning teas, the creation of artworks to be displayed in the school and at Roseville, performances by the school choir and board game activity days.

The Grade 5 students plan the activities for the year, with assistance from teachers and the management staff at Roseville. Both partners provide a member of staff who is responsible for coordination and communication within the partnership. The school liaises with the student committee and assists them in organising and communicating with their retirement village buddies. When the students visit Roseville most of the residents take part but visiting the school often depends on the health of the buddies at the time. Roseville is within walking distance of the school and there have been times when the buddies have arrived at the school independently to see the students. This accessibility and the strengthening of the buddy connection, has allowed some of the students to visit their buddies out of school hours with their families.

THE BENEFIT

Both partners in the *Be My Buddy* program have benefited substantially from the interaction and relationships formed. The students have improved their ability to communicate, listen, learn and respect others through their regular contact with the aged-care residents. They have developed a better understanding of the life experiences that their buddies have been through. They have also engaged in civic responsibility in a meaningful and purposeful way in their local community. Teachers have given anecdotal reports of students' enthusiasm following their visits with the residents and have seen improvements in their communication skills. The program has also increased parent interaction with teachers and Roseville staff have reported an increase in wellbeing among the residents.

Students' authentic involvement with the elderly residents and the intergenerational contact has improved social and emotional outcomes for all involved. The partnership is responsible for developing student self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision making and relationship skills.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

health and wellbeing, connecting with community

TARGET GROUP:

primary school students

“The *Be My Buddy* program at St Charles Borromeo is a wonderful experience for the Grade 5 students. It helps them to understand and totally accept the elderly, particularly those children who don't have grandparents in their lives.”

Cathy
Parent



SHARING HISTORY THROUGH THE GENERATIONS

St Mary of the Angels and Department of Veterans' Affairs and Returned and Services League

This intergenerational partnership between a Catholic secondary school and the Nathalia RSL has given the students the opportunity to undertake volunteer work and build stronger connections with their local community. VCAL students at the school have also incorporated these visits to the RSL into the Personal Development section of their course.

THE SCHOOL

St Mary of the Angels is a regional coeducational Catholic secondary school of 438 students in Years 10, 11 and 12, and provides education to students of the northern Goulburn Valley and southern New South Wales. The school is supported by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, Sandhurst Schools Education Board, the College Board and an active Parents and Friends Association. Many young people at the school feel a strong connection to their community and wish to participate more fully but were faced with little opportunity to do so.

THE NEED

Isolation is an issue for the farming communities and the small townships where many of the students at the school live and where access to opportunities for young people is limited. Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) students are traditionally students who experience difficulty accessing the more academic programs in the school. These students often do not receive any recognition for their particular

skills and talents and some students at the school were suffering from low self-esteem and a lack of post-school pathways.

THE PARTNERSHIP

A staff member at the school approached the Returned and Services League (RSL) after an ANZAC Day service as a possible partner to work with the school to support students studying VCAL. The local branch of the RSL has a rich history, but diminishing numbers of members meant that its history was being lost. The RSL president and secretary were extremely supportive from the beginning, and RSL members have been a source of advice and insight to the school from the outset of the partnership.

Originally, the partnership's aim was to landscape and beautify the RSL clubroom and to create a DVD of the stories of RSL members. This developed as the *Lest we Forget* project grew. The partnership with the RSL provided, and will continue to provide, an opportunity for the

students to participate in the community, learn new skills and achieve at both a personal and school level.

Students at the school studying for their VCAL regularly visit the RSL and have experienced a sense of achievement from completing projects with its members. The students have built a memorial garden of their own design and restored elements of the interior and exterior of the RSL building. They are learning how to archive precious documents and artefacts to record the history of the RSL and its past members. The current RSL members have provided an oral history that the students have recorded in the form of a short film.

Formal classes are held to ensure that the nature of the partnership is understood and it links to the outcomes required for students' successful completion of VCAL. The role of the VCAL Personal Development teacher is to ensure that the relationship between the RSL members and students flourishes and another staff member acts as a facilitator and mentor to the students engaged in the activities.

THE BENEFIT

The students in the group have been variously disengaged from school and had at times seemed to lack direction. The partnership has meant that they are more engaged, feel more valued and, as the project has a direct link between the task and the learning outcome, they have now developed a stronger sense of identity as a 'team' within the school. These students have responded to the hands-on learning experience with increased attendance and retention levels. The *Lest We Forget* project has created pathways that are strongly connected to workplace learning and provides students with meaningful skills to increase employability beyond school.

Many students in the VCAL class have special needs – either intellectual or physical. This experiential learning partnership is the main reason these students have been able to remain at the school and achieve academic results at a senior school level. The partnership has provided the opportunity for students to demonstrate their innate skills and to build self-confidence. Some VCAL students who had previously suffered from low self-esteem and lack of pathways

have benefited from the mentoring provided by members of the community and the RSL.

Anecdotal information from teaching staff indicates that the behaviour and demeanour of the students has improved and their self-confidence has increased. Students are attending more classes and re-engaging with learning. The students appreciated the positive learning experiences provided by the mentors.

The mutual sense of self-worth and pride experienced by both partners has been a particular characteristic of the project. The students feel valued and able to offer something to the community. The members of the RSL feel valued by the younger generation and their contribution to Australian history is recognised and understood by this group of young people.

As a consequence of the partnership, 15 students have travelled to Canberra to visit the national War Memorial and students have been inspired to participate in other related fields of study and interest. An alternative 'schoolies' excursion was made available to three students for a trip to Cebu in the Philippines. This was an extension of the College Charter and its links to social justice, to enable ordinary Australian graduates from the school to be able to think and connect more globally.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

connecting with community

TARGET GROUP:

disengaged secondary students

“The involvement [in this partnership] has restored my faith in the youth of today.”

80 year old

Nathalia RSL club member

ENHANCING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF STUDENTS

A growing number of schools are partnering with local councils, health services, hospitals, universities and government health departments to address issues of students' fitness, health and nutrition. Some partnerships are training volunteers who then become mentors and go into schools to provide positive role models for students, form links across generations, and help students not only to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, but also their confidence and social and emotional wellbeing. Schools that have established partnerships to address health and wellbeing are finding that ensuring that students are healthy increases their ability to focus in class and enhances their learning. These partnerships support marginalised and disadvantaged groups who are often unable or unwilling to seek help on their own. Refugees and newly arrived migrants, pregnant and parenting teenagers, special needs and 'at risk' students are some of these targeted groups.





HEALTHY STUDENTS MAKING BETTER CHOICES «
Albert Park Flexible Learning Centre

STANDING TALL: SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING «
Baimbridge College

OPTIMISING HEALTH AND LEARNING «
Beverly Hills Intensive English Centre

SUPPORTING TEENAGERS WITH EDUCATION, MOTHERING AND MENTORING «
Burnside State High School

EDUCATING YOUNG MOTHERS AND CARERS «
Canberra College

MENTORING ACROSS THE GENERATIONS «
Centenary Heights Senior High School - Toowoomba Flexi School

FAMILIES LEARNING TOGETHER «
Gray Primary School

GARDENING AND A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE «
Karonga Special School

EDUCATING REMOTE INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN URBAN SETTINGS «
Millner Primary School

LEARNING LIFE SKILLS AT BREAKFAST «
Mornington Park Primary School

CREATING A POSITIVE EDUCATION «
Sunshine Harvester Primary School

HEALTH EDUCATION FOR ALL «
Timboon P-12 School

LIFE AS A CLASSROOM «
Zillmere State School



HEALTHY STUDENTS MAKING BETTER CHOICES

Albert Park Flexible Learning Centre and the Lang Park Police and Citizens Youth Club

The partnership between an alternative secondary school, a Police and Citizens Youth Club, the local Council and a number of other organisations was established to provide a health and fitness program to complement the school's curriculum and develop students' fitness, health and self-esteem.

THE SCHOOL

The Albert Park Flexible Learning Centre is located in inner city Brisbane, in Queensland, and following a flexible daily timetabled program, works with around 80 disenfranchised, vulnerable young people with complex learning needs. The school provides alternative learning experiences to build students' self-confidence and self-esteem; to promote an optimistic view of their potential and their futures; and to help them develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life.

THE NEED

The Centre recognised that many students did not have access to mainstream services such as gyms and sporting clubs or teams and were frustrated by the lack of recreational opportunities available to them in the community. Student absenteeism was high and

the Centre needed to provide an incentive to come to school.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The Police and Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) is a prominent community group that provides activities for all members of the community at affordable prices and is also committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for young people. The Centre approached the Lang Park PCYC about setting up a youth fitness and recreation project. The PCYC wanted to increase its youth development strategies and outcomes, so a partnership was formed. The partnership builds on the strengths of both organisations: PCYC's fitness and personal training experience, and the Centre's strong support for the education of disadvantaged young people.

The *Youth Fitness Program* was established to provide students with access to a year-long

fitness program. Students from the Centre, teaching staff and the PCYC staff all meet to plan and design the activities in the program. They work closely with the Centre to provide a health and fitness program to develop students' fitness, general health and self-esteem. The PCYC shares its fitness facilities and its experienced personal trainers and youth development staff, and contributes financially to the partnership. The program is embedded in the Centre's curriculum and the students attend up to three weekly fitness sessions with personal trainers at the PCYC.

In 2012, the PCYC was able to increase the health and fitness opportunities available to students after obtaining a Queensland Government Active Inclusion grant to develop another fitness program, the *TRANSFORM* project. The PCYC aimed to increase student participation by targeting students not normally involved in the youth fitness program at the Centre. *TRANSFORM* is now a successful healthy lifestyle and fitness program delivered in partnership with the Centre for young people classified as 'at risk'.

The partnership's main objectives are to generate a positive attitude towards health and fitness at the school, encourage and support students to be active, empower students with the knowledge and tools to make healthier choices, and increase the PCYC's capacity to work with 'at risk' youth.

THE BENEFIT

The *Youth Fitness Program* is successfully enriching the lives of the students, teachers and PCYC staff involved. The Centre and PCYC have developed a strong professional relationship based on mutual respect and have benefited from the experience of collaboratively planning, delivering and evaluating the *Youth Fitness Program*. The partnership has had a positive effect on the Centre's curriculum and contributed to

increased school attendance, student engagement and improved fitness. Students have also formed a stronger connection with the school and the wider community through their interactions with the partner organisations. The PCYC has been able to engage more young people in healthy lifestyle and fitness goal setting. In addition, the participating students have increased their activity levels and improved their confidence and sense of wellbeing.

The *TRANSFORM* program expansion has allowed all students at the Centre free access to PCYC activities, with its high quality facilities supervised by dedicated fitness staff. Three students who have embraced the *transformation* philosophy are working towards a career in health and fitness as a result of their experiences in the *TRANSFORM* program. One has accepted a school-based traineeship in Fitness, another is working towards accreditation as a Yoga teacher, and the third is working on a 'black belt' in both Ju Jitsu and Judo.

The partnership between the Centre and the PCYC has been further strengthened by other partnerships that have developed around it. The Centre also partners with the Brisbane City Council Youth Team, The Edmund Rice Foundation and High Rise Rotary. All of these community partners, along with the PCYC and the Queensland Police Citizens Youth Welfare Association, are committed to improving youth outcomes within Brisbane City.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

vocational, connecting with community

TARGET GROUP:

disengaged students in an alternative setting

“Before I started the fitness program I found myself feeling lost and unmotivated, but working with Dan and the people at Lang Park PCYC has helped me make a big change in my life and my lifestyle. I wouldn't be where I am today, doing my school-based fitness traineeship, without the people in the fitness program pushing me.”

Joaquin
22 years old



STANDING TALL: SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING

Baimbridge College and Iluka Mining, Victoria Police, and St Vincent De Paul

Baimbridge College has partnered with a number of local businesses and community organisations to develop a mentoring program that calls on volunteers to work one-on-one with students at risk of disengaging from school.

THE SCHOOL

Baimbridge College is a coeducational government Prep to Year 12 school in Hamilton, a rural town 250 km from Melbourne, Victoria. The College has introduced a mentoring program into the curriculum based on the idea that young people benefit positively from one-on-one relationships with caring adults. This program was established after a teacher at the College used her Westfield Premier's Education Scholarship to conduct research into North American school-based mentoring programs.

“ I am astounded at my son's improvement; he went from hating me and the world, to making life plans, refusing to hang [out] up the street with idiots, and respects me! It's wonderful! Thank you. ”

Happy parent
of a Year 9 student at the College

THE NEED

Isolation and socioeconomic factors were having an effect on students' educational outcomes and the College was concerned by the number of students displaying negative behaviours and attitudes that put them in danger of disengaging from school. In response to this challenge, the College established the *Standing Tall* school-based mentoring program, a program that recruits, screens and trains members of the community to act as mentors to students identified as 'at risk'.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Iluka Resources, an ASX-listed mining and processing company with operations throughout Australia and the United States, was approached to support and work in partnership with the College on the mentoring program. The company wanted to increase the community engagement opportunities available to staff and after discussions with Iluka management the company agreed to encourage its employees to become mentors and provided time release for them to be trained and to meet their student mentees on

a weekly basis. The company provided two staff members to assist in the governance of *Standing Tall* and the College provided information packages, training and ongoing support for mentors.

The College has since formed partnerships with Brophy Family and Youth Services, Rotary Inner Wheel, Victoria Police and St Vincent de Paul to further support the mentoring program. The partnership with St Vincent de Paul provides opportunities for the mentors and mentees to volunteer in their charity shop on a regular basis.

The *Standing Tall* mentors organise off-campus site visits that are relevant to their mentees' future careers, and this work site contact has led to employment for some students. Mentors have helped students with time management skills to enable them to cope with their study load and improve their opportunities for academic success. Mentors offer emotional support for students, particularly during periods of grieving and loss, and provide advice or positive role modelling for general life stresses or skills. Other learning experiences the students and mentors share include cooking, art, music, bird-watching, library visits, gallery visits, café lunches, swimming, fishing, zoo visits, sewing, collecting for the local hospital and Red Cross, and photography. Individual mentors have specific skills, talents and expertise that they are encouraged to share with the students.

The partners have expressed a strong commitment to maintain the strength of the partnership. After sharing in the success of this mentoring program, Iluka is committed to its expansion and replication in other schools.

THE BENEFIT

The partnership has proved effective in raising the profile of the mentoring program in the community and attracting sufficient numbers of mentors. Evaluation of the program showed that the most positive outcomes came after ten months or more of mentoring, although changes could be seen after even six months. The mentoring partnership has been effective and teachers have observed more positive attitudes and improved behaviour in students, mentors reported seeing students take more responsibility for their actions, and most students reported that their relationships with their peers and family had improved. The College has noted an improvement

“I cannot express deeply enough how important this program is in helping the students involved develop their self-worth... we have been able to put aside the barriers of generational and social differences and just appreciate each other's value.”

Iluka
Mentor

in the general appearance of the students, there has been greater academic success and students are more engaged in the classroom. Students also stated that they felt a stronger sense of connection with the school and their community.

The students' achievements are acknowledged at *Standing Tall* celebrations during the year and certificates are presented at whole school assemblies to recognise the work that students have done in their door knocking and collection for the Red Cross and the hospital. Teachers at the College have endorsed the program and there are many students who have shown increased motivation to learn and have made significant changes in their lives because of their mentors. Parents have also been enthusiastic about the program, reporting positive changes in their child's outlook.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

mentoring, health and wellbeing

TARGET GROUP:

disengaged secondary students

“The *Standing Tall* program is an invaluable resource, extremely well managed, that hits the target and helps so many students.”

Baimbridge College teacher



OPTIMISING HEALTH AND LEARNING

Beverly Hills Intensive English Centre and Local Health Services

The partnership is between an Intensive English Centre and various health services and aims to improve early identification of student health issues that are likely to impact on learning. The partners work together to combine the skills and expertise of health and education professionals to provide health screening, parent education and links with local GPs.

THE SCHOOL

Beverly Hills Intensive English Centre is located in the southern suburbs of Sydney, New South Wales, and has approximately 170 students enrolled at any one time. The student body is comprised of newly arrived refugees and young migrants of secondary school age from 30 different countries and there are 26 different languages spoken. Many students are from refugee backgrounds and have experienced or witnessed torture, trauma and extreme hardship in their country of origin or in refugee camps. The Centre focuses on assisting these students to settle into life in Australia. As well as developing their English skills, the school equips them with the interpersonal, social and learning skills they will need for effective participation in their local high schools. Students typically learn at the Centre for three to four terms before they transition to one of the twenty local mainstream high schools.

THE NEED

One of the challenges faced by the Centre was how to meet the needs of such a diverse student body and there was strong evidence to support the need for health screening for new arrivals. Many students attending the Centre have spent significant periods in refugee camps where diseases and malnutrition are prevalent and access to health care services is almost non-existent. As a result, these vulnerable students often had significant health issues that were not being addressed and which impacted on their learning.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Beverly Hills Intensive English Centre's partners include: the Multicultural Health Service, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and Sydney Children's Hospitals Network; local GPs; South Eastern Sydney Medicare Local; South Eastern

Area Laboratory Services; NSW Refugee Health Service; St George Hospital Diversity Health Team; and Menai High School. Refugee health programs are among the many services provided by these organisations, including comprehensive health assessments on arrival and support to enhance access to health information.

Through the partners' combination of skills and expertise in health and education, the Centre has been able to provide a nurse-led screening clinic to refer students with identified health issues to appropriate services, and to link students and their families with local GPs to provide health screening and parent education.

Health partners coordinate health information, including diagnosis of conditions; make referrals to appropriate services; keep track of appointments; and follow up through their networks to ensure that treatment occurs if there has been a problem, such as the lack of a Medicare number or the family's inability to pay for treatment.

“My hope for the future is that every young person in my situation will have the same opportunities and access to solutions that I have been so lucky to have due to the Optimising Health and Learning Project.”

Raneem

16 year old student from Iraq

THE BENEFIT

The partnership demonstrates an innovative approach to combining health and education to achieve successful outcomes. Benefits have been assessed in student health and student learning. Students have gained both academically and socially, and those who have had health conditions treated are better able to learn. They are more engaged, confident, energised and focused on their learning; their parents feel supported and informed about health issues; and teachers and teachers' aides are able to recognise and support the students' individual learning needs.

The value of the partnership has become increasingly obvious. Prior to the program commencing, in metropolitan Sydney only 20 per cent of newly arrived students were accessing refugee specific health assessments. As a result of the partnership project at the Centre, all of these students have been treated and families are now connected to health services.

The partnership between the Centre and the local health services, although only in operation for a short time, has proven to be a success. It was a recipient of a NAB Schools First Seed Funding Award in 2010, was the winner of the 2011 Sydney Children's Hospital Health Award and was a finalist in the NSW Health Awards. The partnership went on to win the NAB Schools First State Impact Funding Award in 2011.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

health and wellbeing

TARGET GROUP:

newly arrived refugee and migrant students





SUPPORTING TEENAGERS WITH EDUCATION, MOTHERING AND MENTORING

Burnside State High School, Queensland Health, Education Queensland, Nambour TAFE and Sunshine Coast University

Burnside State High School formed partnerships with Education Queensland; Queensland Health; Nambour TAFE; Sunshine Coast University; Child and Youth Mental Health Services; Playgroup Australia; and a network of community organisations and volunteers to develop the Supporting Teenagers with Education, Mothering and Mentoring (STEMM) program to encourage girls to engage with learning, certification and employment pathways.

THE SCHOOL

Burnside State High School is a coeducational school of 440 students and provides a conventional Year 8 to 12 curriculum. The school, located on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, services the regional town of Nambour and surrounding areas. It is a recognised school for the hearing impaired and offers Special Education and *STEMM*.

The *STEMM* program demonstrates the school's commitment to providing a supportive learning environment for girls. It is tailored to meet their educational, social, physical and emotional needs, and the needs of their babies. The school was the only state high school in the region in 2009 where

100 per cent of students who completed Year 12 left with a qualification. In 2012, the *STEMM* program won the RemServ Showcase Award for Excellence in Schools, and in the 2013 Australia Day Awards *STEMM* was awarded the Sunshine Coast Regional Council's Community Award.

THE NEED

A lack of practical parenting and life skills, low self-confidence and unwillingness to complete secondary education in a traditional setting, were identified as key areas of concern the school had for many of the pregnant teens and teen mothers. Not completing their schooling was impacting on their education.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The school has established partnerships with a wide range of community organisations, each of which brings critical knowledge, skills and practical support to the *STEMM* program. *STEMM* also provides a range of services on-site such as: health services, which provide assessment, interventions and consultations; pre- and post-natal care; secondary medical services; and counselling services for victims of domestic violence. They provide ongoing health care for mothers and their children, can offer advice and strategies on parenting issues and child development issues, provide access to community support and provide a network for young people. The provision of both transport and on-site childcare is critical to the success of the program.

STEMM is the first program in Queensland to support pregnant girls and young mothers to continue school through an innovative and unique stand-alone curriculum. *STEMM* supports 45 pregnant girls and young mothers in a safe, non-judgmental environment. The girls come from across the Sunshine Coast, and there are others who have moved to the Coast from areas such as Brisbane and Ipswich, to become involved in the program.

The partnership has grown as a result of *STEMM* being widely recognised as providing a best practice model of how to support teenage mothers to re-engage in education. Its strengths include the combination of on-site health and educational specialists who have collaboratively facilitated significant improvement in student participation, outcomes and certification rates, and have provided links to government and community organisations. Young parents who have been reluctant to engage in the health system are now establishing relationships through *STEMM*.

THE BENEFIT

The girls have benefited from the program by being supported to complete their secondary education and by being taught parenting skills. They have also learned essential life skills, such as money management, cooking, sewing and have a better understanding about how to interact with government agencies. They have learned to make appropriate choices, take responsibility and have developed greater independence. The girls have gained self-confidence and improved communication skills through interaction with members of the school and the wider community. Participating students are offered opportunities to develop their recreational skills in areas such as painting, craft, woodwork, or pottery.

The school has recorded significant educational outcomes for the participating students, which can be directly attributed to *STEMM*. There have been increased enrolments, both in the program and the mainstream school, and increased attendance and participation rates. More students are completing certified courses and enrolling in the Tertiary Preparation Program, and more young mums are transitioning to tertiary institutions.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

vocational, life skills, health and wellbeing

TARGET GROUP:

pregnant students and young parents

“*STEMM is a second home to me. A place where I feel I have been given a second chance. No one judges me. It is very supportive and I feel like I belong. I am studying my Cert 3 in Beauty, something I have always wanted to do, but never thought I could. I love that my son is close to me while I am studying.*”

Brittany 19, Isaiah 2



EDUCATING YOUNG MOTHERS AND CARERS

Canberra College and the ACT Department of Health and others

This partnership between Canberra College and various health services in the ACT was developed to minimise the risk of young parents not continuing their secondary schooling and not achieving positive educational outcomes. The College recognised the need to provide support for young pregnant women, and young mothers and fathers, to help them stay connected to schooling.

THE SCHOOL

Canberra College, in the Australian Capital Territory, is a coeducational government college located on two campuses for Year 11 and 12 students. There are approximately 800 students on the larger campus and 95 students on the second campus, primarily pregnant and parenting students, but also some young carers and students not achieving in the mainstream academic setting.

THE NEED

The challenge faced by Canberra College was to meet the wide range of needs of the young mothers and fathers who brought their children to school with them. The diverse health and welfare needs of these students were not being met; they were more likely to leave school early, struggle to find employment and face lives of poverty and hardship. It was feared that this cycle of disadvantage would then include their children. To minimise the risk of these negative

personal and societal outcomes, the College developed a partnership with groups in the community to support these young pregnant women and young parents so that they would remain connected to school.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The College recognised the need to bring together education and health professionals on campus and to work in close cooperation with health professionals in order to provide a supportive, holistic program for its students. In 2004, a steering committee was established involving the College, ACT Department of Education and Training, and community health and welfare partners to devise the kind of program that the College believed was needed. The major partner was the Child, Youth and Women's Health Program (ACT Department of Health), and other significant local authorities and organisations were also involved, including women's refuges, hospitals, service clubs, the Salvation Army and

various crisis services.

Staff from the Child, Youth and Women's Health Program committed to providing weekly on-site clinics, which were later increased to twice weekly. This enabled nursing staff to provide advice and care to young pregnant women, new parents, and their children, who may otherwise have had little contact with relevant health services. They also provided referrals to off-campus health professionals, maintained individual health records of students and their children, and advised teaching staff on a range of health and welfare issues. The College provided space, resources and logistic support for the on-campus clinic and prepared personalised learning programs for students that took into account the circumstances and history of each student as well as the curriculum requirements of the regional educational authority. Teaching staff also consulted the community health partners on health and nutritional issues, which needed to be taken into account in the preparation of individual learning plans.

THE BENEFIT

The program has grown from ten young parents in 2004 to 75 in 2009. Increasing numbers of participating students are graduating successfully from Year 12. There has been a significant increase in the number of pregnant and parenting

“Health usually works with health, but to make a partnership between health and education is remarkable.”

Kathy May

Health Directorate

Women, Youth and Children Community Health

young people who are seriously engaging with community health and welfare services for themselves and their children. There has been an improvement in the quality of interaction between health workers and young people and an increase in students connecting with external health and welfare agencies beyond school. An unexpected and significant outcome of the program was the opportunity for nursing staff to gain experience and confidence in working with vulnerable young people. This particular clientele would not ordinarily approach health workers for assistance.

The College and its community partners have developed a one-stop-shop, combining a range of health and education specialists on-campus to enhance the personal development, wellbeing and growth of the young people and their children, transforming the lives of individual students. An important by-product of this partnership is that the children of these young parents and carers – the next generation – are being given a more positive start in life than they would have had if their parents had not been able to access this program.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

health and wellbeing, learning opportunities, engagement

TARGET GROUP:

pregnant students and young parents

“We didn't have much knowledge about the value of our partnership until we filled out the application for NAB Schools First and realised how much we relied on our partners to assist us. It brought home to us that such an undertaking relies on the whole community for support. You need a community to make things happen.”

Jan Marshall

Coordinator, CCCares



MENTORING ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

Toowoomba Flexi School and the Toowoomba Older Men's Network

This is a partnership between an annexe of Centenary Heights State High School, Toowoomba Flexi School, and the Toowoomba Older Men's Network (TOMNET). Students who are at risk of dropping out of formal education in Years 10, 11 and 12, due to social and emotional disadvantage, are supported through a mentoring program and other projects that strengthen intergenerational links.

THE SCHOOL

Centenary Heights State High School is situated in Toowoomba, a regional city in Queensland, and also services many rural communities. The school has three campuses, one of which caters to a unique group of students who are faced with significant social and emotional disadvantage, making it difficult for them to engage fully in a mainstream school and reach their potential. The annexe, Toowoomba Flexi School, has an enrolment of 70 students from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and provides off-site alternative education for these students. A critical element of Flexi School's success is its relationship with the community and its community partnerships.

“Research has found that solutions to community issues involving youth require involvement from all parts of society – public, volunteer and private sectors.”

Jo Brennan
Head of Department at Flexi School

THE NEED

By regularly tracking student progress and achievement, the school identified an increasing number of students who were struggling academically, socially and emotionally and had become disengaged with school. The partnership was formed in response to the need to re-engage two marginalised groups in the community – disengaged youth and retired older men.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Flexi School's partnership with TOMNET was created to provide relevant educational opportunities and improved pathways for students and provide opportunities for older men to volunteer and connect with the community. TOMNET is made up of hundreds of members, fifty of whom assist the students. They are retired professional men and tradesmen who have a wealth of knowledge and skills to offer. They assist weekly; building relationships and supporting students to improve their numeracy and literacy and undertake specific projects. They also support the unit financially through donations to purchase equipment, improve the facilities and provide food for students.

TOMNET's aims are to identify and connect with isolated older men and establish peer support networks and services to improve their physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing, and provide them with a sense of belonging. The partnership with the Flexi School has provided the older men with an opportunity to benefit from individual peer support, enhance social networks and gain a sense of belonging in the community.

Other partners who have become involved in the project include the University of Queensland, who produce an online Mentoring Training Program; a Governance Group, who oversees planning and provides human resources to undertake activities; Toowoomba Regional Council, who provides the facility where the activities are held; and Toowoomba East Rotary, who provides financial support for many of the projects undertaken.

Many *TOMNET* members work with the students on a weekly basis, providing mentoring, academic support, and building relationships as part of the 'Mentoring a Mate' program. The students and mentors also engage in construction and gardening combined with healthy eating tips in 'Vegetable Plot to Plate' and 'Nurture with Nutrition' programs. The activities at Flexi are carefully planned and monitored and *TOMNET* provides special contact with each

student through intensive one-on-one mentoring, ensuring that students feel they are an integral part of the community. The activities or projects undertaken differ from year to year, based on the needs and interests of the students, resources available and the skills, knowledge and abilities of the volunteer mentors.

THE BENEFIT

The partnership has consistently produced exceptional outcomes for all involved and the students feel accepted and supported. They are able to re-engage in learning and work, have the benefit of someone to talk to and a renewed engagement with school and learning. The *TOMNET* volunteers, by sharing their knowledge, skills and friendship, feel valued and connected to their community.

The real strength of the partnership is that not only are the students benefiting, but also the older men at *TOMNET* gain an opportunity to remain active and involved in the community.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

wellbeing, connecting with community, mentoring

TARGET GROUP:

disengaged students in an alternative learning setting

“The partnership exists for the sake of youth and older men and not for the existence of either or both organisations, and the relationship building between staff, youth and older men is both the tool and the outcome.”

Alan Yorkston

Coordinator of the Mentoring Program at *TOMNET* and retired Magistrate





FAMILIES LEARNING TOGETHER

Gray Primary School and The Smith Family and other groups

The partnership between Gray Primary School, The Smith Family and a range of community groups in the local area began in 2006. The partnership focuses on building capacity and resilience in students through leadership and music programs, and working with families to strengthen support for their children's education in a positive, collaborative manner with the school.

THE SCHOOL

Gray Primary School opened in 1984 and was the first primary school built in the Northern Territory regional city of Palmerston, 21 km south of Darwin. The school consists of a multicultural population of 350 students with roughly half of the student population identifying as Indigenous Australian. The school's mission is to be a vibrant teaching and learning centre that maximises each child's wellbeing, and literacy and numeracy potential in a safe, healthy, inclusive and collaborative environment. The community makes extensive use of school facilities after hours and during weekends.

THE NEED

The multicultural school population includes students with special needs, a high proportion of students whose first language is not English and a transient student population. The school community profile has various indicators of

social disadvantage that make it unique within the wider Palmerston community. The school recognised it could not positively influence the lives of these children without supporting their families and involving the wider community. The school recognised the need to positively influence the lives of its students by supporting their families and involving the wider community in the learning process.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The aims of this partnership are to build capacity and resilience in students by teaching leadership skills and running music programs. The partnership objectives include engaging in more work with families to strengthen support for their children's education in a positive, collaborative manner. The school and the Smith Family have established the *Families Learning Together* initiative, which incorporates a series of programs, in order to achieve their goals.

The Smith Family is a national children's charity dedicated to creating opportunities for young Australians in need by providing long-term support for their participation in education. They link schools to unique opportunities and provide access to other support that would not normally be available. The Smith Family has also enabled the school to form strong community partnerships with another seven local community organisations and businesses to achieve positive outcomes for students. The school has other local partners, including Early Childhood Australia, Good Beginnings Australia, Somerville Community Services, Copal and Healthy Palmerston (City of Palmerston), Fast NT, and YMCA of the Top End.

The partnership unites the services, provides access for all families and enables the service providers to connect directly with the school. The partnership focuses on improving the social and emotional wellbeing of students to enhance their ability to learn and the development of positive attitudes and behaviours through student leadership. The partnership also aims to increase engagement between families and the school by providing a range of parent programs that support their role as a child's first teacher.

The school and the partners have established a *Reading Program* for students and parents, which shows them how to introduce numeracy, literacy and singing in a fun way into everyday activities like shopping, folding clothes and cooking. There is also a *1,2,3, Magic* program to teach behaviour management skills. Students participate in music lessons every Friday, such as drumming and music performance, and attend regular school camps. For low-attendance students there is a social skills program that supports them to improve their school attendance and senior students participate in leadership training to enable them to mentor their peers and siblings.

Other programs established through the partnerships aim to involve parents more actively in their child's learning and to reduce social isolation among families. These programs are being run at the Family Centre and include

Parent Yarns each term, *Families and Schools Together Parenting Program* and the *Strong Men, Strong Kids BBQs* program. The purpose of these programs is to connect fathers to school life.

A Smith Family representative is assigned to the school, visits regularly and liaises with the Family Centre Coordinator on a day to day level. Long-term planning for the sustainability of the community partnerships is undertaken between the partners and the school leadership group twice per year. The Smith Family has strong associations with the broader community and brings a broad range of experiences to the partnership.

The school and the partners regularly invite each other to their respective special events as a mark of respect and connection. The wider school community now sees the partners as an integral part of the school as they have a visible presence in the school and advertise current and upcoming programs in the school newsletter.

THE BENEFIT

Since the school and partners began working together, attendance rates, particularly among Indigenous students, have risen significantly. Teachers have reported improved classroom behaviour and enhanced academic achievement. Academic progress is monitored for students whose parents have been involved in reading programs or parenting programs. The school has recorded a much higher rate of parent participation and involvement in the learning process and the curriculum since the Family Centre programs were implemented. In addition, there has been a reduction in antisocial incidents in the playground since the senior student mentoring program began.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

learning opportunities, wellbeing, connecting with community

TARGET GROUP:

primary school students



GARDENING AND A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Karonga Special School and Permaculture Sydney North

Karonga Special School and Permaculture Sydney North (PSN) work together to develop the knowledge and skills of special needs students from Kindergarten to Year 12. The school and PSN collaborate to provide students with practical information about healthy lifestyles through the school's community garden. The partnership provides integrated learning opportunities to the school, PSN members and the local community in sustainable living.

THE SCHOOL

Karonga Special School is situated in urban Sydney on eight acres of land, two-thirds of which is unused. The school has an enrolment of 69 students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities from Kindergarten to Year 12. A number of students also suffer from secondary disabilities, including autism and physical disabilities. The school community has committed itself to sustainable practices as part of the school curriculum to encourage students and families to adopt healthier lifestyle options. The school also runs a 20-week specialist program for a maximum of 14 disengaged students from local high schools and primary schools to improve social and coping skills.

THE NEED

Staff noted that students were physically unfit and many led sedentary lifestyles, often combined with a poor dietary intake consisting of sugary foods. The school identified the need to develop a program to encourage a healthier lifestyle and to promote physical wellbeing among students.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Karonga Special School formed a partnership with Permaculture Sydney North, a volunteer-managed not-for-profit organisation, whose members contribute a range of skills in self-reliance, permaculture design, teaching and sustainable community development to the partnership. Permaculture is a sustainability philosophy that provides practical tools for people to reduce their environmental footprint and build resilient communities. In 2007, the school tested a vegetables-in-boxes program that proved successful and discussions with PSN workers led to the creation of a school community garden in the school grounds.

The school established a Design Team in conjunction with PSN and community volunteers to plan and set up the garden. PSN provided expertise and training to the students, school staff and other interested community volunteers. The school managed the curriculum, the supervision of the students and the sourcing of materials.

PSN members work with students and school staff to design, implement and maintain the students'



permaculture garden, with activities being driven by the school curriculum and the growing seasons. Students and staff undertake independent living skills activities designed with PSN members and using the garden. Professional development workshops promoting a healthy and sustainable lifestyle are organised for PSN members, school staff and other interested community members. Members of PSN are also consulted over a variety of companion projects, such as bee keeping, chook raising and hutch construction.

'Permabees', otherwise known as garden work parties, are planned twice a year with the PSN Garden Team Leader and the garden specialist. Students work throughout the year weeding, mulching, planting and harvesting in three different gardens. The produce is used in the cooking program, which the students enjoy as part of their independent living skills programs.

THE BENEFIT

The project has evolved from one vegetable garden to several gardens in the school grounds. The produce from the gardens is used in the school cooking programs, resulting in healthier foods being consumed. A general improvement in healthy eating has been observed across the school. For example, previously students were preparing pancakes and pizza, now they are cooking salads, stir fry and soups.

The school curriculum is meaningful and contributes to enhanced self-worth in students, as demonstrated by a range of positive learning outcomes. Students' knowledge of plants, and edible plants in particular, has increased. They have demonstrated a healthier lifestyle by developing their skills in the kitchen, including chopping, cutting, mixing and other basic kitchen skills, and awareness of personal hygiene in the kitchen. They also embrace opportunities to try new recipes using a variety of different

ingredients and cooking cultures.

Students' participation in the physical labour of gardening has increased their fitness, strength and flexibility. The physical work has assisted in decreasing incidents of violent, aggressive behaviours in some students. Other gardening benefits for students include developing the ability to care for and use tools appropriately, consistent use of personal protection materials, and using Sunsafes practices in the garden and outdoors more generally. Students also show an increasing awareness and appreciation of animal husbandry after the introduction of a program involving caring for the school chooks.

Students have had a greater opportunity to interact with volunteers and community members, particularly on Open Day with cooking demonstrations and garden tours. They have gained confidence and improved social skills when acting as guides and serving refreshments to visitors touring the school. They have enhanced communication and language skills from participating and learning with their teachers in the garden. Student 'permaculturists' have developed the ability to work as a team and have increased their leadership skills.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

sustainability education, health and wellbeing

TARGET GROUP:

students with physical or intellectual special needs

“ We have gone from a school where the culture was one of helping disabled students to one of empowering our students with disability to be as independent as possible, to make good decisions and to develop leadership and cooperative skills. ”

Sue Dennet
Principal, Karonga Special School



EDUCATING REMOTE INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN URBAN SETTINGS

Millner Primary School, Save the Children and others

Millner Primary School has partnered with a range of services in Darwin to develop a program called: ERICUS (Educating Remote Indigenous Children in Urban Settings). ERICUS aims to improve school attendance, engagement, wellbeing and achievement by providing wrap-around support for Indigenous children from remote communities living in Town Camps around Darwin.

THE SCHOOL

Millner Primary School is a government school in Darwin, with a population of 230 students, representing 42 language groups, and with 73 per cent of the total population having English as a Second Language. Almost half of the school's population is Indigenous and between 30 and 50 students come under the Educating Remote Indigenous Children in Urban Settings (ERICUS) umbrella.

THE NEED

The key identified needs at the school are attendance, engagement and achievement. Factors in the community contribute to these needs and have an impact on children's learning, including extremely low socioeconomic status, cultural and language barriers, inadequate housing, overcrowding and transience. For some families, these factors can lead to high levels of social dysfunction, poor health and poor personal hygiene. School mobility data indicates an almost 50 per cent annual turnover of students, which means a significant number of students are experiencing interrupted schooling.

Town Camps, where many Indigenous families stay briefly or for extended periods of time, present with many social and economic indicators of disadvantage. Many children from the Town Camps display signs of challenging behaviours, short concentration and withdrawal, and all have varying levels of hearing loss and learning delays. The school identified the need to provide attendance and school-readiness support, as well as a targeted teaching program that focused on intensive literacy and numeracy, and opportunities to excel, particularly through sport, circus and dance.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Successful partnerships evolved from work that was being done by the school in close collaboration with other agencies. These partnerships generally developed from informal networks which, through the help of The Smith Family as a brokering agent, have now become formalised agreements ensuring efficiency and targeted outcomes. Linking with the community is integral to Millner Primary School. In the case of ERICUS, it has partnered with many

community organisations to address student needs and improve student outcomes.

Save the Children is an international children's organisation. They work closely with Millner Primary School through their School Attendance Program and Family Support Program. These programs ensure that Town Camp students attend school regularly and that, through capacity building, families maximise educational opportunities. Save the Children employ local women as Cultural Guidance Officers to work with the families and liaise with the school, building family engagement and connecting the school and community. The organisation assists with waking students up and supervising bus pickups and drop offs, and they assist families to be able to support their children at school and facilitate parent attendance at school events, such as Family Days, special assemblies and celebrations, by providing transport and catering.

Danila Dilba Aboriginal Health Service partners with Millner Primary School in order to reach their target clientele and address health needs of the students at school. Health screenings and a preventative health education program targeting students and their families makes a significant impact on students' readiness to learn.

The Children's Development Team provides children's therapy services for families with children who have disabilities or learning delays. Their partnership with Millner focuses on assessments and then providing in-class training for staff on how best to cater for these student needs. This enables practical and sustainable support for students.

The Australian Football League's Northern Territory officers have formed relationships with Town Camp families through school links and now work in the camp, on the school oval and in the classroom to promote school culture through AFL. Families cite football as a key enticement for their children to attend school.

Corrugated Iron Youth Arts is Northern Territory's premier youth arts organisation and supports young people through mentoring options, skills development and training, and offers real opportunities for artistic performance. Through their Circus skills program at the school, student sensory motor skills have improved. Students are able to take on mentoring roles within the school by teaching circus skills to other students and they experience a sense of achievement by undertaking public performances.

Each partner organisation contributes skills and expertise to achieve goals. The overall direction of the partnerships is agreed at quarterly meetings organised by The Smith Family.

THE BENEFIT

Participation in the *ERICUS* program has led to improved school attendance, engagement, wellbeing and achievement through partnerships that offer holistic support for Indigenous children and their families.

The success of *ERICUS* lies in the collaboration occurring between organisations with shared values, where the needs of children are driving the agenda. The initial research indicated that a multi-faceted approach was crucial and that success could only be achieved through committed partnerships. As a result of these partnerships, the students now see themselves as learners, are making significant progress in academic learning and developing citizenship skills that facilitate positive futures. With the integration of *ERICUS* students into the mainstream, the partners have become an integral part of the whole school.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

learning opportunities, health and wellbeing, engagement

TARGET GROUP:

Indigenous students

“*Millner is an inspiring environment when teaching students from a range of communities and with such a wide range of needs.*”

Coordinator, AFL
Northern Territory

“*I feel good coming to this school – seeing my daughter come here and learning. She has learnt a lot. She's not [experiencing] shame here anymore. She's straight forward about everything.*”

Parent of an *ERICUS* student

LEARNING LIFE SKILLS AT BREAKFAST

Mornington Park Primary School and Jacobs and Lowe-Bennett's Real Estate

The school–community partnership was initiated between Mornington Park Primary School and a local real estate agent, Jacobs and Lowe-Bennett's Real Estate, with the aim of improving learning outcomes for students through the provision of healthy eating and wellbeing programs. All students have access to a free breakfast three mornings a week and lessons in life skills.

THE SCHOOL

Mornington Park Primary School is a small, friendly, welcoming community school of 148 students. The school is situated in a low socioeconomic urban area south of Melbourne and many families face challenging circumstances. The school is a Prep to Grade 6 government school and offers two educational streams. The Steiner stream caters for around half of the students. The school works in partnership with local agencies and is highly respected for its commitment to the wellbeing and engagement of all students.

THE NEED

Despite the warm and welcoming school environment, there was a high rate of absenteeism and lateness to school, and some students were exhibiting behavioural, social, mental health and general wellbeing issues.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Jacobs and Lowe-Bennett's Real Estate (JLB) is the largest rental management business in the area, along with experienced sales and marketing teams in residential, rural and commercial property. JLB has provided volunteer staff for the school's breakfast program for over three years, and provides seven hours of staff volunteer time each week for the school's reading program. This network is of great value to the school as they have access to the entire JLB staff of 60 people, who have a variety of skills to offer. Within that group, the school has access to people with fundraising, cooking, sporting and handyman skills. Students have benefited from JLB's discreet sponsorship of swimming programs, camps, excursions and food hampers. JLB's sponsorship of Boot Camp and dance lessons for graduation is also a boost to student wellbeing and engagement. As well as providing time and



money, JLB provide positive role models and mentors for the children.

The partnership was formed in 2008 with the purpose of improving learning outcomes for students through the provision of healthy eating and wellbeing programs. The school needed volunteers to enable the *Breakfast Club* to continue and, with JLB's support, it grew from two to three days per week. The school had a high rate of absenteeism and encouraging children to come to breakfast was one way of getting them to attend school. The partner's regular support at *Breakfast Club* and provision of fruit ensures that the students have a nutritious and positive start to their day.

The partnership was further enhanced when, having already built relationships with many of the students, the JLB staff joined the students in the classrooms for reading. JLB has also donated books to the library and to individual children. Many children who are reluctant readers, or who have no one at home to hear them read, are willing to read to the JLB volunteers.

The third tier of the partnership is the *Life Skills Kitchen Program*, which was developed to further the students' knowledge of healthy cooking and eating, improve their ability to make good food choices and to enhance their social skills. The *Life Skills Program*, enhanced by the participation of JLB volunteers, teaches simple cooking, food handling and budgeting skills to students from Prep to Grade 6.

THE BENEFIT

The partnership has been directly responsible for improved outcomes for the students. Rates of attendance have improved and children are better able to concentrate in class. *Breakfast Club* gives the students an opportunity to interact with other students in a safe, sociable environment and gives them access to a variety of suitable role models and mentors. This is especially relevant to the boys who often lack positive male role models at home.

Benefits of the partnership have been measured in several areas. Reading levels are closely monitored, students are regularly assessed and volunteers provide feedback regarding individual students. Student absence data is also monitored and there is evidence to suggest that attendance is higher on those days when breakfast is offered and that an increasing number of students are accessing the *Breakfast Club*.

The Managing Director at JLB has said that the partnership is a wonderful experience for his staff. It has encouraged them to look beyond themselves and their own needs, and embrace the ethos of 'giving a mate a hand up'.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

health and wellbeing, engagement

TARGET GROUP:

primary school students

“I have been amazed, not only by the level of support from our community partners, JLB, but by the opportunities to expand our network and develop new relationships within our community.”

Heather Christie
Mornington Park Primary School





CREATING A POSITIVE EDUCATION

Sunshine Harvester Primary School and Ardoch Youth Foundation

The partnership between Sunshine Harvester Primary School and Ardoch Youth Foundation has developed a coordinated project delivering explicit teaching of social, emotional and resilience skills to all school community members, using evidence-based methods from Positive Psychology.

THE SCHOOL

Located in Melbourne's inner western suburbs, Sunshine Harvester Primary School is a government school with a student population of 445 students from Years 3 to 6. Forty-five nations are represented and around 70 per cent of students have English as an Alternative Language. Many students are recently arrived refugees, some of whom have been highly traumatised. The school was formed in late 2009 after a merger between Braybrook, Sunvale and Sunshine East Primary Schools; one of its greatest strengths is its cultural diversity and highly cohesive and inclusive school community. Students are taught that differences in ethnicity and cultural backgrounds are non-issues compared to having strong social and communication skills, and upholding values such as tolerance and empathy. This is reflected in the positive and optimistic atmosphere in the school.

THE NEED

The school's challenge is to prepare students to negotiate the difficult and often harsh world that awaits them in Melbourne's west and help them to live happy, successful and connected lives. Often one of the biggest hurdles students face when learning a new task is their fear of failing or of looking silly in front of their peers and teachers. This often leads to them not trying and they miss out on valuable learning opportunities.

There was evidence to show that student engagement was significantly below state average and student morale, sense of safety and connectedness were particularly poor. The school also registered below average scores for parental engagement, school attendance, and emotional wellbeing. Literacy and numeracy data indicated that students had low academic outcomes.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Ardoch Youth Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that works nationally to make education a reality for children and young people who may not have ready access to formal education. Since 1988, Ardoch has linked schools, organisations and communities, generating resources to support and facilitate projects that enhance educational outcomes. Ardoch has provided this partnership with important human resources and their expertise in recruiting, training and managing community-minded volunteers has been instrumental to Sunshine Harvester's success.

Ardoch's long history and commitment to education ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the school's Positive Education initiative. The partners drew on the empirical literature in Positive Psychology and Positive Education to create a program designed to teach students life skills, such as emotional regulation, communication and assertiveness, goal-setting, using strengths, and optimistic thinking.

Ardoch's expertise lies in its ability to source and manage willing and capable volunteers to work at no cost in schools. The volunteers placed into Sunshine Harvester have contributed to many educational programs including music, drama and reading. Ardoch recruited and placed a volunteer with expertise in Positive Psychology and Positive Education into the school, enabling teachers to create the Positive Education program.

Prior to this project, Ardoch enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the school and this continues in a richer and broader form today. The Positive Education program, as a result of the partnership, is now fully integrated into the school curriculum and is adopted by every student, with a fully-committed teacher managing the program at each year level. The implementation has been overseen by members of the Wellbeing Professional Learning Team, attended by teachers in all areas of the school.

THE BENEFIT

Research has shown that building positive relationships is a strong predictor of learning outcomes and the teachers have timetabled one-on-one sessions with their students in order to build these relationships. Student wellbeing was measured before, during and after the program and the Junior School, Prep and Years 1 and 2, traditionally a difficult age group to reach, are now all receiving Positive Education lessons and showing improvement in all areas.

The school has seen a decrease in absentee rates as a direct result of students' exposure to the Positive Education Program. The number of student misbehaviour incidents has dropped significantly and teachers report that all students allocated to small group work are more engaged.

The benefits have been: reduced anxiety and depression, and psychological and social problems; greater community connectedness; improved personal relationships; and enhanced academic outcomes. Embedding Positive Education in the school is an ongoing process, but with the support of Ardoch volunteers, this partnership will ensure the school is able to continue to deliver improved outcomes for students.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

wellbeing, learning opportunities

TARGET GROUP:

disengaged primary school students



HEALTH EDUCATION FOR ALL

Timboon P-12 School and Timboon and District Healthcare Service

Timboon P-12 School's partnership with Timboon and District Healthcare Service is designed to promote and support the health and wellbeing of young people in regional Victoria and improve educational outcomes through jointly facilitated programs, processes and services.

THE SCHOOL

Located in a rural area of south-west Victoria, Timboon P-12 School has a current enrolment of 501 students, with 311 at primary level and 190 at secondary level. The primary and secondary campuses are connected by a covered walkway and the bell times allow for cross-level teaching. The school is organised into three sub-schools: Prep to Year 4, Year 5 to Year 8, and Year 9 to Year 12. The majority of the students at the school are from farming families and more than 80 per cent of students travel on the extensive bus network from the surrounding districts to school each day. Because the bus travels over a vast distance to get to the school, students can spend up to two hours travelling.

THE NEED

The school did not have access to a school nurse and student health was suffering because of the difficulty in accessing health services in a rural area. The need to address poor health and wellbeing at the school and in the wider community became an important issue.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Timboon and District Healthcare Service provide services within the southern half of the Corangamite Shire and the south-eastern section of the Moyne Shire. The catchment area extends from Cobden in the north to the Great Ocean Road coastline, encompassing the tourist icon of the Twelve Apostles. Healthcare Service is an integrated multi-purpose health service that provides acute residential and community aged-care and primary care services. The health promotion team, working with the school, is made up of health practitioners, an educator and welfare workers.

Timboon P-12 School developed a partnership with the District Healthcare Services in order to promote and support the health and wellbeing of young people in Years 4 to 12, through jointly facilitated programs, processes and services. The Healthcare Service is located across the road from the school grounds and the Community Health Nurse works with the school to develop a successful program and to provide health information to the students.

A Youth Worker from Healthcare Service works with the school on existing programs with the aim of reducing negative health outcomes and risk taking behaviours among students. The Youth Worker also supports the school community in addressing contemporary health and social issues facing young people and their families, and provides one-on-one counselling and crisis management. Working together the school, the Community Health Nurse and the Youth Worker are strong advocates for young people within the community and as a result, a bulk billing Youth Access Service at the medical clinic was established.

Healthcare Service works with year level coordinators and the school Welfare Committee to adapt to the needs of the students. The partners meet regularly to review the partnership and plan for the implementation of new programs. The health service is also involved in the ongoing delivery of health promotion programs and health services to students to assist them in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to take responsibility for their own health and make informed decisions.

Some of the programs being delivered by Healthcare Service in collaboration with the school include drug education and anti-smoking programs, Farm Safety, respectful relationships and body image programs. There are staff and student health checks available.

THE BENEFIT

Students have developed confidence, motivation, social skills and school connectedness through their participation in the health and safety programs and have begun to take on leadership roles within the community. More students are willing to take on the roles of Peer Support Leaders within the school and become Rural Youth Ambassadors or student representatives on the Corangamite Shire's Youth Council.

A Youth Centre has now been established within the new Community Services Building. Students have had the unique opportunity to shape the Youth Centre to suit their needs, from the initial planning on how the Centre will look to service delivery. The new facilities also allow students off-campus excursions for health programs, which increase their engagement and participation levels in an out-of-school setting.

Students have benefited from the increased access to health services and support, and the opportunity to work with community organisations to gain greater knowledge about personal safety and wellbeing. Healthcare Service data has shown an increase in young people accessing the youth and preventative health services since the partnership was established. Students have shown that their knowledge and understanding of their own health issues has improved and there has been an increase in student decision-making and a reduction in classroom misbehaviour. All of which have long term implications on learning outcomes.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

health and wellbeing

TARGET GROUP:

rural secondary students

“Rural communities need to be resourceful, resilient and understand the services, skills and talents of neighbouring organisations. Our partnership with the health centre is an excellent example of a successful community partnership.”

Rosalie Moorfield
Principal, Timboon P-12 School



LIFE AS A CLASSROOM

Zillmere State School and Jabiru Community Youth and Children's Services

This partnership is a collaboration between a Queensland primary school and a local community group and encourages a 'life as a classroom' attitude to learning for children in Grades 4 to 7. The partners have worked together to create a learning Hub, including the introduction of physical activities, nutrition lessons and culturally appropriate learning, to re-engage students and promote health and wellbeing.

THE SCHOOL

Zillmere State School has a student population of 100 and is situated in the northern suburbs of Brisbane. It has a proud history of providing a supportive and caring school environment with exceptional educational services. It is a multicultural school catering for the individual needs of each student whether academic, personal or cultural. Almost one-third of the student population identify as Indigenous and there is a high percentage of refugee students, for whom English is their second language, along with students with disabilities.

THE NEED

The school is located in an economically disadvantaged area, which tends to limit student, family and community expectations and aspirations. NAPLAN results showed that literacy and numeracy standards were low in Years 5 and 7 and there was a concern about school attendance and students disengaging once they reached high school.

THE PARTNERSHIP

In an environment of limited resources, the school and the community have built a strong partnership that provides excellent educational opportunities for the students and enables access to a higher standard of learning.

Jabiru is a not-for-profit organisation with several projects currently running including one at Zillmere. The Jabiru Community Youth and Children's Services team works under the REspec (relationships, safe places engaging communities) framework. The team provides early intervention and prevention, individual support and community capacity building programs and

“I liked painting the mural and drawing pictures and making my own design. I also liked working with all the other children, it was great fun!”

Jessica
Year 3

services for children and young people in their families and communities in Brisbane.

Having been part of the school community for seven years, Jabiru realises that there is a specific and somewhat alarming trend that fuels disengagement and hampers educational opportunity among students. The partnership between Zillmere and Jabiru is a genuine collaboration looking to promote the idea that *Life is a Classroom* to children in Grades 4 to 7.

Physical activities and nutritional education courses are run after school to complement the existing curriculum and provide culturally appropriate learning, while creating a safe and productive alternative for students rather than have them roaming the streets after the school bell rings. Other activities include pre-prep playgroups, family literacy groups and school and community resilience initiatives, which have met the needs identified in the Australian Early Development Index for the community.

THE BENEFIT

The Hub has resulted in improved social, emotional, intellectual and physical development and connection for the early childhood students. The school has reported an improvement in school attendance since the partnership began, mainly as a result of inviting children and families into the school community before their official enrolment.

Parents and carers have reported that as a result of the activities implemented by the partnership they now feel more confident in speaking to their children's teachers, happier to come inside the school gates and feel better equipped to support their children in completing homework tasks. Stakeholders have pooled together resources doubling the variety of educational and extracurricular resources that the children now have access to. As a result of the partnership

the school has a more positive profile in the community and is seen as caring and nurturing, not only with the students but with their families as well.

Since the partnership began, parent and carer engagement with the school has significantly increased. The Jabiru worker spends time with families to ensure they feel comfortable in and around the classrooms. Jabiru has engaged with the parents, who are now very familiar with what is offered and see that the partnership is having a positive effect on learning outcomes for students. The number of students attending after school care has increased, which has led to a stronger affiliation between the school and Jabiru.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

health and wellbeing

TARGET GROUP:

primary school students

“I liked doing the mural and how everyone in the school was involved and able to draw what they liked. I also hope everyone in the community sees all the great things we do at our school.”

Ursula
Year 7 student

“It was so much fun creating our song, Dream Out Loud, and practising the different verses. It made me dream of all the things I want to do in the future.”

Willson
Year 5 student



BROADENING VOCATIONAL OPTIONS AND SKILLS FOR STUDENTS

Many schools are forming partnerships to enhance vocational offerings and training opportunities for their students while some are developing courses to meet skills shortages in particular areas. In regional and remote areas, some business and industry groups are developing strong links with schools to ensure that students have real options for employment and the chance to acquire specific skills required by local industries. Through these partnerships, businesses and industry groups are sharing their knowledge and expertise with schools and offering students apprenticeships and traineeships, industry and career mentoring, work experience, hands-on activities and skills-specific training. These partnerships are especially important in special schools where work experiences and career pathways have traditionally been limited.



RECYCLING AND HOSPITALITY – CANS TO COFFEE «
Aspley Special School

SERVING THE COMMUNITY «
Berendale School

SCHOOL AND INDUSTRY COMING TOGETHER «
Claremont College

ADDRESSING A SKILLS SHORTAGE «
Dalby State High School

REAL SUPPORT FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY «
Dubbo College Senior Campus

TRANSITIONING TO FURTHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT «
Flinders Island District High School

AN ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY «
Gin Gin State High School

KEEPING YOUTH OFF THE STREETS «
Key College

DEVELOPING AGRICULTURE IN A SCHOOL «
Murgon State High School

MORE THAN A COMMUNITY GARDEN «
Northern Support School, St Georges

RURAL YOUTH CATTLE ENRICHMENT PARTNERSHIP «
Tumut High School

THE TRADEBLOCK CAFÉ «
Victorian College for the Deaf



RECYCLING AND HOSPITALITY – CANS TO COFFEE

Aspley Special School and various community and volunteer groups

Aspley Special School has forged strong partnerships with a number of business, community and volunteer groups to support its recycling and hospitality projects: the Kingfisher Recycling Centre, the world's largest school-based recycling centre, and the school's café, the Frothee Coffee Shoppee. The school is noted for its innovative Cans to Coffee initiative, which has provided students with access to ongoing vocational training in the recycling and hospitality industries, on the school campus.

THE SCHOOL

Aspley Special School in Queensland is a leader in the provision of school-based vocational skills training for students with disabilities from a range of government and non-government schools located in the northern suburbs of Brisbane. The school caters for over 90 students with intellectual impairment, aged between 12 and 18 years of age. Forty-five per cent of students at the school have an additional disability (autism, physical, vision and hearing impairments) with 17 per cent having multiple impairments. The students require the highest level of learning support and extensive adjustments to the school curriculum to enable access to learning opportunities.

THE NEED

Being a special school for students with disabilities, Aspley recognised the need to improve the level of achievement for students by providing access to meaningful post-school

outcomes through school-based skills training. Traditionally for special schools, there are barriers to accessing skills training for students with a disability, and many employers do not have the facilities or the staff to accommodate these students. Work experiences are not easily accessible as there are limited numbers of work placements available, transport can be a problem, and there are financial barriers because of the extra costs involved and the level of supervision required for the students. Providing these opportunities on-site enables full participation by all students and provides them with the opportunity to develop important life skills in a safe and supportive environment.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Aspley Special School has partnered with community volunteers, many of whom are retirees or adults with a disability, and with Brisbane City Council, Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland and other local businesses,

including Di Bella, Oz Grown, Visy, Amcor and Trans Pacific.

The recycling program originally began in 1983 with the support of volunteers from the community. As a result of the initiative, the school's recycling centre has grown to the point that it is now open twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year, and processes over 700 tonnes of recyclables and generates over \$50 000 in revenue annually. Members of the public drop off their recyclables at the recycling centre at all hours and the community volunteers work with staff and students to process the recyclables at a number of workstations, including can-crushing, bottle sorting and crushing, cardboard folding and stacking, stamp removal, glass bottle sorting for re-sale and e-waste. The school purchased a dual cab ute so that staff and students could pick up recyclables that cannot easily be dropped off at the centre. This has enabled the school to expand its business in computer and television recycling (e-waste). In excess of 1400 tonnes of recyclable materials has been processed at the school in the past three years, which generates an income for the school.

Aspley Special School has also been awarded local, state and national business and environmental awards, including the Queensland Showcase Award for Senior Schooling and the National Banksia Environmental Award for Schools.

The Frothee Coffee Shoppee is open to the public every Friday and caters for between 80 and 120 customers. Students undertaking work experience in the café learn about hospitality, food, nutrition and cooking. This aspect of the partnership has provided access to different skills training for students, including preparing and serving beverages and meals for paying customers at the coffee shop, which also generates an income for the school. Local businesses donate equipment and produce, including coffee, fruit and vegetables, milk and drygoods. This generosity enables school funds to be directed to providing high level teacher aide support. The coffee shop is well supported by the community, and guest chefs share their expertise with students through cooking demonstrations and lending a hand at fundraising functions. Businesses

also provide work experience in the hospitality area for targeted students. More than half of the school's students have shown competence in key hospitality skills that can be directly transferred to work and supported work environments. A mobile coffee van is about to be launched, which will assist students in making the transition from the highly supportive environment of the on-campus shop to a regular work environment.

THE BENEFIT

All of Aspley's students have participated in skills training programs during their transition education and more than 200 students with a disability from other schools have accessed these training programs at the school. Students have acquired a range of skills in the fields of recycling and hospitality and they are exposed to a work environment with quality control measures, health and safety standards and the need to demonstrate a strong work ethic. A number of students have completed hospitality-related TAFE certificates or traineeships on graduating from school. There has been a high degree of parent satisfaction with the training provided through the school's partnerships and there is excellent customer satisfaction with the dining experience at the coffee shop.

Despite the growth in the programs being implemented with the partners and the financial benefits to the school, the core focus remains on student skill acquisition. Students are exposed to a range of skills that are subsequently transferred to work, supported work and real-life environments. The programs that have been developed in partnership with local businesses and community groups are also available to students with a disability from mainstream high schools in the area. Opening these to other schools means that not only are the students exposed to quality learning, but also to the staff and volunteers that support them.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:
school-based skills training

TARGET GROUP:
students with physical or intellectual special needs



SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Berendale School and Elanora Aged Care Facility

The partnership is between a special school and a local aged-care facility to connect the students with their community and to provide real-life workplace experiences. Year 10, 11 and 12 students have established a café in the lobby of the aged-care facility that operates two days a week and is frequented by the facility residents and the public.

THE SCHOOL

Berendale School is a small coeducational secondary special school in suburban Victoria, which caters for 130 students with a mild to moderate intellectual disability. Junior programs focus on literacy, numeracy and the development of social skills and independence, while senior programs emphasise preparation for life after school. The school offers a range of Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs to provide hands-on learning in real-life environments for Berendale's senior students.

THE NEED

Young people with a disability want a successful career, but are often excluded from the work force, lack work experience and have fewer opportunities to further their educational qualifications. Berendale School recognised the need to improve students' post-school options by

developing their employability skills and creating a smooth transition from school to work.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Berendale School identified a way for students to increase their work skills in the hospitality industry and gain accredited qualifications as part of their VCAL and VET programs by forming partnerships outside the school. One of these is Elanora Aged Care Facility, which provides accommodation for 31 low care and 98 high care residents, including a nursing home, a hostel and retirement living. Elanora maintains a strong focus on providing an active and rewarding lifestyle for its residents, along with individual support and companionship.

The school approached Elanora's administration with a partnership proposal after identifying an opportunity to make use of the unoccupied café in the lobby of the aged-care facility. Elanora wanted to re-open the café and the school needed somewhere in the community to extend and

improve the training of hospitality students. Elanora saw the re-opening of the café as an opportunity for its residents to be presented with a more stimulating environment and to be able to interact with the students through their engagement in a community activity.

A commercial kitchen was established at the school, and the partnership with Elanora enabled the expansion of the school's hospitality program. The industry training that takes place in the professional kitchen environment on-site helps students improve their work-ready skills and allows them to transfer these skills to other work locations. The *Serving the Community* program caters for a diverse range of learning needs and abilities and is presented in a real-life environment using a hands-on approach, which is often the preferred learning style of students with an intellectual disability. The students have been given the opportunity to problem solve and make decisions in the safe and supportive environment of the training café.

The project manager, appointed by Berendale School and the Elanora administration, works closely with the partners to oversee the program, discusses shared resources and ensures that the program meets hospitality enterprise standards. During the initial phase of the project, consultation occurred between the partners and the Council Environmental Health Officer, and together they developed a food safety program so that the café could be operated as a registered food outlet.

Berendale School has developed a pathways program for each student that includes the Elanora café partnership and work experience. Students focus on making connections between the kitchen, the school canteen and the Elanora café, and they practise their skills in each of the different settings. Students learn to prepare food in the school's commercial kitchen, which is then transported safely to Elanora where they are trained to use café equipment to make and serve coffee, hot chocolate and cups of tea to residents and visitors.

THE BENEFIT

The partnership helps the students to achieve hospitality industry standard certification. These qualifications will be valued and respected by customers and potential employers as the students move into work experience, traineeships, apprenticeships, TAFE courses, and voluntary, supported or paid employment. Elanora Café has become another classroom and training area that offers VET hospitality instruction. This partnership provides an opportunity for members of the community to support students with physical or intellectual special needs to gain workplace experience and industry standard certification. It is also an excellent opportunity for people in the community to see, experience and assess the skills of students with disabilities.

The autonomous operation of the café by Berendale students gives them the opportunity to experience every aspect of small business and provides them with real, hands-on work experience. Elanora residents regularly enjoy the interaction with young people in the café and it is now an integral part of daily life at Elanora – an industry standard café where residents, staff and visitors can enjoy their coffee and cake. The students have the chance to interact with a diverse range of community members and they provide a valuable service to staff, residents, families and friends.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

connecting with community, vocational

TARGET GROUP:

students with physical or intellectual special needs



SCHOOL AND INDUSTRY COMING TOGETHER

Claremont College and the Housing Industry Association

The partnership between Claremont College and several construction industry organisations was developed in response to a critical skills shortage in the Tasmanian construction industry and the need to provide students with the relevant skills to enter the workforce following their secondary education.

THE SCHOOL

Claremont College, in Tasmania, is a senior secondary college for students in Years 11 and 12. The student body of 855 day and distance students is drawn from predominantly working class families. Established in 1990, the College overlooks the Derwent River, 15 km from Hobart, and provides a wide range of courses preparing students for university or Polytechnic studies, traineeships and employment, and has won national awards for quality teaching, educational excellence, initiative and innovation.

“The reason the whole thing was set up was to help kids decide what they wanted to do. We are now reaching a broader range of kids who are able to make informed decisions about their futures.”

Jim Ransom
Claremont College

THE NEED

Claremont College identified two needs that affected the learning outcomes of their students. In Tasmania, high schools cover Years 7 to 10 and students are required to enrol in senior secondary colleges at the end of Year 10. Claremont College identified the need to tackle the issue of the low numbers of students transitioning from high school into Year 11 and 12. Another issue was the skills shortage that was occurring in the construction industry and the reluctance of young people to enter the industry. This was exacerbated by the mixed quality of those who did enter, along with a considerable drop-out rate of construction apprentices.

THE PARTNERSHIP

A number of community partners were engaged to develop this program. The Housing Industry Association and its members contribute technical support, publicity and lobbying, and access to industry standard tools. The Tasmanian

Building and Construction Industry Training Board gives advice on future student training and employment opportunities in the industry, and provides money for operating expenses, such as vehicles and workshops, and for some of the staffing. Kemp and Denning, a Hobart hardware business, supplies timber and accessories and accepts completed projects as part of its commercial inventory. The Department of Education funds the remaining half of the coordinator's salary and operating expenses, and provides advice on policy matters, facility management, funding and staffing issues.

The partners have also formed an innovative partnership with a rehabilitation company which supplies construction clients who are recovering from injury and returning to work on light duties. These workers act as teachers' aides by assisting students with their practical work and advising teachers on the latest technical techniques.

In 2007, the partners established the *youthBUILD* project which operates daily out of a purpose-built facility at Claremont College. Forty-five students are involved over three days each week, so that in any one week, eighty students pass through the program.

Students undertake a comprehensive induction program covering topics such as occupational health and safety, hand and power tool operations, program rights and responsibilities and construction industry awareness. Students develop their employability skills and hone their practical skills by constructing real projects that form part of the commercial inventory of some Housing Industry Association members, as well as community projects for outside organisations. Through this program, students have the opportunity to experience work in the construction industry, while developing closer links with their Year 11 and 12 College. Three teachers help deliver the program and their responsibilities include student management and welfare, instructional delivery of the program, overseeing and maintaining safe work practices and the assessment of students' competence for VET certification.

THE BENEFIT

Year 10 students have developed closer links with Claremont College which has helped them to make a seamless transition from high school to the senior secondary school. Destination statistics from the 2008 cohort show that 77 per cent of *youthBUILD* students who completed the program had enrolled in the College in 2009, well above the state average.

youthBUILD students who completed the program found employment, reflecting the capacity of the program to develop Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry employability skills. Students are able to experience the construction industry before making decisions about their future training opportunities and employment choices, and they are better prepared for future VET in Schools programs, apprenticeships and traineeships. Work has begun on the construction of a new purpose-built *youthBUILD* facility, to be built by Housing Industry Association members and some of the students.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

vocational and industry training

TARGET GROUP:

senior secondary students

“*youthBUILD provides a practical insight into working in our sector and hopefully will encourage students to take up an apprenticeship or go onto college in a related field. Graduates of the youthBUILD program are highly regarded by industry.*”

Stuart Clues
Housing Industry Association



ADDRESSING A SKILLS SHORTAGE

Dalby State High School and the Manufacturers' Group

The partnership is between Dalby State High School in Queensland and 23 businesses in the manufacturing, engineering, resource and civil infrastructure sectors, and provides Year 11 and 12 students with real-life work experiences and industry mentoring. One of the aims of the partnership is to implement school-based apprenticeships to address the skill shortages within the community.

THE SCHOOL

Dalby State High School, a government secondary school with an enrolment of 850 students, is located 200 km west of Brisbane in a traditionally strong agricultural and manufacturing environment. As a result of the Queensland resources boom, the population of the town expanded and Dalby became a vital regional centre. The school has developed a Trade Training Facility as an innovative way of educating its students.

THE NEED

The town experienced enhanced employment opportunities presented by a resources boom and a subsequent skills shortage. The community was then faced with a lack of training facilities and entry points into this rapidly growing sector.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The school–community partnership was conceived, developed and implemented primarily as a long-term solution to meet the increasing skills shortage within local manufacturing firms. The Manufacturers' Group consists of businesses within the manufacturing, engineering, resource and civil infrastructure sectors. Most of these businesses provide education and training within their organisations, which enables students to link classroom lessons with real-life experiences. Businesses regularly host Year 11 and 12 students in workplaces and local industry has become reliant on the pool of young tradespeople that the partnership fosters.

The school recognised the need to simulate industry standards as closely as possible and the *Trade Futures* program, developed through the partnership, uses a whole-day delivery model

where students study one educational 'topic', such as Engineering, each day. The partners have been heavily involved in all aspects of the program, from the design of the Trade Training Centre to the formulation of the mentoring program via the Manufacturing Group and the Chamber of Commerce. Students are regularly monitored throughout their competency-based training, and mentoring relationships help the students achieve various competencies throughout their studies. They have achieved qualifications in OH&S and Workplace Communication.

Each partner hosts one or more students for a number of mentoring days, where the students get to work among tradesmen and women in real industry settings. The partners also contribute to the professional development of the school's teaching staff and, in some circumstances, financially support some of the learning programs. For example, one partnership project involved students and school staff working with the Dalby Council and local businesses to engineer and manufacture large signage for a parkland redevelopment.

THE BENEFIT

Student attendance levels at the school have risen since this program began. The partnerships, and the program that has been shaped by them, have provided an environment which allows young apprentices and trainees to excel. After participating in the program, a number of students have won prestigious awards from relevant industry bodies: Origin Apprentice of the Year, Construction Skills Queensland Trainee and School of the Year, and Manufacturing School of the Year.

The school has become a Recognised Training Organisation, delivering national Certificate II qualifications in Engineering and Manufacturing Technology, and fostering educational relationships by becoming co-providers for students to gain qualifications in Plant Process Operations, Computer Aided Drawing and Civil Construction.

The majority of students undertaking the program have begun school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, or started full-time employment in a trade. A further 10 per cent of students have received job offers. In 2011, 85 per cent of the participating students were offered school-based apprenticeships or traineeships with the business where they were engaged in training.

The school has recorded increased school-based traineeship and apprenticeship sign-up rates, increased school retention and attendance rates, and an increase in competency completion rates. The partnership's success continues and the 2012 'graduating with a credential' data has increased to 96 per cent, the highest ever at Dalby State High School. Further destination data indicates that 100 per cent of *Trade Futures* graduates have found employment within their chosen trades.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

vocational and industry training

TARGET GROUP:

senior secondary students





REAL SUPPORT FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Dubbo College Senior Campus and the Dubbo Business Partnership

Dubbo College and the Dubbo Business Partnership work in collaboration on the Get Real program. Businesses contribute resources, such as transport, referrals, mentoring, work experience and work placements, to enable students to fulfil their pledge with parents, community members, employers and staff that, by the age of 17, they will be in full-time education, training or employment.

THE SCHOOL

Dubbo College is a rural senior secondary school in New South Wales with an enrolment of over 960 students in Years 11 and 12. The College includes a trade school, trade college and trade training centre, and is part of a three-campus collegiate with a combined student cohort of 2000 enrolments. Students have access to an extensive curriculum, including all VET curriculum frameworks and TAFE-delivered VET courses. The College has had longstanding partnerships with local industry through its extensive VET program and careers initiatives.

THE NEED

Through research into enrolment, attendance, participation, retention and destinations, the College identified that a significant number of students were not completing Year 10, or were

moving from school to unemployment. Some students were dropping out of education upon turning 15, or during Year 11 or 12, and were not transitioning to further education or work. The school needed to establish strategies to improve the number of successful work placements to ensure completion of VET courses and successful Higher School Certificate completion.

THE PARTNERSHIP

A business committee was set up in the community in 2005 – Dubbo Business Partnership (DBP) – and now acts as an advisory body to ensure the students are assisted in obtaining skills and attitudes necessary to fully participate in the workforce when they complete their education. Fletcher International Exports is a founding member of the DBP. Other members are senior managers of local businesses: Frank Cross Tyres,

Newtown Providores, Daily Liberal, Bridgewater Signs, Dubbo City Council and Dubbo Chamber of Commerce. The group provides regular work experience, training and advice for students; promotes the program in the community; ensures resources are available to the school, including employment, work experience, work placement positions and workplace tours. The local businesses also provide access to experienced tradespeople and professionals who act as career coaches and mentors, and who are available to visit classrooms as guest speakers or participate in careers activities.

The *Get Real* program has been operating in partnership with local businesses since 2005 and has resulted in improved outcomes for all students, especially those identified early as being at risk. Initially, the *Will and a Way* program operated in the College for disengaged Aboriginal students, the *Get Real* program has expanded on the original initiative to include and benefit all students. Through the partnership, resources are provided to assist students to complete their education and move into further education and training or employment in the local region. DBP members work closely with the Careers Team at Dubbo College to meet the needs of students and provide opportunities for paid employment, school-based traineeships and apprenticeships, and work placement positions. The businesses participate in Career Expos and Tertiary Days aimed at providing information for students from Year 9 to 12.

Early in Year 10, students sign an education, training or employment pledge at a ceremony attended by parents, community and business representatives. The Pledge Board is mounted in the school hall as a reminder and students participate in programs throughout the year to encourage them to meet their commitment. The College and the DBP work together to provide a sustainable model to address the identified needs of students and funding sources are regularly sought to enhance existing programs.

THE BENEFIT

The partnership provides a holistic approach to solving problems with student engagement, attendance, retention and employability skills. The College has a large number of enrolments in VET courses both at school and at TAFE – 29 per cent of the student population complete a VET course. The College also recorded the highest number of Aboriginal students gaining the Higher School Certificate in 2012, with forty-one Aboriginal students achieving their HSC – 21.7 per cent of the College's cohort.

Employment of an Aboriginal mentor has assisted students to successfully complete work experience, and work placement and industry mentors give all students insight into career pathways and opportunities. The program has incorporated resources to ensure students are ready for their work experience with safety boots and equipment, uniforms and other industry specific items, and also transport if required. Students gain access to knowledge, skills, attitudes and pathways to enable them to complete their HSC.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

vocational and industry training, further education pathways

TARGET GROUP:

senior secondary students





TRANSITIONING TO FURTHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Flinders Island District High School, Newstead College and Flinders Council

The partnership is between an island school off the coast of Tasmania and Flinders Council, to support students from Grade 6 to Year 12 in transitioning to further education and employment. The program developed through the partnership focuses on building life skills, independence, confidence, awareness, and providing information and support.

THE SCHOOL

Flinders Island District High School is located on a remote island in Bass Strait, 180 km from Launceston. The school caters for a student population of 67, with classes starting at Kindergarten and culminating in Year 10. In 2012 there were only 12 students in the secondary school year levels at the school. Because of this small population, students benefit from a safe and supportive environment at the school that enables strong teacher–student relationships and rich connections to the wider community.

THE NEED

The partnership between Flinders Council and Flinders Island District High School originated from the need to support students in transitioning to further education and employment away from the island. When students finish Year 10 on Flinders Island and wish to continue their education they must move to the closest city, which means a move to mainland Tasmania or Victoria. There was growing concern that students who left the island community often struggled to succeed once they found themselves in a place without strong support networks.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Flinders Council serves this remote island’s 750 residents. Its aim is to provide leadership, services and support to contribute to the wellbeing and sustainability of the community and its environment. The Council employs a Community Development Officer who provides in-kind support, substantial financial assistance, links and access to youth and health service providers and many other physical resources.

“It makes our child feel supported with the council and school working together closely to provide good support. This definitely reflects on our child’s attitude and confidence in leaving the safe and secure environment provided at home and at school and in the community here on our island.”

Parent of a Year 10 student

Flinders Council has also provided expertise in areas that the school is lacking, such as youth programs, family support services, drug and alcohol education and many valuable networks.

Students undertake many activities delivered by the partnership that will provide them with the skills to live independently once they leave the island. The program incorporates a basic life skills class into the school's curriculum, which includes: road safety, financial literacy, budgeting, a Party Safe program, personal safety, job applications, mock interviews, and social skills. Students participate in other activities on the mainland to help with their transition such as an orientation trip to Launceston, a youth camp, sport and recreation, links to services on the mainland, public transport and regular drug and alcohol free events.

There is also a work experience exchange program with students from Newstead College on mainland Tasmania that provides interactions between mainland and island students.

Newstead College students act as mentors to the island students during their first term at the College to help them make the transition. The overall objective is to help the island students successfully transition to further education and training and to adapt to living away from home at a young age.

Flinders Council provides extra training opportunities for Flinders Island students such as barista training, Responsible Service of Alcohol certification and agricultural skills training. The Council also provides funding and in-kind support for various activities such as camps, after-school and holiday activities, off-island trips and access to new and different opportunities for students to build their confidence, independence and awareness.

THE BENEFIT

The Flinders Council and Flinders Island District High School felt that the program would be more successful if embedded in the curriculum and together they strengthened and broadened the partnership. The links that have been forged with Newstead College are invaluable and have further widened the students' support networks. The partnership has given the students the skills to succeed, increased their confidence and made them aware of services on the mainland that are not available on Flinders Island.

The partnership has also provided the island students with increased opportunities and has enabled them to develop relationships on the mainland, before they have to leave the island. This assists students in their personal and educational achievement and their overall wellbeing. Newstead College's expertise and support contributes to Flinders Island students' achievement in Years 11 and 12. By reducing anxiety, fear and stress about leaving home at the end of Year 10, the partnership has contributed to the wellbeing of all students involved in the transition program.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

transition to senior school, further education pathways

TARGET GROUP:

rural senior secondary students

“This partnership is especially important for our children, bearing in mind their isolated situation. The Transition program goes a long way in bridging this gap in an area that would be otherwise seriously lacking. Not all families have the financial ability to provide their children with the experiences necessary to prepare them for this major transition in their lives.”

Parent of a Year 10 student



AN ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY

Gin Gin State High School and Kolan Landcare Group

Gin Gin State High School's partnership addresses the issues of disengagement and low retention and aims to improve vocational outcomes for the students involved. Students in Years 9 and 10, mainly boys, were initially involved in Landcare projects. Now the Gin Gin Alternative Pathway Program (GGAP) has been expanded to include agricultural projects in partnership with many other local businesses, community groups and industry partners.

THE SCHOOL

Gin Gin State High School is situated in regional Queensland 50 km north-west of Bundaberg. The school has an enrolment of 450 students, the majority of whom travel from small outlying rural centres to get to school and the area has limited community services and employment opportunities. Despite these disadvantages, the school has achieved a high level of academic success in terms of senior results, impressive vocational certificate attainment and was recognised in 2011 for middle schooling initiatives through the State Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools.

THE NEED

A detailed analysis of school behaviour records, school attendance and academic results showed that boys in Years 9 and 10 were often disengaged, had low literacy and numeracy levels and were socially challenged. The school identified the need to increase engagement with learning, increase attendance, reduce poor behaviour, and improve academic outcomes.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Partnering with community groups was recognised as a means of achieving the desired outcomes for students and giving the school a more positive profile in the community. The school also recognised the benefits that would be gained by providing employment opportunities and career pathways for this group of students.

Kolan Landcare Group was established 20 years ago and relies on community volunteers. Over this time these volunteers have completed several major revegetation projects. Kolan Landcare

“I have enjoyed becoming part of a team. GGAP has helped to improve my focus on my learning and I am developing new skills.”

Year 10 GGAP student

and the other partners enthusiastically adopted the shared responsibility of imparting their knowledge and skills to the students. Students construct fencing, cattle yards, wash down facilities and have completed a major Reef Rescue Riparian project in Central Western Queensland. An informal program was developed and trialled in 2009, to cater for the needs of this diverse range of students and after much restructuring of the initial program the current *Gin Gin Alternative Pathway Program* came to fruition. GGAP now caters for a diverse range of student needs and learning and includes students with disabilities. The partners create training opportunities where students can apply theoretical classroom learning around employability and vocational skills, in a practical, real-life setting.

The GGAP program introduces students to environmental management concepts, initially through Landcare projects, before moving to agricultural projects, such as animal husbandry and crop production. The partners are briefed on course requirements in general work areas and specific skill areas, and access to course material is shared between the school and the partners. A support staff position has been created to monitor student progress in terms of work experience, traineeship opportunities and vocational skill acquisition.

Program staff work with selected students and industry partners and together they develop training plans that match community needs to students' skills and requirements, and ensure that student safety is maintained and outcomes are achieved. The partners attend school programs and share particular aspects of industry knowledge and practices. Small groups of

students attend nearby farms to gain experience in various areas, one of which is cattle handling and grooming at the Red Hill Dexter Stud.

THE BENEFIT

GGAP has contributed directly to increased student attendance, decreased behavioural incidents and at level or above target academic performance. Additionally, increased vocational accreditation and traineeship participation has been achieved.

The school has extended the GGAP program to flow into senior years through the Trade and Agriculture for Seniors' initiative. Students are involved in local Agforce meetings and the local Agricultural show, they have become members of volunteer organisations, and they maintain high visibility in the community through volunteer projects.

The GGAP students follow the same curriculum as students in mainstream literacy and numeracy and in VET Certificate courses and they have progressed to traineeships and employment as a result of the various partnership initiatives. Evidence suggests that Gin Gin State High School students who experience success in partner training opportunities are generally more positive about school in terms of attendance and engagement, show improved self-esteem, and improved resilience.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

vocational and industry training

TARGET GROUP:

rural secondary students





KEEPING YOUTH OFF THE STREETS

Key College and Eden Gardens

A partnership between Key College and Eden Gardens provides community service, work experience and traineeship opportunities for disadvantaged youth. The partnership realises Eden's mission to improve the quality of life for these students in the wider community through horticulture and education.

THE SCHOOL

Key College is one of four accredited high schools operated by *Youth Off The Streets*. The College is located in Redfern, Sydney, and provides educational opportunities for young people who are disadvantaged and often homeless. The school operates in an alternative learning environment and caters for 52 students on four different sites in Redfern, Merrylands, Macquarie Fields and Southern Highlands, and ages range from 14 to 19 years. Key College specialises in offering young people who have become disengaged from education a chance to achieve the New South Wales School Certificate, Higher School Certificate or the skills they require to undertake further education, apprenticeships or employment. *Youth Off The Streets* operates multi-faceted, highly supported, values-based, integrated programs, which engage young people in meaningful and transferable learning. Programs are individually tailored to develop the skills required to return to mainstream education or to access further training or employment.

THE NEED

Many students at the College live in abusive situations, struggle with drug or alcohol problems and have ongoing accommodation difficulties. They need additional youth support services to help them with housing, health, counselling and legal issues. *Youth Off The Streets* recognises the multiple learning difficulties faced by these students and the difficulties they experience in developing strategies to deal with the challenges of everyday life.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Eden Gardens is a local business that has a genuine commitment to social and environmental causes with a mission to improve the quality of life in the wider community through horticulture and education. They support local charities, with the assistance of community volunteers, by holding four fundraising events each year.

Key College formed a partnership with Eden Gardens in 2004 as part of the

Youth Off The Streets initiative to provide young people with the opportunity to gain job skills through work experience. The students at the College were faced with limited future prospects due to their inability to access training and employment opportunities. The partnership with Eden Gardens has enabled the school to provide students with a transitional work experience in a supportive environment.

The Eden Gardens and Key College partnership prepares students for their post-school responsibilities, including punctuality, appropriate behaviour and personal appearance. The students are given the opportunity to learn and model appropriate attitudes to work, education and social behaviour in an external setting.

Students participate in work experience or traineeships in one of seven areas of the Eden Garden business and are assigned an Eden staff member as a supervisor-mentor during the six months of the program. The participating students achieve a certificate of completion at the end of the six months. They are encouraged to pursue further study and are assisted in finding ongoing employment.

Eden offers the opportunity to engage in work experience in six different areas: retail, display gardens, dispatch, marketing, hospitality and administration. The students are assigned a mentor in each particular area so they are directly learning skills from the experts.

Key College has a dedicated support worker who works with the young people and helps with the challenges faced by students. The support worker liaises with Eden Gardens so they are aware of the current situation of the students, as this can

impact dramatically on their attendance and performance at work. Both the school and Eden Gardens believe in the potential of the students and ensure that they are given the opportunities they need to develop skills and experience in the workplace, and that they are treated with care and understanding.

THE BENEFIT

The students who participate in the *Youth Off The Streets* partnership with Eden Gardens acquire valuable employability skills. After their participation, many of the students have achieved stable employment or apprenticeships. The partnership is beneficial to both students and staff, and Eden Gardens staff value the opportunity to make a significant difference to the lives of the young people through mentoring and role modelling.

The students have gained industry knowledge and have developed self-esteem and confidence through their interactions in the work place. They have developed customer service skills, learnt to be part of a working team and have developed practical skills in specific areas including horticulture, retail, marketing, administration and hospitality. As a result of being involved in the partnership, the students are supported to attain levels of competence for further training, are given the tools that will help them find employment and have improved their chances of achieving better post-school outcomes.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

connecting with community, vocational

TARGET GROUP:

disengaged students in an alternative setting





DEVELOPING AGRICULTURE IN A SCHOOL

Murgon State High School and Kewpie Stockfeeds

Murgon State High School has partnered with a local stockfeed business to develop and enhance the school's Agriculture Department. This support allows students from Year 8 to Year 12 to participate in a well-resourced study program that gives them experience in cattle management, breeding, showing and finishing.

THE SCHOOL

Murgon State High School is a coeducational government school of 360 students, located in regional Queensland. More than 50 per cent of the students travel to school by bus from the surrounding farming districts. There is a complex mix of student backgrounds and they are mainly from families involved in farming or local businesses; some are from the township and others are from more remote areas. There is a mix of Indigenous students and other nationalities, and the school promotes cross-cultural experiences, understanding, tolerance and friendship. Many families have been affected by drought and, more recently, severe flooding.

THE NEED

The Agriculture Department in the school had very few resources, with only one cow and three steers. This meant that students had little

exposure to hands-on experiences with cattle, which was not suitable for simulating real-life situations they may encounter when working on actual farms. The school recognised that essential changes to the curriculum were required to improve learning, such as developing and upgrading the resources, equipment and stock in the Agriculture Department and improving the quality of the study of agriculture.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Since 1998, Murgon State High School has been in partnership with Kewpie Stockfeeds. The purpose originally was to provide specially formulated feed rations for the school's cattle. Kewpie Stockfeeds in Kingaroy is one of the major local suppliers of stockfeed to primary producers in the South Burnett region and has been in operation since 1968. While the partnership commenced with a simple donation

of cattle feed, it has evolved into a collaborative and strategic partnership with mutual benefits. Students at the school, in Years 8 to 12, now participate in activities designed to provide them with experience in cattle management, breeding, showing and finishing.

The school's herd has grown from one cow and three steers twenty years ago to a herd of thirty breeders: twenty commercial cattle and ten stud cattle. The school now boasts one of the largest agricultural departments in the region.

The partnership with Kewpie Stockfeeds means that students who have very little exposure to hands-on experiences with cattle now participate in real-life situations on a working farm. One of the aims of this partnership is to ensure students have access to quality resources and new technology within the Agriculture Department, so they can achieve better results. The program undertaken by the partners involves growing the cattle herd, improving facilities at the school farm and encouraging students to get involved in cattle showing. Students are gaining skills in junior judging and handling, confidence building, being a good competitor, public speaking and good sportsmanship. They learn about the animal husbandry requirements of large animals, cattle nutrition and cattle breeding.

Kewpie Stockfeeds makes regular visits to the school to assess the cattle, assists in the selection and purchase of stock for the program, works with students, supports the school's attendance at shows and competitions, and sponsors interstate judges. Staff and students at the school are involved in running local cattle competitions, with expertise in showing and judging being provided by industry alongside the students. The grain for the fodder solutions machine is used to supplement the feed for the animals entered in local competitions. The money the school has saved in purchasing feed has allowed funds to be reinvested in more stock and improved equipment.

THE BENEFIT

Students have access to the Wide Bay Hoof and Hook competition that follows the cycle of beef production. As part of these competitions students get to investigate all sectors of the production cycle including the research and development components of the industry. The expectation of involvement in the competitions has been beneficial and enrolments in agricultural studies are growing. Students' progress is celebrated by local media and internally at school assemblies. The competitions are advertised in newsletters and in the local print media.

Since 1998, almost 2000 students have benefited from this partnership. The growth of the school's herd has helped the Agriculture Department expand and the school now has a reputation for producing well-bred cattle and high-achieving students. The school has also been able to establish a comprehensive cattle breeding program and is a Registered Training Organisation offering Year 11 and 12 students the opportunity to complete a Certificate I and II in Rural Operations.

As well as increased engagement and retention at senior levels, students involved in the partnership have gained self-confidence and self-esteem. The whole school has benefited from the ongoing success of Murgon State High School's partnership with Kewpie Stockfeeds.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

learning opportunities, vocational

TARGET GROUP:

rural secondary students

MORE THAN A COMMUNITY GARDEN

Northern Support School, St Georges and Ravenswood Community Garden and Inspirations Garden Centre

Northern Support School partnered with Ravenswood Community Garden and other community partners to implement a project called Off-Shoots. The partnership's aim is to give students with a disability the opportunity to develop a set of work related understandings, experiences and skills to support their transition into community work placements as they exit school.

THE SCHOOL

Northern Support School, St Georges is the only special school in northern Tasmania. It is a government school with an enrolment of 66 students from Kindergarten to Year 12, all of whom have an intellectual disability. Educational programs are delivered in socially appropriate class groups and, along with standard curriculum, there is a focus on communication, life and social skills. Teachers and specialist staff are committed to supporting the personal growth and development of each student.

THE NEED

There is an identified lack of transition and work opportunities for students with a disability in Northern Tasmania. Traditional work experience models do not work for this group of young people, due to their high level of need, the challenges they have in adjusting to changes in routines and relationships, and the difficulty of sourcing appropriate work placements.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The Support School's partners in the *Off-Shoots* program are all strongly committed to improving opportunities for work-skill development,

training and experience for young people with disabilities. Ravenswood Community Garden, which covers 2.4 hectares and is located on the school grounds, provides a safe, supportive and inclusive environment that promotes community connection. Inspirations Garden Centre is a wholly Tasmanian owned, family-run small business in Exeter on the West Tamar. They specialise in green stock, including roses, ornamentals, and rare and unusual plants, and have their own vegetable seed company. Natural Resource Management (NRM North) is responsible for the planning, delivery and implementation of integrated natural resource management in Northern Tasmania.

The *Off-Shoots* partnership addresses the acute need for opportunities for young people with a significant disability and attempts to bridge the gap between education, training and employment. The school already had an established link with the local community garden, so the stakeholders determined that building upon this partnership, by developing a community-based enterprise with links to industry and inviting other key contributors to get involved, would be a great opportunity to support effective work experiences and employment transition for these students.

The partners' shared expertise is an essential ingredient in the development of effective *Off-Shoots* activities. The industry-based partners provide ongoing technical expertise to develop the enterprise to industry standard. Greater community involvement is also evident, which increases student exposure to opportunities post-school and also allows a greater number of community members to be able to see students in a positive way and observe their capacity to achieve.

The *Off-Shoots* project operates as an authentic workplace for up to 55 young people with disabilities, three days each week. The project provides training and work experience in a supportive environment, preparing the students for potential employment in the nursery industry. Students are involved in opportunities to raise saplings from seed and growing stock for sale to the Garden Centre, for retail sale, and to NRM North for land rehabilitation. Students gain an understanding of work and training, while developing both their employability and their hands-on practical skills. They undertake real nursery work and engage with customers who come in to buy their stock, creating opportunities for greater community involvement for students. Teachers are presented with opportunities for students to be involved further in community-based activities and the partners make a collaborative decision about the suitability of student participation.

The Support School and the Ravenswood Community Garden have worked together to realise the *Off-Shoots* program for students, sharing resources as required and determining how the project operates within the broader school context. A specifically assigned teacher manages the teaching and learning program, behaviour management, and assessing and reporting of students' performance. Staff at the school and Ravenswood work together

to develop appropriate activities to meet the individual needs of each student and student achievement is measured against the Nationally Accredited Certificate 1 in Agrifoods. Ravenswood also liaises with Inspirations Garden Centre and NRM North regarding what can be realistically achieved.

THE BENEFIT

Off-Shoots is now both a school-based learning program and a quality work experience program. Students engage in consistent, ongoing, authentic work experience in a familiar, supportive setting, working with appropriately skilled adults who have an understanding of their needs and disability. *Off-Shoots* has ensured that this relationship has been extended through the other partners, NRM North and Inspirations Garden Centre, and has now become an integral part of the transition from school to work. Because Ravenswood Garden is located in the school grounds all students have access to the garden as part of their educational programs and the general school curriculum.

School staff and parents have noted significant improvement in the students' levels of self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing. The majority of students look forward to, enjoy and experience success in the *Off-Shoots* program. One of the greatest outcomes of the partnership is that some students now see themselves as potential employees whose work is valued in the wider community. Parents are enthusiastic in their praise for the positive outlook engendered by the partnership.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

vocational and industry training

TARGET GROUP:

students with physical or intellectual special needs





RURAL YOUTH CATTLE ENRICHMENT PARTNERSHIP

Tumut High School, Rising Sun Rural and Weemaru Murray Grey Stud

The Rural Youth Cattle Enrichment program was initiated in 1995 as a consequence of a partnership between Tumut High School and two local cattle studs. The partnership engaged local cattle producers, societies, parents, students, industry representatives and local businesses with the aim to impart to students industry knowledge, skills and experiences in the cattle industry and to address the current skills shortage in the agriculture sector.

THE SCHOOL

Tumut High School is a comprehensive secondary school in the rural town of Tumut on the south-west slopes of New South Wales and caters for 560 students from Years 7 to 12. Students have access to a well-rounded education that values and supports the intellectual, creative, physical, social and emotional development of each student by providing them with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values for productive and rewarding lives. Tumut High School provides many opportunities for students to develop a range of skills through a variety of quality educational activities, including sport, culture, leadership, outdoor education, academic excursions, public speaking and gifted and talented activities.

THE NEED

The area surrounding Tumut has experienced a decline in skilled rural labour and professional agricultural expertise, and the school was aware of the absence of relevant rural pathways for local students. The school identified the need to provide opportunities for students to develop skills and an interest in careers in the agribusiness sector.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The school wanted to open up possibilities for students for part-time rural work, to improve and develop the practical skills and knowledge of students, and to address fundamental socioeconomic deficiencies in the rural sector.

Partnerships with Rising Sun Rural and Weemaru Murray Grey Stud led to the creation of the *Rural Youth Cattle Enrichment (RYCE)* program.

The school recognised that there was a significant gap in education and in the level of agricultural skills of the students at the school and there was a lack of employment opportunities for children who wanted to stay in a rural community. The development of *RYCE* provided an opportunity for participants to experience rural life in a positive agricultural industry setting. *RYCE*, with the support and input of its partners, addresses the current shortage of industry skills within the agriculture sector.

The principal of Rising Sun Rural has worked in the cattle industry for 25 years and specialises in cattle selection, marketing, breeding, conditioning, extensive showing and judging at national levels. Weemaru Murray Grey Stud is an operational cattle stud in the local area and provides resources in the form of stock and equipment to the program, as well as their vast knowledge of the cattle industry.

Both partners are involved at all stages of the program and share resources and expertise and provide transport, stock, feed, land and business advice. Students participate in local and metropolitan shows and are thoroughly engaged in rural work such as cattle management, hay carting, collection and storage of stock feed, preparation of stock for shows and the 'breaking in' of cattle. There is a weekly cattle management program and the students are given the chance to be involved in public speaking.

Since 1995, the success of the program has been demonstrated by the creation of 2476 competitive participant positions through local and national show and sales competitions. Participants have competed in cattle parading, cattle junior judging, national sales and breed society workshops.

THE BENEFIT

The success of the partnership is evident in the many individual achievements and awards won by the school. Success can also be measured by the increasing number of students who have been inspired and those who have gained the confidence to speak publicly to their peers and when cattle judging. The program has provided opportunities to enrich the lives of isolated and disadvantaged students and has motivated students who have been previously disengaged. The school's profile has been lifted in local and wider communities and the media attention focused on the school and cattle program has created awareness of the importance of the agriculture curriculum at the school.

Over the many years that the partnership has been operating, teachers have witnessed an improvement in not just educational outcomes, but personal, emotional and social ones as well. There has been an improvement in students' self-confidence through working as a team, taking on individual tasks and working at the Royal Show under the guidance of cattle stud managers. The educational outcomes can be measured by the improved performance in a range of subject areas through the demonstration of experience, knowledge and understanding.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

vocational and industry training

TARGET GROUP:

rural secondary students

“It is important to provide the next generation of educationalists with the rural skills, knowledge and opportunities to maintain Australia's reputation as a country that produces clean, healthy, high quality food to world class standards. The *RYCE* Program, with the support of its community partners, provides the tools for today's rural youth to continue the primary production of food in an efficient, technologically advanced, environmentally aware, sustainable agricultural system.”

Tony Butler

RYCE Coordinator, Tumut High School



THE TRADEBLOCK CAFÉ

The Victorian College for the Deaf and the Victorian Deaf Community (Vicdeaf)

Tradeblock Café is a vehicle for delivering the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning that was established by the Victorian College for the Deaf in partnership with The Deaf Community, who are represented by Vicdeaf. The café is an authentic workplace open to the public where students build their communication skills and understanding of the workplace in a supportive context.

THE SCHOOL

The Victorian College for the Deaf (VCD) in Melbourne is a bilingual Prep to Year 12 school that attracts students from all over Victoria and interstate. Australian Sign Language is the predominant means of communication with English being used for reading, writing and spelling. The school caters for 67 deaf students and follows a program based on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. There are VCE, VET and VCAL options available for students in senior years.

“This opportunity has added another dimension to the experience and skill development for our students. Being able to cater for our partner organisations has strengthened the relationship and we proudly continue to find ways to expand our program and reach further heights.”

Amanda Joyce
Café Program Manager

THE NEED

Most students at the College suffer from low literacy levels causing a significant gap between educational outcomes and future employment or learning pathways. The College saw a need to extend its existing VCAL program to provide students with a greater chance of developing employability skills. The project was also expected to raise the profile of deaf people in the local community and break down perceived barriers around disability.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The College sought out external partners who could assist with this goal, and formed partnerships with several groups. The Victorian Deaf Community, represented by Vicdeaf, is a not-for-profit organisation providing resources, referrals, advice and support for deaf adults in Victoria. The partners established a training café called the *Tradeblock Café* to be operated by the College students. It provides a setting for members of the deaf community to meet, connect and become role models for the next generation.

Such a project gives the students a chance to develop skills in an authentic workplace setting.

The College also partners with the Newsboys Foundation, which funds community organisations to provide programs and activities for disadvantaged young people. The manager of MadCap Café, which employs, trains and assists people with mental illness to find work, has become a mentor to the College, and Training First, a hospitality organisation, provides industry advice and mentoring.

The café project was established as a pilot in 2008. Now students run the *Tradeblock Café* and are responsible for preparing food, making coffee, serving customers and cleaning up. The program develops communication, leadership, teamwork and problem solving skills. Students who participate in the program gain positive experiences and valuable life skills. A number of students have gained employment as a direct result of the hospitality experience provided in the café. Students are required to represent the College when serving food and are often called upon to talk about the café program. Local businesses have expressed interest in having the students host or cater events. The café is a busy and popular meeting place within the deaf community.

The deaf community offers ongoing custom in both formal and informal ways to keep the café going. Deaf organisations such as The Victorian Deaf Education Institute, The Victorian Deaf Education Network and the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association have actively promoted the café and made use of the catering services offered by the students. Mixing with people in the deaf sector on a professional level strengthens students' communication and interpersonal skill development. *Tradeblock Café* provides an essential service for the community and the College has found a legitimate way to engage the community within the school grounds on a daily basis.

THE BENEFIT

By participating in the program, students have acquired a stronger sense of independence. They have been given the opportunity to interact with the wider community and foster relationships built on better understanding. The café has also provided a neutral location whereby people within the deaf sector can meet

for both professional and casual interactions. The partnership has demonstrated that a hands-on approach to learning at a senior level can enhance student engagement and improve literacy and communication skills.

The community invites students from the College to community events to engage them in voluntary and sometimes paid work. Students are able to showcase their skills in the wider community and meet other deaf adults outside the school environment. At festivals and events students are able to see other deaf people working in their roles in the community. The increased community exposure has enabled deaf individuals to engage students in activities such as the arts, sport and hospitality.

The College has been able to work with other deaf organisations to establish an adult transition to work program in addition to the school project. Opening the College to the community through this partnership has had a positive impact on everyone involved. For the students, the opportunity to meet people in the adult deaf services industry is invaluable in assisting them to understand the range of support services available when they leave school.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

vocational and industry training

TARGET GROUP:

students with physical or intellectual special needs

“Your catering is clearly amazing. Thank you and job well done! Food has been epic, thanks a million.”

Cara Due
ASLIA Vic committee member

IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

Many school–community partnerships are providing flexible and creative approaches to learning to ensure that students who have become disengaged are motivated to learn and given the opportunity to see the value of education. By enhancing the learning opportunities available to students, these partnerships are improving learning outcomes. They include a wide variety of educational programs such as gardening, cooking, health, financial literacy, art and drama. Some partnerships are developing programs in specific curriculum areas such as marine studies, science, sustainable practices and agriculture, and others are providing opportunities for students to participate in creative endeavours such as circus skills, performance, theatre and musical productions.





THE LIVING MURRAY PROJECT «
Burrumbuttock Public School

AN ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNEY «
Eltham North Primary School

COMMUNITY TUTORS «
Hunter River High School

RAISING ASPIRATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT IN SCIENCE «
John Monash Science School

FLEXIBLE LEARNING «
Lynwood Senior High School

PERFORMING ARTS FOR STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY «
Mount Ommaney Special School

MARINE STUDIES FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS «
Star of the Sea School – Henley Beach

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT «
Waikerie Primary School



THE LIVING MURRAY PROJECT

Burrumbuttock Public School and The Murray Darling Association

Burrumbuttock Public School has been actively involved in education for sustainability and has a strong partnership with the Murray Darling Association. Together, the school and the Association have developed innovative and creative resources to support teaching and learning about the Murray-Darling Basin.

THE SCHOOL

Burrumbuttock Public School is a small primary school of only 28 students and is situated in a rural village 30 km from Albury in New South Wales (NSW). The school has been a leader in environmental education for the last 15 years and is recognised across Australia for its work in education about sustainability. In 2000, the school was awarded the prestigious NSW and Australian Landcare Education Award for promoting environmental awareness to the wider community.

“*Writing about squirrel gliders was fun, we learnt a lot about publishing a book.*”

Jack Watson
Year 6 student,
Burrumbuttock Public School


THE NEED

The school identified a lack of educational resources available about the Murray River. Teachers wanted to educate students about the ecological importance of the river and teach them the skills to monitor and care for the river and catchment.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The Murray Darling Association is made up of 100 local government councils from the Murray-Darling Basin in eastern Australia and South Australia. The Association exists to ensure the local government plays a key role in managing the Basin's natural resources and to provide advice and expertise in securing knowledgeable people who can support the school's programs.

The initial idea behind the *Living Murray Project* came from a workshop conducted by the Association in 2007 and involved students from



six small NSW and Victorian primary schools. As part of the project, the schools worked with the Association to create accessible resources to educate students about the importance of monitoring and improving the river and catchment. The collaboration between the school and the Association led to the creation of a NSW primary curriculum unit, the publication of a poster about Murray River issues, a student workbook with accompanying DVD and a comic-style pamphlet on river health. The partnership has also led to the development of a website enabling a wider target audience to access the resources online.

Burrumbuttock Public School students and teachers used their expertise, knowledge and passion for river health to develop a project that ensured environmental awareness became a key component of the NSW primary curriculum. The partnership's educational materials for the *Living Murray Project* now provide support to all schools across the Murray-Darling Basin. The resources are also being used in hundreds of other schools across Australia and the website is regularly accessed for information.

The Association and the school have also collaborated on a handbook, which guides teachers on natural resource issues when they are teaching the Living River unit, one of the components of the *Living Murray Project*. A DVD on threatened species in the Murray-Darling Basin is being planned and the school also intends to develop an Aboriginal studies program to show how Aboriginal people have managed the local landscape over the past forty thousand years, and how these practices are consistent with existing natural resource management activities.

“The creative Catchment Kids program supported by the Murray Darling Association has enabled students from my class to explore a whole new world outside of the classroom.”

Christine Pech

Classroom teacher, Burrumbuttock Public School

THE BENEFIT

The partnership provides opportunities for students to act as guides and to share their knowledge and this has contributed to enhanced self-esteem and confidence. Media interest in the project has given the students many opportunities to improve their communication skills by engaging in public speaking events and giving presentations.

The schools in the target area across the Murray-Darling Basin have incorporated the resources and educational tools into their curriculum. The environmental education resources are also being studied by a number of schools in Europe and the information on the website is regularly accessed by universities, local governments, industry, researchers and community groups.

The Murray Darling Association employees have become regular and welcome visitors to the school and a university nearby will review and monitor the partnership's programs as part of a research project. This research will look at how the school's programs and partnerships have resulted in better sustainability outcomes and increased student learning.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

sustainability and environmental education

TARGET GROUP:

rural primary students



AN ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNEY

Eltham North Primary School and Edendale Farm

The partnership between Eltham North Primary School and Edendale Farm, a Centre for Environmental Education, has been operating for ten years. It was established to provide opportunities for the primary school students to learn about environmental sustainability and participate in programs and initiatives based on environmental issues related to Water, Waste, Energy and Biodiversity.

THE SCHOOL

Eltham North Primary School is a Victorian government coeducational primary school with a student population of 536, located in the northern suburbs of Melbourne in close proximity to parks, reserves and the Diamond Creek. Significant increases in school population and the new Building Education Revolution project have impacted significantly on the amount of school playground space available to students.

THE NEED

In 2003, as a direct response to the school's large ecological footprint and local environmental issues, an educational opportunity for shared learning with Edendale was taken up. Edendale's environmental educational program was in its development stage and had limited access to schools and the local community. Eltham North Primary School is only a short walk away and Edendale is a local landmark with an interactive learning environment easily accessible by all the school community.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The Environmental Education Centre opened in 2001 on a seven-hectare farm in Eltham and offers a range of programs on many topics, such as biodiversity, waste minimisation, energy and water conservation and sustainable land management. Edendale provides staff expertise, a meeting point for the Teachers' Environmental Network, trial projects like the Edible Eltham Project, indigenous plant stock for the school's gardens, and teaching and learning resources for environmental education. Other organisations that contribute to this partnership are: Sustainability Victoria, the Victorian Association of Environmental Education, Yarra Valley Water and CERES. These organisations are instrumental in the ongoing development and delivery of the *Sustainable Schools Program* providing valuable resources, knowledge and networking opportunities.

Eltham North Primary School demonstrates strong environmental leadership, mentoring other schools via their website, networks, school

visits and active involvement in local community projects. The partnership has enabled projects, such as local planting, Carbon Sinks and community art projects, which have empowered and motivated others. Through initiatives, like the Kids Teaching Kids program, students have become active voices in the community.

Edendale's educational facilities provide practical activities that integrate with the school's units of work and resource smart objectives for students and teachers. There is an indigenous plant nursery at the Farm and experts share their knowledge and practical advice to enhance learning and improve biodiversity at the school. Edendale and council staff facilitate a dynamic Teachers Environment Network for local teachers, providers and council staff involved in sustainability education. They also provide conference facilities for leadership and Kids Teaching Kids conferences. The partnership has a variety of well planned, highly interactive and engaging learning experiences.

THE BENEFIT

The school is embracing environmental challenges by mobilising students to use their unique environment to develop lifelong learning about sustainability and conservation. The school is one of the first three schools in Victoria to be accredited as a five star Resource Smart leadership school and was the first school to achieve gold level status in the *Yarra Valley Water Live It Learn It Program*.

The partnership has achieved accreditations, awards and positive media coverage. The Eltham North Primary School community and Edendale Farm continue to develop environmentally sound practices, learning opportunities and experiences

that are implemented at school, at home and in the wider community. Together the partners seek opportunities to further reduce their ecological footprint and provide a valuable resource for others on the sustainable journey.

Through Eltham North's involvement with Edendale, environmental education has become an integral part of the school community members' lives and empowers them to take action in local projects. Because of the students involvement in the partnership, their levels of engagement have increased and many students have become environmental leaders. The students are able to share their learning from partnership activities with the broader community and in local and statewide events. The partnership also provides a mentoring role and is a positive, working model of an effective school-community partnership.

Future plans for the partnership and school community are: a frog bog at the school, a Community Landscaping Day, school lunchtime programs and a vertical gardens project. The partnership is also setting up a 'Friends of . . .' Group, to address biodiversity along the Diamond Creek at Eltham North, and establishing Environmental Arts in the schoolyard with sculptures, murals and signage. The level of community involvement is increasing and the achievements in the *Sustainable Schools Program* and the education program at Edendale are major outcomes of this partnership.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

sustainability and environmental education

TARGET GROUP:

primary school students

“Winning a NAB Schools First Award means our school and its partners can continue their journey and take action to create new, exciting projects that will benefit the local environment and all who share it.”

Jo Harwood
Eltham North Primary School





COMMUNITY TUTORS

*Hunter River High School and The Smith Family and
The Community Tutors Group*

This partnership is between a semi-rural high school, The Smith Family and a group of community volunteers with the purpose of providing one-on-one assistance to students to improve their literacy and numeracy outcomes. Each day, 85 per cent of students travel to and from the school by bus and teachers found it impractical to provide one-on-one assistance after school hours.

The partnership enables students to have access to volunteer tutors from the community who come into the school on a regular basis.

THE SCHOOL

Hunter River High School, with an enrolment of approximately 700 students, is a comprehensive, coeducational secondary school situated on the Hunter River at Heatherbrae, just south of Raymond Terrace, New South Wales. In May 2005 the school officially changed its name of fifty years from Raymond Terrace High School to Hunter River High School. This move was made to reflect the geographically widespread and diverse communities the school serves.

THE NEED

Hunter River High School administers a comprehensive individual reading test to all incoming Year 7 students at the beginning of each year and data indicated that in excess of 30 per cent of the students entering the school scored below a reading age of ten years. Increasing numbers of children were being diagnosed with learning, behavioural and emotional disorders, which were impacting on their ability to learn.

In turn, poor reading skills were contributing to early school leaving, disruptive and antisocial behaviour and poor performance across almost all areas of the curriculum.

THE PARTNERSHIP

At the end of 2006, the school received an enquiry from a community member who wanted to volunteer to tutor students with learning difficulties. When it was pointed out that a program for tutors had not been implemented because there was an inadequate supply of tutors to meet the needs of the school, the prospective volunteer began a recruiting drive. The campaign produced twelve volunteers and the Community Volunteer Tutors' Group was established.

The Smith Family, a not-for-profit organisation committed to helping disadvantaged students by providing better access to education, has also assisted the school by contributing dictionaries, calculators, stationery, as well as fiction and reference books. A number of students have

benefited from Smith Family scholarships and the school has been able to access a no-cost Smith Family camp.

The *Community Volunteer Tutoring* partnership contributes to the wellbeing of the students by providing tutors to spend quality one-on-one time with students, some of whom do not have sufficient resources at home to complete homework and assessment tasks. Students have their social, emotional and educational needs met when working with a volunteer tutor who assists the students with literacy and numeracy tasks and can help them to access technology by using computers and educational programs.

All tutors participate in an initial training session prior to working with students and during the weekly sessions the tutors provide feedback on student progress and on the program operation. At the end of each year, feedback is gathered from tutors, students and staff to identify the partnership's areas of strength.

The Learning and Support Team provide the initial program outline for each student, but constantly monitor and vary it according to student needs and requests. Tutor feedback assists with this process. Classroom teachers are contacted by the Learning and Support teacher to clarify any material that is not familiar to the tutors. Teachers refer students to the tutor program to assist when they have a particular need, such as when a student needs help to complete an assessment task or catch up on missed work because of extended absences.

The partnership between the school and community volunteer tutors provides access to learning programs and assistance in a non-threatening environment. It has directly contributed to improved learning outcomes for students, improved attendance, the development of word attack, comprehension and text recognition skills and improved intergenerational relationships between the students and tutors.

THE BENEFIT

The benefits of the program are significant. More students are now staying at the school to undertake Years 11 and 12. Teachers view the *Community Volunteer Tutoring Program* as integral to the school and feel that students would not achieve course outcomes without the help of The Smith Family and the community volunteer tutors.

Student surveys have provided evidence of the positive effect of the program for students. They are more confident about school as a whole, their self-esteem has grown because of their interaction with the tutors and their achievement levels have improved.

The students are more engaged in class and the overwhelming observation is that students are performing better in many subjects because of the help they are getting from the tutors. Student attendance records show that students being tutored are coming to school more often, especially on tutoring days. The tutors report that they enjoy their time at the school and return each week believing that they are making a difference in the students' lives.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

learning opportunities

TARGET GROUP:

disengaged secondary students

“This is a partnership to be proud of and for which Hunter River High School is very grateful.”

Graham Eather
Principal, Hunter River High School





RAISING ASPIRATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT IN SCIENCE

John Monash Science School and Monash University

This partnership is between a senior secondary science school and Monash University. It involves specialist academics and teachers collaborating to create a unique, dynamic science curriculum that utilises innovative teaching approaches to engage and excite students.

THE SCHOOL

The John Monash Science School, Victoria's first specialist senior secondary school focused on Science, Mathematics and emerging technologies, began in 2010 with 191 Year 10 students. It currently has 640 students in Years 10, 11 and 12, selected from over 120 different schools throughout Victoria and is located on the Clayton Campus of Monash University. There have been several noteworthy achievements in the school's short life that demonstrate the strength and success of its partnership with Monash University.

THE NEED

During the last 20 years, Australia has experienced a significant decline in students choosing to study science subjects in secondary schools and as a consequence, the numbers of students enrolled in and graduating from tertiary science courses have also continued to fall. Research has shown that many students regard junior high school science as irrelevant, uninteresting and difficult, leaving them with little motivation for enrolling in senior science subjects. There is a greater need to make science

curricula more relevant and teaching approaches more engaging through the adoption of inquiry-based and problem-based learning.

THE PARTNERSHIP

A major component of the partnership is to reinvigorate secondary science teaching and help redress the decline in the numbers of students undertaking science-related courses in higher education. The school sought to achieve this by developing a highly innovative science curriculum that introduces and explores cutting edge research that is underway in many of the emerging sciences. Monash University made a substantial commitment to the establishment and success of this specialist school on its grounds and is a partner in their mission to encourage students to study science subjects.

The school and university formed a partnership to create the program *Raising Aspiration and Engagement in Science*. The Science School uses its unique affiliation with Monash University to inform and strengthen student learning and develop new approaches to teacher professional practice, particularly in science, which may then be used in other Victorian secondary schools.

The school uses a range of Monash facilities and has access to research and technical staff from the Faculties of Science, Education, Arts, Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Engineering, Pharmacy and Computer Science. The university's academics collaborate with the teachers to share specialist research knowledge to help inform and enrich the school curriculum. The students have regular incursions into the university's research facilities, attend presentations by visiting world experts and have classroom and laboratory support.

In partnership with the university, the school has developed several unique new science studies such as Nanotechnology, Marine Biology, Astrophysics, Bioinformatics and Pharmaceutical Science. Two of the key platforms of the partnership are now being met: the creation of dynamic new science studies that have the potential to re-energise science learning in secondary schools, and new pedagogies that more effectively engage students. The university's academics and researchers collaborate with school staff to develop relevant lesson plans and courses, build capacity and establish strong networks.

The partnership has expanded to include two rural regions in Victoria – the Loddon-Mallee and Grampians Regions – and an exchange program that sees twenty Year 10 students from remote schools coming to the science school for five weeks each year. The rural students engage with contemporary emerging science, have several incursions into the university, attend the Monash Open Day and complete a project for the annual school Science Fair, which is attended by their parents, teachers, family and friends.

“The partnership has been extremely beneficial to both the John Monash Science School and to the University, and is testament to what can be achieved when educational partners work to the longer term benefit of students and their future studies and careers.”

Dr Gerry Rayner

Monash coordinator of academic liaison at the John Monash Science School

THE BENEFIT

This partnership has achieved its goal of getting students interested in pursuing science and the partnership activities have become part of the school's curriculum. The program offered through the partnership with Monash University is a life-changing one for the participants. The rural students' exchange program has lifted the profile of science in remote Victorian schools and given many young people who are passionate about science an opportunity they would otherwise never have been able to access, and it is an enriching opportunity for the John Monash Science School students as well.

For many of these students the opportunity to undertake immersion experiences in science within the university not only opens their eyes to the many careers in science they have access to, but inspires in them the belief that they can gain a place in these courses if they commit themselves to working consistently at school. The partnership between the university and the John Monash Science School has lit a genuine spark in many young minds in both urban and regional schools and is having a significant influence on raising the profile of science in Victorian schools across all sectors.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

learning opportunities

TARGET GROUP:

senior secondary students





FLEXIBLE LEARNING

Lynwood Senior High School and HotRock

This partnership between Lynwood Senior High School and HotRock, a charitable organisation, provides vocational, practical and relevant learning experiences through sustainable, student-centred ventures to stimulate achievement.

THE SCHOOL

Lynwood Senior High School is a large, coeducational urban secondary school located in Perth, Western Australia, and caters for a culturally diverse demographic of 65 nationalities. It has an Intensive English Centre, which was established in 2011, with a capacity for 120 students annually. Because of this diversity and its low socioeconomic index, the school has developed a variety of academic programs to meet a wide range of student needs.

THE NEED

Legislation raising the school leaving age to 17 resulted in an increase in the senior school population and exacerbated issues of bad behaviour, poor attitude and low retention rates. Year 10 students had become disengaged and were at risk of failing to graduate from Year 12. This highlighted the need for a relevant and skill-based curriculum for 'at risk' students. The *LEAF (Lynwood Environmental Academic Flexible Learning)* program was initiated by the school to re-engage students who were disengaged from their education and students who were

struggling in mainstream classes due to learning or language difficulties.

THE PARTNERSHIP

HotRock, an independent registered charity organisation, assists West Australian secondary schools to deliver current sustainability education and believes in engaging students across all curriculum areas. Its mission is to expose as many school communities to cutting edge sustainability knowledge and provide the tools to create learning experiences which invoke respect for the community and the planet. The organisation has provided the school with expertise, professional advice, support and enthusiasm.

The purpose of the school–community partnership with HotRock is to provide opportunities for stimulating hands-on, relevant learning experiences to engage senior students. The partnership's organic kitchen garden is the venue for creative sustainability and the centre of experiential behavioural and attitudinal changes in students. This long-term garden project, *Flora Fauna and Fodder*, provides vocational, practical

and relevant learning experiences through student-centred ventures. The school's major unifying theme of sustainability is in place throughout all learning areas.

A sense of purpose and commitment to the project is growing in all students as a result of collaboration between the school and HotRock. The students are able to develop their leadership skills by using and adapting technology, problem-solving, and getting their hands dirty with the garden projects. The curriculum is connected to the development and maintenance of the organic kitchen garden.

Members of HotRock, the LEAF students and school staff work together to build and maintain the organic garden. The garden's produce is regularly sold in the staff room and the partners are planning a Farmers' Market to sell to the community. Maintaining the garden has become a whole school project in which everyone takes pride. Large panels showing Aboriginal Growing Seasons have been created by Aboriginal students, the community and the Art Department, and placed in the garden. Each Learning Area at the school has taken ownership in some way and uses the garden for varied learning or creative activities.

The partnership is helping to stimulate student learning across the curriculum. Fifty-five students from the upper and lower school are growing 4000 seedlings in the LEAF propagation shed and these will be planted in the western wheat belt of Western Australia.

THE BENEFIT

The aim of the partnership is to improve student outcomes, specifically for disengaged senior students, giving them academic success, useful

life skills and opportunities for graduation. For many students this meant that a change in behaviour and attitude was necessary and the success of the organic garden in changing behaviours and increasing self-esteem for disengaged students has been remarkable.

A further aim was to embed sustainability into the school culture and curriculum and HotRock has become an integral part of the school. The appreciation and absorption of HotRock philosophies has brought great benefits to the school.

Since the work on the organic garden commenced and the project has grown, student engagement has risen dramatically, leading to greater personal success for students. Part of this success is the growth of self-esteem and self-worth, and LEAF students have become more interested in completing school and graduating. The increase in overall LEAF student achievement and wellbeing has been significant. One previously disengaged student gained enough confidence from her improved academic results that she achieved the position of School Captain on the Student Council.

The partnership with HotRock has not only been instrumental in improving the academic performance of Year 11 and 12 students over the last four years, but has given students hands-on experiences in practical subjects and the ability to gain certificates and higher grades, resulting in a graduation rate of 100 per cent.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

gardening, wellbeing, learning opportunities

TARGET GROUP:

disadvantaged and disengaged students

“HotRock's focus and enthusiasm, their expertise and patience, their understanding and ability to encourage change in our points of view, their sense of humour and creativeness, their desire to get their hands dirty and “muck” in with the students, their sincerity, their amazing energy and their passion, have brought so much success for our students.”

Marg Parlevliet

Project Officer, Lynwood State High School



PERFORMING ARTS FOR STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

Mount Ommaney Special School and The Song Room

Mount Ommaney Special School in Queensland and The Song Room have partnered to engage students with disabilities in performing arts, including drama, storytelling and dramatic play. Students from Prep to Year 12 participate in weekly drama sessions that provide innovative opportunities for the students to be creative and connect with the world around them.

THE SCHOOL

Mount Ommaney Special School, based in the Brisbane Metropolitan area, was established in 1992 to provide educational programs specifically for students with severe and multiple physical and intellectual disabilities, many of whom have complex medical needs. The current enrolment is 56 students from Prep to Year 12. Most students are non-verbal with limited ability to communicate in other ways due to severe physical and intellectual impairments. The school develops Individual Education Plans for students that address specific needs, enabling them to engage and learn through assistive technology and specialist intervention.

THE NEED

The school's challenge was to provide all students with opportunities to engage in a range of learning activities that provide access to the Australian Curriculum. Teachers had observed that students showed more willingness and greater engagement during music sessions, which provided opportunities for communication, interaction and self-expression that were not observed in other programs. The school wanted

to improve student access to the proven benefits of an arts program designed to address complex needs. Another need was to develop staff skills, knowledge and confidence to be able to deliver arts-focused programs in the future.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The Song Room (TSR) is a national not-for-profit organisation that provides opportunities for enhanced learning and development for disadvantaged children through music and the arts. TSR's vision is that all Australian children should have the opportunity to participate in the arts to enhance their education, personal development and community involvement. TSR targets its programs to disadvantaged children who would otherwise miss out, including students with learning challenges in special schools. TSR works closely with the school and provides weekly Teaching Artist workshops, staff professional development, mentoring and access to a wealth of specialist and online resources. *A Moment in Time* was developed by TSR and Mount Ommaney to address the school's particular needs and provides a drama-focused intervention program.

The partnership between the school and TSR engages all students, including those with severe and multiple impairments, in the performing arts. Students from Prep to Year 12 participate in weekly drama sessions that provide innovative opportunities to connect with the world around them. Through planning meetings and email communication, the partners select appropriate units of work from the Australian curriculum and then investigate how drama can be used to increase student engagement.

The majority of students at the school are non-verbal and have limited physical movement. This presents a number of challenges in relation to devising appropriate drama activities and implementing effective evaluation for further refinement. TSR works with the school to design a Program Plan every semester, to meet the specific physical, intellectual and communication requirements of each group. Through this partnership, the school initially implemented a six month in-school drama workshop program, delivered by the TSR Teaching Artist, in consultation with school experts in education for students with complex special needs. This has been followed by an 18 month mentoring program, in which the Teaching Artist works closely with classroom teachers in planning and delivering their own drama sessions using TSR drama expertise and resources.

Mount Ommaney and The Song Room are also partnering with Soul Vision Films to film the journey of the partnership from the initial planning and consultation stage through to the final product of the school performance. Melbourne-based Song Room staff, including the Senior Program Coordinator, Fundraising and Communications Manager and Events and Communications Coordinator, are contributing their expertise to the 'Just Imagine' educational documentary project with advice on how to launch, market and distribute the film.

Drama classes are now embedded in the curriculum at the school and are an integral part of all students' Individual Education Plan goals.

THE BENEFIT

The benefits to TSR have been three-fold: significantly improving the organisation's capacity to deliver sustainable programs to Special Schools across Australia, improving the

skills of individual staff in delivering specialised programs, and improving evaluation and reporting processes for a specialised program. By instituting a sustainable drama program in every classroom, the students at Mount Ommaney are experiencing the joy of being able to express themselves through music, dance and drama.

Mount Ommaney Special School has progressed from a school without arts trained teachers in 2009 to a school where every teacher is enthusiastically planning and teaching drama activities. Regular program updates are communicated to the school community on the school's website and in the newsletter.

The school and TSR deliver professional development sessions at other schools and at national and international conferences. The school community also takes a great deal of pride in their school-produced film documentary, which demonstrates the impact that this successful partnership has had on the students and their lives beyond the classroom.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

learning opportunities, wellbeing

TARGET GROUP:

students with physical or intellectual special needs

“The Song Room partnership has created a buzz around the school. Teachers are rising to the challenge of creating their own series of drama lessons and students are swept up in a flurry of enthusiasm.”

Lynda Fincham
Teacher/Librarian,
Mount Ommaney Special School





MARINE STUDIES FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS

Star of the Sea School and City of Charles Sturt

The partnership between a Catholic primary school and the local council was formed to engage in collaborative work on a number of projects over the year with a view to improving student outcomes and engaging the community. Some of the joint projects include coastal environmental activities and extensive community education. Local volunteers also work with students in the school's Marine Discovery Centre.

THE SCHOOL

Star of the Sea School is a coeducational Catholic primary school in South Australia with an enrolment of 510 students. The school has been awarded a number of international, national and state awards for delivering world-class learning in specific fields and specialises in a Marine Studies program. The school, with community and local council support, has developed a Marine Discovery Centre on the school grounds where students at the school undertake weekly Marine Studies lessons. Students become Marine Leaders in Years 6 and 7 and share their knowledge with other classes in the school and with 7000 annual visitors to the Centre.

THE NEED

Because of its location in the urban, coastal area of Henley Beach near Adelaide, the school identified an opportunity to develop a Marine Studies program. The students' love of learning and their desire to be involved in their local coastal environment prompted the school to capitalise on the local coastal habitat and involve students in Marine Science.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The City of Charles Sturt is situated west of Adelaide and extends to the coast. The City has provided support and guidance to the school since the partnership was formed in 1995, when the very first City of Charles Sturt Environment Officer ran lessons at the school on coastal issues. This partnership has since been responsible for the implementation of many coastal environmental activities and is part of an extensive community education campaign. The partnership began as a means of enhancing the students' knowledge of their local environment and demonstrating the need to protect and preserve the coast. This has evolved into the *Marine Leaders* program where senior students at the school take on leadership roles to teach others.

The active involvement of the City in the school's Redevelopment Committee has enabled the Marine Discovery Centre volunteers to design thirty high-quality coastal education signs, and develop a virtual tour, downloadable maps and close-up images of these signs to be put on both partners' websites. Students participate in marine

activities such as monitoring their local coastal environment by performing water testing, taking photographs, recording information and changes and observing the habits of local wildlife.

The City volunteers coordinate revegetation activities in the sand dunes and other hands-on activities are developed by the school and the City of Charles Sturt. These are designed to encourage an appreciation for the local coastal environment. These include Sea Week displays and parades, creating a sand dune in the school yard, becoming involved with local Lifesaving Clubs, participating in Clean Up Australia Day, promotion of litter-free lunches, caring for a worm farm, energy auditing, implementing recycling systems and developing a school vegetable garden.

The partnership sought to use the marine environment and the interest it generates to change student attitudes, ultimately leading to an improved understanding of the environment. The aims of the partnership and the further development of the Marine Discovery Centre are to provide high-quality marine-based environmental education to primary school students in South Australia and give isolated students the same educational opportunities as their peers who live on the coast.

The Centre is open to other schools for whole day excursions and is booked out one year ahead. The Marine Leaders educate visiting students and teachers about marine life and there is a dedicated group of 43 volunteers from the community who are also actively engaged in these excursions and regularly provide their expertise, skills and time to ensure the smooth running of the Centre. The aim of the thematic educational programs for visiting primary school students is to encourage an appreciation and understanding of marine life with a view to promoting conservation and sustainable use.

Through the partnership, the students learn practical skills including dune-planting, recycling and litter management and many are now interested in future employment in the Marine Science area. An Eco-Warriors program has also been developed, which includes recycling projects, reducing power costs, creating a native garden area and reducing waste.

THE BENEFIT

The Marine Discovery Centre has won many awards and is particularly proud to have achieved second place in South Australia for the Premier's Most Innovative Big Picture Award. The Centre is widely regarded as 'Adelaide's best learning Centre for school excursions' (Adelaide Matters) and due to its wide supporter base and innovative projects, has a promising future.

Star of the Sea School and the City of Charles Sturt are constantly developing innovative hands-on learning ideas to keep students engaged and to cater for students of all abilities and backgrounds. The students at the school acquire life skills, including presentation, speaking and listening skills, through their participation in the programs run by the partnership. They have exhibited increased enthusiasm for learning and for the environment.

The *Marine Leaders* initiative has been responsible for improved engagement in all aspects of schooling. There has been an increase in students applying for school leadership positions, students are displaying greater confidence and self-esteem and their performance across a wide range of subjects has improved.

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

environmental education

TARGET GROUP:

primary school students

“The Star of the Sea School Marine Discovery Centre has been an outstanding partner with our various projects.”

Rata Luckens

Natural Resource Management Officer
City of Charles Sturt

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Waikerie Primary School and Riverland West Local Action Planning Group; Hart Lagoon Committee; Loxton-Waikerie Council; and other community partners

The Youth Environment Team started as a project between Waikerie Primary School students and Riverland West Local Action Planning Group, along with various other community organisations. The partnership aims to increase student knowledge in environmental studies, improve student engagement in learning and extend students' leadership skills and self-esteem.

THE SCHOOL

Waikerie Primary School is a coeducational, government school located in rural South Australia. It has an enrolment of 263 students from Reception to Year 7. Due to its rural location, and recent drought conditions, the school is often challenged when extending the activities of students, but with dedicated leadership and staff and an extremely supportive wider community these challenges of distance are overcome. Student participation and development of leadership are two of the focus areas of the school. There are opportunities for students to become School or Sporting Captains, members of the School Representative Council or *Youth Environment Team* members. Specialist programs link the local cluster of preschools and primary schools with the local high school.

THE NEED

Historically, Waikerie students had participated in environmental activities such as Waterwatch and School Tree Day, but many students expressed the concern that they could be doing more for the local and wider community. The opportunity for an environmental education project that engaged students grew out of the actions of a student group who lobbied for such a program. Students were keen to interact with the local environment and to gain the knowledge and skills that would allow them to do so.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The *Youth Environment Team* began in 2005, after twelve passionate environmental students in Year 6 and 7 attended the Youth River Conference in Adelaide. On their return to the school, they spoke to the principal, teachers and parents about the need for a student-driven environment team.

The *Youth Environment Team* is a partnership between Waikerie Primary School students and various local community organisations, with the main partner being the Riverland West Local Action Planning Group who employs environmentalists and scientists to provide knowledge, skills and support to projects. The

“Students can only apply to become members in Year 6 and 7, and younger students have made mention to me how they are counting down the years till they can apply to be in the *Youth Environment Team*.”

Jeany Winter
Environmental Education Teacher
Waikerie Primary School



other two key partner organisations are the Hart Lagoon Committee and the Loxton-Waikerie Council. The project educates and engages students primarily in environmental studies, but also extends their leadership skills, community engagement and personal confidence. Many volunteers also offer their experience and share their passion for the environment with the students.

In September 2006 the *Youth Environment Team* members were invited to be guest speakers at the tenth anniversary Annual General Meeting of Local Action Planning. The teacher-mentor for the group helped to facilitate the program and was elected onto the Local Action Planning Committee, formalising the partnership. Other scientists, environmentalists and the invaluable volunteers, with their years of experience, skill and passion for the environment, act as mentors, teachers and knowledge support, not only for the students but also for their teachers. Partner organisations assist by providing a wealth of environmental management skills, environmental knowledge, life experience and plenty of volunteer members for the committee. The school and partners share knowledge freely and tackle tasks in a hands-on collaborative manner.

The *Youth Environment Team* is seen as an opportunity for students to excel and receive recognition for their efforts. Many students had previously not experienced that level of recognition and achievement until they had been a part of the Team.

THE BENEFIT

Environmental Education is now an integral part of the school's curriculum and strategic plan. Information on the *Youth Environment Team*, its partners and projects are featured on the school's website and in the parent handbook available to families.

Through the partnership, students have benefited by being members of the Team and are exposed to a wider range of specialist knowledge

and expertise. The students themselves have personally grown in their confidence and self-respect. Team members peer-teach to a younger class of students at least once per term and the teachers of these classes are impressed with the expertise and knowledge the students present.

The whole school now has a functioning environmental shed and shade house, complete with worm and composting stations, a bush tucker garden, flourishing plants and seedlings, a recycling trailer, and successful recycling program that serves the school and community. Local waterways are healthy and rubbish free, and baseline data and bird watching results are being analysed. Students' achievements are recognised across the broader school curriculum, in public speaking, at community presentations, and for growth in general knowledge and confidence.

The *Youth Environment Team* host the Local Action Planning Group's Annual General Meeting. One of the *Youth Environment Team* mottos speaks volumes about the partnership's sustainability: 'We help look after our environment today, to save it for the future.'

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS:

environmental education, student leadership

TARGET GROUP:

rural primary school students

“I've never been that good at sport or chosen for teams or that good at my school work, but now I feel like I'm really good at something.”

Youth Environment Team member
Waikerie Primary School



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